NORMS FOR THE EVALUATION OF LITERATURE FOCUSING PRIMARILY ON THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL

by

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Summary:
Critical Theory, as posited by members of The Frankfurt School, was evaluated with the objective of attaching an implied ethical dimension. This was discovered in their privileging of a particular type of aesthetic, as evinced in their analysis of certain works of autonomous High Modernism. This implied ethic, which is one based around the concept of enlightenment as potential for emancipation, was then applied as a norm for the evaluation of art. This ethic, however, does not seek to impose a particular reading on (specifically) literary production: Rather, it seeks to impart the importance of a commitment by the literary critic in the use of an ethically based norm, an ethic, what is more, that is based and supported by a discussion of the concepts ‘freedom’ and Enlightenment. Finally, with this ethic firmly established, the discussion then attempted to distinguish between modernism and post-modernism, using this implied ethic as a guide to separation.

Key Terms: Frankfurt School; Aesthetics; Ethics; Modernism; Postmodernism; Emancipation; Enlightenment; Norms; Culture; Literary Evaluation; Ideology.
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1. Introduction

In order to find the norms for the evaluation of art (and in particular literature) using the Frankfurt School’s writing as base, it will be necessary initially to examine the political content of their writings, since so much of their thought was politically inspired in terms of both theory and, in the case of Herbert Marcuse, praxis. Their evaluation of art will be shown to have always contained an underlying and, for the purposes of this dissertation, crucial ethical dimension. Although focus, for the Frankfurt School, was on the aesthetic in relation to literary evaluation, it, the aesthetic, was always underpinned by the political dimensions of the Frankfurt School’s thought … and it is this particular link between the ethic and the aesthetic that this dissertation will seek to convey. It will be therefore necessary to firstly demonstrate this implied ethical dimension in the evaluation of literature and art (or, to be more precise, what makes art political and how), before moving on to examine how these ethics directly influenced the Frankfurt School’s evaluation of certain types of art and literature, notably those of High Modernism and their antithesis, the works of the Culture Industry.

The reason for this is to demonstrate where the Frankfurt School stood in relation to the world; it is this underlying assumption – and ethic – that informed their elevation of a particular type of art to the lofty position of retaining the emancipatory potential of the people, a shift away from Classical Marxism where this potential was seen to be held by the people themselves. In this statement, then, also resides the obvious fact that if art holds emancipatory potential, (in terms of its enlightening potential), it must free the people from some sort of prison, even were this prison one that was self-created – this dissertation will attempt to demonstrate the types of thought that the Frankfurt School held as regressive, as demonstrated in the rise of technology, the socialization of the individual, anti-identity thinking and other key concepts, and also their Ideal of a utopia – a utopia that is based on an ethic of freedom from the domination of both society and capitalism. These concepts are dealt with by all the writers in the Frankfurt School (although they were sometimes not in agreement, as was the case with the technological debate between Benjamin and Adorno1), and, along with the works of Adorno and Horkheimer, this dissertation will also focus on Herbert Marcuse’s work since his views are not only expressed very succinctly, but also because, when writing One-Dimensional Man, Marcuse still wished to retain
a practical-political Critical Theory of social change (on which he would work with Neumann). This radical and practical theory was, in a way, a continuation of the work that Adorno and Horkheimer had started in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, but which was abandoned in favour of cultural and philosophical criticism divorced from radical politics and a theory of social change. The reasons for this will also be analysed.

The goals of this dissertation then are as follows: to establish the ethical dimension of the Frankfurt School’s work which entails, interalia, the establishment that art is political and thus has a function (both regressive and progressive), and the exploration of what is meant by freedom, a concept that resides in the Enlightenment and which, through Marx, Adorno, and finally post-modernism, will be shown to have altered in terms of its final emancipatory goals. This will follow an investigation into the function of culture, which is found, in terms of its emancipatory and enlightening potential, within the aesthetic – an aesthetic which, in order to be investigated, must have an ethical dimension since, it will be demonstrated, without a political/ethical dimension in analysis, the study of the aesthetic of a literary text will not show any type of political/ethical dimension, be it regressive or progressive, a point which has been made by Habermas, and on which this dissertation will base its normative evaluation. Once this has been achieved, it will be necessary, as conclusion, to investigate whether subversive literature in the post-modern world (a title which is itself open to scrutiny, as will be debated below) is available and, indeed, even possible (in terms of modernism, as well as in terms of itself). In order to achieve this, the ‘results’ of the above-mentioned investigation will be used, and the modernist / post-modernist debate will be evaluated using an ethical premise; an ethical premise that postmodernism, as will be demonstrated, tends to shy away from, linking this, as it does, with forms of metanarratives, while at the same time still holding the concept of modernist aesthetics in its artworks.

This dissertation, however, will begin by focusing briefly on the work of Marx, for it is the base upon which the Frankfurt School attached their work – and, in line with the ethical dimension of this dissertation, the concept of freedom, which, as will be demonstrated in the work of Adorno and Horkheimer, resides in works of high culture, needs to be explored fully in order to understand what it means, in Marxist terms, to be free, before Adorno and Horkheimer’s enlightenment of the Enlightenment is discussed. In all then, it should be observed that this
dissertation involves two major and interrelated discussions: the first is the concept of an ethic of freedom, whilst the second, which involves literary evaluation, will question the role of culture within this all-encompassing concept of ‘unfreedom’ and emancipation, with the final goal being that of establishing whether some type of ethical norm for the evaluation of culture is possible and indeed relevant in the works of post-modernism.

2. Marx and Freedom

It is to be understood, in terms of this dissertation, that emancipation rests on the concept of enlightenment – in other words, that the former rests and depends entirely on the latter. Without enlightenment, there can be no freedom. With this in mind, emancipatory knowledge can be seen as an understanding, or, indeed, a self-awareness, of where one stands in relation to the world. This self-awareness, however, will also change the individual in the very act of self-awareness – or, phrased differently, to realise that one is enslaved in the type of rational one-dimensional system that will be elaborated on in the work of Marcuse will, by the very act of this realisation, alter the individual. At the same time, and crucially, the realisation that the individual is enslaved will lead to the individual’s (or group’s) attempt at ‘changing the world’ as a result of this very self-awareness. Terry Eagleton discusses this self-awareness thus: “It is knowledge as an historical event rather than as abstract speculation, in which knowing that is no longer clearly separable from knowing how. Moreover, to seek to emancipate yourself involves questions of value, while knowing about your situation is a matter of factual comprehension; so here the usual distinction philosophy acknowledges between facts and values becomes interestingly blurred. It is not just that this kind of knowledge can be put to valuable use, but that the motivation for understanding in the first place is bound up with a sense of value.” This value aspect will be returned to in the discussion of modernism / post-modernism below. It is also important to note that this dissertation will not investigate the determinist / non-determinist debate on Marx (as evinced in Gouldner’s The Two Marxisms, for instance) since it does not influence, at least directly, the direction of this dissertation.

As Herbert Marcuse makes the point, the facet of need plays a crucial role in understanding what Marx meant by freedom. Marx’s view was that the individual reaches his/her own full potential
only when the individual is free from producing for material needs – this aspect echoes what Adorno meant when he noted that even if the individual were free from producing for material need, he would still work because of the false ideology and consciousness of the current state of affairs. Eagleton makes this point thus: “Only when a society has achieved a certain economic surplus over the material necessity, releasing a minority of its members from the demands of productive labour into the privilege of becoming full time politicians, academics, cultural producers and so on, can philosophy in its fullest sense flower into being. Now thought can begin to fantasise that it is independent of material reality, just because there is a material sense in which it actually is.” 5 It was Marx’s contention that capitalism would bring about a state of affairs where there would be created, by automation (for instance), a surplus of material need – and this surplus, in turn, would inaugurate a certain freedom for the individual, a freedom from having to, in its most elemental form, work and produce to survive. It would be the Frankfurt School’s analysis that this type of freedom has been forgotten in the totally administered state, almost as if there were some type of collective amnesia that makes individuals forget that there was once a reason for their labour – and that reason was to free themselves from producing needs solely for survival. Once the material needs for survival have been conquered, the Frankfurt School maintain, society, irrespective of this, continue to create for so-called false needs. This constant labour denies the individual his/her own freedom. An example here is language – language was ‘invented’, it can be argued, to fulfil a material need – but literature demonstrates that the need can be extended to a realm above the simply functional for, it is suggested, there is no material need for literature – at least not, in any event, for survival.

Marx’s view on culture, following on from what has already been rendered, can be viewed as follows: that culture is labour and thus exploitation. If it is then true, and it is difficult to argue against the notion that thought creates culture, it is equally difficult to argue against the truth that thought itself is part and parcel of history – and if history is one of labour and exploitation, then culture itself can be little else but exploitation. Eagleton notes the following: “In class society, the individual is forced to convert what is least functional about herself – her self-realising species being – into a mere tool of material survival.

“It is not, of course, that Marx disowns such instrumental reasoning altogether. Without it, there could be no rational action at all; and his own revolutionary politics necessarily involves the
fitting of means to ends. But one of the many ironies of his thought is that this is in the service of constructing a society in which men and women would be allowed to flourish as radical ends in themselves. It is just because he values the individual so deeply that Marx rejects a social order which, while trumpeting the value of individualism in theory, in practice reduces men and women to anonymously interchangeable units.\textsuperscript{6} This will be discussed further, in particular in the section on identity thinking below.\textsuperscript{7}

This aspect of freedom sheds light on the ethics of the artwork itself, for the artwork that is lauded by the Frankfurt School is one that is seen as being autonomous and independent from material needs. This is very much in keeping with Marx’s views on freedom – while it is relevant that Marx never entertained much time for art and culture, the cultural aspects of his theory that were worked on by the Frankfurt School retained Marx’s ethic of freedom, and applied this ethic to the artwork. Eagleton demonstrates this by noting the following: “If we were asked to characterise Marx’s ethics, then, we might do worse than call them ‘aesthetic’. For the aesthetic is traditionally that form of human practice which requires no utilitarian justifications, but which furnishes its own goals, grounds and rationales. It is an exercise of self-fulfilling energy for the mere sake of it; and socialism for Marx is just the practical movement to bring about a state of affairs in which something like this would be available to as many individuals as possible. \textit{Where art was, there shall humanity be.} This is why he wants a society in which labour would be automated as far as possible, so that men and women (capitalists as well as workers) would no longer be reduced to mere tools of production, and would be free instead to develop their personalities in more fully rounded ways. Socialism for him depends crucially upon shortening the working day, to allow this general flourishing to become available.”\textsuperscript{8} (\textit{Emphasis – A.M.}).

Here then is the ethic of freedom in Marxism and its link to the aesthetic. At this preliminary stage, the logic does indeed apply to the works of art that are lauded by the Frankfurt School.\textsuperscript{9} At this juncture, however, another form of positive rationalism, the concept of abstraction, needs to be investigated to further understand Marx’s views on freedom. For Marx, all objects (and this includes the individual) have a ‘sensuous’ quality, certain essences that make them individual to themselves. In the realm of capitalism, these objects become commodities – and as such, they exist solely for exchange rather than use value. Like the individual and culture, they exist solely to be bought and sold – the abstraction here, then, is this: Under capitalism, the individual’s
labour, for instance, is bartered for money, the two things (labour and money) being unequal and yet, in abstraction, treated as equal. And once this abstraction takes hold, individuals treat one another just like so many other commodities – in short, everything becomes geared around profit (from the labourer who sells his/her time for the highest pay-cheque, to the entrepreneur and artists, whose creations are, also, solely for profit). Marx makes this point, as cited by Eagleton thus: "'Only when real, individual man resumes the abstract citizen into himself and as an individual man has become a species-being in his empirical life, his individual work and his individual relationships, only when man has recognised and organised his forces proper as social forces so that social force is no longer separated from him in the form of political force, only then will human emancipation be completed.'" 10

Marx’s ethic of freedom advocates an abolishment of commodity exchange – or, put differently, a return from exchange value to use value. In similar terms, and very much in line with an aspect of Marcuse’s writing that will be investigated, Marx’s ethics would also advocate a return of the individual to a state where s/he no longer produces for profit – a rejection, then, of rational positivist thought. Rationalism, as was evidenced in Taylorism, for instance, broke up the artisan’s labour into distinct phases – the so-called division of labour. Indeed, while it is true that in the natural sciences such positivist rationalism has helped to explain so much of the natural world, Marx’s contention was that this type of rationalism would serve only to alienate the individual from his/her own labour and sensuousness. In this all-encompassing drive for production, the worker becomes reduced, in many instances, to one quasi-mechanical process, such as the repetitive work of factory workers. A cessation of this alienating labour, and a return of human senses was only possible, for Marx, if private property was abolished: "'The suspension of private property is therefore the complete emancipation of all human senses and attributes; but it is this emancipation precisely because these senses and attributes have become human, subjectively as well as objectively. The eye has become a human eye, just as its object has become a social, human object, made by man for man. The senses have therefore become theoreticians in their immediate praxis. They relate to the thing for its own sake, but the thing itself is an objective human relation to itself and to man, and vice versa. Need or enjoyment have therefore lost their egoistic nature, and nature has lost its mere utility in the sense that its use has become human use.'"11
The result of this rationalisation is specialisation, where the individual is trapped in a sphere of activity that provides him or her with livelihood. This means that the individual must, by necessity, and not choice, become one thing, and remain that one thing. This is the result of specialisation, since the individual is seen as being forced into an activity, rather than voluntarily entering into a certain type of labour. The point being that, if one were to enter into something by one’s own volition, one could, theoretically then, enter into another activity at will. This is, for Marx, a notion of freedom that does not exist in capitalist society where the division of labour creates specialists, and specialisation, as per the factory worker, leads to a sense of alienation from the product produced since the worker’s responsibility is centred solely around a small aspect of the finished article.

Although there are, as Eagleton rightly notes, many problems with Marx’s Ideal of freedom (not least of which is the fact that it is another all-encompassing metanarrative that seeks to bury the individual), these problems will not be entered into yet, since it is merely the scope of this section to note what it is, for Classical Marxism, to be free. Much of the Frankfurt School’s thinking on freedom was derived from Marx, and thus the link must be established. It is, however, noteworthy that, unlike animals that create or produce only when there is immediate physical need for it, the human being produces and creates even when there is no physical need (art being a case in point) – Marx’s freedom ethic suggests that production, free from material needs, is when Man produces ‘truly’. Freedom, in this view, is freedom from production and labour that is forced upon the individual due to the nature of capitalism. Freedom is freedom from exchange value (and a return to use-value), an escape from forced and divided labour, and freedom from material needful labour. As Eagleton writes: “We are free when, like artists, we produce without the goal of historical necessity; and it is this nature which for Marx is the essence of all individuals. In developing my own individual personality through fashioning a world, I am also realising what it is that I have most deeply in common with others, so that individual and species-being are ultimately one. My product is my existence for the other, and presupposes the other’s existence for me. This for Marx is an ontological truth, which follows from the kind of creatures we are; but it is possible for certain forms of social life to drive a wedge between these two dimensions of the self, individual and communal, and this, in effect, is
what young Marx means by alienation.\textsuperscript{13} The worker then is alienated because s/he is no longer able to relate to his/her own creations.\textsuperscript{14}

The Frankfurt School will be shown to have extended Marx's ethic on freedom into the artwork and culture: as such, this brief exposition is necessary solely as an introduction. Before this aspect is delved into further, however, the problem of culture as Politics needs to be evaluated, for if freedom is a goal, then culture, it will be demonstrated, can be the field on which this battle is fought. This is an aspect that was not covered by Marx, but which, instead, was drawn out by the Frankfurt School. Before explaining how, the question of whether culture is political needs to be initially evaluated.
3. Art as Politics

In order to demonstrate how culture is political, it is important to briefly explain how Classical Marxism was ‘overturned’ by Althusser’s reformulation of the base/superstructure theory which was seen, by Classical Marxism, as being, to use a deconstructive definition, in a relationship of dominance / dependence.15

With the break-up of the communist-based Eastern Bloc came the awareness that, even if the base (the economy, which, in Classical Marxism, was the controlling force over all other aspects of society) was socialist, the classless society that was meant to be derived (in a grand theory of causality and determinism) from this classless economy never materialised. This quasi-scientific social determinism found in much of Marx’s materialist theory proved to be incorrect in practice (again, the facet of revolutionary intervention in Marx’s writings will not be discussed) and it became clear, instead, and as a consequence, that the base was not in total control of all the other superstructures - in fact, as was evidenced in many of the Eastern European countries such as the Czech Republic and the so-called ‘velvet revolution’, it was the cultural, political and other superstructures which finally destroyed the socialist base.

The Marxist re-formulation was the work of Althusser, who supposed that all superstructures (and the so-called base, the economy, being just one in a multitude) are linked interdependently. The logical consequence thus being that each will have influence on the other structures of society. The base/superstructure hierarchy is then replaced by these interdependent structures, all of which are responsible for the life-world of the subject, as well as creating the mode of production for that society. However, it is noteworthy too that the superstructures, although they are interdependent, do form binary oppositions between one another, since they all share the same mode of production: The logical consequence then is that the literature of that society will, for instance, reflect this mode of production, while the political and the educational will help maintain it. Simultaneously, however, it is also possible that the literature of a society can both help maintain the dominant mode of production, and, at the same time, rebel against it - this is possible because of the interrelations of the formations, and it was towards this interrelation which the Frankfurt School drifted. Thus, rather than mechanistic causality as is evidenced in
Classical Marxism, Althusser specified a new term, *structural causality*, where the above-mentioned structures interrelate. In terms of this dissertation, what is of importance is the point that, if all structures are interdependent, the cultural structure, if it were subversive (in other words, opposed to the dominant state of affairs), could theoretically affect the economic base. This was, it could be argued, a strategy of the Capitalist West during the Cold War, when adverts, to name but one example, showed the apparent wealth of the Western Person when compared to the individual in the Communist Bloc. It would be possible, albeit very tenuously, to draw a direct link between the end of the Cold War and the Cultural battlefield that was fought throughout the Cold War, as evidenced in the battle between the realist art so lauded in the Communist Bloc and the seemingly progressive cultural production of the West. \(^{16}\)

The concept of ‘hegemony’, a term coined by the Italian Marxist Gramsci, explains how the dominant ideology will (or, at least, attempt to) remain dominant. Hegemony is defined as a dominant code of meaning, interpretation or behaviour, and exists because of the non-reflective acceptance of this by the subject. It is therefore the subject in society that maintains and reproduces the dominant views. This link between Gramsci and the Frankfurt School is evidenced in what Adorno termed anti-identity thinking – the main point, at this stage, being that it is the individual, the subject, who has the power to maintain hegemony but, equally, with Althusser’s structural formation in mind, also to subvert it.

A final concept taken from Althusser and used by the Frankfurt School is the former’s writings on Ideology which is seen as an *effect* of the superstructures: Because there are seen to be contradictions developed by these structures, shared norms and attitudes for beliefs are necessary to blanket-over these very contradictions. Ideology is always functional, and defined as such and not by its content. Ideology exists solely to strengthen the dominant class's economic, political and social interests, and this is achieved by hiding the contradictions by implying that its truth is both universal and natural (and thus not open to change). This type of ideology, for the purposes of this dissertation, are to be found most clearly in the works of the Culture Industry, a term that will be focused on in depth because of its importance in establishing, firstly, the political function of art, and secondly, since it relates directly to the ethical base of the Frankfurt School. \(^{17}\) Before that, however, a discussion on Ideology is necessary.
De Jong, in answer to the question of how, for Althusser, the individual reproduces ideology - or, importantly, how this ideology reproduces and thus maintains itself as dominant, notes the following: “According to him, ideology is the imaginary relationship between the individual person or subject and her/his 'real conditions of existence', as the often quoted formulation of Althusser states. 'Real conditions of existence' refer to the specific roles, functions and social and institutional structures an individual finds her/himself in. These functions are not her/his choice but are always already present, determining the individual's life. The relationship refers to the types of behaviour the individual adopts from his/her environment with respect to these functions and structures and it describes common behaviour such as going to school or to church, being a child or a parent, a man or a woman, an employer or an employee, a sportsman or similarly structured social positions in which individuals find themselves. Behaviour here takes the form of specific, almost ritualistic practices such as, for example, the practice of obeying one's teachers or of regarding a minister of church with respect.”

These structures are christened Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) by Althusser, and within this broad definition reside everything from the religious ISA, the legal ISA, the cultural ISA, etc. The importance here is that, although it would appear to the subject that his/her actions are determined by his/her own mind-set, for instance, the truth is that the actions have already been imposed (or determined) by the superstructures. Thus the subject is not autonomous, but is controlled - or, as the dictum would have it, ‘the subject is subjected’. And this very subjectification, it will be shown, is a direct function of the works of the Culture Industry.

New ideas, however, if what has been described here is taken as true, would, logically, not be possible. Macherey sees the solution to this in the fact that ideology, like the capitalist mode of production, carries within it its own contradiction would help clarify this position. Complexity and education can be posited as being paramount in the acceptance of a literary work as exactly that; however, this type of literature can only be written (and, presumably, read) by people with an 'elevated' education which, in turn, and in most societies, would inevitably entail a high-degree of cost, and thus a large percentage of the society will not have access to this type of literature. The consequence of this is that it helps to maintain the class barriers, for instance, where only the dominant-class have rightful access to so-called literary works of art. The implication, then, is this - if the enlightenment potential in art resides in complexity, and if only the dominant class,
with their elevated education, are able to read and interpret this type of art, the net result is that those who are exploited will not be in a position to be either enlightened nor emancipated.\textsuperscript{19}

Ideology, while pretending to be natural or 'universally valid', functions solely to re-enforce and maintain the interests of the dominant class or group – it is, furthermore, nothing but 'social practice'. And it is language, finally, that connects the subject to ideology. De Jong notes in this connection, that, “Habermas states that ideologies in late-capitalist society (today) serve to legitimate (or justify) social, economic, political and also technological and scientific practices. However, legitimisation gaps (i.e., the impossibility of practice legitimating itself on its own terms) are inherent to these practices. For example: late capitalist economy is characterised by technological development. The ideology which justifies technological development is the belief in the importance and value of technological, scientific and economic development. The belief obscures the fact that a high rate of development is necessary to keep profits high, which in turn is necessary to keep factories, mines and companies (global economism, in short) going. This in turn is also necessary to provide labour with good salaries, as has become essential in modern late-capitalism. ... The legitimisation gap or crisis inherent to high production together with a high technological economy, is hidden by another system - that of social security, integrated in economical and technological systems. In late capitalism, legitimisation gaps are covered up by extending systems to include other systems.”\textsuperscript{20}

Ideology, in the view of J. Habermas (a later member of the Frankfurt School) functions to blanket the legitimisation gaps created by the dominant mode of production. It is thus possible to state that, as witnessed in the critique of ideology, neo-Marxism is not value-free - indeed, the social emancipation (through enlightenment) of exploited people and nature is seen as being the end result of this critique, and within the critique of legitimisation gaps is the critique of society and what was known as the superstructures in Classical Marxism.

To conclude this shift from Classical to neo-Marxism, one further point should be noted and that is that the Frankfurt School were more interested in explaining and noting the cultural effects of the market rather than the Classical Marxist question of class distinctions. And within the emancipatory goals of neo-Marxism, it is noteworthy that the Frankfurt School would cite (amongst many other things) that the fetishist nature of modern ideology had to be defeated,
because the domination of modern society was maintained by the so-called market-ideology. Adorno and Horkheimer would then devote much of their writing to the concepts of cultural production, or the so-called Culture Industry, as well as the ideas behind the dialectics of enlightenment and negative dialectics. This latter term needs to be briefly explained before this dissertation moves on to a discussion on Culture.

Dialectical thought negates the existing state of affairs, it demonstrates the possibilities for freedom and happiness as found in certain works of art, where there exist other ideas, images and, in Marcuse’s words, imagination that negates and transcends the works of the Culture Industry. The Frankfurt School were concerned by the rise of technology and its positive rationality which would bring about a totally administered state. In terms of this dissertation, one of their major concerns is central to the idea of discovering norms in the evaluation of culture, and this is the Frankfurt School’s investigation into the new modes of social control (ideology, in short) which would function two-fold: to restrict and to repress the revolutionary potential of the working class (by denying them their class, by denying them enlightenment) and secondly, to destroy the individuality of the individual, thereby negating, as it were, happiness.

At this early stage, therefore, it is already possible to pose these two ethical positions: that the Frankfurt School were concerned by the intrusion of technology and (regressive) culture in the revolutionary potential of the working class (as evinced by Marx) and the second, albeit linked, sphere of human happiness, found in the ‘true-individual’. What must be made clear, then, is that culture is political — it is political because it can function as a regressive and oppressive ideological instrument - the regressive qualities of the works of the Culture Industry stand as a case in point. Simultaneously, Culture, and Literature, as an Ideological State Apparatus, forms its own binary opposition and thus can also maintain the revolutionary and emancipatory potential of the individual.
4. Culture

Whereas Walter Benjamin had seen in the rise of technology a possibility of spreading enlightenment to the exploited as to their class, Marcuse (and the other later members of the Frankfurt School[21]) saw in the rise of technology a new, more sophisticated means whereby the individual would be administered and controlled, with the ultimate goal being that of the destruction of individuality and the concomitant destruction of the revolutionary spirit that was the destiny of the working class. Marcuse’s central point, his underlying ethic, and one shared by the Frankfurt School, is that the human being is defined by, as Marx would have it and as paraphrased by Marcuse, “a community of free and rational persons in which each has the same opportunity to unfold and fulfil all of his powers.”[22] This is negated or repressed, primarily by the technological world – its instrument, in the main, is culture. In order to understand this important point, it is necessary to examine the subjugating and repressive forms of culture, which Adorno termed the ‘Culture Industry’.

4.1. The Culture Industry

The Culture Industry, a term that was coined by Adorno, was developed primarily in the USA in the 1930s and ‘40s where he and fellow Frankfurt School members such as Horkheimer were exposed to the mass-produced culture of the USA, and the way in which the mass media was used for propaganda, in particular during the Second World War. (Martin Jay makes the point that there were a number of theorists, including Lowenthal and Marcuse, working for the Office of War Information in Washington during this period).[23] Adorno was thus influenced by the use of culture, advertising, mass communication and media as instruments of social control in the creation of what he refers to as new forms of capitalist society. Kellner writes: “The production and transmission of media spectacles which transmitted ideology and consumerism by means of allegedly ‘popular entertainment’ (a misnomer, because this type of culture is neither popular nor entertainment) and information were, they {Adorno and Horkheimer – A.M.} believed, a central mechanism through which contemporary society came to dominate the individual.”[24] Popular entertainment thus duplicates the social reality.
Any topic that deals with the emancipatory potential of art must, by its very nature, addresses the regressive side of culture, which is evidenced, in Adorno's work, in the products of the Culture Industry. The term itself alludes to the fact that concepts such as mass-culture or popular culture are misleading - the Culture Industry was not created by the masses but, rather, it was imposed upon them from above – and in line with this, one can readily see that its function is consequently open to questioning. Russel Berman makes an interesting point when he notes that, “Against the eternally returning cultural conservative complaint that the purportedly low quality of popular literature merely reflects the desires of the masses, I will suggest that it was rather the experience of the book industry and its economic forms which led to the specific character of the maligned literature. No matter how literary production and consumption may be reciprocally determined, the nature of production has its own definite consequences: authors who understand themselves as employees dependent on publishing houses with precise marketing strategies will choose to write in certain ways. In other words, it is not the growth of the readership but the constraints on the writers, not democracy but capitalism which leads to Ganghofer and other proponents of pulp fiction. This concern led Adorno, by the way, to insist on his notion of the ‘Culture Industry’ against the competing term of mass culture with its implication that the masses only got what they deserved.”

Culture that is administered from above was what Critical Theory sought to analyse. The scope of ideology and regressive effects of the mass media were thus investigated through various mediums such as film (which, at the time, attracted up to 110 million people a week), radio, jazz and even television, which Adorno tackled in his essay ‘How to look at Television’, and in which he sought to, “investigate systematically socio-psychological stimuli typical of televised material both on a descriptive and psychodynamic level, to analyse their presuppositions as well as their total pattern, and to evaluate the effects they are likely to produce. This procedure may ultimately bring forth a number of recommendations on how to deal with these stimuli to produce the most desirable effect of television. By exposing the socio-historical implications and mechanisms of television, which often operate under the guise of false realism, not only may the shows be improved, but, more important possibly, the public at large may be sensitised to the nefarious effect of some of these mechanisms.” In its clarity of objectives, one can see how Critical Theory is applied to the study of a cultural artefact.
The Culture Industry stands in opposition to the humanising or emancipatory elements found in autonomous artworks such as those of Kafka and Schoenberg (Adorno’s examples) – at this stage, however, this dissertation will not focus on the aesthetics of the literary work of art, but merely focus and discuss whether the Culture Industry has only domination and ideology as a central feature. To discover this, one must firstly examine the origin of this industry.

The Culture Industry itself has come about through the administration of scientific and technological organisation which now dominate the individual’s thought and experience. Reasons are first encountered in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Kellner suggests that Adorno was forced, “to abandon trust in the disciplinary sciences and turn to critical philosophy in part because of the integration of science and scientific thought into the apparatus of the current systems of domination, fascist and capitalist.” The *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, furthermore, seeks to show how scientific reason and thought has become conformist: “There is no longer any available form of linguistic expression which has not tended toward accommodation to dominant currents of thought; and what a devolved language does not do automatically is proficiently executed by societal mechanisms.” The ever-burgeoning strand of positivism in science, with its highlighting of reducible facts (as in a clock that is dismantled to see how it works before being re-assembled), and verifications could not, so Adorno and Horkheimer claimed, be conducive to explaining society – positivism, indeed, was seen as one of the major elements in the destruction of the enlightenment. The technology, the scientific reasoning in positivism, was found to be part-and-parcel of the dominant forms of production and thus domination. Culture, like thought and science, had immersed itself into the dominant form of production and administration - this is a basic reason why the Culture Industry has risen - because science, as Kellner notes, and thought itself, have fallen foul to the totally administered world. (There is, however, another strand of thought that links the Culture Industry with the onset of the industrial revolution and the replacement of the noblemen with the bourgeoisie).

The Culture Industry, to continue, is seen as replicating the dominant mode of production, and it is also a major reason why the determinist socialist revolution would never take place in Western societies such as the USA. It is noteworthy too that this social determinism was itself seen as scientific – an element that has been discussed in relation to Althusser’s re-formulation of Classical Marxism.
The theory of the Culture Industry has been linked to Lukacs's theory of reification - it is, then, in this view, an application of Lukacs on both the mass media and culture in general to investigate how these phenomena impede and even prevent the growth of a class-consciousness so imperative in any idea of emancipation.

Technology (in contradistinction to the view of Walter Benjamin who could see emancipatory potential in these new forms of reproduction) was seen as an added instrument of class domination in so far as it was an impediment to class-consciousness. Class-consciousness could not occur because the dominant forms of production use the Culture Industry as a tool of repression - in the sense, for instance, that class consciousness would never be achieved because of the instruments of social control. However, since culture itself is functional in the repression of consciousness, it can also, at the same time, act as an instrument of enlightenment.

Kellner, in this regards, notes the following: "In Gramsci's terminology, the culture industries reproduce capitalist hegemony over the working class by engineering consent to the existing society, thereby establishing a socio-psychological basis for social integration ... the culture industries coax individuals into the privacy of their homes or the movie theatres, where they produce consumer-spectators of media-events and escapist entertainment while subtly indoctrinating them with dominant ideologies." 33 Involved in this too is the idea that the Culture Industry captures people at their weakest moments, tired from their labour and thus unable and unwilling to think critically.

Thus entertainment, where the spectator is nothing but a passive recipient, requires no thought nor work (which are the prerequisites for the understanding of autonomous art) - the fears of the modern person (the fear of losing their job, the fear of war, nuclear bombs, depressions, recessions, redundancies, unemployment) are seen as being beyond their immediate control, as indeed is the culture to which they are exposed. They are not determinants in the construction of the artwork as they are not involved in the construction of their life-world - for inherent within capitalism is the idea that there are always those that can choose either to give or take away the drudgery of life.

This is ideology at work, and it is crucial that, whilst this appears as normal, it is the individual
and society that creates their own life-world to begin with. The unremitting nature of labour creates a need for escape - entertainment is offered as a solution, with the result that capitalism creates the need (false) for escape, and then creates the escape itself, which, in the guise of the Culture Industry, does nothing but repress and duplicate the world from which the person is attempting to escape in the first place. Held notes that, "Adorno wrote, 'the modern mass media tend particularly to fortify reaction formations and defences concomitant with actual social dependence.' Its messages appear to offer escape; they suggest pleasure, spontaneity and 'something metaphysically meaningful'. In fact, their forms duplicate an 'opaque and reified' world. They do not shatter existing images of reality - they reproduce them. The Culture Industry stands for adjustment to existing social organisations. Under its auspices 'free-time' experiences all too often serve to sustain capacities for wage labour." One can thus see a type of cultural dialectic - the worker, in search of escape from unremitting labour, suffering and degradation, to paraphrase Eagleton, turns to the Culture Industry, only to find there more ideology and domination; thus capitalism creates the need for escape and then creates the escape which is, in itself, a mere duplication and continuation of the domination and the furthering of the need for the escape that it continually (re)creates. Thus it creates the demand and the supply and, as a result, it also creates the sustainability which is key in the continuance of the capitalist economic system. This is what Adorno had in mind when he equated the Culture Industry with the worst forms of bourgeois sadism. The Culture Industry itself, then, is but a mirror-image of society; the need (false) is generated and then supplied in a never-ending circle.

It is, furthermore, an 'industry' because of the way the cultural products are produced (the term 'dream factories' has also been applied to this notion). As Kellner notes: "The very processes of production in the Culture Industry are modelled on factory production, where everything is standardised, streamlined, co-ordinated and planned down to the last detail. Indeed, Adorno and Horkheimer use their analysis of the Culture Industry to call attention to what they perceive as the fundamental traits of the administered society and to carry out a radical critique of capitalism. They suggest that reflection on the culture industries illuminate the processes promoting standardisation, homogenisation and conformity that characterise social life under what they call 'totalitarian capitalism'. The tendencies toward manipulation and domination in the Culture Industry illuminate similar trends throughout capitalist society." This is an example of the
dialectical approach of Adorno, where the Culture Industry and the examination of particular works within it will demonstrate the extent to which the capitalist system deceives with its false promises, just as the Culture Industry deceives with its false dreams and escapism. An investigation of the Culture Industry can produce a theory of society. Therefore, to analyse a work of art is tantamount to investigating the way in which it is interpreted, and here an enquiry would lead into its formation and reception.

Entertainment itself functions to indoctrinate the consumers into accepting the status quo; one way in which this is done is by making the passive recipient believe that the existing social order and relations are natural (and universal) - this is achieved by reproducing the same or similar views of life which emulate the system, of affairs in the world. For instance, Adorno and Horkheimer note the following: “Pseudo-individuality is rife: from the standardised jazz improvisation to the exceptional film star whose hair curls over her eye to demonstrate her originality. What is individual is no more than the generality's power to stamp the accidental detail so firmly that it is accepted as such. The defiant reserve or elegant appearance of the individual on show is mass-produced like Yale locks, whose only difference is measured in fractions of millimetres.”

It can be claimed that the Culture Industry's products are nothing more than advertisements for the status quo, dominating and manipulating people into accepting what can be viewed as a system of exploitation as natural. As such, they function as ideology.

In ‘On the fetish-character in Music and the Regression of Listening’, which does much to illuminate Adorno's point on reification and the logic of the Culture Industry, Adorno writes that to recognise something is almost the same thing as liking it. It is tantamount to saying that repetition is a successful mode of indoctrination. The reason is that a value-judgement is non-existent in a system where people are constrained by standardisation - therefore, for Adorno, preference is not on the artwork itself but rests on things like biographical details and where or when the music, in this instance, is heard. The extent to which biographical details are taken into account before a cinema-goer enters the theatre were used by the makers of The Blair Witch Project, who created a website dealing with an apparent (and, it turns out, false) account of three amateur filmmakers who vanished into the woods of Maryland – the filmmakers' videos were apparently discovered some years later, and then shown as a movie. Without the biographical background, the movie would have been interpreted, arguably, in a different light.
Entertainment is offered to people who are moulded by 'anxiety, work and undemanding docility'. In the Culture Industry's products, the whole is not changed by the particular. The Culture Industry's products are commodities - and this commodification, in reproducing the real world, brings with it the all-pervading profit-motive, as Adorno & Horkheimer note in the Dialectic of Enlightenment when they state that cultural products are turned into pieces of commodity; the products thus marketable and interchangeable as are all other products in the capitalist system. Cultural products are therefore nothing but commodities, emphasising their exchange value, as opposed to their use value (with the added value of social manipulation and control). Crucially, it is arguable that, in its manipulatory function, this is the Culture Industry's use-value, a point that will be re-appraised below.

It is equally important to note (as Adorno does in his dissertation 'Culture Industry Reconsidered') that the Culture Industry does not resemble other sectors of industry; the reason for its difference (and here denying what Kellner has stated) is in the very act of production, where the individual is still seen (with the notable exception of movies) as the producer. Rather, the industry in culture is to be found in three aspects which Adorno calls; (1) standardisation, (2) pseudo-individualisation (3) rationalisation of promotion and distribution techniques. In 'Culture Industry Reconsidered', Adorno qualifies the use of the term or expression 'industry' in the following way: "It refers to the standardisation of the thing itself - such as that of the Western, familiar to every movie-goer - and to the rationalisation of distribution techniques, but not strictly to the production process." (Contrast, in this regard, the production process of a movie where hundreds of people are involved, to the creation of a novel where, typically, there is but the author and the editor).

The goal of the Culture Industry is the production of commodities that are both profitable and consumable. It creates in order to duplicate the creation for the purposes of profit and sustainability. This year's best-seller will be duplicated and copied until the sales decrease, at which point the new best-seller will undergo the same treatment. Success of one type of novel will mushroom into hundreds of similar books being published.

More insidiously, however, is the fact that the Culture Industry acts in order to debilitate the potential crisis between forces and relations of production which are found in the era of bourgeois
art, where artistic expression in autonomous cultural artefacts and the prevailing consciousness of
the masses were in contrast and where the possibility of the above-mentioned crisis of values or
attitude was always a possibility. This potential is denied in the products of the Culture Industry.
Held notes in this connection that: “The Culture Industry gears itself almost entirely to the
development of cultural forms which are compatible with the preservation of capitalism. The
effects of capitalist contradictions on consciousness, Horkheimer and Adorno suggest, can be
managed.” 44

The Culture Industry, in its treatment of the audience, is similar to the way in which the audience
(as repressed individuals in the totally administered system) is treated in other parts of their lives
(work, etc.,) – the individual is powerless and has no capacity to control any aspect of his/her life
just as s/he has no input into the products of the Culture Industry to which s/he is exposed. The
Culture Industry is a symptom, then, of society’s general trend towards domination and uncritical
acceptance – a move that has been called the mass cretinisation of society. In its uncritical
acceptance of entertainment, society allows itself to be dominated in the fashion that Gramsci
described and which was covered in the section on hegemony. The few who own the means of
production inflict a condition of dependence on those who need - the former, as noted, can choose
to give or take away from the latter who exist in a perpetual state of need45 - escape is just one such
created need. In the uncritical acceptance of this status quo, society does not seem able to ask the
question – escape from what? Why is there such a need for escapist books, television and movies,
and the dictum at certain cinemas in England that begin every show (before the commercials, that
is) with ‘the great escape’? As Held writes, “Irrational susceptibilities and neurotic symptoms, ever
present within most human beings, are open, as a consequence, to exploitation by the mass media.
The ‘natural’ corollary of capitalist industrial production is the Culture Industry.” 46

Having said this much, however, the logical question of how the Culture Industry is able to sustain
this type of manipulation needs to be investigated further. In order to achieve sustainability, the
Culture Industry must have uncritical reception. It is here where much criticism is levelled on
Adorno and Horkheimer, as their work never focused as intensely on reception as it did on
production. Adorno’s point, however, is that sustainability is in-built because the products of the
Culture Industry are standardised - the products, though varying slightly, are constantly the same, as
in the example given on the Western or, in today’s terms, the action, big-budget (the more spent on
the movie, the more revenue is generated because of the publicity generated in 'star' magazines) movies of Hollywood, or, as is evidenced and in vogue this year, the 'star-pairing' movies where 'stars' are paired to generate 'box-office' - with the result that, because the audience know what's coming, they will watch, listen or read uncritically and passively. Scripts are given so-called commercialised treatment, where companies have their logos placed into the movie and to which the script will be subject to – note the use of watches, cars, suits, jewellery, boats, places, hotels, etc., in the James Bond movies, a veritable 120 minute advert with explosions. Hollywood movies are constantly being reduced in terms of dialogue since the need for dubbing in foreign markets diminishes with less dialogue – an explosion is the same in any country, as is the veritable car-chase sequence.

Following on from this, however, is the contention that the Culture Industry's products are a constant re-enactment of social reality - they are, then, for Adorno, essentially mimetic - a mere continuation of social reality, as is evidenced by the front-page of a daily newspaper in England devoted to Prime Minister Blair's pleading for the release of a soap-opera character jailed in the series 'Brookside', which draws over 18 million viewers a week. Held notes that the Culture Industry's, "products reproduces, reinforces and strengthens dominant interpretations of reality; it schematises, classifies and catalogues for its customers and often represents a spurious reconciliation between society and the individual, identifying the latter with the former." 47

It is thus the standardisation and pseudo-individualisation that can be taken as the main characteristics of the Culture Industry's products. Standardisation is present because of the Culture Industry's need to generate a profit. This is achieved in the following way; if a work has been popular or successful, it will be imitated and mimicked. 48 However, the audience would not, it would appear, want to see the same movie, thus a way of individualising one from the other must be used (pseudo-individualisation); an example being the new women and new gadgets and baddies and cars, etc. in the constant procession of new James Bond movies, as well as, when this fails to work, a new James Bond himself. In a Bond movie, it is quite obvious what will happen before the spectator even enters the cinema - the plot is already known from the billboards, as well as from the trailers and the advertisements on television (showing the highlights, which is tantamount to seeing the whole movie).
Therefore Held contends that, "Magazines and newspapers usually present little news and certainly no surprises. Even special effects, tricks and jokes are all allocated particular places in the design of programmes by experts in offices."\(^{49}\) This was noted by William Burroughs, who wrote in this connection that,\(^{50}\) "what we see is determined to a large extent by what we hear you can verify this proposition by a simple experiment turn off the sound track on your television set and substitute an arbitrary sound track prerecorded on your tape recorder street sounds music conversation recordings of other television programs you will find that the arbitrary sound track seems to be appropriate and is in fact determining your interpretation of the film track on screen people running for a bus in piccadilly with a sound track of machine gun fire looks like 1917 petrograd you can extend the experiment by using recorded material more or less appropriate to the film track for example take a political speech on television shut off sound track and substitute another speech you have prerecorded hardly tell the difference isn't much record sound track of one danger man from uncle spy program run it in place of another and see if your friends can't tell the difference."\(^{51}\)

This brings this part on the Culture Industry into the more sinister area of its function - that being the shaping of the response of the audience, reader or listener. Here, too, inevitably, aspects of manipulation abound. The response of the audience can be seen as being just as standardised as the products themselves - this is achieved by the use of cues which will make sure that the response to the product is similar. For instance, if one were to watch a news programme on the television, the pictures of war zones are accompanied (always) by background speech, thus making sure that the response of the audience to the pictures is largely uniform and in accordance with the dominant discourse; a picture of a warzone or atrocity in Albania can thus be blamed on the Serbs, then the Bosnians, then the United Nations, etc. Sadness is accompanied by 'sad' (usually so-called Classical) music, battle scenes by heroic music, etc. Even more insidiously, the 'canned laughter', 'applause' and 'standing ovation' cues at the Oscars every year is a perfect example, it seems, of the way the response of the audience, who watch the 'stars' receive and lose their nominations, is programmed and manipulated.

The 'come-back' of Scooby-Doo, the ghost-chasing dog, is a fine case in point – this series, a cartoon sketch, carries with it canned laughter in the background as if human beings were actually present while the cartoon characters were ‘acting’ in this week’s episode. These cues are termed
'response-mechanisms' by Adorno, and their function is simply to illicit automated responses as well as weakening any individual reaction or response; even the critics of the mass culture use predefined models for analysis (for instance, the old favourite of whether the characters are 'real' or not, or the story or plot-line is 'realistic' or not, as if society and the artwork were one). Held's remark, taken from Adorno, that popular music hears for those who listen and programmes watch for their audiences is essentially correct in this Culture Industry as described by Adorno and Horkheimer. Thus Held notes the following: “Despite the repetitiveness and ubiquity of mass culture, its structure is multi-layered. In Lowenthal's well known phrase, 'mass culture is psychoanalysis in reverse'. The Culture Industry appears to recognise that individuals have multi-layered personalities. This knowledge, far from being used for the purposes of emancipation, is employed in order to embroil his or her senses in the vicissitudes of predetermined effects.”

Finally, to see how the Culture Industry works in a particular form, Adorno's notions on astrology will be briefly discussed focusing on his dissertation 'The Stars'; here the situation is one where the individual's life and destiny is controlled by the stars (things above him/her) and over which s/he has no control for the stars (naturally) have all consuming power over the fate of the individual. This replicates the state of affairs in their lives. Importantly, rather than leaving it at that (where the individual thus understands s/he is powerless under the cruel or happy fate that awaits him/her below the stars - what Adorno calls 'institutionalised superstition'), the astrologers go further by trying to justify this powerlessness. The justification is that one must accept (for what else is there?) that one's destiny is preordained by the stars - in order to be happy one must forget about things that cannot be changed - happiness lies in blind acceptance of the stars' will, as well as the drudgery of life, the unremitting nature of labour, etc. As Held makes clear, “to be 'rational' in astrological terms means to adjust private interests to given social configurations.” The paradox, in this instance, however, is as follows; if it were the case that one should just accept one's powerlessness, then one would not need to consult the astrologer's advice for the week - why, then, do astrologers evince remarks like 'be careful in your love-life' or such like generalities? The answer lies in the fact that one must be shown to have certain individual traits that make conscious, life-changing decisions - thus on the one hand the stars are what determine all aspects of life, on the other the astrologer who, having 'read' the stars, offers advice on how the individual can cope with the 'news' from the stars by flattering his/her ego. But, obviously, if the stars are all powerful, the individual is
not capable of change. In this, then, much can be seen about the nature of the so-called *totally administered world*, when the stars are replaced with, for instance, social hierarchies, and the concept of pseudo-individuality that puffs up the ego of the person.

In order to conclude this section on the Culture Industry and the anti-emancipatory effects and traits of it, Adorno's dissertation *Free-time* will be briefly discussed since it is the final piece in the way in which the individual is dominated through the Culture Industry, as well as illuminating how Adorno sets about analysing certain aspects of society. Needless to say, this 'time' is also when culture plays a defining role in the person's life.

### 4.2. Free-Time

To begin with, when one looks at free time, one must, invariably, look at its opposite. As Adorno writes, "Free time is shackled to its opposite. Indeed the oppositional relation in which it stands imbibes free-time with certain essential characteristics. What is more, and far more importantly, free time depends on the totality of social conditions, which continues to hold people under its spell."\(^5^4\) As free-time is shackled to its opposite, so is art shackled to the Culture Industry.

Adorno's point is clarified by his exposition on the now widespread 'barbarous' mentality of the hobby - he notes how the giants of the Culture Industry, in their interviews, are always telling people about their hobbies in their free time (i.e., presumably time beyond that of forced labour), as if time outside labour time were merely there to be whiled away in the pursuit of a mindless preoccupation (read hobby). Tom Cruise, we are told, likes to grow his hair between movies …

Adorno brings forth the disconcerting need to define these two times so exactly - as if a person were merely waiting, in free time, for labour to begin anew the next day. A way of re-charging one's batteries, so to speak. This has a resonance to what was explored in the section on *Marx and Freedom* above. Adorno reflects on the paradox and the irony in the term 'leisure time' thus: "It is wildly known but no less true therefore that specific leisure activities like tourism and camping revolve around and are organised for the sake of profit. At the same time the difference between work and free time has been branded as a norm in the minds of the people, at both the conscious
and unconscious level. Because, in accordance with the predominant work ethic, time free of work should be utilised for the recreation of expended labour power, then work-less time, precisely because it is a mere appendage of work, is severed from the latter with puritanical zeal. Paid work must be taken seriously - all time outside it, on the other hand, must be used to pursue things that are precisely not work so that one is prepared, fully rested, to return to work with renewed vigour. Adorno, however, wishes to show how the ‘contraband’ of the work ethic, which exerts total control over the way one works (think of the production lines where the level of labour is controlled by the machine, time and motion studies, Taylorism, etc.) is now (then) beginning to pervade out of labour-time and into free-time. Thus, alluding to children, Adorno notes that, “Secretly, parents sensed a certain unruliness of mind which was incompatible with the efficient division of human life.” The child, at school, is graded according to its marks - therefore, a child that is alert and fresh after a good night’s sleep will perform better. The subjugation, moreover, of free time by the same type of domination of leisure time can be found in the ideology of the hobby. The hobby is the thing one does (naturally) in one’s free time, in accordance to what is offered by the leisure industry. ‘Organised freedom is compulsory’. Note Adorno’s point on camping - in order to feel free and closer to nature, people go outdoors to camp. This need is then institutionalised by the culture (in this example the camping) industry; the result is that the need for escape is reversed by the industry and forced back on the individual by being functionalised, extended and reproduced by business; what they want is forced back upon them once again with such ease that, “people are unaware of how utterly unfree they are, even here they feel most at liberty, because the rule of such unfreedom has been abstracted from them.”

Adorno continues by noting how fetishism thrives in free-time - just like the idea that the suntan is an end in itself (as, for instance, one notes in London when the well-off can afford a dark skin in the middle of winter). The very act of suntanning is, for Adorno, the end result of free-time as it is now understood; it marks the boredom of the individual. Note (considering the article is dated thirty years and more and taking into consideration institutions like McDonalds where the ‘burger is the same from Moscow to Montreal) how Adorno writes: “The miracles which people expect from their holidays or from other special treats in the free time, are subject to endless spiteful ridicule, since even here they never get beyond the threshold of the eversame: distant places are no longer -
as they were for Baudelaire's ennui - different places. The victim's ridicule is automatically connected to the very mechanisms which victimise.\textsuperscript{58}

The reason for boredom lies in the fact of the fierce division of labour (a repercussion of rationalisation and positivism, where, 'scientifically', labour is broken down into its smallest part and then reassembled with each stage being cut-off from one another); were people able to make their own decisions, Adorno believes, boredom would not play a part. Boredom exists solely because of the perpetual need for escapism and pleasure (that is, when one is not engaged in forced labour) and therefore it is correlated by Adorno to political apathy (since free-time is uncritical by nature) because, "boredom is the reflection of objective dullness. As such, it is in a similar position to political apathy. The most compelling reason for apathy is the by no means unjustified feeling of the masses that political participation within the sphere society grants them, and this holds true for all political systems in the world today, can alter their own existence only minimally. Failing to discern the relevance of politics to their own interest, they retreat from all political activity."\textsuperscript{59}

Furthermore, Adorno links boredom not only with the perception of powerlessness, but also with the loss of imagination, which, he contends, is crippled in childhood - it is only with a loss of imagination that one cannot find something to do in the ever largening area of free time - for instance, the question if a society is not dominated by forced labour generally evokes the reply - then what are people going to do? - as if the abandonment of wage-labour would lead to the masses sitting in front of the television watching soap-operas. Adorno's reply would be that,\textsuperscript{60} "The reason why people can actually do so little with their free time is that the truncation of their imagination deprives them of the faculty which made them the state of freedom pleasurable in the first place. People have been refused freedom, and its value belittled, for such a long time that now people no longer like it."\textsuperscript{61}

With no conception of freedom, people turn to the products of the Culture Industry just as, in b-grade horror-movies, the scantily-clad teenage girl (always promiscuous as demonstrated in Wes Craven's Scream) turns (unknowingly) to the killer for support, only to discover, always too late, that the one that helps is, in fact, the monster itself. The Culture Industry itself, for Adorno, is the means by which, "cultural conservatism patronises and humiliates them, in order to summon up the strength for work, which is required of them under the arrangement of society which cultural
conservatism defends. This is one good reason why people have remained chained to their work, and to a system which trains them for work, long after that system has ceased to require their labour. 62

Adorno maintains that so alienated is people's labour-time, so little do they produce (genuinely), that it would be pointless to expect them to be creative in their free time; thus they feel no pleasure in the superfluosness of their productivity in leisure time. But even in this superfluosness, Adorno notes, can be found their integration to the totally administered system - he uses the example of the domestic servant that can no longer be afforded, with the result that people have to do the 'chores' which were once delegated out. This reversal is encompassed under maxim of 'do-it-yourself', a behaviour which, Adorno notes, was labelled a pseudo-activity thirty years before. 63

Thus free time is not some sort of antithesis of labour-time; rather, and crucially, with the aid of the Culture Industry and its products, it has become a continuation of labour (with the difference that in free time no effort is needed and, also, free time is just that because there is no wage, not because there is freedom involved). Adorno's example of sport is interesting in this regard; in finding a sport for themselves through which they feel free, society will take and inflict upon the individual this same sport in order to dominate them. The sport's analogies are all-over the newspapers - from the coach who instils the 'work-ethic' on his players (earning up to $50,000 a week), to the supporters on the terraces shouting for their team to play for each other, to the players themselves who attribute their success to hard work (but not their failures, presumably) ...

The works of the Culture Industry thus function in order to both sustain and continue the status quo: at the same time, it functions to obscure the 'unfreedom' of the individual. In culture's commodification, it reflects the way things are in the world, and, further, it shows them as normal and natural. It replicates and it is, as Adorno noted, essentially mimetic in nature. This normality and universality needs to be evaluated for, in-built in what has been discussed here, is an ethic that suggests that things should, or indeed could, be otherwise - a question, in short, of why the status quo is anything but normal and universal and, further, both regressive and exploitative. The answers to this lie, to a certain extent, in the realm of the critique of the positive
rationalisation of the individual under capitalism, which will now be further elaborated upon by focusing on the work of Herbert Marcuse. At the same time, this will bring this dissertation closer to understanding the ethical viewpoint of the Frankfurt School, in particular their ideas on freedom and emancipation, which is central to this dissertation.
5. One-Dimensional Man and the Rise of Technology

*One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* is important because, as mentioned earlier, it was Marcuse’s attempt to force Critical Theory into a more practical commitment – a facet that was to be further explored in his dissertation ‘*Repressive Tolerance*’. *One-Dimensional Man* was, as Rolf Wiggershaus notes, an, “attempt to provide what had been missing in the work of the other older Critical Theorists: putting analyses of late capitalist society into a systematic context.” Marcuse was thus concerned with finding a more active role for Critical Theory, but while the historical repercussions of that effort (which began with *One-Dimensional Man*) will not be entertained in this dissertation, the following quote demonstrates Marcuse’s movement toward a more practical commitment which had been seemingly abandoned by both Adorno and Horkheimer. “In terms of historical function, there is a difference between revolutionary and reactionary violence, between violence practiced by the oppressed and by the oppressors. In terms of ethics, both forms of violence are inhuman and evil – but since when is history made in accordance with ethical standards? To start applying them at the point where the oppressed rebel against the oppressors, the have-nots against the haves is serving the cause of actual violence by weakening the protest against it.” One can thus see Marcuse’s more practical attitude with regards to a theory of change. As Marcuse wrote to Adorno in 1969: “You know as well as I do how fundamental the difference is between the work the Institute did in the 1930s and the work it is doing in today’s Germany. The qualitative difference is not derived from the development of the theory: ... You know that we agree in our rejection of any immediate politicization of the theory. But our (old) theory has an inner political content, an inner political dynamic, which today, more than in the past, presses for a concrete political position.” It is this political content, foregrounded in Marcuse’s work, that will show why the Frankfurt School lauded certain types of art above those of the Culture Industry.

By negating popular culture or the Culture Industry, Critical Theory hoped to find the possibilities of an emancipatory art. Marcuse is important because he was one of the first in the tradition of Critical Theory to investigate how culture represses revolutionary spirit or the *destiny of the working class* (by stabilizing the system) and how the individual as individual is integrated or administered from ‘beyond’ or above – i.e., what the human being is, in the one-dimensional
world, is not an essence of reality but an appearance. Consumerism, in short, creates needs and wants merely for its own purposes which, again in broad strokes, is its own survival. ‘Mass’ culture, which is central to this dissertation, functions either to repress or sabotage oppositional ideas – these oppositional ideas are debunked, for instance, by making the public either hostile or indifferent to them. (An example here is the often proclaimed ‘public opinion’, which is tantamount to asking oneself for clarification on something one does not know since public opinion lies squarely in the realms of mass indoctrination through the technological and cultural domain).

This point is crucial because, like Adorno and Horkheimer, Marcuse believed that the encroachment of the totally administered state was final – the rise of one-dimensional man was the total victory of the oppressors. This is a highly contested point, and will be revisited when the modernist / post-modernist debate is evaluated below. Oppositional thought, if it exists at all, and should the Frankfurt School be correct, would still exist within the aesthetic (the domain of culture) – within the form and style of art. However, Helmut Dubiel makes a fascinating point when he notes that, “no empirically identifiable social group can be considered the bearer of utopian goals. Instead, utopian conceptions are much more likely to be products of the transcendentally conceived bourgeois individual, of his ‘imagination’ or ‘fantasy.’” This sphere is also directly examined by Marcuse.

Firstly, however, Marcuse’s work will be examined with the eventual goal of finding an underlying ethic to the Frankfurt School which, it will be shown, holds together their theory of the aesthetic. In brief, it will attempt to explain Walter Benjamin’s dictum, when he wrote in the 30s that, “it is only for the sake of those without hope that hope is given to us.”

This dissertation has progressed in a two fold manner: firstly it has sought to prove that there is, indeed, a repressive regime (even if that regime happens to be society itself) at work – that established, one can then posit an ethical standpoint - i.e., that to seek emancipation from this regressive tendency in the modern world is the underlying ethic which leads, by extension, to the assertion that art, in order to be evaluated, needs to encompass some sort of promise of freedom. Which is to say that art and culture should be judged by their ethical roots, which are, as will be demonstrated, to be found within their aesthetic dimension – the aesthetic being firmly
in the territory of Horkheimer and Adorno’s work. In short then, the assertion that emancipatory potential is found in the aesthetic itself suggests that there is an ethical foundation – an ethical foundation that is found all too clearly in the work of Herbert Marcuse.

5.1. Needs

Marcuse makes the point that critical thinking and oppositional thought are being destroyed by a society that, in the way it is organised, is indeed satisfying the needs of society and the individual. His point, however, is that the needs that are being fulfilled are themselves not necessary, and are, in fact, not true needs – i.e., that society is able to provide for the needs of the individual solely because of the fact that these needs are themselves created by the very society through dominating forms of culture in the guise of mass communication, entertainment and public opinion. Crucial, at this juncture, is the fact that Marcuse does not believe that there is intellectual freedom – and thus public opinion, like needs, is not a true reflection of that which it purports to contain. Freedom has been destroyed by the Culture Industry, by mass communication and its function, indoctrination and suppression of people’s freedom and individuality.

Needs are classified by Marcuse as being either true or false - staying true to Critical Theory and negation, he argues that (and in this falsity, then, it is possible to extrapolate true needs) false needs are needs that are superimposed from beyond or above social interests (which are repressive). These needs will serve only to continue the individuals’ need for work which, in Marx’s terms, is a continuation of misery and injustice. False needs are thus created to maintain the system – one finds in advertisements, for instance, the need to relax, to buy products and, even more insidiously, the need to hate, to love, to support in conjunction with other similar false needs. One can use the idea of public opinion, here, as an example. Public opinion is either for or against certain things – Marcuse’s point is that so-called public opinion is already administered (given that the agenda, the poll, is already a given – the fact that one supports or opposes something is irrelevant since a state of affairs is already implied by the mere notion of a poll) and that through indoctrination, the poll will also be meaningless in terms of its final conclusion. It is
this that Marcuse holds is the, "comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom {that} prevails in advanced civilization, a token of technical progress."73

Implied in this too, is the question of how, as the totally administered state becomes ever more technical and rational, the individual will be able to break out of this enforced servitude. Adorno would see art as the sole way of creating and sustaining opposition within this all-consuming structure - and this is found primarily within the aesthetic of the artwork - whereas Walter Benjamin and (primarily) Brecht would find it in the lesson (over) form, in its very content. At this juncture, though, it is not important to debate that; rather, what is important is to note that Critical Theory is concerned with the existence of a state of affairs that denies the individual his/her true needs - the possibilities, in short, of being truly free and happy. One can thus posit, at this preliminary stage, that there is an underlying ethic to the Frankfurt School, and that is that people, the individual, is enslaved and servile to the one-dimensional, technological, 'rational' society. The individual is dominated by forces above and beyond him/her. As Habermas would say, some decades later, it is possible to find emancipatory potential in art (if indeed it exists at all) only and exclusively if one sets about 'looking' for it. Thus it is safe to say that in order to justify the point that emancipatory potential exists within the artwork, one must first of all note that there is an ethical dimension, a dimension that says things are not the way they could be, things could be otherwise and perhaps (crucially?) better - and in this, then, one finds an ethical norm to the works of the Frankfurt School.

There is much talk of the democratic, free West (as opposed to other spheres such as communist China, etc.) where the individual has the apparent right to exercise choice in everything from toothpaste brands to presidents - but when all is said and done, the individual is free to choose from the already chosen - i.e., liberal or democrat, Colgate or Palmolive. Freedom is thus in choosing the services, products and commodities that will sustain the individual's own enslavement, his/her own alienation. As Marcuse argues, "if the worker and his boss enjoy the same television programs and visit the same resort places, if the typist is as attractively made up as the daughter of her employer, if the Negro owns a Cadillac, if they all read the same newspaper, then this assimilation indicates not the disappearance of classes, but the extent to which the needs and satisfactions that serve the production of the establishment are shared by the underlying population."74 This is a point that will be returned to in the section on post-
modernism’s ethics – a question of whether ‘freedom’ is a freedom to choose the already chosen (as in women winning the right to vote, to use a crass example) or if freedom suggests something more substantial (which is not to suggest that suffrage was not a victory of its own).

For Marcuse, as noted, needs are seen as either being true or false – a short definition to find the distinction would be to view false needs as society’s needs subsumed upon the individual. When one looks at the works of the Culture Industry, it is almost impossible (unless, crucially, one is looking for it) to see them as instruments of control and deception, indoctrination and repression. Instead, they appear innocuous, as forms of entertainment, as news or public information. In the exposition above on the Culture Industry, much that was discussed would not have been possible had Adorno and Horkheimer not used concepts such as deception and repression as ethical foundations on which the rest of their Culture Industry theory was then based. Thus one can say that cultural production functions two-fold: it creates the need for the products, but written in the ‘DNA’ of their production and reception is social control and domination. It does this (and here again, one must recall that this dissertation will focus primarily on cultural products – and on literature as far as is possible) by dictating, albeit in a very pleasant and seemingly harmless way, habits, attitudes, viewpoint and assumptions which condemn the individual to subservience to society by creating a false consciousness. That false consciousness, by extension, makes the manipulatory and indoctrinary nature of these cultural products totally transparent to the indoctrinated individual, now completely subsumed by the society.

This resembles Gramsci’s work on hegemony. It is tantamount to saying – one can be an individual simply by picking one’s individuality from a pre-determined series of choices – as in, the ‘modern’ woman, busy, articulate, successful, athletic, professional, (by day), a ‘lad’ by night as is evidenced in many Woman’s magazines and television programmes such as Sex and The City, Ally McBeal, etc. Furthermore, since these false needs abound in society, the individual, in his/her false consciousness, will look at the choices and freedoms available and rejoice in this good way of life. Indeed, the lot of mankind is constantly improving; with air-conditioning, tourism, art galleries, cars, the people have never had it so ‘good’. Written in this, however, is the concept of the false need. Since this is what they believe they need, (an idea that they derived, presumably, from the cultural artifacts that they are exposed to), any oppositional values that threaten their supposed right to enjoy the good life will be crushed, for they will be viewed as a
threat to this continuing improvement. There is no conspiracy, then, as in an episode from the X-Files, no secret organization plotting the domination of mankind. It is society itself that will crush any opposition. In their false consciousness, individuals, now subsumed by the collective needs of society, will militate and fight against the very and only things that will set them free from this very domination. But since the Culture Industry denies them any emancipatory art, the individual is incapable of understanding what freedom actually is. Helmut Dubiel notes in this connection that, "the late capitalist culture-industry and the fascist propaganda apparatus have made it entirely impossible to develop class consciousness of any political significance." ⁷⁶

Marx’s contention, that the emancipatory potential was seen to exist ‘in’ the worker, is thus annulled by this state of affairs. Clearly, with the rise of technology and the Culture Industry, the worker can no longer be aware of his/her own enslavement. Marcuse and the Frankfurt School have come full circle when they declare that the people, masked by their false consciousness, have become their own enemy – and that the hope, the Ideal of freedom, lies now solely in the artwork, in the autonomous artwork that holds, in its foundation, in its form and aesthetic, emancipatory potential.⁷⁷ Helmut Dubiel tracks the development of this revolutionary spirit in Critical Theory from the worker through the individual and finally to autonomous art and, whilst valuable as background, that thread must remain as such.

It is this seeming impossibility to form a class-consciousness that Marcuse dubbed the one-dimensional man – all opposition to the status quo is either repelled or reduced to society’s needs. Helmut Dubiel makes this point thus: "Horkheimer and Adorno maintain in their programmatic writings that the success of a theory whose praxis lay in its capturing the masses is hindered by the proletariat’s integration into the late capitalist context of domination. Conditions within the public sphere brought about by the Culture Industry and by fascist propaganda allow Adorno and Horkheimer to formulate the political theory only negatively, providing a reflected critique of the shortsighted political instrumentalisation of theory." ⁷⁸

The explanation leads to certain inevitable issues: the underlying ethic of Marxism calls for overturning the present state of affairs for something that is fairer and freer - and that the needs so well catered for by the present system are needs that are, like the consciousness of the individual, false – but that assumes that there could be a better way, a freer way, of being. It is, albeit a
stretch, a question of whether people are fundamentally 'good' but somehow forced to do 'wrong' – but that involves a normative ethical assumption that people are inherently noble in the first place. Western Marxism can be asked the same type of question: if people are enslaved by society, of which each is part, is it possible to state that they are somehow, for the lack of a better term, better than the present state of affairs would indicate? That they have the potential not only of revolution but also of creating a better world - as Brecht tried to prove in his social experiment with the Berlin workers of 1937, and as the Institute's own survey of,⁷⁹ "blue-collar and white-collar workers {who} indicated that only a small portion of the German proletariat could be ascribed to the analytical category of 'revolutionary type.'"⁸⁰ Another question that Marcuse lays open is whether, in this state of affairs, it is still possible to have an art that has within its aesthetic the possibilities of emancipation. Asked differently, within the form and style of art, can things, somehow, be different (better?) since the artist, as member of society, is as exposed to the same false consciousness as everyone else and, therefore, so is the art that he or she will produce.⁸¹

Marcuse, however, does provide a certain answer to these issues when he notes that the, "reign of such one-dimensional reality does not mean that materialism rules, and that the spiritual, metaphysical and bohemian occupations are petering out. On the contrary, there is a great deal of 'worship together this week', 'why not try god' and Zen existentialism, and beat ways of life, etc. But such modes of protest and transcendence are no longer contradictory to the status quo and no longer negative. They are rather the ceremonial part of the practical behaviorism, its harmless negation, and are quickly digested by the status quo as part of its healthy diet."⁸² These remarks are included in their entirety because they are critical in answering the question of whether art can indeed harbor the possibilities of emancipation; it would appear that, for Marcuse at least, nothing will be able to defeat this one-dimensional world – in fact, what it suggests is that even where things begin with the hope of negating reality (or the status quo) such as the hippie movement of the 60s, for instance, they are used as further evidence of how free the people actually are. Therefore anything, even hardcore pornography which would appear, at least in the Christian world, as oppositional, will be used as more evidence of the way in which society feeds the needs of its people. In this arena, it would appear that, were oppositional literature even possible (and this is assuming already a great deal), it would be subsumed by the system as another example of the
freedom of the people – as Kafka and Joyce are now fully assimilated and taught at school as 'classics'. At the same time, however, Marcuse also makes the point that, “underneath the conservative popular base is the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colours, the unemployed and the unemployable. They exist outside the democratic process; their life is the most immediate and the most real need for ending intolerable conditions and institutions. ... The fact that they start refusing to play the game may be the fact which marks the beginning of the end of a period.”

All opposition in the rise of the one-dimensional, totally administered state, are either repelled or reduced to society’s needs: society creates false needs and the individual, subsumed, and in his/her false consciousness, believe that gratifying those false needs is indeed progress, and will militate against anything that threatens that progress. Culture, as has been described, functions to maintain the status quo by instilling this false consciousness in its works by forcing the norms and needs of the society upon the individual. The people are thus no longer the subject of history. The determinism in Marx’s work, of the socialist society’s rise from capitalism’s contradictions, is no longer entertained – but neither is a more revolutionary reading of Marx, since even the subject of such a potential revolution has been subsumed by society’s ability to sustain and produce and meet his/her demand for false needs, as well as the regressive tendencies of the works of the Culture Industry. This leads to the extrapolation that it is only certain forms of art, in this vision, that are able to hold the candle of freedom aloft - freedom that has been touched on in Marxist terms, and now needs to be re-appraised in Marcuse’s work.

5.2. Progress and Utopian Visions

Progress, for Marcuse, is the amelioration of the human condition. In stipulating this, he thus binds his ethics onto the hope for a furthering of mankind’s freedom, onto freeing the individual from labour (as in Marx’s abolition of labour) and making humanity a ‘community of free individuals’ by ending the antagonisms between the dominated and the dominating and thereby leading to a start of ‘perpetual peace’. Marcuse finds this eventuality in what he defines as progress. For Marcuse, writing in the 60s, the advanced industrial society was already reaching the stage when
opposition to its direction was the only way to move forward, to progress toward ameliorating the lot of mankind. Following Marx’s utopian vision, Marcuse notes that production would need to be automated - automated to the extent where all vital needs would be catered for by the machine – thus destroying labour time. Marcuse contends that Adorno, in *The Culture Industry*, argued this automated notion would already have taken root had it not been for the Culture Industry, “by means of which cultural conservatism patronises and humiliates them {people – A.M.} in order to summon up the strength for work, which is required of them under the arrangement of society which cultural conservatism defends. This is one good reason why people have remained caged to their work, and to a system which trains them for work, long after that system has ceased to require labour.” 84 Once freed from the necessity of providing essential products, Marcuse asserts that the rationality of progress would unfold and would lead to, “the development of man’s struggle with man and with nature, under conditions where the competing needs, desires and aspirations are no longer organized by vested interests in domination and society – an organization which perpetuates the destruction of the struggle.” 85 For the Frankfurt School, this type of shift in the emphasis of progress, its shift away from enforced wage-labour could be found (its possibilities, at least) in the aesthetic, in the formal structure of art. To understand this, a very brief explanation of the Kantian spheres (as noted by Weber) is necessary.

The cognitive, the ethical and the aesthetic are all interrelated and combine to make up our lifeworld. These can be seen as Althusserian structures, and, consequently, a shift in the aesthetic will lead to a consequential shift in the cognitive – and the ethical, when the aesthetic is influenced, would then bring about a change in the cognitive, or, to use a larger term, the truth. Marcuse, however, cannot (and, to a certain degree in line with Adorno’s pessimism) see how the status quo can be altered: he makes this point when he states that with the achievements of science and technology and the ever burgeoning products available to society and all that this entails, results in transcendence being defeated by the current state of affairs. Marcuse states that, “the status quo defies all transcendence”. 86 Marcuse’s point is critical to the underlying question posed above: the way society organizes itself is the way in which it will progress. To give an example in terms of the ethics of Marxism and the Frankfurt School, if evaluation of art is one where the most entertaining is lauded, then progress, in terms of artistic production, will go down the path of entertainment.
Similarly, in terms of the way in which existence is organized, and further assuming a society
geread toward exploitation, this implied ethic will produce a culture which is, in terms of its
function at least, repressive. This type of society and rationality will continuously organise itself
around the repression and administration and indoctrination of the individual. Were it possible, as
it may likely to be in the near future, that automatons and machines would be able to produce the
vital things necessary for the preservation of life, within the current state of affairs, society’s
structure would negate this and continue in the forced labour of mankind. A system organised
around exploitation is, in Marcuse’s logic, different from a system based around the amelioration
of the true needs of society as espoused by Marx, by Adorno and Horkheimer, and by western
Marxism, as well as the work of utopian theorists like Ernst Bloch. Here, then, can be seen the
underlying ethics and aspirations of the Frankfurt School.

One of the underlying ethics, a norm, in effect, of Marcuse and the Frankfurt School, is the idea
of an end to wage-labour – a view in line with Marx’s notion of the abolition of labour. It is thus
possible here to note that the underlying ethic in society is crucial to its progress. Furthermore, if
there is no negation (in Hegelian dialectics, to which Adorno and the Frankfurt School owe a
significant debt), if there is no antithesis, there is no resulting synthesis and consequent progress.
The only progress possible within the totally administered state is one within its own terms: i.e.,
the creation of more artificial and false needs. It will progress to satisfy ever more of these false
needs and market this, through the Culture Industry, as progress. The individual, trapped in
his/her false consciousness, will consequently assume that this is progress and oppose anything
that threatens it.

Writing in the early 60s, Marcuse makes the following evaluation as to where progress, with its
underlying organisation within the status quo, will lead: 87 “The society of total mobilization,
which takes shape in the most advanced areas of industrial civilization, combines in productive
union the features of the welfare state and the warfare state. … concentration of the national
economy on the needs of big corporations, with the government as a stimulating, supporting and
sometimes controlling force; hitching of the economy to a world-wide system of military
alliances, monetary arrangements, technical assistance and development schemes, gradual
assimilation of blue-collar and white-collar population, of leadership types in business and
labour, of leisure activities and aspirations in different social classes; fostering of a pre-
established harmony between scholarship and the national purpose, invasion of the private household by the togetherness of public opinion, opening of bedrooms to the media of mass communication.” 88

With all of that, Adorno and Horkheimer would not disagree: however, they would argue, as they did in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, that its negation, the negation of this repressive, retroactive and non-progressive status quo, rests in the domain of so-called High Art. Marcuse, writing three decades on, would disagree: he sees High Art as having been destroyed by a process he terms *desublimation* which is ‘achieved’ in the progress of technological rationality. At the same time, the aspect of negation 89 is something that Marcuse still held as potentially emancipatory in spirit.

It is crucial here to note that Marcuse is not arguing that high culture does not have within its aesthetic dimension a contraction and transcendence of the status quo; rather, he is questioning whether this possibility will ever transcend into the ‘real’ world, whether the contradictions and negation it contains within it will ever lead to an alteration of the world as it is. So in effect Marcuse is answering and extending Adorno and Horkheimer’s work into practical considerations: i.e., yes, culture does hold within it the possibilities for emancipation. But does, or indeed, *can* this possibility progress, as it were, into the actuality of a change – praxis. For, as noted previously, Marcuse was determined to find a relationship between Critical Theory and social praxis, something that Adorno and Horkheimer were, to a certain extent, more reticent towards. Investigating Marcuse’s term *desublimation* holds the key to this debate. The aspect of ‘desublimation’ will answer the question of whether, for Marcuse, art can lead to change in the current state of affairs, in the rational, positivist, one-dimensional man so well described in his text.

5.3. Desublimation

Marcuse, along with Adorno, agrees that High Art has always stood as the opposition to social reality, and concedes that within it is carried the hope and truth (in its sublimation) of the masses, so long the victims of repression and domination. At the same time, however, Marcuse makes the point that high culture has been *desublimated* – not in terms of its being rejected by the mass culture, but rather, by reality itself. What High Art offered was only enjoyed by an elite, by a
privileged few. And furthermore, social reality has offered more, in terms of satisfying needs (albeit false needs) than art ever did or, indeed, could.

Sublimation, it should be explained, is a Freudian term where psychic energy derived from sexual impulses is transferred into non-sexual activity, especially in the creative field. Marcuse’s point is that high culture coupled with social reality (the two standing in opposition) created a two-dimensional culture. But through the use of technology (which Benjamin and Brecht had seen as a vehicle for potential emancipation or a better way of enlightening people as to their class) which reproduces and displays High Art on a massive scale, this opposition is denied, and the transcendent nature of High Art is not so much rejected as subsumed, incorporated into the all-encompassing social reality. This destroys its oppositional force and impulse.

This point can be illustrated by the use of art in the Cold War, where the Soviet bloc insisted on realist fiction while the West incorporated its own existentialist/realist art (as in the work of Pollock, for instance) to prove how advanced and inclusive the West was. Thus High Art was incorporated into exchange value rather than truth value. The oppositional antagonisms between social reality and High Art are thus destroyed since the works of art become commodities themselves - and as commodities, they are thus subsumed. The idea of Adorno, that high modernism contained within it the sparks of emancipation, is not incorrect – for Marcuse, the emancipatory potential is not so much defeated as subsumed into the status quo. It is yet more ammunition for its own glory. Instants of high modernism, it is difficult to argue against, are today used to sell everything from washing powder to automobiles, and modernist literary techniques are used in many works of the Culture Industry (the self-reflection in movies like Scream, for instance).

Importantly, then, the great themes of High Art - the humanism, freedom, fulfillment, the ‘sorrows and joys of the individual’ - all of these are not destroyed but simply subsumed by the social reality, thus making them in effect (as opposed to in existence) meaningless and invalid. They are no longer, as Marcuse would see it, a part of the human spirit – they are now part of the propaganda, they are part of the social reality which means, in effect, that they are used to solve problems. “This assimilation of the ideal with reality testifies to the extent to which the ideal has been surpassed … Here are the progressive elements of mass culture. The perversion is indicative
of the fact that advanced industrial society is confronted with the possibility of a materialization of ideals. The capabilities of this society are progressively reducing the sublimated realm in which the condition of man was represented, idealized or indicted. High culture becomes part of the material culture. In this transformation, it loses the greatest part of its truth."

In terms of the Frankfurt School, Marcuse's view is extreme. Adorno and Horkheimer saw the class consciousness transferred, as it were, from the working class to the sphere of High Art, in particular high modernism. For Marcuse, High Art was incorporated into mass or social reality because it, art, had always been feudal in terms of its firstly privileging (because of the education needed to understand it) of a minority, and secondly, its romantic element and, finally, because in order to remain authentic, in Adorno's terms, it always had to be produced free from the underlying but all prevailing profit motive. The result is one where everything performs a function — even the alienated, the outsiders, perform a function by advertising, as it were, how social reality is able to co-opt with the freaks. This does not stand in opposition to social reality — constant repetition and reproduction destroy oppositional and subversive force or, as Marcuse would phrase it, High Art's truth. They are thus subsumed. This crucial aspect needs to be reevaluated, and will be in the discussion of the aesthetic. Certainly modernism, and certain of its 'leading lights' as propounded by Adorno, are no longer revolutionary in spirit — how much opposition can Kafka create when his work (mostly unpublished and certainly not popular in his lifetime) now stands in a new paperback edition next to the work of Stephen King in an airport terminal?

Having now brought the dissertation to a stage where the Culture Industry, freedom, the individual and society have been examined, it will be necessary to turn to the issue of the aesthetic. Before this, however, a brief summary is in order. In its opposition to the material conditions of the status quo, High Art, or, in particular for Adorno, high modernism, contained within it the seeds of enlightenment by showing that things could be somehow different — i.e., truth, enlightenment to the way things are, and a glimpse of how things could be. But with the rise of technology, it is Marcuse's contention, this facet of High Art no longer holds true, for these works have become, by their constant reproduction, meaningless in their effect — they are now part of the material culture and, subsumed, they become invalid.
It is, nevertheless, the aesthetic, or the form of the literary text that holds, for Marcuse and Adorno, the emancipatory potential of the working class – at least, in terms of it being able to enlighten the individual as to his or her captivity. As was noted in the section titled *Marx and Freedom* above, the mere enlightenment of one’s own condition, or one’s self-awareness, will result, in Marx’s conception of it, in the changing of the conditions that enslave the individual. In order to understand how art can enlighten, and thus serve as a potential emancipatory weapon, it is necessary first to examine some key terms in the construction of the artwork, which is dealt with by Adorno in his investigation into authentic and autonomous art, as well as the realm of identity versus non-identity thinking. Once these concepts have been examined, the aesthetic, and its relation to the ethical, will be discussed.

6. Autonomy and Authentic Art

Before analysing Adorno’s term ‘autonomy’, some general points on this concept need to be rendered. An autonomous work of art, to begin with, can be seen as separate from the material practice of everyday life. At the same time, and following Russel Berman, it will have instances of individuality, “produced and received by isolated subjects” and of emancipation, “participating in a historico-philosophical teleology leading potentially to a secular redemption via an ‘aesthetic education.’” 91 In evaluating this concept of autonomy, this dissertation will focus, initially, on the writer, as espoused by Berman in his chapter entitled ‘The Writer in Organised Capitalism’. The reason for this is that, in tracking the writer’s ‘progress’ (or the reverse, as the case may be), one can clearly see how the totally administered state has brought an end to the autonomy of the writer. As such, one can then lead the discussion on to an end of autonomy for the literary text, for once the writer has lost his/her autonomy, the creation itself will be absolved of this very autonomy. And it is autonomy that carries so much of the emancipatory potential of art.

Berman notes that whereas in pre-capitalist modes of production the production of art was not a planned, carefully marketed pursuit of profit, capitalism forces art and literature to function according to the capitalist notion of profit. Thus the writer, in capitalism, becomes an employee – he works for the publishers. This fact has the consequence of forcing writers to abandon the ideal of autonomy and, instead, create works for the dictates of the publishing houses. Once under the
auspices of capitalism, the literary work becomes merely a product – a commodity. The writer no longer creates outside or beyond the so-called process of commoditification. This point is noted by Berman when he quotes Theodor Fontane’s estimation of the writer’s situation: “The situation of the author is miserable. Which country can claim priority in this impoverishment may be difficult to determine … Those who do business with literature and politics are growing rich, those who produce them either hunger or barely survive. This financial poverty leads to something even worse: the ink slave is born. Those who work for ‘freedom’ are themselves unfree and are often worse off than the medieval serf.”

With the rise of the book industry, the writer and publisher became opposed, with the writer now dependent on the whims of the publisher. Thus the writer, in order to survive, must lose his/her autonomy. The writer can no longer produce free from the demands of the commodity and industry of the capitalist world. Adorno, as David Sutchoff notes, stipulated that the market determines the development of the so-called social novel, as evidenced in those of Dickens, for example. The modern novel thus demonstrates the presence of the market on both the author and the reader. At the same time, it is also noteworthy that the publishers, in pursuing profits, will seek to publish exclusively that which will, in all probability, create further profit. Thus any new or experimental forms of literature will struggle to find publication; the books that sell will force the writer to replicate the winning formula in order to secure publication. This depersonalisation of social relations, between author and publisher (as evidenced, by Berman, in the old publishing firms and salons of the early 1800s, where author and publishers could have a human friendship) means that the author now produces much as a factory worker produces, since both are producing commodities for exchange. Formulas that generate a profit will be lauded. “For Alberti {a literary critic – A.M.}, legitimate literature provides either expressive authenticity or social communication (in literary historical terms, it derives either from classic-romantic or Enlightenment programs). It speaks a language of personal subjectivity or interpersonal norms … Just as it {non-authentic literature –A.M.} reduces its material to an object of commercial speculation, it objectifies its public as the passive consumer of merely instrumental enunciations.”

The book, then, becomes an object, free from its author’s autonomy – it is a reified object. As such, limitations are imposed on the writer’s exploration of new types of literature and aesthetics.
Berman notes in this connection that, "Once capitalism renders the literary work a commodity, not only does the publisher become an entrepreneur and the readership become consumers; the author simultaneously becomes a commodity producer who therefore experiences the social distribution of his work as expropriation." This separation leads to changes in the aesthetic dimension of the artwork — the aesthetic repercussions can be seen, for instance, in the narrator of the text itself. Whereas previously the author could speak to the reader as an autonomous subject, in his/her new capacity as commodity producer, the writer can no longer be seen as expressing, in a public way, his or her own subjectivity. This Berman calls the desubjectification of the writer. Whilst interesting, however, the consequent distinctions that Berman draws between the various types of narrators that were created from this process will not be discussed. Berman’s conclusion, however, is important when he notes that, "in the age of organised capitalism, the categories of capitalist production are reproduced in all literature, since all texts, high and low, are caught in the same society of commodity exchange and reification."

In his classic dissertation on ‘Commitment’, Adorno notes that the autonomous work of art destroys the destroyer. In order to understand this, one must call attention to the following with regards to autonomy: that because art is seen as being unavoidably caught up in social reality, it will, in its form and structure, contain the contradictions that are to be found in this reality. Autonomous works of art are those that resist any assimilation into the existing modes of production and exchange and further, autonomous art will create in their form and style images of contradiction and dissonance. Autonomous art does not replicate reality — rather, it makes strange and highlights the contradictions and offers an alternative image or vision. It is this that makes autonomous art potentially subversive by its deliberate rejection of the dominant modes of production and exchange — it is the negation of the state of affairs where all things and people are treated as commodities.

Autonomous works of art are not produced for the market and are therefore not at the will or whims of the market (what Adorno terms, in Prisms, the “mortgaging of culture”). In the introduction to Prisms, Adorno makes the following assessment of autonomous works of art: "Their very rejection of the guilt of a life which blindly and callously reproduces itself, their insistence on independence and autonomy, on separation from the prevailing realms of purposes, implies, at least as an unconscious element, the promise of a condition in which freedom were
realised. This remains an equivocal promise of culture as long as its existence depends on a bewitched reality and, ultimately, on control over the work of others. 99

The truth function (or value) of autonomous art is spelled out by Held when he remarks that this truth value is to be found in art's, "capacity to sustain a discrepancy between its projected images (concepts) of nature and mankind, and its objects' actuality." 100 This is crucial to the understanding of negative dialectics which will thus be elaborated on here, for it is in this dialectic that a key to understanding Adorno's work lies, as well as a further discussion on this, for the purposes of this dissertation, crucial term 'autonomy'. 101

6.1. Negative Dialectics

Negative dialectics is, to begin with, based on Hegelian dialectics, where a thesis and an antithesis bring about a synthesis. For the sake of clarity, Hegel's example of the tree will be used as follows; that if the thesis were the tree, and the synthesis the boat, the antithesis would involve the denial of the tree's 'treehood', for it is only in the tree's denial that the tree can become a boat.

In Adorno's work, the thesis can be seen as the object, while the antithesis can be viewed as the concept. Extending this to Hegel, one can see that the concept, in this dialectic, denies the object its objecthood. However, and crucially, it is this very denial (and this is where Adorno reformulated Hegel) in which the object's possibilities are to be found.

In Adorno work, the concept is seen as denying the object. The concept, it is to be recalled, belongs to the mind or consciousness and therefore it no longer 'belongs' to the object. "An object can be conceived only by a subject but always remains something other than the subject, whereas a subject by its very nature is from the outset an object as well. Not even as an idea can we conceive a subject that is not an object, but we can conceive an object that is not a subject. To be an object also is part of the meaning of objectivity: but it is not equally part of the meaning of objectivity to be a subject." 102 Adorno maintains that the denial here is the only relation the concept has with the object. Therefore, it is through the dialectical tension between object and concept that negative dialectics stresses a tension which can be found in the so-called autonomous work of art, rather than in the 'spurious reconciliations' that are testament to the
products of the Culture Industry. It is the maintenance of the tension between the general and the particular. It is, then, within the object - or rather, a critique of the object (for instance, the Culture Industry) that will unveil or make apparent the contradictions formed in its creation.

Critical Theory is not a metanarrative or grand-narrative - it does not wish to control the object it studies by applying a steadfast theory upon it which will explain the object - rather, Adorno's point is that the object itself 'creates' the concept. In other words, in order to investigate the Culture Industry as object, Adorno would use Critical Theory or critique not in order to discover an all-encompassing truth about the object, but instead, it will be a negation of the object that is the focus of its study. Therefore, instead of bringing a metatheory to bear upon an object (which then seeks to mould the object to fit into the theory), Critical Theory will allow the object itself to 'show' the critique which it itself (the object) generates as a so-called 'dialectical reflux'. Critical Theory does not claim to hold the truth of the object (and thus does not seek to dominate the object). As a practical example, one can note how Adorno maintained that culture had once been instrumental in the burgeoning of individuality but now, with the rise of Culture Industry, it was instead playing a crucial role in the so-called 'totally administered society' that seeks only conformity and standardisation and the destruction of the individual.

Culture itself can be seen, therefore, as both social opposition and criticism, as well as repressive and regressive; a study of culture would, then, in terms of Critical Theory and negative dialectics, provide insights into other areas of social processes. Adorno would, in fact, attribute a crucial role to cultural critique because of its central role in capitalism, as well as finding the potential for emancipation within certain forms of art, rather than 'in' the proletariat who had been, until then, the subject of history.

The ability of culture to be both repressive and oppositional is a cultural dialectic - and the critique of mass culture should, consequently, be seen in this light.

This is a reason why the connection between social theory and cultural critique is so intimate, and it also explains the insistence of the particular over the general, though the latter must always remain unreconciled with the former (or else it is merely a spurious reconciliation, as found in the products of the Culture Industry).
It is in *Aesthetic Theory* where Adorno discusses the importance of form and observes that for a work of art to go past its monadic limits requires thought: “Because of the universality of thought, the kind of reflection demanded by all works of art inevitably has a certain externality to it.” 103

Kellner states that the Frankfurt School saw that, “Culture, once a refuge of beauty and truth, was falling prey … to tendencies toward rationalisation, standardisation and conformity, which they saw as a consequence of the triumph of the instrumental rationality that was coming to pervade and structure even more aspects of life. Thus, while culture once cultivated individuality, it was now promoting conformity.” 104 One can see, therefore, that the theory of negative dialectics makes both sociology and critique inseparable; a cultural artefact is analysed by an enquiry into the work’s social origins, its function and reception, content, form, processes of production, reproduction, distribution and consumption - i.e., an analysis into the social totality. In *Prisms*, Adorno 105 points out that there is no such thing as an independent logic in culture, that a study of a literary text in itself, for instance, as independent from society, was not to be considered apt.

With regards to the particular and the general, Adorno maintained that autonomous art can, through its style and form, create universal statements from individual or particular experiences. It makes strange what is taken for granted, and thus art has both a cognitive and subversive nature. It is through the style that Adorno finds “a promise in every work of art.” 106 Art, as Adorno notes, negates the conceptualisation forced on the ‘real’ world - it is art that stands in opposition to empirical reality, and this opposition is found in its form; but form is influenced from the outside just as music, for instance, is derived from external contents such as dance. Thus Adorno, in separating form from content, is making the point that the content itself is derivative from the form - he gives the example that ornaments in the visual arts had originally been cult symbols. 107 This is why Adorno noted, in his dissertation ‘Commitment’, that art loses its potential in works such as Brecht’s when there is a primacy of lesson over form. Art should not be used as a weapon to demand change, but rather it should enlighten or, put differently, it should compel change.

Martin Jay makes this assessment on the difference between demanding and compelling change: “Figures like Schoenberg and Beckett, who resisted the demand to make their art immediately
effective in political and social terms, were more genuinely revolutionary in the long run than those, like the Surrealists, who did not. ... But at least in the years since their quarrel {Benjamin and Adorno – A.M.} was first joined, I think it can be said that Adorno has gotten the better of the argument. For rather than leading to anything demonstrably revolutionary, the integration of deauraticized art and life has led to the co-optation of artistic negativity by new variants of affirmative culture. The once disturbing techniques of movements like Surrealism have shown themselves to be easily adaptable to the demands of consumer advertising.”

Art functions when it appears functionless; autonomous art then seeks to destroy the unity (doubtful) between object and concept. Although art can convey reality, it does so through non-conventional forms and thus creates different views of reality by making strange what is taken for granted or natural; it negates empirical reality and does not merely replicate or duplicate the world or society in which it is produced. “Art's essence is twofold; on the one hand, it disassociates itself from empirical reality and from the functional complex that is society; and on the other, it belongs to reality and to that social complex.” It can oppose by showing, for instance, that things can exist that have no exchange value, and for which there is no apparent need.

Adorno, further, sees autonomous art and ‘entertainment’ as antithetical - for instance, the former would need concentration, attention and work in order to be appreciated, whereas the latter is content with inattention and a 'lazy' mind (generally, the mind of one exhausted by labour and seeking escape from the 'real' world) - crucially, this dialectic between art and entertainment is reflective of the relation (or antagonism) between art and society. Form then relates to the possibility of art to restructure the conventional patterns of meaning.

The truth of authentic art is in its ability to reformulate existing relations between subject/object, or concept/object. Truth in art lies in the idea that in its theme and form there is potential enlightenment to the contradictions and antinomies. Furthermore, in its very structure or form, autonomous art does not, in Adorno's oft quoted saying from Prisms, "resolve objective contradictions in a spurious harmony but ... expresses the idea of harmony negatively by embodying the contradictions pure and uncompromised, in its inner-most structure." Adorno's contention is that in the social realms there are what he sees as 'unresolved antagonisms' - and it
is these which are to be found in art. They are found, then, by using an 'immanent' critique (an immersion into the internal form and structure of cultural objects). It is here, in the form, that antagonisms and contradictions are to be found, where art's relationship to the reality or society is found and not in the so-called 'social-content' which is deliberately placed into the artwork (as found, for instance, in the realist art advocated by the Soviet Union). With regards to art's distance with the real world, Adorno notes that, "The aesthetic tensions manifesting themselves in works of art express the essence of reality in and through their emancipation from the factual facade of exteriority." Autonomous works of art do not replicate social reality as one finds in the Culture Industry's products that are created solely for exchange; rather, authentic art keeps a distance between the aesthetic subject (as artists) and the empirical person - the distance between art and 'real' life is not cancelled.

The final distinction to be made is between true and false art. Adorno, discussing the relationship between art as autonomous entity and social fact, writes that, "it is through this relationship to the empirical that works of art salvage, albeit in a neutralised fashion, something that once upon a time was literally a shared experience of all mankind and which enlightenment has since expelled. Art, too, partakes of enlightenment, but in a different way: works of art do not lie; what they say is literally true. Their reality however lies in the fact that they are answers to questions brought before them from the outside. The tension in art therefore has meaning only in relation to the tension outside. The fundamental layers of artistic experience are akin to the objective world from which art recoils." With regards to the falsity of art, then, Adorno states the following: "Loss of distance makes art profitable. Its false immediacy has an element of fraudulent manipulation. The double essence of art is responsible for the blemish on all works, which is that they are dishonest about their origin, just as artists themselves used to be treated as dishonest people. The same origin, however, is responsible for the mimetic essence of art. The dishonesty of art deflates the dignity of its autonomy, which is puffed up as it is because art has a guilt conscience for participating in society. Also, to the extent to which art makes a mockery of honest, socially useful labour, there is something to be said in its favour." The functionless aspect of art is thus liberating: in its apparent autonomy from manual labour, in its non-essential nature, its mere existence opens the question of whether something needs to be functional in order to exist. Art, its very existence, would suggest the answer to be no. Art has the ability to
show the freedom that can exist away from the commodity-imprisonment of modern life.

6.2. Identity and non-identity thinking

Non-identity thinking is crucial for the understanding of emancipation both within the artwork and in Adorno's writings. Historical and material conditions are what emancipation (or rather, the possibility thereof) depend on. The idea of non-identity thinking is tackled foremost in *Negative Dialectics* and rests on the implications that have been drawn out in the section above and with which this section needs to be studied in order to understand how non-identity thinking contains the emancipatory potential of art.

It is to be recalled, at this stage, that the work of art and the society it reproduces are not identical, although identity thinking would portray the two as being in harmony. It is autonomous art itself which can (and here, too, is the truth function) destroy the unity (doubtful and false) of idea and material world. The truth that is found in art is thus its ability to portray the difference between what is created and what is reality and their mutual discrepancy. Different objects, under the principle of exchange, become identical by the use of abstract concepts – these abstractions serve to nullify the differences and non-identical nature of the objects so conceptualised. Erving Goffman has noted that, "the study of how to uncover deceptions is also by and large the study of how to build up fabrications ... One can learn how one's sense of ordinary reality is produced by examining something that is easier to become conscious of, namely, how reality is mimicked and / or how it is faked." At the time of writing, Adorno believed that art could not conform to identity thinking - it could not allow itself to be dominated by the existent relations between what it portrayed and the reality external to it. Remaining here on the fundamentals, art (besides its functionlessness, which has already been discussed) can illustrate new meanings, can portray the individual as distinct from the general, though it is through the individual that the general is created. Held notes that closed aesthetic images, “make no compromise with a society increasingly dominated by modes of thought that collapse into subjectivism (the false view that the objects' concepts produce the world) or objectivism (the false view that the world is a realm
of pure objects given independently of the subject”). And further, he notes that Autonomous works of art, “also challenge in their very structure, a world of purely pragmatic affairs.”

A truth in autonomous art lies in its ability to portray the contradictions. An art that embraces these contradictions within their form and structure are found, by Adorno, in the modernist works of Kafka and Beckett, (for instance), and elaborated on in his dissertation ‘Commitment’: “Even in the most sublimated work of art there is a hidden 'it should be otherwise'. When a work is merely itself and no other thing, as in pure pseudoscientific construction, it becomes bad art - literally pre-artistic. The moment of true volition, however, is mediated, as the totalisation that places artworks in a social totality that is structured economically but does not contain a future-orientated dynamic though nothing other than the form of the work itself, whose crystallisation becomes an analogy of that other condition which should be. As eminently constructed and produced objects, works of art, even literary ones, point to a practice from which they abstain; the creation of a just life.” Adorno's point here is that politics is no longer a matter of commitment in art as espoused in the works of Brecht and the theories of Benjamin (to the extent that he found emancipatory potential in technology and new reproduction techniques in the arts); the function of art is its functionlessness, the politics of art is its apolitical form - politics, as Adorno maintains, has migrated into autonomous art.

In traditional theory, the objects studied are subsumed into the general concepts, with the result that the particular (the individual) is subsumed into the universal. Marcuse, indeed, makes this point in his criticism of Classical Marxism and the totalitarian states that called themselves 'communist' in the ex-Soviet bloc. Thus it is posited (and negated by negative dialectics) that the object is equal (or adequate) to its concept. However, the concept itself only shows the ideal properties or conditions and relations that are the essence of the object. But the object itself can still fail to fulfil its concept. For instance, if freedom (or a particular vision of freedom such as that described in the section on Marx and Freedom) were taken as the concept, and prevailing conditions as the object, one can see that the two are not identical (as it is readily claimed in the West) because of, for instance, the very apparent inequality of social power. However, were the case that the object meets all the characteristics of the concept, this would be ‘rational identity’. Non-identity thinking, then, will show up the false consciousness of identity thinking - it does this by assessing the relationship between concept and object. Again, if freedom were the
concept, it carries with it its own defining characteristics and properties, which must be assessed against the actual state of affairs in the world (the object) in order to show the contradictions and discrepancies.

Thus one can see why it is the form of the artwork and not the content which is privileged, for it is in the form that one can come to see how the concepts do not 'match up' with the object's actuality. Therefore in order to assess the object, negative dialectics will use the characteristics that are found in its concept. With this technique, the object will illustrate, as Held notes, the historically crystallised standards that suggest what the object sought and perhaps seeks to be and that also, "suggest possibilities which are rarely, if ever, realised, and present an image of (logically entailed) unfulfilled potentialities."\(^{122}\) This is done in the following manner: one begins with the object's concept and portray non-identity thinking where identity is, usually, dogmatically taken for granted (though Critical Theory will assess, crucially, as noted, both the concept and the object and thus does not, like other forms of sociology, merely confirm the reified nature of society, or duplicate that society). Therefore, in order to assess a cultural object, Adorno uses immanent critique (priority, then, in this way, is given to form over content) which will highlight the particular within the general or universal. This stands in direct contradistinction to other theories that seek to impose (such as the Classical Marxist metanarrative) notions derived from the 'outside' (such as political economy of Classical Marxism that seeks to explain all via its base/super-structure model, for instance). As Held notes, "Negative dialectics depends on the internally related employment of the categories of concept and object, appearance and essence, particular and universal, and part and whole (totality). Through the examination of the formation of concepts and the disjuncture between them and the objects they seek to cover, Adorno's dialectical method aims to disclose the processes of mutual constitution and alteration between object and totality."\(^{123}\)

Culture, therefore, is not only an object - rather, it is both a subject and an object. To understand culture (or a specific work) it must be looked at from 'inside'. If not, then the artwork will be assigned characteristics that it does not have of itself. It is pointless to analyse a cultural object with categories that are brought from beyond it, for this would offer nothing more than a replication of that which is brought to bear upon it in its investigation. This, however, is contentious, and rests at the heart of this dissertation. For as Habermas notes, if there is no idea
(or category) such as an emancipatory ethic brought to bear on the artwork, then the artwork itself, within its aesthetic, will not ‘show’ any emancipatory aspects. It goes to the issue of the argument between Benjamin and Adorno, where Benjamin insisted on the author having a duty (commitment) toward enlightenment. The answer to this crucial question, which this dissertation must resolve in order to attain a certain ‘norm’ that rests on the idea of emancipation, is to be found in what Adorno termed ‘constellations’, and which will be explained forthwith.

Adorno writes that, “every work of art spontaneously aims at being identical with itself, just as in the world outside a fake identity is everywhere forcibly imposed on objects by the insatiable subject. Aesthetic theory is different, however, in one important respect; it is meant to assist the non-identical in its struggle against the repressive identification compulsion that rules the outside world. It is by virtue of its separation from empirical reality that the work of art can become a being of a higher order, fashioning the relation between the whole and its parts in accordance with its own needs. Works of art are after-images or replicas of empirical life, inasmuch as they proffer to the latter what in the outside world is being denied them. In the process they slough off a repressive, external-empirical mode if experiencing the world.”

At this juncture, it is necessary to explain the idea behind constellations. Before that, it must be born in mind that these concepts are being explained in isolation in order to give a somewhat clearer picture of how one must approach a cultural artefact, and not because they can should be used in isolation.

6.3. Constellations

This term is derived from both Walter Benjamin (a derivation found by Buck-Morss in *Origin of Negative Dialectics*) and Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In this work, Hegel maintained that the object under investigation was always 'moving' and thus the concept used in its investigation must show the same flexibility. However, as was made apparent in connection with negative dialectics, Adorno does not share the same principle of the primacy of concept over object. Adorno is, generally speaking, more sympathetic to the Classical phenomenological position of philosophers such as Husserl, whose aims are to find the essence of the object under investigation.
- it is, to a certain extent, an intuitive principle. Having said that however, Adorno's shift here is to find the essence of the object in the social and the historical - historical, because they (the objects under investigation) characterise a society at one moment, and social, because they change and are flexible within the society. As Zuidervaart notes: "Adorno thinks of the essence within specific phenomena as a sedimented social prehistory and a possible social posthistory. ... It is within a larger socio-historical process and in relationship to other objects, but this process and these relationships are intrinsic to the objects' own identity." 125

The construction of conceptual constellation is a way around the central problem of negative dialectics - i.e., a way around 'normal' theory's construction of concepts that suppress the particular of the object under investigation with the concepts employed in its investigation. Conceptual constellations are thus a way in which the socio-historical essence of the object can be discovered (note that one is referring to a particular object), rather than placing upon it a metanarrative or inflexible concept of traditional theory. Over and above this, as Adorno points out in *Negative Dialectics* under the heading of 'The Ontological Need', conceptual constellations are also a way in which the possibilities of the object that were socially altered, are shown - and this, Adorno believed, was beyond the grasp of traditional theory. Therefore, "Constellations let concepts interrelate in such a way that both the sociohistorical essence of phenomena and their unique identities can emerge. A philosophical constellation provides conceptual mediations for mediations within the phenomena, but it refuses to equate conceptual or phenomenal mediations." 126

It is the reason why art, for Adorno, cannot be defined; art is not only what it was in the past (its origins) because these very origins cannot be ascertained; neither, then, is it possible, as Adorno notes in *Negative Dialectics*, to subsume art under an ontological 'tag' or essence because art is 'heterogeneous'. Thus in order to investigate art (or the arts for that matter), a constellation of concepts must be created which will then demonstrate the way in which art is constantly fluctuating. Zuidervaart calls this the "shifting contours of a continually unfolding phenomenon." 127 Emancipatory potential, the ethics of a free individual, and the end of labour are such constellations.

In order not to be a metanarrative, Critical Theory insists that one overbearing theory should not
be forced upon the object under investigation since this will merely lead to an exposition that brings out what the theory brings in. In order for this to be avoided, the object under investigation will propose, so to speak, the very constellations of concepts that will be used in its enquiry. The study of the cultural object, for instance a work of high modernism, will suggest, in its form, its own ambiguities and contradictions to the demands of the market (and the works of the Culture Industry), as is evidenced, for example, in the complexity of the work of Joyce. Thus the concept of emancipation and enlightenment is suggested by the object under investigation. At the same time, and as has been evidenced in much of this dissertation, the ideas of enlightenment and freedom pervade much of Critical Theory's work. The fact that emancipatory potential is 'found' in the aesthetic of the artwork, as has been elaborated, and that the Culture Industry has done much in the dissolution of the promised 'revolution' in capitalist societies, would suggest that at some stage (whether the art work or the cultural product suggests this 'itself' or not) the constellations of freedom, oppression and enlightenment were 'used' on the object, and conclusions drawn.

The aim of this dissertation at this stage then, is to note that the ethic of freedom, of emancipation, as seen, for instance, in Marx's work (and as has been evidenced in much of the thinking from, at least, as Berman notes, before the French Revolution), is one that does concern the Critical Theorists. As such, this ethic has permeated their study of the aesthetic and has, or so this dissertation will continue trying to demonstrate, moved Critical Theory into seeing in the aesthetic the promise of freedom or, as Stendhal would have it, lu bonheur. Thus, if the concept of freedom were one that was not advocated by Marx but by a right-wing conservative, the object under investigation, society, for instance, would, it can be argued, demonstrate all the traits of freedom. Thus it is in the use of a certain Ideal of freedom, within the tradition of Marxism (or Enlightenment for that matter) that will lead this analysis into finding the contradictions between a certain type of freedom and the reality of the given state-of-affairs, and their mutual discrepancy – after all, the works lauded by the Frankfurt School are not those that are written with the goal of extending and maintaining the status quo. Therefore, the ethic involved does permeate the constellations employed for analysis, as demonstrated by the works that the Frankfurt School lauded – i.e., those which held the promise of emancipation.

In summation then, constellations for the evaluation of a literary work are suggested by the work
itself - but in maintaining or defining certain works of art as 'art', while dismissing the products of the Culture Industry as precisely not art, the Frankfurt School created the framework for the supposition that their ethics identify these works, such as those of modernism, for instance, with the label of art. This facet, however crucial, cannot be further elaborated upon until the aesthetic has been evaluated, which will be undertaken after a brief analysis of fetishes, ideology and reification.

6.4. Fetishes, Ideology and Reification

As conclusion to this section, the above-terms will be explained and discussed with particular focus on how they relate to the artwork, before they will be applied in a detailed discussion of aesthetics and ethics.

Adorno, like Lukacs to whom much of the ideas expressed here on fetishes, ideology and reification are owed (although Adorno revised much of it), intended to extend Marx's critique of political economy into a critique of culture, which was not self-evident in Marx's work.

Adorno maintained that the commodity form (or character) of art - as is evidenced in music and discussed in his dissertation 'On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening' - has changed with the changes in capitalism. In other words, where music had once had both use-value and exchange value, it is now posited that the exchange value and the use value of music are no longer separated but are, instead, merged. In the early stages of capitalism, music (as well as other cultural art forms) were produced to be bought, but bought in order to be enjoyed - hence both exchange and use value are implied. However, with the changing nature of the capitalist system in Adorno's day, and with the rise of the Culture Industry, Adorno noted a shift in the above-mentioned relationship between use and exchange value - or, phrased differently, the exchange value of the music (or art) is seen as replacing the use-value, with the result that the commodity's (music in this case) use value becomes one with its exchange value. Therefore, "Cultural industrial production destroys use values and then presents exchange value as an enjoyable use value. The concert-goer no longer buys a ticket in order to enjoy the music: 'The consumer is really worshipping the money that he himself paid for the ticket to the Toscanini
concert. He has literally 'made' the success which he reifies and accepts as an objective criterion, without recognising himself in it. But he has not 'made' it by liking the concert, but rather by buying the ticket." An example here is the publishing of Umberto Eco's follow-up novel to his best-selling War of the Roses – *Foucault's Pendulum*, so the legend has it, was published with a $10.00 rebate on a certain page in the novel – and although the copies sold, not one rebate was ever claimed, suggesting, at least within a certain extrapolation, that those that carried their copy of *Foucault's Pendulum* onto the 'tube' did so to be seen reading Eco's new work, rather than actually reading it.

Reification, to continue, is derived from Lukacs, in particular his 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat' in his book *History and Class Consciousness*, where he uses both Marx's capitalist critique (in particular commodity fetishism) and Max Weber's theory of rationalisation to create the theory of reification. In essence, Lukacs' point is that under commodity fetishism, human intervention in creation is forgotten, with the result that things themselves begin to appear as if they had not been created by human labour, or, as Zuidervaart would have it, "exchange relations among commodities come to seem like social relations in their own right, quite apart from the human interactions that sustain them. Commodities are like the gods of the religious world." This 'amnesia' is not only visible in production (as Marx noted), but it is also evident in all areas of 'social institutions' including culture. Reification is used by Lukacs to note this type of activity in social institutions. The consequences are twofold; (1) the *objective side*, which is that things produced by people begin to seem independent of people's will (e.g., economic cycles, inflation, etc.) while (2), the *subjective side*, where humans themselves begin to see one another as commodities as well, or, as Zuidervaart would have it, mere things totally dominated by the will and the forces of the market. To be noted, however, is that the illusion that things have a life of their own is necessary to sustain the capitalist environment. Zuidervaart writes that, "Lukacs describes proletarian class consciousness as the revolutionary 'self-consciousness of the commodity'. Unlike other classes, the proletariat has an aspiration toward totality and an orientation toward transformative praxis. Through this aspiration, the phenomena of reification are unmasked for what they really are; through the proletariat's practical orientation, the grip of the commodity form can be broken." To return to Adorno's point on musical regression, the shift (that of exchange value merged with
use value) has major consequences in as much as this unity provides a basis for the capitalism of that time to consolidate into the minds or consciousness of society. Furthermore, as is evidenced by Adorno's much-discussed 'argument' with Walter Benjamin on the emancipatory effects of mass media, Adorno believed that this shift would make it appear as if use value wax, in fact, exchange value, with the result being that art loses any of its emancipatory potential. Thus Zuidervaart says that, "Art had become a social glue made by the same companies producing other commodities. Hence the traditional Marxist concept of art as ideology no longer directly applies, the distinction between base and superstructure loses its clarity, and optimism about productive forces become unwarranted."

One can thus see that, with the commencement of advanced capitalism (which Adorno ‘discovered’ on his sojourn to the USA under The New Deal), the political and economic spheres are drawn together. The result is that exchange value and use value are subsumed in the commodity, as it is in artistic production. In this stage of capitalism, culture functions as a way of transmitting norms and ideas of domination, and no longer questions nor criticises social reality. Therefore, when art loses its use value, its very uselessness becomes crucial in its oppositionary stance: not because it is useless, but because it has, in late capitalism, begun to function only as social ‘glue’ since its use value and exchange value have now been subsumed.

Enmeshed in this is Adorno's view that there are three methods in which society can be changed or transformed, and which warrant a brief summation: the first is a return to use-value, the second has to do with freeing the individual from the culture of domination ('internalised constraints of capitalism') and the third, importantly, is that the truth found in autonomous art must be 'actualised' in society. In this is the crucial point on how Adorno, unlike Marx, does not see (or perhaps accept would be a better term) the revolutionary potential of the proletariat but rather, and importantly for this dissertation, he finds the potential for social transformation within culture - or, i.e., autonomous cultural commodities. In other words, while he retains that social praxis is one for the proletariat to achieve (for, after all, they have nothing to lose but their chains ...) their revolutionary potential (enlightenment) is found strictly within the work of art. The reason for this is that, "Adorno thinks that the essence (Wesen) of society can be disclosed in a more telling way from somewhat isolated regions of culture such as art, philosophy, and individual experience that from the economic mode of production." The reason for this shift is
found in Adorno's understanding that society 'moves', and thus Critical Theory attempts to locate so-called contemporary trends, or the general, by exploring the particular. In so doing, Adorno emphasises the idea of domination as being crucial, and places upon it far greater emphasis than Marx had before him.

Domination, in Adorno's terms, is found through an historical link - in the pursuit of control over nature, humanity succeeds through myth, magic and then through rational labour. Zuidervaart writes that, "the control of nature unfolds into domination by some human beings over others, into suppression of nature within human beings, and into the domination of all human beings by what they have made; and domination either will culminate in a catastrophe - the complete destruction of life - or will lead to a reconciliation that transcends control and domination via control and domination. Much of the outcome depends on whether radical changes occur in the structure of modern Western society, where the 'impenetrable unity of society and domination' has become an antagonistic totality." 136 Humanity has created the society in which they live but because, in simple terms, it has become a fetish, humanity develops a case of amnesia to the fact that they did create it and, consequently, are unable to form a self-conscious subject which would, given a certain ethical predisposition, alter this self-made society which, in terms of Adorno and Horkheimer, threatens to destroy them. Where Marx found the potential for this self-conscious subject in the proletariat, Adorno finds it within autonomous art - and here, then, in a very basic schematic, can be found a reason for the emancipatory potential of art.

The Culture Industry is seen as merely continuing this reification of exchange. Therefore it can be said, as Zuidervaart 137 does, that society itself, "has turned into a huge commodity whose fetishism must be exposed so that society can become 'rational and genuinely free'. 138 Overpowering institutions must be seen as the human labour that certain people have objectified within an economic relation that, though temporarily frozen, can be altered. This relation is one of exchange. It is also a relation of domination, a relation dominating both master and slave. Given humanity's temporary impotence and the exchange society's present power, an impasse seems unavoidable both in society and in Adorno's social theory." 139

In order to understand more fully the concept of emancipatory potential as found in certain works of art, then, one must begin by noting that, for Adorno, an artwork is both dependent and
independent on society in a dialectic relationship. For instance, autonomous works of art are, in the capitalist system, both produced and consumed within an arena of exchange, and are, therefore, seen as fetishes. In short, the artwork hides the labour that has produced them. Moreover, they are fetishes because they pretend to be somehow above the economic system in which they are produced. And finally, they are fetishes because they have, seemingly, no use-value. But in this lies their potential, for it is Adorno’s contention that, by being a fetish and suggesting that they have a life of their own, art can raise the inference that society lives in a condition where nothing is just of itself and everything must be reducible to exchange. Furthermore, by pretending not to be part of the economic process, the autonomous work of art can portray a different reality. And finally, by being functionless, they function, so to speak, to demonstrate that use value is not only and primarily exchange value (nor the idea that use itself must be something rational). Thus for the artwork to be functional it must be dysfunctional - through its autonomy it will influence society via the creation of a social consciousness which, as has been explained, will lead to a structural change.

In this, the idea of cognition is important and a brief summary would read as follows: a mental act, through which knowledge is acquired, is a fundamental reason for autonomous art's importance and function - art can contribute by demonstrating the following: “expression of suffering, broken promise of happiness, inexplicit knowledge of society, negative embodiment of utopia. Because adequate relations to autonomous works become ever more difficult in advanced capitalist societies, Adorno sometimes seems to regard the best modern works as bottles for messages that few of the shipwrecked can read.”

Adorno's insistence on the importance (and primacy) of production (rather than to reception which Benjamin was aligned) can therefore also be seen; i.e., the production of the artwork is where society and the artwork meet in 'substance'. This would go some way in answering Peter Burger, in his ‘The Decline of the Modern Age’, when he makes the point that Critical Theory should open itself up to changes in the area of reception, or, that so-called low-brow reception of art could, in fact, be a new, “way of dealing with works of art that overcomes the one-sided fixation on form and at the same time places the work back in relation to the experiences of the recipients.” Related to this, too, is Adorno's point on artefact and phenomenon, where the artefact is something that is given shape by man and the phenomenon is something which appears
or is observed; these two are seen then to be in a dialectic (or, as Zuidervaart terms it, an ‘internal polarity’, where there is a state of two opposing tendencies) where the artefact, though created by the individual is, at the same time, 'conditioned' by the society in which s/he lives - but it is the fact that it is something created by the individual that gives it its autonomy.

Furthermore, the emancipatory potential of the artwork is to be located in its cognitive function, or, in its ability to convey knowledge whether by perception, intuition or reasoning, and in what Zuidervaart calls its import (its ability to signify or, be significant). Thus the artwork's function is directly dependent on its import. Truth is the yardstick whereby import is measured (and by extension, then, its social functioning in a cognitive manner) and truth itself is measured by the autonomy of the work itself (or, stated differently and perhaps better, autonomy is the condition that must exist before any truth). Therefore, as Zuidervaart notes, “just as Marx demystifies the commodity by tracing it back to its origins in human labour, so Adorno lifts the veil of romanticism by tracing autonomous art back to its origins in the process of social production.”

Thus in order to find the phenomenon, one would need to look at the artefact while, in order to understand the phenomenon, one would need to understand the artefact – at the same time, though, a study of the artefact would show the phenomenon and thus they are linked in a dialectic.

To conclude, one last point on the suggestion that art's, for the want of a better term, uselessness is its very usefulness (and so, too, its function, that of being functionless) must be rendered. Social functions are cognitive functions and thus, as a consequence, if art itself is dysfunctional (as has been discussed with regards to its use-value in capitalist society), it can convey information or knowledge (that can be acquired) on that society's irrationality. Thus autonomous art contributes cognitively in creating a social consciousness - i.e., enlightenment.

Having then evaluated the key aspects as to the reasons why art can prove to be a liberating force, it is now crucial to examine in what way it can lead to social praxis. As has been argued in much of the discussion above, the artwork’s form - its aesthetic - harbours the potentials for human freedom. The question that needs to be answered now is, how does this function. Albeit that this has already been discussed, the answers rendered below will bring this dissertation closer to a way of discovering the ‘norms’ for the evaluation of culture in a far more ‘workable’ manner.
7. The Aesthetic and the Ethic

This section owes much of its nature to what has been detailed in the section on desublimation where, it was noted, Marcuse evaluated the incorporation or co-habitation of High-Art in terms of its concomitant loss of oppositional force. Through constant repetition and reproduction, it has been argued, High-Art is destroyed of its truth, a truth that, as is discussed in the work of Adorno and Horkheimer, resides firmly in the aesthetic. A thorough explanation and evaluation of the aesthetic therefore needs to be posited. Before looking at this, however, it is important to recall that without an underlying ethic of opposition/subversion of High Art/social reality, it would not be possible for Marcuse, or any other members of the Frankfurt School, to find any justification in finding any oppositional/subversive quality in High Art: i.e., High Art is subversive and its subversion is found in the aesthetic means, so to speak, that the two must be linked – or else the aesthetic could never be judged on its subversive potential, but would, rather, be judged on other – purely aesthetic – dimensions, such as beauty, realism, etc.

Art, before this incorporation or sublimation, was ‘about’ alienation from social reality – it kept alive the possibilities (the notion that things could, somehow, be different) – and sustained the idea that man and nature had a dimension that was not achievable or livable in social reality. In One-Dimensional Man, Marcuse notes that, “to live one’s love and hatred, to live that which one is means defeat, resignation, and death. The crimes of society, the hell that man has made for man became unconquerable cosmic forces.” 146 Art’s subversion lies, then, in its form, in its aesthetic. In very basic terms, Marcuse’s point is this: that fiction, because it is a constructed reality, shows not the deception of the real world, but instead shows its own form, its own artificial nature. Simultaneously, by showing this artificial nature, it also calls into question the idea of the real – it exposes the real by showing that it, too, is constructed, artificial and open to change. This is the power of negation and transcendence. It is, crucially, an evaluative norm which counters High Art with mass or popular culture since it is the artificial nature of art’s form which negates the apparent truth of the reality or status quo. It is why works that merely reproduce social reality are not art but products of the Culture Industry. And, again, to judge art as having these capabilities for emancipation is judging the artwork by a norm – by the norm of its ethic – and it is, at this stage, irrelevant whether the ethic is found in its aesthetic for Adorno.
or its cognitive for Benjamin. Art, primarily, negates – through its form or through its message. Tentatively, even here one can see the implied norm for the evaluation of literature within Marcuse’s writing: Art negates social reality through its form, through its aesthetic. Its form is one of alienation. And thus Marcuse can state: “The developing technological reality undermines not only the traditional forms but the very basis of the artistic alienation – that is, it tends to invalidate not only certain ‘styles’, but also the very substance of art.”147 Here is the crucial point: that the style, the aesthetic, but also the substance (the subversion, the opposition, the alienation) of art is subsumed by the status quo. The aesthetic in itself is meaningless without the underlying ethic. The study of the aesthetic would not demonstrate its alienating nature - its oppositional force - without first looking for this ethic in High Art. It is what distinguishes, for Marcuse at least, Madame Bovary from other such love stories. To support this, however, would mean finding a distinguishing, an evaluative critique between High Art and the products of the Culture Industry.

In their form, works of High Art transcend everyday experience – they contain what Marcuse calls the rationality of negation. In effect, one can say that the works of alienation are easily ‘put right’ in the new modern world - the madness of characters are easily assimilated and explained. The acts of characters such as Hamlet are all explainable and reducible by the modern world – after all, Hamlet requires nothing more than a good shrink to find true happiness. This affirms the modern status quo – it demonstrates how civilised the modern world is, and thus the alienation is subsumed and incorporated and the ‘Great Refusal’ is annulled. In this can be seen Marcuse’s point that the aesthetic and the ethic are entwined in art – and thus, in order to find a norm for the evaluation of culture in terms of the Frankfurt School, at least before Habermas, it will be necessary to look at both of these Kantian spheres – that of the ethic and the aesthetic - and their link to the cognitive.

Marcuse makes this point when he states that, in contradistinction to neo-conservatives who claim that the re-birth of Bach in the kitchen as background music or the works of Joyce on supermarket shelves is a positive development (for they are now not only accessible by an elite but by everybody), these moments of High Art are brought back to life merely as ‘classics’ and thus, as is made clear in One-Dimensional Man, “they come to life as other than themselves; they are deprived of their antagonistic force, of the estrangement which was the very dimension of
truth. The intent and function of these works have thus fundamentally changed. If they once stood in contradistinction to the status quo, this contradistinction is now flattened out.\textsuperscript{148}

There is more at play, then, than mere aesthetics; the aesthetic of \textit{Ulysses}, for instance, has not altered since its creation, but its reception, its \textit{effect}, on the other hand, has - at least in terms of the Frankfurt School. \textit{Ulysses} is no longer seen as subversive. It is no longer banned. The novel now sits on the supermarket shelves side by side with other classics and recordings of 'classical' music; it has lost its oppositional effect. It is no longer elitist, but it is also no longer at odds with society – it is now a paperback, a Penguin modern classic – it has been moved from the periphery and now survives in the mainstream, subsumed and incorporated – or, as Marcuse would have it: “It is good that almost everyone can now have the fine arts at his fingertips by just turning a knob in his set, or by just stepping into his drugstore. In this diffusion, however, they become cogs in the cultural machine which remakes their content.”\textsuperscript{149}

Were the aesthetic independently valued, this transformation, it is argued, could not happen - it is the way they are evaluated, in terms of their ethical promise, which made them subversive and which now make them, in terms of their effect, irrelevant. What Joyce created in \textit{Ulysses} was an estrangement effect (in Brechtian terms), through distance and reflection – making strange, then, what would appear as ordinary and natural. Or, as Marcuse would phrase it, great art makes the ordinary into the extraordinary. High Art is made ineffectual by the advanced industrial society’s conquest of nature and scarcity: it is difficult to deny and to oppose that which seems, on the surface, to provide all that is required for the \textit{good} life. It is why one can say, albeit in a rather tongue in cheek way, that the absence of bananas in the old communist bloc did more to undermine this system than the idea of mutually assured destruction (MAD), when the abundance of bananas in the West was so obvious. And it is also undeniable that the avant-garde was used as propaganda to inflate the West’s slogan of superiority and freedom in terms of which everything and everyone is welcome, even subversion and apparent perversion. The Great Refusal, the alienation in the work of high modernism, is cured by the new world: it is the progress of the rational world. \textit{Ulysses} is, like the alienated characters of high modernism, cured and now available for all to enjoy. Marcuse explains this when he writes: “The prescription for ... injustice are being administered by a rationally organized bureaucracy which is, however, invisible at its vital centre. The soul contains few secrets and longings which cannot be sensibly discussed,
analyzed, and polled. Solitude, the very condition which sustained the individual against and beyond his society, has become technically impossible. Logical and linguistic analyses demonstrate that the old metaphysical problems are illusory problems; the quest for ‘meaning’ of things can be reformulated as the quest for the meaning of works, and the establishment of discourse and behavior can provide perfectly adequate criteria for the answer.”

It is this that Marcuse means by ‘technological rationality’.

In effect, then, what is being expressed here is that High Art opposed the status quo. But the status quo subsumed this so-called great refusal by providing material satisfaction for society. Confronted by the diminution of misery and poverty, (at least in the Western World), High Art was no longer valid – faced by a choice of the unknown, of the possibilities of the new and improved reality, art lost its subversive function. By giving people more, people stopped complaining – and art that complains stops being functional and, instead, becomes another part of the more – it becomes entertainment, it increases the satisfaction of society through entertainment. High Art becomes entertainment, totally subsumed and totally defeated. Thus, finally, Marcuse writes: “The obscene merger of aesthetics and reality refutes the philosophies which oppose the ‘poetic’ imagination or scientific and empirical reason. Technological progress is accompanied by a progressive rationalization and even realization of the imaginary. The archetype of horror as well as joy, of war as well as of peace lose their catastrophic character. The appearance in the daily life of the individual is no longer that of irrational force – their modern avatars are elements of technological domination and adjust to it.”

It would appear that, for Marcuse, emancipatory potential is found in literature and High Art, but that it is now irrelevant in terms of praxis. The aesthetic has been subsumed by reality. Nietsche had already stressed the aversion of the human mind to chaos, the fear of unmediated intuition, and its resultant attempts to simplify the world by reducing diversity to identity. At the end of *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse does see a glimmer of hope in those who refuse to play the ‘game’, in those who exist outside the democratic process – but this dissertation is concerned with culture, the aesthetic and the ethical and that leads directly onto Marcuse’s study of the aesthetic.
7.1. Marcuse and the Aesthetic Dimension

The work of art, for the Frankfurt School, held its lofty position because it was seen as retaining, within its form and style, the interests and ‘world outlook’ of society. Furthermore, and in line with Western Marxism *per se*, art also has a political function (i.e., negating the realism of the Culture Industry and social reality), as well as showing the potential that things could be, somehow, different and better. The break from traditional Marxism, however, occurs, for the Frankfurt School, when they assign the potential and political spheres of art directly onto the aesthetic - in other words, not the content (as it was in the Soviet Union’s insistence on the primacy of the social realist novel, as evidenced in Adorno’s discussion over this very theme with Lukacs) but on the form and the style of the artwork.

Focusing on the aesthetic, however, does not automatically mean that it and nothing else must be studied in the evaluation and, furthermore, it must also be noted that Critical Theory was always a self-reflexive exercise. The works of modernism that were lauded by Adorno and Horkheimer need not, and indeed *must* not, function as a prescription or blueprint for the way contemporary works of art and literature should be evaluated. The scope of this dissertation, then, is not to find prescriptive norms for either the creation or evaluation of an artwork – rather, it will seek to explain why there is, in terms of an ethical dimension, a normative ethic in-built in Critical Theory – an ethic, in shorthand, of emancipation, or, stated in a different way, a norm that the artwork, in its form and style, holds the oppositional and alienated ground against the status quo. Art shows some type of transcendence from this totally administered, rational and positivist world. This does not mean, however, that, by implication, the aesthetic of the works of high modernism need be continuously reproduced (in fact, the exact opposite holds true). What it does mean, however, and where it *is* prescriptive, is that Critical Theory based its evaluation of art on a political dimension, on art’s potential for emancipation (via enlightenment) which is found directly in the aesthetic. So although the aesthetic is investigated, it is the *underlying ethic* that will inform the evaluation. The fact that the world had changed significantly since Joyce and Kafka need not refute this. The opposition in art may still reside in a different aesthetic to that employed by high modernism, and thus still retain those elements that are seen as being
indispensable – autonomy and opposition, two name but two. This crucial aspect will be returned to, when the modernist aesthetic as found in the works of post-modernism is discussed.\textsuperscript{152}

Thus the scope of this dissertation is not in finding a prescriptive norm for the evaluation of literature, but rather, to show that attaching an ethic of alienation, of opposition, of emancipatory potential to the aesthetic dimension of literature, can function as a way in which art and the products of the Culture Industry can be evaluated. As Stephen Bonner writes: “In evaluating the aesthetic, furthermore, there must also be a commitment by the critic to find emancipatory potential.”\textsuperscript{153} In other words, a study of the aesthetic is informed by the ethic – without it, without the ethic of what Habermas would term the ‘emancipatory interest’, the study would serve no purpose other than the evaluation of the aesthetic in and of itself, rather than tracing its oppositionary potential.

A final point, here, and more of a footnote since it would require a study of its own, is the question of the validity of the ethics of Marxism and neo-Marxism – a question that has been dealt with by numerous critics such as the deconstructionists’ critique of Marx’s idea of a full development of all human faculties. To a certain extent, however, this very questioning of the ethical underpinning of Marxism will be dealt with when Lyotard’s postmodernism is discussed.

Marcuse positioned much emphasis on aesthetics, as did the Frankfurt School itself; his vision that progress (the ideal of freedom in social reality, for instance) had been subsumed, made him postulate that there were two ways remaining in which freedom (or its potential) could remain; in theology, which never occupied much space in his writings, and in the aesthetic. In his view, art, “by virtue of its aesthetic form … largely autonomous vis-à-vis the given social relations, and at the same time transcends them. Thereby art subverts the dominant consciousness, the ordinary experience.”\textsuperscript{154}

The following two thoughts can be gleaned from Marcuse: like Adorno, his view, that the world could be changed and bettered, was a normative aspect and it was also, at the same time, sceptical. However, like Adorno, Horkheimer and Benjamin before him, he did find this possibility in the artwork – not in the content, but in the aesthetic. Marcuse, Adorno and Horkheimer, furthermore, did not simply preach – all their writing is composed in a very
deliberate and self-reflective manner, imbuing within them their theory of the aesthetic in their actual theorising of the aesthetic. As such, their work can be seen, in themselves, as being revolutionary, and could explain why there are those that (mistakenly, since most of their work was unavailable in English translation until the mid '70s) would like to blame or congratulate Critical Theory for much of the anti-establishment protests of the 60s, both in Europe and the USA.\textsuperscript{155}

Marcuse’s aesthetic theory was thus simultaneously in line with the tradition of orthodox Marxism, and directly opposed to it. Marcuse agreed that the work of art had a political function and thus had inherent within it both a regressive and emancipatory potential. But he deviates, much like Adorno, when he traces these elements to the aesthetic form of art. His contention is that art is autonomous from the social relations, and thus it is able to oppose these relations, and also transcend them, which gives it the potential to subvert the status quo or social reality.

It is also worth noting, as Marcuse does, that: “I would say that throughout the long history of art, and in spite of changes in taste, there is a standard which remains constant. This standard not only allows us to distinguish between ‘high’ and ‘trivial’ literature … but also between good and bad art … There is a demonstrative qualitative difference between Shakespeare’s comedies and the Restoration Comedy, between Goethe’s and Schiller’s poems, between Balzac’s Comédie humaine and Zola’s Rougon-Macquart.”\textsuperscript{156}

Marcuse then touches on some critical notions in the context of this dissertation. He argues that art is revolutionary in many ways – for instance, if it departs from the norm and employs a deviation in style, form and technique. Marcuse writes, however, that, “the merely ‘technical’ definition of revolutionary art says nothing about the quality of the work; nothing about its authenticity or truth. … a work of art can be called revolutionary if, by virtue of the aesthetic transformation, it represents, in the exemplary fate of individuals, the prevailing unfreedom and the rebelling forces, thus breaking through the mystified (and petrified) social reality, and opening the horizon of change (liberation).”\textsuperscript{157}

It is argued that all authentic artworks would thus be revolutionary: “i.e., subversive of perception and understanding, an indictment of the established reality, the appearance of the
image of liberation ... The obvious difference in the representation of the subversive potential is due to the difference in social structure with which these works are confronted: the distribution of oppression among the population, the composition and function of the ruling class, the given possibilities of radical change. These historical conditions are representative in the work in several ways: explicitly, or as a background and horizon, and in the language and imagery. But they are specific historical conditions and manifestations of the same trans-historical substance of art: its own dimension of truth, protest and promise, a dimension constituted by the aesthetic form... Indeed the content (the established reality) appears in these works only as estranged and mediated. The truth of art lies in this: that the world really is as it appears in the work of art.”

Marcuse is not making an elitist stand here for he is not claiming, as could be argued, that one can apply a particular norm to dictate what is good and what is not, which is revolutionary and which is not, except to the point where, in Marcuse’s vision, an artwork is only valid if it is authentic. Authenticity is thus linked to a normative vision of an aesthetic that is, for the lack of a better term, ‘true’ to the ideal of enlightenment – which leads to the assertion that there is a link between the normative ethics that underpins Critical Theory and its concomitant views on the aesthetic of the artwork. This, indeed, is linked to the idea that art reflects the world (through its aesthetic) which, consequently, means that it is political, which, in turn, leads to the argument that it can be revolutionary (subversive/oppositionary/enlightening). At the same time, however, Marcuse suggests that there is no single or overriding aesthetic qualitative norm to judging art: it is, in line with Classic Marxism, an historical evaluation of art (the given possibilities of radical change).

To simplify matters here, the following example could be submitted: a novel is a metaphor for life – its content is social reality, while its form and style - its aesthetic - is the relationship between the individual and social reality. If it is indeed true that art is political (because it subverts by opposition while holding the baton of freedom), it is in its form that one can find its potential since the content is, in effect, form. Or, stated differently, the aesthetic creates the content, while the content is subservient to it just as social reality is subservient to the individual. It appears as if it is not (particularly in the works of the Culture Industry), but this is why modernist art tends to be self-reflective – it shows the true status of social reality and the power of the individual that has either been, or been forced to be, forgotten.
Content is dialectically linked to the form: without form there is no content. And this is why the aesthetic is so crucial to Critical Theory, and why Marcuse, at the conclusion of his introduction to *The Aesthetic Dimension*, can make the following point: "This thesis implies that literature is not revolutionary because it is written for the working class or for ‘the revolution’. Literature can be called revolutionary in a meaningful sense only with reference to itself, as content having become form. The political potential of art lie … in its aesthetic dimension. Its relation to praxis is inexorably indirect, mediated, and frustrating. The more immediately political the work of art, the more it reduces the power of estrangement and the radical, transcendent potential in the poetry of Baudelaire and Rimbaud than in the dialectic plays of Brecht." 161

In this lies the answer as to why Critical Theory privileges the form over the content. It has also been demonstrated that there is an ethical norm, a certain morality that underpins Critical Theory’s writing. The question that now needs to be answered is this: why, if social reality needs to be defeated, if this status quo takes away the freedom and happiness of the individual, if it is indeed a ‘miserable reality’, as Marcuse would have it, why then is the revolution, the emancipation of the individual, now to be found in the realm of fiction, in the world of the aesthetic when, it must be recalled, Marx had found the very same promise in the workers of the world themselves? In providing an answer to this, this dissertation will take another step towards defining the norms through which literature should be evaluated.

Classical Marxist aesthetics sees art as ideology – a connection between art and the material base, between art and the totality of the relations of productions. As the relations of productions alter, so too does art. For Classical Marxism, further, the only real art is that of the so-called ascending class, the proletariat. And since the proletariat is seen as the subject of history, art for the proletariat will, by definition, be revolutionary, for it is argued that the writer of true, committed literature, in expressing the truth (i.e., the needs and interests of the proletariat) which is, fundamentally, the writer’s obligation, 162 is already producing revolutionary literature. And as opposed to the decadent art created by the bourgeoisie, the revolutionary writer will write realist texts.

This, briefly, is the stance of Classical Marxism – a stance which, as has been made evident, was subject to a reformulation by the Frankfurt School. For Marcuse, the problem with Classical
Marxism in relation to art is its abandonment or subjugation of the individual for the (greater) good of the whole through its (Classical Marxism's) insistence that only realist art is true to the proletariat cause. This, in post-modernist terms, is a metanarrative. All subjective, individualistic art is ignored or labeled 'bourgeois' – the consequences of this abandonment is, "a major prerequisite of revolution is minimized, namely, the fact that the need for radical change must be rooted in the subjectivity of individuals themselves, in their intelligence and their passions, their drivers and their goals. Marxist theory succumbed to that very reification which it had exposed and combatted in society as a whole. Subjectivity becomes an atom of subjectivity, even in its rebellious form it was surrendered to a collective consciousness."  

It is, therefore, the individual capable of escaping from the enforced socialisation that remains true to the revolution, or the defiance of the status quo. Similarly, the same can be said of art that retains its individuality. A subject that remains true to the potential of emancipation does not decree the 'right' way, but demonstrates the possibilities that things can still be, within the imagination at least, somehow different and, even, better. Classical Marxism, to reiterate, by abandoning or devaluing subjectivity - by stipulating that human emotions like joy and hate were simply psychological problems and thus irrelevant to the class struggle - discarded these notions from 'radical praxis'. At the same time, however, decreeing that things could be different is saying that things, as they stand, are somehow, for the lack of a better term, wrong – this is the ethic of Marcuse's writings. What is wrong, so to speak, with the status quo has been discussed above – not only in terms of Marcuse's view, but also those of Adorno, Horkheimer and Marx himself.

Classical Marxism could not, in terms of its ideology, examine the aesthetic of the artwork without applying an exterior ideology, that of the reality of the world – but in its inability to do so, it abandoned the individual subjective artwork in favour of those realist works which purported to show the way the world was, as evidenced in, for example, the oppression of the proletariat. All other art, because it could not be evaluated in any other way, was, by definition, categorised as decadent.

This is very important and will thus be summarized to illustrate two points. Firstly, within Classical Marxism, there is no doubt that there is a very real link between art and society. For
instance, the changes in the ex-Soviet Union were not down to the material base (in Althusser’s reformulation, all changes in the superstructure, of which art is one, affects all the other structures) – it was, rather, down, to a certain extent, to art – the subversive art, to name it, of the West, and indeed the work of dissidents such as Solzhenitsyn. Secondly, in Classical Marxism, the link exists and should be used to portray the obscenity and injustice of modern capitalism - it should show and tell of the exploitation of the proletariat and show the way forward (i.e., Marxism) – it should spread the word of the revolution. It should do this by employing realist styles to educate the proletariat.

The Frankfurt School wish to extend this position. For them, the use or deployment of a realist style, the art so valorised by Classical Marxism, does not transcend the status quo - it merely operates within it. It duplicates the class consciousness already evident in everyday life. It seeks (as capitalism does) to subjugate the individual, to flatten the subjectivity of the individual to the altar of a greater cause, albeit, (unlike capitalism that is seen as oppressive), one of social emancipation based on a socialist system. Thus, although the justification (and even the final goal) is different, both capitalism and Marxism seek to tie the individual down by dominating him/her through the use of ideology, with an enforced view of the world as either one of freedom or, as the case may be, repression. The fact that Marxism, from a certain perspective, can be seen to be the ‘kinder’ of the two metanarratives, to say that Marxism does this for the greater good, is to deny the implicit fact that it still seeks to repress the individual – it places class consciousness over individual consciousness, it places general emancipation of the proletariat over the emancipation of the individual – it elevates art that shows the world to be exploited, it elevates art that denies the very humanity, the very individuality that makes humanity ‘human’ – like capitalism, it seeks to destroy the individual in the name of a better cause. This is why it (Classical Marxism) prioritises realist art – art that does not seek to emancipate the individual, but instead wishes to show the exploitative nature of the individual’s life under capitalism.

But exploitation, equally, for the Frankfurt School, is the denial of the individual – the sacrifice of subjectivity to the greater revolution. Emancipation through the forced ideology for ideology’s sake is no emancipation at all - it is merely, were this ever to come about, a replacement of one all-encompassing ideology for another. Even if Marxism is, arguably, a fairer way, it is still no closer to emancipating the individual from society – from liberating the subjectivity and
individuality of every human from public opinion and the powers that be. It is the individual, as individual, that needs to be freed from society, rather than society from itself. And therefore it is the work of art’s aesthetic, the individualisation of the aesthetic, that promises a way to freedom— it is not content (as social reality) that promises freedom, but the aesthetic, the individual expression, that promises (or retains) emancipatory potential.

With this in mind then, one can see how radical a switch the Frankfurt School offered. Marcuse writes: “I shall submit the following thesis: the radical qualities of art, that is to say, its indictment of the established reality and its invocation of the beautiful image of liberation are grounded precisely in the dimension where art transcends its social determination and emancipates itself from the given universe of discourse and behavior while preserving the overwhelming presence. Thereby art creates the realm in which the subversion of experience proper to art becomes possible: the world formed by art is recognized as a reality which is superseded distorted in the given reality. This experience culminates in extreme situations (of love and death, guilt and failure, but also joy, happiness, and fulfillment) which explode the given reality in the name of a truth normally denied or even unheard. The inner logic of the work of art terminates in the emergence of another reason, another sensibility, which defy the rationality and sensibility incorporated in the dominant social institutions.

“Under the law of the aesthetic form, the given reality is necessarily sublimated: the immediate content is stylized, the data are reshaped and re-ordered in accordance with the demands of the art form, which requires that even the representation of death and destruction invoke the need for hope – a need rooted in the new consciousness embodied in the work of art.”

This can be seen to be a generalised view of the way the Frankfurt School understand the function of the aesthetic. Implied are both the reason why the aesthetic is privileged over the content, and also, crucially, the normative aspect of the artwork for the Frankfurt School. That is, normative, not in terms of a prescriptive way of creating or evaluating art — neither in the aesthetic nor the content — but normative in terms of which art should not be — a standard of the moral dignity of the work of art, that requires that it show the possibilities that things can be somehow otherwise. Marcuse’s point is thus worth repeating: Authentic art subverts by elevating itself above the way things are — it transcends the world in which it was created, and in this way
subverts that world by showing things to be diverse. It is here where one finds its emancipatory potential. It creates a world dissonant to ordinary reality and is simultaneously recognised as a world that can be or, even, indeed, *should* be. It shows this and simultaneously asks the question - why is it not so? The artwork, the aesthetic, the form is privileged – the world within the artwork must function in accordance to the aesthetic and only the individuality and autonomy of the aesthetic – not to the outside world which is reified. The aesthetic is created by the artist, by the individual, by the subjective. It operates according to its own inner logic, its own aesthetic, one that is created by the individual.

Taken a step further, one can say, albeit in very generalised form, that were the artwork a metaphor for the real world, the content would be social reality and it, importantly, should function in subjugation to the individual (aesthetic) rather than the individual working for the society, the system. It is a flipping of the coin. Art - subjective, individual, experimental - shows the individual as ascending over the societal restrictions of the exploitative system. It is not ideology that restricts or dictates the content – it is the inner form, the aesthetic and, ultimately, it is the artist, his/her own subjectivity and individuality that dictates the content. It thus affirms the individual and negates the real world, or the status quo. And thus it is also, simultaneously, transcendent and revolutionary. And therefore, in the aesthetic can be found emancipatory potential, “in their feelings, judgements, thoughts; an invalidation of dominant norms, needs, and values. With all its affirmative – ideological features, art remains a dissenting force.”

The aesthetic takes the content and transforms it into a self-contained whole – it is a reshaped reality, or those things that constitute reality such as ‘language perception’. It forces upon content the inner logic of the individual and thereby demonstrates the potential, the possibilities that are denied by the reality. It transcends and accuses simultaneously.

Marcuse writes that, “the critical function of art, its contribution to the struggle for liberation, resides in the aesthetic form. A work of art is authentic or true not by virtue of its content (i.e., the ‘correct’ representation of social conditions), nor by its ‘pure’ form, but by the content having become form.” What the aesthetic achieves, then, is the questioning of the conformity dictated by socialisation. The aesthetic negates what appears, or what is dictated, as reality - it shows, in short, reality to be fabricated - to be a fiction. And as such, in its showing of reality to be
fictitious, by showing the content to be subservient, as it were, to the inner dimensions or the aesthetic, it simultaneously shows the truth. It does not try to dictate the truth – to show the truth as being this or that - it does not try to determine reality. It merely, but crucially, shows that reality is a fiction, reality is determined, it is not a given, it is not 'one-way', it is not as it has been constituted by society and socialisation – it can be other ways, it can be other things and finally, it can also be better things. And in this, one can see that there is an implied ethic - not in terms of expressing Marxism as better than capitalism, but in expressing that there is an alternative - possibilities that have been denied by the dominant ideology of the times.

Thus there is a norm to the evaluation of art for the Frankfurt School – but it is not, like that which it negates, a thing that one can readily find – the norm to which art or literature can be ascribed the term ‘revolutionary’. What makes it art lies in its showing the possibilities and transcending the ‘social determinacy of the time’. The norm is not prescriptive – but on the other hand, and crucially, it still serves to delimit what can be considered art, as opposed to what can be regarded as works of the Culture Industry – industrial products that are regarded as both ideology and propaganda. The autonomy of the artwork is crucial, the ascendancy of the individual over the social reality is what is foregrounded. And thus Marcuse stipulates that, “Inasmuch as man and nature are constituted by an unfree society, their repressed and distorted potentialities can be represented only in an estranging form. The work of art is that of another Reality Principle, of estrangement – and only as estrangement does art fulfill a cognitive function: it communicates truths not communicable in any other language; it contradicts.”

For Marcuse, art is ideology in as much as it opposes the dominant reality – it militates against false consciousness. It does not say – ‘revolt because you have nothing to lose but your chains’ – what it does do, however, is imply that things can, and indeed, should, be otherwise. Classical Marxist theory cannot answer the question of whether a particular book is ‘good’ – and to say it is good because it affirms Marxist values is, as Marcuse correctly notes, a circular method. If one already decides the criteria for ‘good’ in terms of its content being revolutionary, then there is no need even to read the book. The point being that outside factors, such as the artists’ background, are irrelevant in the search for art’s progressive potential. So, too, a study of the content of characters in the book will not show its emancipatory potential. Potential is found in “what it says and how it says it.”
Art, or, more precisely, autonomous ‘true’ art, opens areas that are kept locked and tabooed by the dominant ideology. It refuses, in its form, to co-opt with the given state of affairs. It denies, it fights, it subverts, it refuses to jump in line and follow the rules. In its form, in its very essence, this art subverts the rules. And as such it does not become a faction for political praxis, except, as Marcuse makes clear in his assessment of the French poet Baudelaire, “to open the tabooed zones of nature and society in which even death and the devil are enlisted as allies in the refusal to abide by the law and order of oppression. This literature is one of the historical forms of critical aesthetic transcendence. Art cannot abolish the social divisions of labour which makes for its esoteric character, but neither can art ‘popularise’ itself without weakening its emancipatory potential.”

Thus it is, by necessity, elitist. It cannot be otherwise. Were it not so, it would deny its very potential – and it is this emancipatory potential which, for the Frankfurt School, makes it ‘art’ in the first place. And in this is the normative aspect of the Frankfurt School – art must be this way. It cannot be another way. This norm, further, is linked directly to an ethic that sees the dominant reality as restrictive, as something that needs to be denied, that needs to be negated. And the book, the text that does this is, therefore, valorised as art. This is the normative aspect, linked to an ethical dimension, which affects the cognitive aspect of life.

Within the parameters of literature, it is Marcuse’s belief that all narrative functions through its subjugation to its own form – an aesthetic of ‘stylisation’ – where the protagonists of literature seem always to be in collision with the life-world, their lebenswelt. Having said this, it is also suggested that the social content always remains secondary to the protagonists: in other words, in literature, it is the fate of the individual that must interest us – it is the way, in short, that one individual ‘individualises’ the social reality in the literary text that is crucial. It is thus the protagonists, the characters, and the way they are created in an aesthetic that gives art its truth. As Marcuse writes: “The life and death of individuals: even where the novel or the play articulates the struggle of the bourgeoisie against the aristocracy and the assent of the bourgeois liberties … it is the personal fate which remains form-giving – the fate of the protagonists, not the participants in the class struggle, but in lovers, scoundrels, fools and so on.” The aesthetic is what estranges familiarity, and that estrangement leads into a new perception or new consciousness. In Marcuse's terms, this is, “form {becoming – A.M.} content and vice-versa.”
In this transformation lies the key to Marcuse’s and the Frankfurt School’s insistence on the emancipatory potential of art – it lies in this very transformation.

Everyday reality, even direct experience - what Marcuse calls the ‘stuff’ - when incorporated into the novel, loses its immediacy - it is subsumed under the form of the novel, assimilated by the aesthetic. Thus subsumed, the ‘stuff’ loses its previous reality and becomes part of a different reality – the reality of the novel. For instance, if words taken in total from a newspaper are transplanted into this world - this fictitious reality - those words and what they mean can be completely distorted because they now inhabit a new context, a new and different reality. It is a question of reproducing social reality but it must remain true (autonomous) to its own form – its style. It is the aesthetic, the ‘tyranny of form'\(^{173}\) that makes the estrangement possible. It is tantamount to saying that the novel is form and content, but content is dictated, is controlled by, the form. In life, it is the individual that stands above society – asserting that form stands somehow above content is tantamount to saying that it is the individual that shapes society. And within that reformulation of reality, one can see the true potential of art – its emancipatory goals not only within the class system or within modern advanced capitalism, but in any system where the true potential of the human species has not come to fruition.

At this point, it must be recalled that Marcuse was dealing with the proletariat in advanced capitalism - i.e., that the subject of history is no longer the negation of the society since the proletariat has been, in this vision, fully integrated within the status quo. Art can no longer (if it ever could) change the world, but in its autonomy, in its aesthetic, it can, potentially, alter the consciousness of people. And it is people, finally, that change the world, that bring about the freedom and happiness of the individual which is, after all, the point, the final point, of all revolution.

The aesthetic and the ethic have been discussed to the extent where one can see a definitive link between the two in the work of the Frankfurt School. The question to be answered, however, is what underpins their ethic. What is it about Classical Marxism and capitalist culture that the Frankfurt School based their critique on? An answer to this will give this dissertation a clearer vision of what type of ethic is highlighted here. In turn, this will lead on to the next enquiry, that of relevance.

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7.2. Frankfurt School and Freedom

It should be recalled that the beautiful (as expressed in art) is an idealised world. It may indeed exist, but it does not exist for the vast majority of mankind who are forced into wage labour, into commercial lives. Marcuse, in his essay, “The Affirmative Character of Culture” calls this, “the provision and preservation of the necessary.” 174 What is necessary is separated from what is not — that which is superfluous or simply a luxury. Idealism, in Classical terms, would suggest that the ideals achieved by those not concerned with the daily struggle for existence (through art for instance), should permeate downwards into the material world — and in so doing, the material world would be somehow transcended.

Idealism seems to have a function: The ideal should be somehow realised in the material world. Plato believed in recognising society by this; Aristotle, a ‘realist’, understood that the presence of the ideal, of philosophy and the beautiful, was always going to reside solely for an elite. And the rational acknowledgment thus produced a deep divide between the Ideal and the real. The real, then, is cast as the opposite of the ideal — and with that split comes the realisation that if the ideal is beauty and truth, then the material - that which provides for mankind - is the ugly, the untrue. In that time, before the bourgeoisie overturned it, it was inevitable that a small elite enjoyed the beauty while the mass provided for them and themselves. It was the way things ‘were’, inevitable and natural. That inevitability was questioned by the bourgeoisie epoch, the good conscience was no longer taken as either inevitable or for the greater good. To paraphrase T. Jefferson’s oft-quoted claim, the rise of science brought with it the knowledge that the mass of mankind had not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favoured few, booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God.

Marcuse’s assertion is critical. For him, in the bourgeoisie epoch, culture was defined as something elevated from the drudgery of everyday life. In opposition to Aristotle, and in all good conscience, culture, albeit different from everyday reality, was also available to every miserable human being. The real world need not be altered to mould with the ideal, since culture, the beautiful, this other, could exist from the ‘inside’. And in so doing, culture attains its lofty status in real life — it is given its value and its objects are now elevated, “above the everyday sphere. Their reception becomes an act of celebration and exaltation.” 175 Marcuse makes the point that in
antiquity there was never any doubt about the ultimate ‘point’ of existence – that of happiness and enjoyment – but equally the fact remains that they could not foresee a time when the preservation of life would be conquerable. The ideal was the negation, as it were, of the real – when reality was ugly brute survival, the ideal was beautiful, kind enjoyment.

With the rise of the bourgeoisie and the so-called individual, freed from the constraints of Gods and Lords, Man has now, in his own power, the means to his own happiness – and for this, the capitalists produced the goods for the individuals’ happiness. The individual, set free, could attain his own freedom, his own quest for the beautiful. “For the bourgeoisie, when it comes to power, abstract equality sufficed for the flourishing of real individual freedom and real individual happiness, since it already disposed of the material conditions that could bring about such satisfaction.”

The change from feudalism to bourgeoisie was, however, accompanied by little or no shift in the misery of the individual, still toiling away, only now to a different, a new inequality. The elite were still able to enjoy happiness, while the majority were left no better off. And to the accusation that this new order had altered nothing for the masses (now individuals), the following is offered as reason: “To the need of the isolated individual it represents with general humanity, to bodily misery, to brutal egotism ... the realm of virtue. Whereas during this period of the militant rise of the new society all of these ideas had a progressive character by pointing beyond the attained organization of existence, they entered increasingly into the service of the suppression of the discontented masses and of mere self-justifying exaltation, once bourgeois rule began to be stabilized. They concealed the physical and psychic vitiation of the individual.”

It did this by the use of what Marcuse calls the affirmative culture. This culture was based on universal concepts like misery and exploitation and sorrow – forces of natural things above the scope of mere men – the idea that man should somehow be resigned to the ugly misery of the material world, in compensation for the beauty within – for this universal suffering was an eternal suffering. “Classical bourgeois art put its ideal forms at such a distance from everyday occurrence that those whose suffering and hope reside in daily life rediscover themselves through a leap into a totally other world.”
In art resided the ideal. That ‘other place’ to which the individual longed to go was kept alive in art. It maintained, still, that the materialism of the bourgeois epoch was only a step closer to the ultimate ideal, to the time in which the individual, all individuals, could join the elite in happiness and enjoyment. Bourgeois art was in itself a validation and a negation. In trying to justify itself, it also retained the pain of its own betrayal – it held its own negation and the promise of things that could have been, that still could be. It held this within the realm of art.

Thus we have an historical overview of ethics that the Frankfurt School prioritise. Summarised, it would read as follows – the ideal, that of human happiness and enjoyment, has always been the final goal, as it were, of existence since - it would appear - it was first theorised by Aristotle and Plato. To antiquity, though, the conception of a world wherein the need for labour to preserve life was not necessary, was seen as unlikely, and this view was taken on into the Middle Ages where the inevitability of ‘unfreedom’ and servitude was shown to be from God Himself. Men and Women were chosen by a higher power, either to be leaders and part of Aristotle’s Elite, or those who slaved to preserve life. With the rise of the bourgeoisie, though, these ideas were debunked – every individual was as free as the next, and happiness could rise from the gutter and the toil to ‘accumulate profit’. While in theory it was an advancement from the Middle Ages, the reality afforded little or no change to the mass of mankind – and in justifying itself, the bourgeoisie turned to culture to show the masses that material toil, that sorrow and misery, was a universal given – it was part and parcel of life itself.

Simultaneously though, it did not make the break from the ‘pursuit of happiness’ – what it did, indeed, was to show that happiness resides within the individual. In other words, accepting their lot, their misery, was not in and of itself unhappiness. Happiness resides in the soul. But in art, the ideal of this happiness was maintained because in order to find happiness, man had to escape to another place. Embedded in its own legitimising culture, its ‘affirmative culture’, remained the promise of happiness, not in the soul, not from within, but from the outside. And with that came the inescapable conclusion that to reach this happiness would require a complete destruction of the material conditions of existence. And this hope is retained in materialist philosophy – whereas the ideal has abandoned itself to the soul, materialist philosophy remains true to the essence of happiness. In other words, if Aristotle could have seen the way society has progressed
mechanically, then the material happiness, enjoyment and freedom that he saw as possible only for an elite could, instead, become a possibility for all.

This is noted by Marcuse as follows: “The highest point which man can attain is a community of free and rational persons in which each has the same opportunity to unfold and fulfill all of his powers. The concept of the person, in which the struggle against repressive collectives and conventions and addresses itself to all individuals. No-one prescribes his rights and sphere of action – no-one except the ‘law and his own breast’.

“Nature intended that man generate entirely out of himself everything going beyond the mechanical organization of his animal existence, and that he partake of no other happiness or perfection than that which he proves for himself, free of instinct, by means of his own reason.” 179

In bourgeoisie culture, the Ideals of freedom and happiness are ‘exported’ to the soul. In the soul, in everything that is not material, remains the final vestige of the possibilities of the bourgeoisie ideals. Whereas in the real world every object has become reified (including the human being), to be bought and sold and assigned a value for exchange, the soul could not be bartered. It stood beyond the material – it could never become a commodity. Thus in order to show the freedom of the bourgeoisie, the soul was ‘given’ this freedom – man could be used as a slave or a king, but it did not alter the fact that his freedom was to be found in the soul and, in the soul, all men are equal. It proclaimed that man should surrender himself to the debasement of his material life for his soul would live on, he was free and equal and happy – at least, in death ... and thus, “Man does not live by bread alone; this truth is thoroughly falsified by the interpretation that spiritual nourishment is an adequate substitute for too little bread.” 180

In the world of culture, of beauty, all men are equal, for not only do rich and poor speak in the same verse, but all souls that enjoy culture – its universal themes understandable and recognisable to all - are equal. “The soul can understand what the mind must condemn.” 181 Thus the soul, for Herder, is capable of universal empathy. The soul is cut off from what is right or wrong – cut off, in essence, from the rationality of the way things are because a change in the real makes no difference to the soul. The real is just there to serve the material body – work, toil, starvation and misery have no impact on the eternal soul. Thus change, in the material, is
irrelevant because happiness resides exclusively in the soul. All, in short, that the bourgeoisie had stood for, all the ideals and lofty beliefs on which its revolution had been based, had now been buried—buried within the individual, within the individual’s soul.

“The cultural ideal assimilated man’s longing for a happier life; for humanity, goodness, joy, truth, and solidarity. Only, in this ideal, they are all furnished with the ... accent of belonging to a higher, purer non-prosaic world. They are either internalized as the duty of the individual soul (to achieve what is constantly betrayed in the external existence of the whole) or represented as objects of art (whereby their reality is relegated to a realm essentially different from that of everyday life).” In art, as within the soul, those lofty ideals of human freedom are still in evidence—in its beauty remains the traces of the possibilities. The soul, then, is set apart from the body—and simultaneously it is also set against the body. Where the body is tied to the real world and its misery, the soul is not—it resides in beauty. The soul is now dominant—and it dominates the sensual as Marcuse notes: “Release of sensuality would be release of enjoyment, which presupposes the absence of guilty conscience and the real possibility of gratification. In bourgeoisie society, such a trend is increasingly opposed by the necessity of disciplining discontented masses. The internalization of enjoyment through spiritualisation, therefore, becomes one of the decisive tasks of cultural education.” And cultural education teaches the individual that beauty is somehow shameful—shameful because it shows things as they are not—it shows what could be but is not. Here is the fundamental change of the bourgeoisie epoch—man was freed from being used and exploited. No longer was man exploited directly to enrich the barons and lords—the revolution had broken those chains. Instead, what men produced would be sold for exchange—thus man was free and his product sold for profit.

In this way, the man who hired himself to work in a factory undertook an honourable course of action for it was not him, as it were, but that which he produced, that was being sold. On the other hand, were one to sell one’s actual body for money, as opposed to its abstraction, one would, naturally, be depraved, since this action stood against the Ideals of freedom.

The body was therefore freed—it was no longer bartered and sold as in the Middle Ages—not for labour, and not for pleasure either. The consequence of that is that the body is thus cut off from its beauty and its sensuousness. Just as the body must work to create products for the good of
mankind, its pleasure is now limited to producing offspring; thus the connection to the body which is not sold - it is what the body produces that demonstrates how the bourgeoisie have progressed since the Middle Ages - and in the same way, the beauty and pleasure of the body is now socialised, as it were, solely for reproduction. For it is in the soul where 'true' enjoyment and happiness resides. The body and mind exist in order to survive reality - there is no joy in this, just commitment and necessity - and the pleasure of the body thus becomes somehow depraved or taboo. The freedom of the individual was thus separated from the material conditions of life; but its echo could still be found in Culture.
8. Critical Theory: Relevance and Criticisms

Critical Theory's relevance needs to be evaluated, for, as has been noted by theorists such as Kellner and Dubiel, it was devised during, and in response to, a certain time in history. It was created, briefly, within a certain historical and political experience, those being, as Dubiel points out, the development of socialism in the Soviet Union, the development of fascism in Germany and Europe, the rise of 'authoritarianism' in late capitalist societies such as the USA, as well as concerns over the demise of the German labour movement at the end of the Weimer Republic. As such, criticisms over its relevance have surfaced and need to be answered. However, it is not only its historicity that is open to question, but also its apparent Elitism, with which this appraisal of Critical Theory will begin, before moving on to elements of relevance.

8.1. In Defense of Elitism

There have been many critics of the Frankfurt School's dismissive attitude towards popular culture — many of those criticisms centre on Critical Theory's seemingly elitist attitude toward art. Shils, for instance, accused Critical Theory of ignoring the literary and cultural tastes of the majority (which is to ignore the fact that culture, for the Frankfurt School, was not produced by the mass to begin with), while Enzensberger's critique was based on the fact that Critical Theory and conservative theory regarding mass culture were inherently similar. And while Martin Jay makes a defence of Cultural Elitism, a general remark before examining Marcuse's defense of Elitism needs to be made.

Elitism, for the Frankfurt School, is grounded on the idea of the commodity culture — and whilst works of surrealism, with which Adorno and Benjamin would argue, and works of Realism, with which Adorno and Lukacs would argue, have both been sublimated into the commodity form (surrealist art, for instance, can be seen hanging in offices throughout the world), it is noteworthy that the works of modernism that Adorno privileged still remain resistant to the market. David Suchoff argues the point thus: "Kafka recognised the containment of cultural resistance in commodity culture, making use of a difficult style to challenge a society whose differences were
becoming identical. ‘The crucial moment ... towards which everything in Kafka is directed,’ Adorno observes, ‘is that in which men become aware that they are not themselves.’” 186 Suchoff further elaborates on this deliberately difficult style by noting excerpts in Kafka’s diary which shed light on the author’s determined ideas on the complexity of the text.

In short, one can note that the literary works’ resistance to commodification is, at the same time, both elitist and necessary, if it is to hold any promise of emancipation. Reasons for this are have been discussed in the sections on autonomy and the foregrounding of the aesthetic.

But if the type of art that the Frankfurt School prioritise is elitist, it is also argued that what dominates the best-seller lists of today do not, in any way, fit into what the Frankfurt School call literature. To the extent we can ascribe norms in deciding what is literature or art at this stage of the dissertation, the assertion that the best selling authors such as Clancy or Collins do not hold any promise of emancipation can easily be made since they do not privilege the aesthetic – they are not autonomous works. They are produced solely for their exchange value. (Beethoven, it is said, whilst on his deathbed, “hurled away a novel by Walter Scott with the cry ‘why, the fellow writes for money.’”) 187 How, then, can this elitist art, resistant and unread, be in any way functional in the ‘revolution’? It is fine to say that it changes people’s consciousness – but if the people do not read this type of literature, are not exposed to this art, then, removed and unread, can one say that this type of art thus becomes irrelevant?

Marcuse tackles this question by asking who the ‘people’ are: “...under monopoly capitalism the exploited population is much larger than the ‘proletariat’, and ... it comprises a large part of previously independent strata of the middle class. If the ‘people’ are dominated by the prevailing system of needs then only the rupture with this system can make the ‘people’ an ally against barbarism. Prior to this rupture there is no ‘place among the people’ which the writer can simply take up and which awaits him. Writers must rather first create this place, and this is a process which may require them to stand against the people, which may prevent them from speaking their language. In this sense, ‘elitism’ today may well have a radical content. To work for the radicalization of consciousness means to make explicit and conscious the material and ideological discrepancy between the writer and ‘the people’ rather than to obscure and camouflage it. Revolutionary art may well become ‘The Enemy of the People.’” 188

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That extract shows the ethical dimension of the Frankfurt School. It also demonstrates how the ethics of art impresses upon the production and reception of that art. It is the ethics of a free individual in a free world which dictates which is art, and which is propaganda for the maintenance of the status quo – and, in essence, that which is good and that which is not.

This is the tension between art and political praxis. But Marcuse makes a further point. It is within advanced capitalism and the forced socialisation and homogenisation of the individual that the autonomous artwork, and the artist, stands as a negation. As Marcuse suggests, “Inwardness and subjectivity may well become the inner and outer space for the subversion of experience, the ... emergence of another universe.” In other words, both socialism (in its ugly reality played out in the former Soviet Union) and capitalism seek to ‘write’ the individual into the masses - what is required or, rather, what is hoped for, is that individuals unite freely with ‘associated individuals’. The type of autonomous art, with its roots in this utopian, non-conformist morality that the Frankfurt School see as the holder of the possibilities of emancipation, does not, cannot, speak in the language of the dominated, for to do so would mean that it, too, becomes part of the, “need for the life-long alienated labour and leisure ... subjected to the instruments of their labour ... dominated by the performances imposed upon them ... by the entire system of material and ideological repression.” Thus autonomous art must negate and it must transform – it negates the reality, and it transforms the consciousness. It does so through its aesthetic, through its inner logic. It is not thrust upon the people; as the promise of liberation, it cannot do otherwise but maintain its truth and hope that the people come to it and understand its truth – understand not art’s potential, but the potential and the possibilities of the individual. And it is these possibilities that remain in autonomous art.

It resists, as explained, within the aesthetic form because, as Marcuse argues, “in its very elements (word, colour, tone), art depends on the transmitted cultural material; art shares it with the existing society. And no matter how much art overturns the ordinary meanings of words and images, the transfiguration is still that of a given material. This is the case even when the words are broken, where new ones are invented, otherwise all communication would be severed. This limitation of aesthetic autonomy is the condition under which art can become a social factor.
"In this sense art is inevitably part of that which is and only as part of that which it does is speak against that which is. This contradiction is preserved and resolved in the aesthetic form which gives the familiar content and the familiar experience the power of estrangement – and which leads to the emergence of a new consciousness and a new perception." 191

The aesthetic is where the possibility resides for a world that allows the individual liberty and happiness. For the Frankfurt School, these two concepts are the cornerstone of the underlying morality to which all art must be tied. Radical praxis - revolution - and the possibilities of emancipation within the artwork are intertwined – both, “envision a universe which, while originating in the given social relationships, also liberate individuals from these relationships.” 192 In that, there is an implied view of the permanent revolution, or “the struggle for the impossible, against the unconquerable.” 193 Within art, the ‘people’ will find that which has been concealed in everyday reality – they are shown the negation of what is. That which is taken as normal, as usual, is estranged, replaced by the ‘other’, simultaneously part of the reality but also a new reality - it is this that is claimed to be the truth of art. Its autonomy, then, “reflects the unfreedom of individuals in the unfree society. If people were free, then art would be the form and expression of their freedom. Art remains marked by unfreedom, in contradicting it, art achieves its autonomy.” 194

Thus it is not simply a case of negation – it is transcending what is, it is not only showing what is not, but also what could be, by illustrating the past and the present. It is thus noted that, “art fights reflection by making the petrified word speak, sing, or perhaps even dance. Forgetting past suffering and past joy alleviates life under a repressive principle. In contrast, remembrance spurs the drive for the conquest of suffering and the permanence of joy.” 195 The freedom of art always contradicts the unfreedom of the world or, as Marcuse would phrase it: “The autonomy of art reflects the unfreedom of individuals in the unfree society.” 196

8.2. Relevance

Now that the point of elitism has been discussed, the question of relevance needs to be addressed. Again, with the historicity of Critical Theory very much in mind, criticisms have been leveled at
the amplified level with which Critical Theory attributed social control to the Culture Industry. To a certain extent, that criticism falls into the realm of reception, which, it has been noted, Adorno and others of the Frankfurt School did not elevate to the level that they did production.\textsuperscript{197} While it is not possible to enter into the entire argument over this facet of Critical Theory, certain general points need to be made.

The absolute power of the mass media to ‘cretinise’, deceive and manipulate what is seen as the autonomous consciousness of the masses has been dubbed dubious by Kellner in ‘\textit{Critical Theory and the Culture Industries: A Reassessment}’, which further notes that while this conception of an over-reaching Culture Industry and mass deception was accurate during the Second World War and, indeed, even during the Cold War, it is no longer able to explain such post-modern issues as, “struggles against advanced capitalism, nor for the ‘legitimisation crisis’ that is undermining ideological consensus and social integration”\textsuperscript{198} and as such, Critical Theory leads to a, “politics of resignation and despair”\textsuperscript{199}. Again, historicism aside, the theory on the Culture Industry had it that the mass media would desensitise and de-individualise the individual – as such, the struggles that Kellner sees against advanced capitalism must be superimposed against the neo-conservatism and New Left movements that are in the ascendency both in Europe and the US. In England, the Labour Party no longer espouses any overtly socialist leanings, and other New Left governments in Europe are certainly not questioning capitalism which has become almost natural and no longer open to serious debate. It can be posited, then, that the Culture Industry, in terms of its function, has certainly succeeded. As Moishe Gonzales correctly notes, “what bothers Kellner most, though, is that the theory of the Culture Industry implies a relatively pacified populace just like one finds anywhere in America or Western Europe. ... The real tragedy of the overwhelming success of the Culture Industry is precisely that it has managed so well to make unthinkable any hint that qualitative alternatives may exist.”\textsuperscript{200} The end of the Soviet Union, what is more, has made any talk of overt socialism in the media one based on ridicule.

Kellner’s point on historicism, again, is correct, to the extent that the theory of the Culture Industry was created during, and in response to, a specific time in history. Stating this, however, does not necessarily support the conclusion that it has become irrelevant. It is noteworthy that, while the media has allowed within it what post-modernists would call the ‘other’ since the theory of the Culture Industry was written, it can also be argued that this ‘other’ was entertained
solely to bring into capitalism's sphere more people to invigorate the system – the 'pink pound' being a case in point. Gonzales makes this connection when he notes that, "new needs for the new commodities had to be created to retain the economy of scarcity needed to legitimate the performance principle and ultimately capitalism itself. To do so, it became necessary to go beyond the 1950s stereotypes and reintroduce a minimal negativity that had been entirely eliminated before." 201

The wide changes of the 1960s, further, is seen by Kellner as not being explicable by the use of Critical Theory. If the Culture Industry had been successful, why was there such an upheaval against the ideal of middle class society, as epitomised in much of 1950s television in the USA? The Beats, visions of bohemia, drug-induced dance festivals, LSD experiments and Timothy Leary, the Merry Pranksters, etc., were all portrayed in the media and thus, perhaps, served to fuel the student and youth rebellions of that decade. The theory of the Culture Industry, it is noted, could not explain this turn of events. Thus Kellner states that: "Whereas the culture industries were once instruments of ideological conformity and cultural homogenisation, they are now increasingly theaters for social conflict and instruments of cultural diversity. ... These new audiences may be different from the amorphous and undifferentiated 'mass' that continues to be the center of mass society, but which is ever more surrounded by marginal groups and differences threatening the breakup of social homogenisation and integration." 203

This criticism is not answered by Gonzales, though it is a crucial point and needs to be evaluated. Gonzales does make the point that the mass media are in the hands of a small minority of corporations. The Murdoch empire, for instance, owns TV stations such as Fox in the US, SKY TV in the UK, as well as newspapers throughout the world (such as The Sun in the UK), and men like Berlusconi, the Leader of the Opposition in Italy, controls three TV networks. To suppose that these companies will allow for non-cretinising and emancipatory programmes for the sole goal of profit is to revert to a crude form of pre-Althusserian Marxism. Gonzales notes, then, in this connection that, "the media do engage in social critique, but only, at best, to facilitate the further rationalisation of advanced capitalism by eliminating social anachronisms or lingering dysfunctional features, such as racism, sexism and any kind of discrimination that resists the collective homogenisation that is already, for the most part, fairly well accomplished. Far from subverting anything other than obsolete traditional remnants, this social critique is one of the
most powerful legitimating forces at work, positing advanced capitalism, as it is, as the best of all possible emancipatory and democratic social systems." To use but one example, the demand for Blacks to have the same salary as Whites, while being, in liberal discourse, proper, is not, however, forcing the system into considerations over the role of capitalism and the need for labour, exchange and exploitation.

However, the central point of Kellner’s argument, that of the student and youth rebellions of the 60s, does, at first glance, seem to contradict the idea that the culture industries had socialised and desensitised the individual, and as such needs to be explained if Critical Theory and the theory of the Culture Industry are to be deemed relevant. One can find a rebuttal to this point in evaluating the role that was affixed to the Frankfurt School in the aftermath of the 60s; the inference being that it is possible to state that the writings of the Frankfurt School, along with the art that they favoured, had somehow contributed to the upheaval of this decade.

Adorno, in an address to the Sixteenth German Sociological Association in 1968, did not seem to see this as a possibility when he noted the following: “It is only in the recent past that traces of a counter-tendency have begun to appear, among a whole variety of groups of young people: resistance to blind conformism, freedom to choose one’s goals rationally, disgust at the existence of a world of cheating, and an idea, an awareness, of the possibility of change. Whether society’s growing urge to destroy itself will nevertheless triumph against this counter-tendency remains to be seen.”

Adorno can be interpreted as saying, at least for the convenience of this dissertation, that without the underlying ethic of freedom and emancipation, the concerns of the rebellions would not, in the long run, change the system – and his impression, it can certainly be argued, was correct. It has been stated, in Wiggershaus, for instance, that the Frankfurt School’s writings, in particular those of Marcuse, were of use to the students in the rebellions of the late 60s.

Such was the notoriety of the Frankfurt School that Wiggershaus claims, “the Prime Minister of Baden-Wurttemberg, Hans Filbinger, and the chairman of the CDU in the state of Hesse, Alfred Dregger – the former in a speech given at the celebrations for the 500th anniversary of the University of Tubingen, and the latter in a Bavarian television programme that was broadcast
throughout Germany by the television station ARD - both declared the Frankfurt School to be one of the causes of the terrorism. Terrorism, and the demand for an intellectual and political analysis of its roots, became an excuse for the defamation of its so-called sympathisers and of those who criticised society and talked about socialism. 206

Whether the Frankfurt School's writings had such a large effect on the student rebellions and terrorism that was to spring up in the 70s is not open for debate in this dissertation. What is noteworthy, however, is that the Frankfurt School did play a role in this decade and thus, it could be further argued (against Kellner) that rather than not being able to explain the causes of the rebellion, it was perhaps the Frankfurt School's diagnosis of the Culture Industry and the reductionist nature of society that helped fuel this rebellion. It is not this dissertation's aim to prove this either way: what is important is the argument that, without the Frankfurt School's writings, the student rebellions of the 60s may not ever have occurred.

This section has attempted to answer the question of the Frankfurt School's relevance by focusing on certain criticisms. Amongst those, the criticism of its non-historicism, of its elitism and its apparent inability to incorporate itself into modern capitalism, has been posited to the extent where this dissertation will claim that it can and is still able to explain the role of the mass media, and the function of the culture industries in this age. In addition to this, theorists such as Habermas and Negt have extended the Frankfurt School's writings into various other directions. A full description and analysis of Habermas' work will not be rendered here, except his analysis of the post-modern which directly affects the conclusions that this dissertation is aiming for. This analysis will be undertaken below. 207

At this stage though, and still in terms of the relevance of Critical Theory, this dissertation will seek to evaluate how modernism was utilised by American cultural critics, who retained the idea of the subversive force of modernism, but, in light of the Cold War and McCarthyism, rejected its Marxist ethical base. The implication here is this: what is the use of modernism's aesthetic without the underlying ethic of freedom and emancipation that has been discussed in this dissertation?
8.3. ‘Safe’ Modernism

An exact rendition of modernist and liberal cultural criticism exemplified by the work of Lionel Trilling, and the response of the ‘New Historicism’, is not necessary for the purposes of this dissertation. However, in view of the fact that this liberal and modernist cultural theory - created during the height of the Cold War and McCarthyism - focused on Modernism and has, it will be shown, much in common with Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School (many of whom were still in the US at the time), makes an overview essential.

In line with the ideas of the Culture Industry, this new cultural criticism prioritised the works of modernist writers such as Kafka, but focused on what can be termed a liberal-psychological agenda. As such, Trilling’s work has been posited as crucial in the construction of a liberal critical cultural criticism. In effect, this advocated the idea of modernism as High Art, as opposed to the works of social realism, for instance, that were seen as modernism’s antithesis. Complexity was seen as a determining aspect of High-Art. This theory, it is to be recalled, was created during a time when ideology was seen as an anti-American, communist agenda, and as such was described by Frederic Jameson as ‘strategies of containment’. In line with the Frankfurt School, this new criticism was hostile toward mass culture and the works of Stalinist social realist texts, while, as demonstrated by the so-called New York Intellectuals, foregrounding the complexity and aesthetics of modernism.

Thus aspects of modernism, like complexity, metaphysical alienation and hostility (as seen in Kafka) were used against the works of the Culture Industry. At the same time, writers like Dickens were ‘rescued’ from the mould of mass culture by readings that were liberal, focusing on his oppositional stance toward Victorian England and his antipathy toward mass society. Again, it bears noting that the idea of modernism as oppositional was retained in this liberal cultural critique. However, in line with the historical period in which this theory was developed, any Marxist or socialist ‘reading’ was left aside – both in response to McCarthyism and Stalinist USSR. As David Suchoff notes: “This separation of the novel from ideology became one of the linchpins of liberal cultural theory. Trilling argued against ideological approaches while supporting the liberal value of modernist narrative and the ‘disenchantment of culture by culture’
it expressed." Thus the aesthetics of modernism were lauded, but the ethical dimension, its potential for changing the world, was left, conveniently, aside.

This liberal cultural critique, devoid of any socialist ethic or grounding, did see modernism as an oppositional force against society and mass socialisation, but in contradistinction with the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, it did not retain the ideals of a freedom or emancipation in its cultural critique. Suchoff makes the point that congressional liberals, for instance, participated in the Subversive Activities Control Board of 1952: this was, as Geraldine McCarthy called it, a 'safe modernist subversion.' The agenda of this cultural critique was based around social critique, around modernism as oppositional art, but, without an underlying ethical premise, this opposition worked solely to maintain the safe 'liberal' status quo. David Suchoff illustrates the point thus: "'Proust, Joyce, and Kafka,' in Philip Rahv’s view, represented an artful social 'verisimilitude' in fiction that was to be opposed to the crudity of Marxist approaches. ... The modernist qualities of the American novel were used to link American literature with aestheticism, and to separate the concerns of the American novel from politics." The consequence was evaluating the novel in terms of its 'cultural disaffection', whilst at the same time confirming the status of American democratically political and economic institutions. As such, it highlighted the so-called liberal imagination of the (non-socialist) modernist subversion. This cultural, liberal critique concerned itself with the literature and its antithesis, the works of mass culture. As such, works by Dickens, for instance, were found, by Trilling, to have modernist tendencies in terms of its aesthetics.

Modernism had become ideology-free in the readings of these liberal critics: whilst not advocating an austere analysis of the text by itself, as was being advocated by other cultural critics, the modernist texts were read as examples of oppositional literature; oppositional, that is, to mass culture, as well as demonstrating the complexities of the liberal imagination as seen in the modernist texts. As such, it was open to criticism, open to the 're-instilling' of ideology into the text. David Suchoff notes, in this regard, the following: "The official modernism of the Cold War had posited the novel as a socially critical instrument, hostile to social control. But the question of narrative’s complicity with mass society had been begged, and waited to return." This was what New Historicism sought to accomplish.
New Historicism will be treated in a very abbreviated way, only highlighting those issues that directly pertain to this dissertation. It should be noted, to begin with, that it was a response against the liberal cultural theory as advocated by Trilling and others. As such, it sought to see how mass culture, as subjugated by Trilling, could be reintegrated into cultural critique. Modernism itself was under attack, and, it was theorised, novels that were dominated by the process of reification could hold no possibility for cultural critique. Dickens was thus returned to his place as mass-entertainment, and modernism itself was questioned as to its culturally critical force. New Historicism, to put it simply, regarded texts of modernism and mass culture as instants of social control (not unlike Critical Theory but without, crucially, the dialectics of this theory). New Historicism brought with it a return to historicism and noted how cultural criticism itself was influenced, as the liberal cultural critique of Trilling had been, by social contexts. As such, it criticised the ‘containment’ ideology that had surfaced in the cultural critique of liberals such as Trilling.

New Historicism thus focused on the issues of modernism’s oppositionary influence and discovered social collusion and, further, questioned its critical power. “Social control as a theme predominated in arguments against the liberal consensus that modern culture and its fiction were subversive. New Historicism readings brought ‘containment’ home from foreign policy, and read it as a political description of liberal culture that could challenge a self-satisfied vision of Cold War ‘consensus’; challenging modernism meant emphasizing the dominating power of mass culture over art.” 213

The consequence of this move against the interpretation of modernism by Trilling and others, rather than a theory of modernism itself, brought New Historicism to attack the works of modernism as being part and parcel of the ideology of containment. Socialism (and other forms of emancipation) had never been replaced into this new cultural criticism, and as such, the social critique of modernism had been replaced by a will to see only the repressive side of culture. This, it must be noted, was also addressed by the Frankfurt School – but the Frankfurt’s School dialectic, with its focus on both the regressive and progressive side of modernism, art and culture, meant that this theory held the idea of emancipatory potential of art intact. And it is, in terms of this dissertation, its ethical base, its emancipatory, neo-Marxist socialist ethic, that allowed this school of thought the ability to find the emancipatory potential of art. Unlike the liberal critics
that excluded the socialist ethic of their cultural critique, and the New Historicists, who sought to
attack this thinking by replacing the 'safe' subversion of their modernism by focusing on the
regressive side of art, the socialist ethic itself - the idea of freedom as evinced in works of high
modernism - were left behind. Thus it is possible to maintain that, in terms of cultural critique
(reception), as well as production, an underlying ethic of freedom, as evinced in the works of
Marx, and, further, in the works of the Frankfurt School, and based on the considerations of the
totally administered state and the pressures of commodification, must remain intact in order for
the potential of freedom to remain alive. When the ethical base is replaced, forgotten, or
conveniently placed aside, art loses its redemptive function and, even in works of modernism
such as Kafka and Joyce, become solely regressive aspects of an all-consuming domination of the
individual's freedom. Therefore the link, in Critical Theory, between ethics and aesthetics;
because a critique of aesthetics, without a concomitant ethical base, results in free readings of art
and literature that become, in terms of their function, as regressive and non-autonomous as the
works of the Culture Industry themselves.

With this ethical dimension firmly in mind, then, the modernist/post-modern debate will be
evaluated, with the final goal of demonstrating that postmodernism's aesthetics are modernist in
'spirit' - but it is in the ethical domain that modernism and postmodernism seemingly part ways.
9. The Project of Modernity

Habermas' influential dissertation 'Modernity versus Post-modernity' will be primarily discussed in an attempt to crystallise Habermas' views on modernity (Habermas being a later proponent of the Frankfurt School) and post-modernity, which, it will be seen, is rejected by Habermas, the practitioners and theorists thereof being dismissed as the 'discontents' of modernity.

Habermas's contention is that modernity, although likened to the rise of European art, can be seen in a different light - what he refers to as the 'project of modernity', and which subsumes the ideas of Max Weber as such. Weber believed that cultural modernity separated the reasoning in religion and metaphysics into three autonomous parts, these being (1) science, (2) morality and (3) art. The reasons for this are varied. Briefly, Habermas contends that: "Since the eighteenth century, the problems inherited from these older world-views could be re-arranged so as to fall under specific aspects of validity, truth, normative rightness, authenticity and beauty. They could then be handled as questions of knowledge, or of justice and morality, or of taste. Scientific discourse, theories of morality, jurisprudence, the production and criticism of art, could in turn be institutionalised. Each domain of culture could be made to correspond to cultural professions, in which problems could be dealt with as the concern of special experts. This professionalised treatment of the culture tradition brings to the fore the intrinsic structures of each of the three dimensions of culture."214

There is, for Habermas, a widening gap between the culture of the people as opposed to the culture of the experts - a kind of specialisation. The idea of the Enlightenment, however, was to set this knowledge free for the use of the people, or, as Habermas would have it, for the rational organisation of everyday social life. Habermas contends that in the twentieth century, rather than a mass enlightenment, there has been a proliferation of specialists in the above-mentioned fields. Their apparent autonomy has increased. This mass enlightenment was, for Habermas, the project of modernity and he asks the critical question of whether the ideas of modernity have failed, in the face of reality? Habermas seeks the answer in the traditional field of modernism - the arts - and contends that, "In the course of the eighteenth century, literature, the fine arts and music were institutionalised as activities independent from sacred and courtly life. Finally, around the
middle of the nineteenth century an aestheticist conception of art emerged, which encouraged the artist to produce his work according to the distinct consciousness of art for art's sake. The autonomy of the aesthetic sphere could then become a deliberate project: the talented artist could lend authentic expression to those experiences he had in encountering his own de-centred subjectivity, detached from the constraints of routinised cognition and everyday action. Thus the gap between art and life became ever more great, and the reconciliation was seen as impossible since art had become completely autonomous. Habermas continues by describing the effects of the surrealist movement - the attempt, that is, to, "level art and life, fiction and praxis, appearance and reality ... between artefact and object of use, between conscious staging and spontaneous excitement ... to declare everything art and everyone to be an artist ... all these 'nonsense experiments' led to exactly the opposite effect which they had intended; instead of 'liberating' art, as it were, they re-enslaved it within the boundaries of its appearance as the medium of fiction, to the transcendence of the art work over society, to the concentrated and planned character of artistic production as well as to the special cognitive statutes of judgements of taste." Habermas, here, is allying himself with Adorno, when the latter criticised Walter Benjamin's position vis-à-vis surrealism.

Habermas notes the 'errors' of this surreal revolt - the first as mentioned, the second being even more important. Habermas, with his Weberian ideas on the three parts of culture, notes that had the surrealist revolt succeeded, it would have enlightened only one portion of the triad. "The surrealist revolt would have replaced only one abstraction." Habermas further notes that there have been similar attempts to negate both scientific and moral knowledge, but all, like the surrealist attempt, failed. To conclude this point, Habermas' alternatives will be briefly discussed. These alternatives rest on Habermas' supposition that the project of modernity has not failed because it has yet to be fulfilled; the reception of art by the Berlin workers in '37 serving as an example, and he contends that, "This new connection {with the everyday life - A.M.}, however, can only be established under the condition that societal modernisation will also be steered in a different direction. The life-world has to become able to develop institutions out of itself which sets limits to the internal dynamics and to the imperatives of an almost autonomous economic system and its administrative complements."

Andreas Huyssen's dissertation, 'Mapping the Post-modern', in particular the idea behind the
so-named ‘exhaustion of the modernist movement’, now needs to be discussed. Huyssen contends that the post-modernist movement had its roots in the USA, and from there migrated to Europe where it was taken up by the likes of Lyotard in Paris and Habermas in Frankfurt. In this dissertation, Huyssen concentrates on the break, as he sees it, from modernism to post-modernism, with emphasis on architecture where, it is noted, modernism died its symbolic death on July 15, 1972 at 3:32 PM, the time when a modernist building by Yamosaki was torn down. Post-modernism is evidenced by a pastiche of codes and styles, arbitrary and incoherent. Huyssen contends that the pop-psychology of post-modernism is in direct contrast to modernism's hostility to mass culture, and thus, consequently, post-modernism's embracing of mass culture would stand in direct contradistinction to Habermas' position.

Furthermore, there is seen to be a considerable difference in the post-modernism of the 60s, 70s and 80s, and this will be investigated with an effort to clarify, albeit in Huyssen's view, not only the split within post-modernism, but, in his view, the distinct break between it and modernism – a split, it is to be recalled, which is rejected by Habermas.

The 60s found postmodernism in direct conflict with high modernism and its grand assertions, as evidenced, for example, in the pop-art of Andy Warhol, and thus what could be called an American avant-garde was taking root. In the 70s, however, the negation and critique of modernism seems to have evaporated and, simultaneously, the critique, negation and resistance to the status quo was created, but not in any avant-garde 'experiments' or in any other type of modernist techniques. What should be noted is Daniel Bell's contention (as cited in Huyssen) that in the 60s (in opposition to Habermas' view), post-modernism was the logical culmination of modernist intentions and, “my argument here is that the revolt of the 1960s was never a negation of modernism per se, but rather a revolt against that version of modernism which had been domesticated in the 1950s, became part of the liberal-conservative consensus of the time, and which had even been turned into a propaganda weapon in the cultural-political arsenal of Cold-War anti-communism. The modernism against which artists rebelled was no longer felt to be an adversary culture. It no longer opposed a dominant class and its world view, nor had it maintained its programmatic purity from contamination of the Culture Industry.” This view has been corroborated in the discussion of liberal cultural theory. The attack against safe modernism is thus seen as a part of post-modernism.
Huyssen further notes, crucially, that the American vision of post-modernism can be seen as a movement *sui generis* - i.e., as a movement with its *own* characteristics. These characteristics, importantly, are as follows:

(1) The 1960s saw the movement display, "a powerful sense of the future and new frontiers, of rupture and discontinuity, of crisis and generational conflict, an imagination reminiscent of earlier continental avant-garde movements such as Dada and surrealism rather than of high modernism."222 (This, when compared to Habermas's views on absurd experiments, would read as a paradox).

(2) The second point is very similar to Habermas' contention that modernity's (in the European sense) function was to attack High Art's separateness from everyday life, and to return art (and, in this sense, only art, for art is what Huyssen is using to demarcate post-modernism's distinctiveness) to the people, separating it thus from its ideology of autonomy. "The historical avant-garde's iconoclastic attack on cultural institutions and on traditionalist modes of representation presupposed a society in which High Art played an essential role in legitimising hegemony or, ... to support a cultural establishment and its claims to aesthetic knowledge."223 Huyssen, along with Habermas, accepts that modernism, in fact, achieved the very opposite and failed to reintegrate life and art, but does not support the idea that modernism's project has not failed, for he claims that America in the 60s, faced with the institutionalised art of modernism hanging in museums and accepted as the very zenith of artistic production, turned to the cutting-edge artistic expressions such as the 'pop-vernacular, psychedelic art, acid rock', etc. and, "the postmodernism of the 1960s was groping to recapture the adversary ethos which had nourished modern art in its earlier stages, but which it seemed no longer able to sustain ... No matter how deluded about its potential effectiveness, the attack on the institution art was always also an attack on hegemonic social institutions, and the raging battles of the 1960s over whether or not pop was legitimate art proves the point."224

(3) Drawing a comparison between the mass media and television, etc. in the '60s with the arrival of film and mass-production techniques earlier in the century (the '20s, for example), which had so attracted the likes of Brecht and Benjamin, Huyssen wishes to
show how the avant-garde movements in both epochs\textsuperscript{225} were seduced in equal, uncritical abandon to the wonders of science and technology which promised a future filled with enlightenment by the very adaptation of these instruments.

(4) This is a direct consequence of the point above, which leads Huyssen to this, the final characteristic of American post-modernism, and that is a wish to validate 'popular' culture as a direct confrontation to High-Art, be this modernist or, again using Huyssen's terms, 'tradition'.

In the 60s, there appeared, therefore, to be a complete abandonment of critique towards this populist culture, as well as towards modern mass culture. The irony, as Huyssen is quick to note, is obvious; post-modernism was aiming to achieve the exact same goals as modernism before it, though with the crucial distinction that, "a new creative relationship between High Art and certain forms of mass culture is, to my mind, indeed one of the major marks of difference between high modernism and the art and literature which followed it in the 1970s and 1980s both in Europe and the USA. And it is precisely the recent self-assertion of minority cultures and their emergence into public consciousness which has undermined the modernist belief that high and popular culture have to be categorically kept apart; such rigorous segregation simply does not make much sense within a given minority culture which has always existed outside in the shadow of the dominant high culture."\textsuperscript{226} The Elitist position, here implied, has already been discussed.

Thus Huyssen can be seen as offering a reply to Habermas' contention: it would appear that the post-modernist movement of the 60s had achieved precisely what the modernist movement before it had not - or is it, perhaps, a case of the project of modernity finally coming of age and fruition? Huyssen clarifies his position by explaining that the avant-garde in the USA of the 60s was a breakthrough to 'new frontiers' but, simultaneously, in the European sense, it was the final movement of the avant-garde which had started in the nineteenth century in Paris, only to move to Moscow, then Berlin in the 1920s and New York in the 1940s. Huyssen concludes the brief history of post-modernism in the 60s thus: "... ideology of modernisation which has become increasingly problematic in our post-modern age, problematic not so much perhaps in its descriptive powers relating to past events, but certainly in its normative claims."\textsuperscript{227}
Modernism's great claim of universal emancipation had been shown not to be feasible or even possible within the real world. Once sublimated into institutions, it had become lauded as the way in which art and cultural production should be evaluated and created. It became a safe modernism and, as such, was seen as part of the problem. In the rejection of the popular in favour of modernism, but without modernism's underlying ethic, works by such modernist luminaries as Kafka served only to distinguish between High Art and mass art – the ethical evaluation of the deliberately alienating aesthetic of such modernist authors had been forgotten and dismissed.

In the 70s, Huyssen notes that much of the rhetoric of the European avant-garde had vanished, and so, too, the idea of any 'futurist revolt'. The mass culture of pop, rock and alternative theatre were now mainstream and institutionalised, and thus, like the modernist works before, (or so post-modernism claimed) was no longer avant-garde and consequently no longer trying to repudiate the dominant cultural discourses. The mass-media and technology that was heralded as a step closer to Enlightenment were now replaced with the realisation that television, for instance, was be seen as a 'visionary-pollutant'. Huyssen, in fact, puts this idea succinctly as follows: "...all modernist and avant-gardist techniques, forms and images are now stored for instant recall in the computerised memory banks of our culture. But the same memory also stores all of pre-modernist art as well as the genres, codes and image worlds of popular cultures and modern mass culture." Huyssen contends, furthermore, that the protection of High Art (as opposed to mass art and the so-named Culture Industry) was a direct response to the times in which these theories were written - Adorno, then, protecting modernist art from the polluting, totalitarian hands of Stalin and the madness of the Cold War ethos. But the post-modern, for Huyssen, has channelled art and theory into new frontiers, new visions and paths. With the peace at the end of the Cold War, modernism/mass culture could be analysed without the dogma of war ideology, as well as without the Stalinist or Nazi threats of cultural administration from above. The point was that modernism and mass culture could find a sort of hybrid, a working together where neither was reduced to its most insidious forms. This pastiche of modernism and mass culture led to the 70s, and what Huyssen sees as the ambitious and successful art of that decade - as well as admitting to the spectacular failures that modernism itself had been prone to almost a century before.

Huyssen, in explaining the path of post-modernism from the 70s and into the 80s, notes that, "it was especially the art, writing, film-making and criticism of women and minority artists with
their recuperation of buried and mutilated traditions, their emphasis on exploring forms of gender and race beside subjectivity in aesthetic production and experiences, and their refusal to be limited to standard canonisations which added a whole new dimension to the critique of high modernism and to the emergence of alternative forms of culture. Thus, we have come to see modernism's imaginary relationship to African and Oriental art as deeply problematic, and will approach, say, contemporary Latin American writers other than by praising them for being good modernists ... such new insights can be interpreted in multiple ways ... its implications of modernism not yet elaborated."  

Huysen, in his explanation of post-modernism's relationship to neo-conservatism, remarks that it was Habermas who had first noted and questioned this. Habermas equating of post-modernism with neo-conservatism is crucial, and will now be elaborated.

Huysen writes that, "In his 1980 Adorno-prize lecture, which has become a focal point for the debate, Habermas criticised both conservatism (old, new and neo) and postmodernism for not coming to terms with the exigencies of culture in late capitalism or with the successes and failures of modernity itself. Significantly, Habermas' notion of modernity - the modernity he wishes to see continued and completed - is purged of modernism's nihilistic and anarchic strain just as his opponents', e.g., Lyotard's notion of an aesthetic (post)modernism is determined to liquidate any trace of the enlightened modernity inherited from the eighteenth century which provides the basis for Habermas' notion of modern culture."  

Huysen, however, contends that the time and the historical background in which Habermas was writing must be taken into account; that of the Federal Republic of Germany in the late 70s with the modernisations that took place at this time - a time of conservative redefinitions after the 60s and an attempt to re-instil cultural hegemony. Huysen's argument is that Habermas was fighting off the right and defending the ideals of enlightenment - the point being that, for Habermas, the post-modernism of the 70s was a perfect fit for the Right and the abandonment of the enlightenment ideals of the modernists and for which Habermas fought. This facet remains crucial in the context of this dissertation: without the underlying enlightening potential of art, an ethic, post-modernism was abandoning the central goal of modernism. As such, post-modernism was no such thing, as it seems to imply that the goals and ideals of modernism had been fulfilled when, rather, the only thing that had been fulfilled was the leaving behind of the goal or ethic of emancipation. Thus a
neo-conservative strand of post-modernism can be seen directly in its abandonment of the enlightening project of modernism itself.

Huyssen further notes that there are two fundamentally and inherently differing views of modernity, belonging to Habermas and Lyotard, (as in German versus French views). For Lyotard, modernity was foremost a question of aesthetics, and the questioning and potential destruction of language and representational forms in general. Habermas, on the other hand, could see, within modernity itself; the ideals of the enlightenment. For Lyotard, (and the French) the ideals of the enlightenment had led directly to a history of terror and brutality so prevalent in European history. The historical connections, made by Huyssen with regards to both Habermas and Lyotard representing their countries of origin, must thus be noted.

Huyssen's point on neo-conservatism is noteworthy too, when he states that they believe the post-modern to be both dangerous and not worthy of acceptance. As evidence, the neo-conservative Daniel Bell is cited by Huyssen, who believes that post-modernism and its popularisation of the modern aesthetic is dangerous in so far as it leans towards nihilism and anarchy, with its emphasis on immediate gratification. Huyssen's metaphor of high-modernism being a previous chemical spill which, in the 60s, flowed out to pollute the mainstream culture will serve as elucidation.

Neo-conservatives like Bell are not, in any shape, way or form, to be linked to the post-modern. Hilton Kramer serves as a second repudiation of neo-conservatism's relationship to post-modernity, with his call for a return to high-modernism's values and ethics. It would thus appear that for Habermas to equate these two is erroneous; Huyssen, however, hastens to add the following: "To Habermas, even Hilton Kramer's neo-conservative defence of a modernism deprived of its adversary cutting edge would have to appear as a post-modern, post-modern in the sense of anti-modern. The question in all of this is absolutely not whether the classics of modernism are or are not great works of art ... a problem does surface when their greatness is used as unsurpassable model and appealed to in order to stifle contemporary artistic production."232 Therefore, to use modernism as a norm for cultural production is already to institutionalise it, and, in so doing, to subsume it and make it irrelevant in terms of its effect.
Huyssen's conclusion on Habermas' contention of post-modernity's link with neo-conservatism is as follows: either, "the neo-conservative political vision of a post-modern society freed from all aesthetic, i.e., hedonistic, modernist and post-modernist subversion", or, "whether the issue is aesthetic postmodernism". Huyssen stresses the point that post-modernism is not a style, but rather a political and cultural viewpoint. Post-modernism, for Huyssen, is a politicisation of culture.

By way of conclusion to this section, Huyssen's point of the fascinating paradox in the understanding that the body of work created during the 60s in the name of post-structuralism has become, in the USA, the backbone texts of postmodernism, will be noted. He is able to conclude this by tracing the links of post-structuralism when he states that: "Post-structuralism's readings of modernism are new and exciting enough to be considered somehow beyond modernism as it has been perceive before, in this way post-structuralist criticism in the U.S. yields to the very real pressures of the post-modern." 234

A further paradox is noted by F. Jameson, that writes: "This very commitment to the experimental and the new, however, determine an aesthetic that is far more closely related to the traditional ideologies of high modernism proper than to current postmodernism, and is indeed - paradoxically enough - very closely related to the conception of the revolutionary nature of high modernism that Habermas faithfully inherited from the Frankfurt School." The aesthetics of postmodernism are borrowed from modernism itself – not the normative aspects of modernism, but rather the experimental forms such as those of Ulysses, for instance. Jameson, to continue the debate on the post-modern, contends that it is possible (regardless of whether, as he notes, they are susceptible to either 'politically progressive' or 'politically reactionary' expressions) to locate certain positions in this debate, and, using Jameson's shorthand, the following initial split can be offered:

(1) anti-modern/post-modern

(2) pro-modern/anti-post-modern.

Jameson contends, further, that there should be two more positions available, the reasoning being
as follows; that (1) and (2) above must accept the fact that there has been an historical 'break' between modernity and post-modernity. This would be in line with Huyssen's contention. However, the break is not obvious, and the contention that post-modernism does not 'exist' will constitute Jameson's final two ideological positions. This position would contend that that which is labelled post-modern is nothing more than modernism's response to the post-industrial world in which we live, and further evidence of modernism's response to this new century. Jameson's contention is that this is Lyotard's position: "Lyotard thus proposes that his own vital commitment to the new and the emergent, to a contemporary or postcontemporary cultural production now widely characterised as 'post-modern', be grasped as a part and parcel of a reaffirmation of the authentic older high modernism's very much in Adorno's spirit. The ingenious twist or swerve in his own proposal involves the proposition that something called 'post-modernism' does not follow high modernism proper, as the latter's waste product, but rather very precisely precedes and prepares for it, so that the contemporary post-modernisms all around may be seen as the promise of the return and the reinvention, the triumphant reappearance, of some new high modernism endowed with all its older power and with fresh life." The repudiation of this would then be the other side of the dichotomy.

The link to this dissertation is clear: post-modernism can be seen as an aesthetic continuation of modernism's aesthetic. It is, in one sense, modernism's very extension, its answer to the way in which its aesthetics have been institutionalised and sublimated. But modernism's aesthetics, as has been made clear, had an ethical dimension to them: the potential for emancipation through enlightenment. Without this ethic, post-modernism's aesthetic, whilst linked to those of modernism, can be viewed as being both regressive and neo-conservative in 'spirit'.

As conclusion, however, Jameson's remarks should be taken into account, when he argues that to place post-modernism in any of the above classifications is erroneous because, "it seems more appropriate to assess the new cultural production within the working hypothesis of a general modification of culture itself within the social restructuration of late capitalism as a system."

Huyssen, in his book After the Great Divide, notes that culture in the last two hundred years has always been marked by a litigious relationship between High Art and mass culture, a relationship, furthermore, that has been, at times, both oppositional and irreconcilable. At the same time, there
have been many marked attempts to bridge this gap. Huyssen gives the example of Brecht's use of the 'vernacular' of popular culture. In this respect, Huyssen, following on from what Adorno and Benjamin had claimed before, states that High Art and popular culture's, "much heralded mutual exclusiveness is really a sign of their secret interdependence ... as modernism hides its envy for the broad appeal of mass culture behind a screen of condescension and contempt, mass culture, saddled as it is with pangs of guilt, yearns for the dignity of serious culture which forever eludes it." This split can be traced back to when culture, in an early stage of capitalist development, broke free from the church and state, and is thus seen as residing outside both culture and the economy - this was 'autonomy', and it was made possible (organised) through the principle of the market economy employed on culture.

The division between High Art and popular culture can be traced, in relation to literature, to the eighteenth century and the growth of both the reading market and the readers themselves. Habermas was largely responsible for placing an historical moment in the Critical Theory of Adorno which, for Huyssen, was a theory of culture that was both closed and 'seemingly timeless', evincing a lack of historicity as has already been discussed. Habermas' postulation is this; that both modernism and mass culture can be traced back to around 1848: it is then when the split occurred. The reason for that split is explained by the European bourgeoisie having to fight two revolutions: the first much heralded one against the monarchy, the second, and at the same time, against the workers to whom the new capitalist class was dependent for future wealth and whose enlightenment rights would have to be suppressed in order for the industrial revolution and capitalism to take hold and function. Thus mass culture was a way to offer new cultural 'orientations' for the newly freed proletariat.

Huyssen, however, notes that while this split between the revolution and counter-revolution is helpful in tracing the rise of mass culture, it fails to acknowledge, "the universalisation of commodity production {that caused – A.M.} mass culture ... to cut across classes in heretofore unknown ways." Huyssen’s contention is that it is not that mass culture began circa 1848, but rather, that the commodification of culture emerged at around this time. Adorno's work does not say much on nineteenth century mass culture with regards to an analyses of either historical or textual importance, and thus one can claim that a strict reading of Adorno's work would indeed yield a thesis of manipulation and resignation – "Blaming the Culture Industry for capitalism's
longevity, however, is metaphysics and not politics. Theoretically, adherence to Adorno's aesthetics may blind us to the ways in which contemporary art, since the demise of classic modernism and the historical avant-garde, represents a new conjuncture which can no longer be grasped in Adornean or other modernist categories." Huyssen's point is that Adorno's split between High Art and popular culture, and the reasons for it (experience and theoretical assumption) can be criticised in a sympathetic discussion.

Huyssen, in this regard, does indeed raise some important points. To begin with, he notes that if the Culture Industry and its products were nothing but commodities without use-value, this would imply that it has no function, and thus Adorno's insistence on the Culture Industry reproducing ideology would not be tenable. In other words, if the products do have a manipulating function they should, at the same time, be a place for both resistance and subversion. Therefore, the, "Culture Industry, after all, does fulfil public functions; it satisfies and legitimises cultural needs which are not all *per se* false or only retroactive; it articulates social contradictions in order to homogenise them. Precisely this ... articulation can become the field of contest and struggle." Therefore post-modernism's linking of both popular and High culture can be a battleground since, after all, if ideology and manipulation occur in the products of the Culture Industry, then so can moments of subversion. This point has already been encountered in the section on elitism. A second point that Huyssen raises is that, whilst Adorno questioned the possibility of total reification of the individual, he never questioned the same possibility with regards to cultural objects, in particular those of the Culture Industry. These limits of the reification of cultural commodities, Huyssen contends, "become evident when one begins to analyse in detail the signifying strategies of those cultural commodities and the mesh of repression and wish fulfilment, of the gratifications, displacement and production of desire which are invariably involved in them and their reception." Furthermore, and equally as important, Huyssen notes that Adorno saw modernism as a response, of sorts, to the Culture Industry. The two, therefore, can be seen to be in a dialectic to the extent that modernism, without the Culture Industry, and an analysis of it, is largely irrelevant. Which leads on to the contention that the constant repetition of social norms is only necessary, as Adorno has stated, because the individual is not and *cannot* be totally controlled, otherwise there would not be any need for this very constant repetition.
Albrecht Wellmer's defence (or reconstruction) of Adorno's autonomous art theory into a less dogmatic and more open theory, which highlights its ability for communication, should be briefly noted. Wellmer's point is that, "just as Habermas attempts to expand the concept of rationality through a theory of 'communicative rationality', so too one could expand the concept of authentic art to include art that links aesthetic experience with moral education and politics, and which thus produces a wealth of potential effects." 

Neo-Adorneans such as Russell Berman, furthermore, seem unable to find any evidence of autonomous art in current cultural production, citing such luminaries as Beckett and Schoenberg as the only practitioners of this type of art. This, so the argument goes, ignores important contributions in the arts by, for instance, feminist writers. A problem here, for Kellner, at least, is that without having any examples of autonomous art, it is difficult to sustain any type of critique of the post-modern, which, for Berman, is dismissed as nothing more than the products of the Culture Industry.

Now that the essentials of emancipation and repression within culture have been discussed in detail, the third part of this dissertation, the modernism/post-modernism debate, will be tackled. In addition to what has already been discussed, there are certain other questions that must be looked at. For instance, the idea that if (as has happened) modernist works privileged by Adorno, such as those of Beckett or Joyce or Picasso, have been taken in by the mainstream - after all, modernism is now the staple diet of museums, universities and galleries; even office paintings are generally of the modernist variety - do they, and can they still retain the emancipatory elements that were found within their aesthetic? Can they still hold the promise of utopia when toothpaste and toilet paper are sold using typically avant-garde composition? And further, if it is true that post-modernism attaches to itself modernist aesthetics, can the works of post-modernism, relieved, as they are, of the emancipatory metanarratives that informed the works of modernism, still have the effect of containing within them traces of enlightenment and emancipation?

In order to answer these questions, modernism must be investigated with the goal of finding its aims and purposes and, also, to discover whether post-modernism is a continuation of the aims and ambitions of modernism. Kellner has suggested that the rebellion of the 60s (where, for Kellner, an entire generation socialised by the Culture Industry rebelled against middle-class
values) could be ascribed to 'rebellious forms' evinced in popular movies (Dean, for instance, and
Brando) as well as, "media images of beatniks\textsuperscript{245} and bohemia as well as advertisements for sex,
drugs, student rebellion, and the counter-culture\textsuperscript{246} broadcast in the 1960s as they\textsuperscript{247} sought to
capture an audience by addressing the issues and symbols of the day. It is conceivable that the
attempts to de-legitimise student rebellion and the counter-culture may have surreptitiously
advertised this."\textsuperscript{248}

With this in mind, the modernism / post-modernism debate will now be discussed. But as a way
of concluding this section, Helmut Dubiel's point on revolutionary theory must be quickly noted,
when he places Adorno into the context of Marx's proletariat revolution. Here one can see why
Adorno, in the later stages of his life, came to see the proletariat as being no longer the subject of
history.\textsuperscript{249} "According to Marx, revolutionary theory becomes practical by seizing the masses.
Horkheimer and Adorno maintain that such a firm of political praxis is now displaced in the long
run, on the one hand, by the conditioning of social experience through propaganda and through
the Culture Industry,\textsuperscript{250} in fascism in the United States, and, on the other hand, by the
transformation of Marxism into a Stalinist science of legitimisation."\textsuperscript{251}

9.1. Institutionalised Modernism

This dissertation has dealt with the 'safe' modernism that was formed under what Jameson has
called the Theory of Containment in the USA. At the same time, much has been said on
modernism's emancipatory potential as expressed in the works of the Frankfurt School. A final
consideration remains, however, and that is the problem of the institutionalisation of modernism,
or, as Russel Berman calls it, the 'Routinization of Charismatic Modernism'. Put another way, the
question that needs to be asked is this: If modernism has been appropriated into institutions such
as university programmes and advertising campaigns, then what has become of its enlightening,
emancipatory potential?

Russel Berman, in \textit{Modern Culture and Critical Theory}, offers an alternative evaluation of the
historical consequences of modernism – a reading that subverts the common status of modernism
from one of oppositional force to one that helped, albeit unintentionally, to bring to fruition the
bureaucratization of society. Evidence for this, for Berman, rests on the avant-garde of the early 20th Century, and their attempt at the re-organisation of everyday life. The features of this project include ‘invocations of crisis’ (do this, or things will turn ugly); ‘cadre leadership’, where a small group of elitists hold the torch of emancipation; and ‘life commitment’, where the lifestyle of the elite is shown to mirror that of their revolutionary thoughts, theories and ideals. With these three features, the avant-garde opened the way to bureaucratisation since the invocation of crisis leads to a “motive for bureaucratic administration. By legitimating the notion of a leadership cadre ontologically superior to the majority of the population, vanguardism produces the bureaucratic actors. And by insisting on the need to regulate all features of everyday life – the ineluctability of life-styles – vanguardism describes the space in which bureaucratic control can operate.”

This reading by Berman, although from an historical perspective, has much in common with the New Historicist readings, especially in their response to the liberal cultural critics such as Trilling. Michael Rogin, for instance, saw Kafka’s *In the Penal Colony* as an “internalisation of social authority that supported the oppressive power of the modern state.”

Berman’s point is that modernism, while maintaining an oppositional and adversarial ideal, at the same time still contributed to the advancement of the modern bureaucracy. And with the arrival of the totally administered state, modernism itself - so long its opponent - has become obsolete through a process that Berman calls ‘routinization’. The reasons for this are as follows: firstly, the middle class, whose tastes were so often the focus of modernist aesthetic attacks, have cased to be the ‘hegemonic carriers of taste’ and, as such, the aesthetics of estrangement, for instance, are no longer able to function. This change in the realm of so-called High Art occurs at the same time as the products of the Culture Industry become increasingly industrialised. Secondly, with the institutionalisation and ‘cross-pollination’ of High Art and popular culture into one another, innovative works of modernism are incorporated into university departments and the mainstream. Finally, the works of high modernism, within a continuously expanding publishing market, allows these formally inventive aesthetic works a wider audience, with the result that this type of innovation becomes part of the mainstream cultural taste. Examples abound within popular film and advertising campaigns, and, as such, with High Art and popular culture combining, the ideas of modernism, where form functioned to somehow shock the middle-class, has become obsolete in effect.
The incorporation of modernism’s aesthetic effects, such as estrangement techniques, into mass culture has made any talk of oppositional qualities and functions untenable. As Berman notes, “Because of this multifaceted integration of aesthetic culture, the adversarial claims that marked the modernist self-understanding of artists and literary intellectuals hardly continue to seem convincing.”254 Once appropriated into universities, for instance, (what Berman calls hegemonic institutions), works by Joyce and Kafka become part of the administered state. And even more insidiously, appropriated as such, they also become allies to the bureaucratisation of life.

Berman notes that this, “duplicity of the aesthetic cultural opposition to bureaucracy becomes increasingly evident after the institutionalisation of modernism, certain consequences follow for literary intellectuals. All of them are hallmarks of the postmodernist position. The implausibility of the adversarial stance leads to a phenomenon that has been addressed as the ‘disappearance of the author.’ In terms of public life, this means the gradual retreat of authors from regular intervention in political debates. … This is to say not that all authors or literary texts lose political significance, but that the role of a major author as a public ‘conscience of the nation’ no longer seems desirable or credible. A similar conclusion may have been marked in France by Foucault’s death.”255

With the theoretical alliance of modernism linked to the rise of the totally administered state, as has been discussed, the modernist (and, as a consequence, all) literature is seen as being either authoritarian and/or patriarchal. Narrative is interpreted deconstructively, for example, and will show the implied western metaphysics that reside therein; as such, “Literary life is consequently asked to surrender its historical role as a medium of cognition and critique of social experience. This critical paradigm shift is lodged, it is true, in a collection of radical gestures, but at the same time all discussions of emancipation are prohibited as vestiges of an anachronistic Western metaphysics.”256

Read in this way, it can be said that the ideal of modernism, that of returning beauty and autonomy from the aesthetic into the realm of ‘reality’ (as is discussed by Peter Burger in ‘The Decline of the Modern Age’) has succeeded – the aestheticisation of everyday life, as Berman terms it, is seemingly complete. And, simultaneously, the avant-garde techniques and innovations that were, in the initial phases of modernism, theorised as leading to large scale social
transformations, are now employed in the selling of commodities. Like the music video, modernist forms are used to sell records. In all, as Berman saliently states, “Modernist art, despite and because of its adversarial claims, found its home in the enclaves of museums; by suppressing any adversarial claims, postmodernism thrives on a reinvigorated market, as if the deregulation of culture could only mean a return to market exchange and an intensified commodification of art.”

One can readily see, whether it be in the work of Habermas or Berman, that the project of modernity - the revolutionary, oppositional, reactionary elements of modernist art (evidenced in the use of experimental aesthetics) - has not led to the whole-scale changes that it had predicted for itself. Rather, modernism may even have unwittingly aided the onset of the totally administered state much like Leninism, opposed to the state bureaucracy of Czarist Russia, created, as Berman correctly notes and to which history readily testifies, its own mammoth bureaucracy.

If one can readily admit to modernism’s failure or success, the inevitable question that needs to be asked is whether post-modernism still holds any of the emancipatory goals and aims that were, in a manner of speaking, in-built within the modernist aesthetic. Modernism’s success, or failure, is based around what one takes as its end-goal. If that, as has been posited in this dissertation, was an emancipatory aim, in terms of what Marcuse and Adorno and Horkheimer and Marx conceived as freedom, then that project has not been fulfilled – and further, in line with Berman, it is impossible to view modernism as still, in any way, an oppositionary or enlightening force. Thus this dissertation must seek, as a way to conclude, post-modernism’s position in terms of this goal of enlightenment, this emancipatory potential and freedom so long the subject of discourse. In order to achieve this, one of post-modernism’s ‘fathers’, Lyotard, will be initially discussed.

9.2. Lyotard and Post-modernism

In his introduction to The Post-modern Condition, Lyotard notes that, “the object of this study is the condition of knowledge in the most highly developed societies. I have decided to use the word post-modern to describe that condition. The word is in current use on the American
continent amongst sociologists and critics; it designates the state of our culture following the transformations which, since the end of the nineteenth century, have altered the game rules for science, literature and the arts. The present study will consign these transformations in the context of the crisis of the narrative.\textsuperscript{258} The self-legitimisation of discourses, such as the political or the scientific, is what is examined by Lyotard. As Lyotard writes, "I define post-modern as incredulity toward metanarratives."\textsuperscript{259}

Before the concept of the metanarrative is discussed, it should be noted that these types of grand theories (Marxism and Critical Theory being examples) are no longer, for Lyotard, tenable in a post-industrial society, especially when the evidence of the cold facts are examined against these metanarratives' Grand promises. Modernism, it seems safe to say in light of present circumstances and with what has been discussed previously in this dissertation, never did result in the emancipation of the world. Here, however, it is important to understand the following in Lyotard's term post-modernity, as elaborated by Readings – post-modernism "was but a provocative way to put the struggle in the foreground of the field of knowledge. Post-modernity is not a new age, it is the re-writing of some features modernity had tried or pretended to gain, particularly in founding its legitimisation upon the purpose of the general emancipation of mankind. But such a re-writing... was for a long time active in modernity itself."\textsuperscript{260}

What should be foregrounded is that post-modernism, for Lyotard, is not something that happens after modernism, in a chronological order; Lyotard himself notes that the modern work of art, for instance, can only be deemed so if it was, at first, post-modern, the reasoning being that if post-modernism is the 'moment' that follows modernism, the art that is then produced must have some defining characteristics (a pastiche, for example). Further, if post-modernism begins to assume certain formal characteristics and properties, it is no longer post-modern – it will, presumably, suffer the same sublimated fate of the works of high-modernism. In other words, as Readings explains, "once the post-modern is formally recognisable it is no longer opening up a hole in representation; rather than testifying to the unpresentable, it will have presented it. Lyotard's account of post-modernism implies that, if resistant to anything, post-modernism resists the assurance of a conscious stance or positions of knowledge, critique or historical survey. This seems to involve a questioning of the political (or the economic) as the 'last instance' in which the truth of all things will be revealed."\textsuperscript{261}
Furthermore, it is important to explain certain concepts as used by Lyotard. 'Event', for instance, can only be understood, 'out' of time. For instance, if one takes the Renaissance as an event that changed art forever, it can also be said that it is only after, when the Renaissance was no longer an event, that its repercussions could be understood and even measured. As Readings notes in this regard, \(^\text{262}\) "the event is the radically singular happening which cannot be represented within a general history without the loss of its singularity, its reduction to the moment. The time of the event is post-modern in that the event cannot be understood at the time, as it happens, because its singularity is alien to the language or structure of understanding to which it occurs. ... the time of the event is that which is unaccountable in representation, appearing as either the difference inscription makes to the temporality of knowledge, or the difference unrecognisability makes to the institutional commodification of art." \(^\text{263}\)

To return to post-modernism and Lyotard's so-called grand or metanarratives, these terms and the reasons why post-industrial society should evaluate them with such scepticism will be briefly examined, as an aid to understanding why all discourses (freedom and emancipation being examples) should, in Lyotard's vision, be abolished. In the face of the events that have occurred in the last century, for example, one can see that these grand narratives, or their promises and theories, have all been, seemingly, contradicted by the real world. Modernism did not change the world: socialism, as evidenced in the Eastern Bloc, turned out to be even more repressive (if human potential is taken as a barometer) than capitalism. A metanarrative, is, for Readings, "the organisation of the succession of historical moments in terms of the projected revelation of a meaning. Modernity's metanarrative is that of a project which works through a rupture with the past that will perform the emancipation of a universal subject of history." \(^\text{264}\) In this regard, one can look at the examples; Marxism and the deterministic vision of the proletariat revolution, or, with regards to Parsons and the idea of a functional society where the generation of profit and technological improvements would bring about a just society, all of these metanarratives have, for Lyotard, not resulted in the expected conditions. The consequence is that these metanarratives can no longer be accepted as possible or even credible.

This destruction of the grand narratives has left culture with what are termed by Lyotard as little (petit) narratives. Since culture's representations (of emancipation, for instance, in the works of the Frankfurt School) are so varied, it is impossible to find a universal 'subscription', or a
universal explanation and prediction of what society holds in store. Readings notes that, "culture is not one filed ... but a series of local or minoritarian representations organised by narratives. Culture as a style of inquiry is thus dissolved into an expanded field of littler narratives." One can link this to Lyotard's contention of the post-industrial incredulity towards metanarratives.

With regards to the legitimisation of knowledge (or the epistemology of knowledge), Lyotard notes the following types; the first is what can be viewed as the Classical positivistic stance, where the apparent truth is to be found in the object's external description - because this, it would be said by the positivists, is the only way an objectivity towards the subject/object under investigation can be maintained. Lyotard's point here, as elaborated by Readings, is that the positivist strand is the primacy of the narrative instance, where the senders and receivers in the classic communication model are seen as secondary to the actual act of narration: "Classical positivism claims speaker and audiences as mere contingencies upon the truth of the narrated. Knowledge is purely referential, narration a thing that happens to knowledge." Modernism, on the other hand, and still using the communication model as reference to the point, is seen, by Lyotard, as the privileging of the sender and the receiver over the narrated. The reason for this is the legitimisation of knowledge. An example here, for purposes of elucidation, is that of the explorer who, having discovered Niagara Falls, returned to New York only to be confronted by scepticism - when asked what he had in the line of proof, he replied, simply, that he had seen it.

Readings, however, in line with Lyotard, makes the following crucial point: "Modernist rationalism reduces narratives to the effect of consensus in the production of a total subject who will serve as the end of the narrative, whether 'man' or 'the proletariat as subject of history.' Knowledge may take the form of narrative, but it can only do this as an instrument of a subjective consciousness which is itself obstructed from the narrative, which does not itself require to be narrated." However, what must be born in mind here is that relativism itself is, also, merely another instance of the metanarrative since relativism (which Readings calls modernism's negative moment), in order to explain away positivism, would call it just another way of seeing the world. However, with this very admission, relativism (just as positivism) becomes another metanarrative, since, in its explanation of the subjectivity of all knowledge, it assumes that all knowledge is thus subjective and explainable by it (Relativism). However, if relativism explains everything as 'another way of seeing things', then - like positivism which also
wishes to explain all - it is nothing but a metanarrative. Readings, in this regard, notes that, "relativism must legitimate its own claim to be more than just another way of looking at things by imposing its subjective consciousness as a metanarrative, the way of describing all ways of looking at things ... The characteristic of both classicism and modernism is thus to erect one instance of narrative to the point where it governs narration from outside, becomes a metanarrative." 271

Lyotard himself explains this in *The Post-modern Condition*, where he elaborates on what he believes to be the properties of knowledge: "The narrative 'roots' (sender, addressee, hero) are organised that the right to occupy the post of sender receives the following double-grounding: it is based upon the fact of having occupied the part of addressee, and of having been recounted oneself, by virtue of the name one bears by a previous narrative - in other words, having been positioned as the diegetic reference of other narrative events. The knowledge transmitted by these narratives is in no way limited to the functions of enunciations; it determines in a single stroke what one must say in order to be heard, what one must listen to in order to speak, and what role one must play (on the scene of diegetic reality) to be the object of narrative." 272

Both modernism and classicism therefore became metanarratives - this was achieved by both administering to narration from a point beyond it. This, in classicism, comes from the privileging of the narrative itself, whereas in modernism, privileging of the sender achieves the same goal - the metanarrative of knowledge. Lyotard notes that there is no tenable position beyond or outside the narration. Readings makes the point that, "the post-modern condition privileges neither referent, narrating subject, nor addressee. The referent is the object of a narrative; the subject is always already placed within narration. No metanarrative instance makes narrative its object; we are in the expanded field of 'little narratives'. 'Little' because they are short, because they resist being turned into 'grand' or metanarratives. The grounds of this resistance lie not so much in an internal equilibrium between narrative instances as in the way in which language particles are linked together." 273

This is where Lyotard accounts for narrative as figure and here it is necessary to briefly explain what is meant by this term; the figure here is the 'other' that is seen to exist within every discourse, and serves to disrupt the rule of representation. Or, as Readings would phrase it, "it is
Lyotard is expressing the idea that history, or that which has taken place, will contradict the threads of the metanarratives. In The Differend, Lyotard demonstrates the point by 'showing up', as it were, all the great narratives - his examples for the contradiction between the grand narratives and reality are, for instance, 1911 and 1929 refuting the ideals of economic liberalism, and Budapest 1956 (to name but a few) refuting the doctrines of historical materialism. Thus one can see how Lyotard comes to the conclusion, aided by the cold light of history (particularly European history), that the grand narratives never did stand up to the universalistic hegemonic claims that they made. Thus Lyotard can say that this is the post-modern era; it is this scepticism toward the grand narratives that points to our living in the post-modern epoch. The idea that there can be an overreaching universal theory that will not be destroyed by the facts, Lyotard calls the 'abyss of heterogeneity' in The Differend.

Before discussing this, however, a quick note on another French post-modernist, Baudrillard, needs to be made, and that is that we now live in an age of illusion and mass-media propaganda, a time of mass-publicity and what Baudrillard refers to as the obscenity that puts an end to all representation. It is, for Baudrillard, no longer possible to look back at the grand ideas of enlightenment to find there the truth (as opposed to falsehood, were this possible, theoretically, in the first place). As Norris writes: "Reality just is what we are currently given to make of it by these various forms of seductive illusions. In fact we might as well give up using such terms, since they tend to suggest that there is still some genuine distinction to be drawn between truth and untruth, 'science' and 'ideology', knowledge and what is presently ‘good in the way of belief'.

On the contrary, says Baudrillard, if there is one thing we should have learned by now it is the total obsolescence of all such ideas, along with the enlightenment metanarrative myths."275

(An interesting aside here, however, is the point that if all truth is falsehood, then this very statement itself is open to speculation. If all is false, then the actual statement that all is false must, by necessity, be false itself - and that the truth of all metanarratives being false in reality is, itself, a falsehood). For Baudrillard, the truth is only about how persuasively one can use the
mass media and one's own powers of persuasion; there is no truth behind the illusions and the lies, because even these truths are illusions and lies themselves. Thus can be seen that Baudrillard, albeit in a more extreme manner, like Lyotard, believes in the abolishment of all discourses that point to some great universal homogenic truth.\textsuperscript{276}

Returning to Lyotard, he believes that Habermas is giving the world another grand narrative when he notes that, "We no longer have recourse to the grand narratives - we can resort neither to the dialectic of Spirit nor even to the emancipation of humanity as a validation for post-modern scientific discourse."\textsuperscript{277} Lyotard would then accuse Habermas of providing another universalistic philosophy. Lyotard notes that in the last forty years, language has played an important (if not leading) part in the sciences – as evidence, he uses the example of computer languages, phonology, etc. The importance of this, with reference to this dissertation, resides in the fact that science is a discourse. Lyotard continues by explaining the changing status of knowledge in the so-called post-industrial societies, and with the technological and scientific advances, knowledge and how it is acquired, used and even learned is also changing. In this regard, Lyotard notes that, "knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorised in a new production; in both cases, the god is exchange. Knowledge ceases to be an end in itself, it loses its 'use-value'."\textsuperscript{278}

It is, for Lyotard, this very knowledge that will widen the gap between developed and underdeveloped countries, and it is this knowledge as power, furthermore, that Lyotard predicts will be the battleground of the future. With regards to legitimisation, Lyotard poses the following question: "who decides what knowledge is, and who knows what needs to be decided?"\textsuperscript{279} Lyotard's answer rests in what Wittgenstein called language games.

Language games, to begin with, and using Lyotard's example, are like the rules of chess, thus designating what moves can be carried forth at any time - or, in other words, the rules governing the game and the pieces in the game. Lyotard relates three observations about these language games:

(1) The above mentioned rules do not (and cannot) be their own legitimisation; in fact, it is the players that have a contract between themselves\textsuperscript{280} and which leads on to the assertion that,
(2) if there are no rules, there exists no game, with the consequence that the slightest modification of the rules will obviously change the entire game, and which leads to the assertion,

(3) that an utterance, any utterance, should be regarded as just another move in this game.

It is in these language games that Lyotard states (referring to the 'antagonistics of language') that to speak is to fight. Methodologically, society has been explained, in this century at least, in two distinct ways - one is the functional whole as portrayed by the work of Talcott Parsons, where the society functions as a whole and everything is a component within it, and the second is the dysfunctional contradictions of a split society as embodied in the work of Marx. Both, naturally, are prime examples of metanarratives. The crucial point here, however is this: “it is impossible to know what the state of knowledge is - in other words, the problems its developments and distributions are facing today - without knowing something of the society within which it is situated. And today more than ever, knowing about that society involves first of all choosing what approach the inquiry will take, and that necessarily means choosing how society can answer. One can decide that the principle role of knowledge is as an indispensable element in the functioning of society, and act in accordance with that decision, only if one has already decided that society is a giant machine.

“Conversely, then, one can count on its critical function, and orient its developments and distribution, only after it has been decided that society does not form an integral whole, but remains haunted by a principle of opposition. The alternative seems clear: it is a choice between the homogeneity and the intrinsic duality of the social, between functional and critical knowledge. But the decision seems difficult, or arbitrary.”

In order to understand Lyotard's point, his example of an ordinary discourse between two friends as opposed to an institution and the communication possibilities within it, will be used. With the two friends, a multitude of games will be played in the following manner: “the interlocutors use any available communication, changing games from one utterance to the next: questions, requests, assertions, and narratives are launched pall-mall into battle. The war is not without rules, but the rules allow and encourage the greatest possible flexibility of utterance.” With an institution, however, one can immediately see Lyotard's contention of constraints imposed before a statement...
can be termed admissible, and, furthermore, these constraints limit the discursive possibilities, thereby allowing (and simultaneously dis-allowing) what is said. The repercussions are, as Lyotard writes, that, "orders in the army, prayer in church, denotation in the schools, narration in families, questions in philosophy, performativity in business. Bureaucratisation is the outer limit of this tendency."\textsuperscript{283}

However, Lyotard takes this point further by arguing that these limits or constraints are the very stakes of the language games, and, therefore, the changing or moving of the limits of the institutions are possible, and, furthermore, when the constraints are unmoving, the stakes are no longer important, or, put alternatively, "the boundaries only stabilise when they cease to be stakes in the game."\textsuperscript{284}

From here, Lyotard discusses the important concept of 'narrative' knowledge, and the concomitant discussion of legitimisation of knowledge - for instance, scientific knowledge; Lyotard puts it thus: "Knowledge \{savoir\} in general cannot be reduced to science, not even to learning \{connaissance\}. Learning is the set of statements which, to the exclusion of all other statements, denote or describe objects and may be declared true or false. Science is a subset of learning. It is also composed of denotative statements, but imposes two supplementary conditions on their acceptability: the objects to which they refer must be available for repeated access, in other words, they must be accessible in explicit condition of observation; and it must be possible to decide whether or not a given statement pertains to the language judged relevant by the experts."\textsuperscript{285}

Knowledge, however, is seen as being more than just the evaluation of truth. Lyotard gives the example of criteria such as efficiency, justice, happiness, etc. and thus one can say that knowledge is, "an extensive array of competence-building measures and is the only form embodied in a subject constituted by the various areas of competence composing it."\textsuperscript{286} With regards to what was known as 'legitimating statements opinion' or, who knows and who doesn't, Lyotard notes that this is what denotes the culture of a certain people at a certain time. The point being made here, to summarise, is that all knowledge is narration. The conventional story, for instance, will prescribe the 'criteria of competence' (an example being myths) and, simultaneously, what can be done within the society (the hero as successful, or vice-versa, for instance). One can then find many examples of language games, such as denotative statements, interrogative statements and evaluative statements, all of
which leads Lyotard to this point; to be a sender in the communication triad of sender, addressee, hero (in a conventional story), one must be grounded by two points. (1) The sender must have, at one point, been an addressee (i.e., been told the story by another sender) and (2), "having been positioned as the diegetic reference of other narrative events. The knowledge transmitted by these narrations is in no way limited to the functions of enunciation; it determines in a single stroke what one must say in order to be heard, what one must listen to in order speak, and what role one must play (on the scene of diegetic reality) to be the object of a narrative." 287

This is a brief explanation on the legitimisation of knowledge and science; it is found in narrative knowledge. "This way of inquiring into socio-political legitimacy combines with the new scientific attitude: the name of the hero is the people, sign of legitimacy is the people's consensus, and their mode of creativity norms is deliberation. The notion of progress is a necessary outgrowth of this. It represents nothing other than the movement by which knowledge is presumed to accumulate - but this movement is extended to the new socio-political subject. The people debate among themselves about what is just or unjust in the same way that the scientific community debates about what is true or false; they accumulate civil laws just as scientists accumulate scientific laws, they protect their rules of consensus just as the scientists produce new 'paradigms' to revise their rules in light of what they have learned." 288

This is traditional knowledge; it serves as background to Lyotard's contentions on the post-modern, and the seeming impossibility of the grand narratives. What should be noted is that any knowledge that cannot legitimate itself (knowledge legitimates itself by 'reduplicating' itself by re-applying its own statements in a so-called second level discourse that will legitimate it) would now no longer be a science, but 'vulgar' knowledge, an example being that of ideology. Lyotard notes that the 'crisis' of scientific knowledge is, in fact, a crisis of legitimisation, and thus sociology and psychology, for example, begin to overlap. Science, as with other discourses, legitimates itself through language games and is thus, like other discourses, "a closed door. Between 'the door is closed' and 'open the door' there is no relation of consequences as defined in prepositional logic. The two statements belong to two autonomous sets of rules defining different kinds of relevance, and therefore of competence. Here, the effect of dividing reason into cognitive or theoretical reason on the one hand, and practical reason on the other, is to attack the legitimacy of the discourse of science. Not directly, but indirectly, by revealing that it is a language game with its own rules (of which the a
priori conditions of knowledge in Kant provide a first glimpse) and that it has no special calling to supervise the game of praxis (nor the game of aesthetics for that matter). The game of science is thus put on a par with the others.\textsuperscript{289}

Thus science cannot legitimate itself, and neither can it legitimate other discourses. And therefore one can argue, as Lyotard does, that the loss of the grand narratives will not lead to barbarity, but rather, that the acceptance that knowledge and legitimisation comes from their own linguistic practice and communicational interaction.

Legitimisation by performativity, or the so-called quest for performativity, where there is an input/output relationship and where the system into which the input is placed is stable, does not hold water with the pragmatics of post-modern scientific knowledge. Without, however, extending into the entire debate on Lyotard's treatment of science and the legitimisation of paralogy, the following must nevertheless be noted, before Habermas' contention of consensus is discussed; that language games are, for Lyotard, 'heteromorphous' and thus subject to 'heterogeneous sets of pragmatic rules'. Lyotard believes that consensus is not the end of discussion, but rather only a part. The end goal of dialogue, for Lyotard, is paralogy. "This double observation [the heterogeneity of the rules and the search for dissent} destroys a belief that still underlies Habermas' research, namely, that humanity as a collective (universal) subject seeks its common emancipation through the regularisation of the moves permitted on all language games and that the legitimacy of any statement in its contributing to that emancipation."\textsuperscript{290} Lyotard notes that consensus is a 'horizon that can never be reached'.

Seyla Benhabib, in this regard, notes the following: "The new social option is described {by Lyotard – A.M.} as a 'temporary contract', supplanting permanent institutions in the professional, emotional, sexual, cultural, family and international domains, as well as in political affairs."\textsuperscript{291} Performativity, then, is the idea that knowledge is power, but in this quasi-formula, Benhabib, citing Lyotard, notes that science is legitimated through the ever-widening scope of scientific and technological capacity, efficiency, control and output it enables. Thus, "Not only is knowledge power, but power generates access to knowledge, thus preparing for itself a self-perpetuating basis of legitimacy. 'Power ... legitimates science and the law on the basis of their efficiency, and legitimates this efficiency on the basis of science and law ... Thus the growth of power, and its
self-legitimation, are now taking the route of data storage and accessibility, and the operativity of information'. 292

In this overview of post-modernism, the following points should be noted: that firstly postmodernism does not logically follow on from modernism itself (Lyotard’s point on history – its arbitrary nature - supports this reading), and that, secondly, the visions of functionality, like those of Talcott Parsons, or the oppositional visions of, for instance, Marx, are both lumped into the category of metanarrative. These two points demonstrate much on the ethics of post-modernism, and it is this that needs now to be discussed.

9.3. Ethics and Post-modernism

It is not the aim of the dissertation to trace a historical overview of post-modernism other than that which has already been rendered: the aim of this section, rather, is to assemble the pieces of the modernist hope for emancipation and apply these hopes or possibilities on the realm of the post-modern, with the view of ascertaining whether these enlightenment concepts still reside within what is, according to its title, an extension of modernism.

As is evidenced by the Left wing politics of much of Western Europe, the capitalist ideals have become quasi-naturalised. As Terry Eagleton notes: “With Darwinian conformity, much of the cultural left has taken on the colour of its historical environs: if we live in an epoch in which capitalism cannot be successfully challenged, then to all intents and purposes it does not exist. As for Marxism, Lenin was just an ‘elitist’, theory and political organisation are ‘male’ and – a slight intellectual advance this – historical progress is ‘teleology’ and any concern with material production ‘economist’.” 293

The goals of the Enlightenment, as seen to exist within the works of high modernism, have been swept aside by post-modernism. In its understanding of modernism’s complicity in the creation of the ‘modern’ world, (witness modernism’s link with the rise of the bureaucracy), it (post-modernism) has sought to exorcise the ideals of modernism, and with it the underlying ethic which has been noted by this dissertation. But in surrendering this crucial aspect of modernism,
post-modernism has become allied to the consumerism and commodification of culture and art. In its joining of the aesthetics of modernism with popular culture, it has, for Eagleton "unleashed the power of the local, of the regional and the idiosyncratic, and has homogenised them across the globe. Its nervousness of such concepts as the truth has alarmed the bishops and charmed the business executives, just as its compulsion to place words like 'reality' in scare quotes unsettles the pious Burger in the bosom of his family but is music to his ears in his advertising agency."²⁹⁴

Post-modernism's historical relativity²⁹⁵ supposes that there is no logical history that is evolving, from one process to another, much like, it appears, it itself evolved from modernism as modernism, it is noted, grew out of realism. In order to defend itself from this, Eagleton notes that post-modernism sees itself as the negative of modernism: "So perhaps it is the case that modernity, it its day, was real enough – that these notions of progress and dialectic and the rest really did have material effects, really did correspond in some way to a certain historical reality. But in that case post-modernism buys its immunity from epistemological naivety only at the cost of an historicism it finds equally distasteful. It also suggest that we are somehow superior to the past, which might offend its anti-elitist relativism."²⁹⁶

Post-modernism has ended the era of the metanarrative upon which all had to adhere – the world, consequently, has no inherent shape and it, post-modernism, is not another metanarrative that wishes to explain all, as modernism had, with its own grand, all-encompassing theory. Cultural differences and plurality are accepted as relative, while ethics and morality are things that stand without foundation – in short, everything is relative, including the truth, the narrative, history and meaning itself. And so too this idea of freedom with which this dissertation has been concerned. "...this subject,"²⁹⁷ which was as revolutionary in its day as it was deeply flawed, was never in fact all that securely founded, since its very autonomy tends to rip it from the world which might lend it some anchorage, leaving it rooted in nothing more solid that itself. It is for this reason that its euphoria is also a kind of nausea, as the Romantics were well aware. The freedom of the subject puts it tragically at odds with Nature; but if it is grounded in the sense of being integrated with the world, then this reinforces it in one way only to undermine it in another. History is on the side of the free subject, but only by gathering it to its bosom and so constraining its autonomy. Either the subjects hangs vertiginously in the air, compelled in solitary self-confinement to legislate for itself, its inner freedom mysteriously at odds with its empirical

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determination; or it is buoyed up by a history which is itself an unfolding narrative of emancipation, but thereby risks being reduced to no more an effect of it. It is a choice, more or less, between Kant and Hegel.”

That quote had been reproduced for its remarkable elegance. Post-modernism suggests that the subject is free since there are no more metanarratives to imprison him/her – there are no more grand theories of terror, as Lyotard saw residing in the Enlightenment. But this view has repercussions: “The dilemma of freedom and foundation is thus ‘resolved’ – but only at the risk of eliminating the free subject itself. For it is hard to see that one can really speak of freedom here at all, any more than a particle of dust dancing in the sunlight is free. As far as any ‘positive’ doctrine of freedom goes, a world which really was random would not stay still long enough for me to realise my freedom, in the sense of taking the reasonably determinate steps involved in furthering my chosen projects. Freedom demands closure, a paradox which post-modernism seems reluctant to entertain. This is one reason why its idea of freedom is often enough the ‘negative’ conception of it espoused by Classical liberalism, and just as full of holes.”

Post-modernism’s freedom is a suggestion that it (freedom) is in a constant state of flux – that no sooner has one freedom been attained than that freedom will be re-appraised and deconstructed – thus the lack of finality to which Eagleton refers. A question of, how far is free? And, again, if there is no closure, then freedom becomes an empty concept – as it is viewed in post-modernism, it appears that freedom is relative – and in any event, if there is no theory here, no metanarrative of freedom, then what is the difference, ethically, between freedom and fascism? Since there is no grounding, as Eagleton calls it, no foundation, then who is to say that fascism is ‘bad’ anyway, and freedom something to fight for? “For what stable identity is there to be emancipated? Is not the whole notion of emancipation just another variant of an inner/outer, expressive/repressive paradigm which has been long since deconstructed? Perhaps, then, emancipation would not be some sort of process or event, but would consist simply in recognising how things really are with the subject, which is to say no way in particular – how it is, even now, ‘free’ in the sense of being diffuse, decentred, provisional, and how it is merely our metaphysical rage for order which frustrates perception. It would seem, then, that we could be free simply by taking thought – by substituting a true conception of the self for a false one. But this not only involves an epistemology with which postmodernism feels less than comfortable; it also repeats, in rather
more modish a guise, the traditional errors of philosophic idealism. Whatever is restricting the self, it is unlikely that simply changing our view of ourselves will wish it away, as the more radical currents of postmodernism are well enough aware. For these political trends, it is not changing one’s mind which abolishes grand narratives, as though they would simply vanish if we were all to stop looking at them, but certain material transformations in advanced capitalism itself.\textsuperscript{300}

Without an underlying ethic, an evaluation of culture will not turn up the materialistic contradictions under which the novel, the reader and the writer, for instance, are forced to function beneath. It is all well and fine to look at the social relativity of society, of the differences and the so-called Other and celebrate in its difference, but the Ideal of freedom, as has been posited throughout this dissertation, will not materialise simply by wishing it, or, indeed, by pretending that the vast majority of mankind doesn’t function beneath a system which exploits all in the name of profit. Allowing – or succumbing to the fight for – universal suffrage, to put this crudely, is, from a liberal perspective, a welcome improvement: but the freedom to vote for the already determined, the freedom to become a wage-slave is not, when all is said and done, quite the freedom that the Enlightenment had promised. It is certainly not the freedom as envisaged by Marx and other proponents of Marxist metanarratives. Thus is this ‘post’-modernism post-freedom? Or has this ideal now simply been left behind for the little freedoms gained. As Eagleton asks, has postmodernism rejected, “the notion of human equality along with the idea of historical progress? The emancipation of women as well as the working class? The belief in individual freedom and conscience as well as in the sovereignty of Reason?”\textsuperscript{301} Indeed, it would appear that the idea of revolution, as Eagleton correctly remarks, may have been discarded by post-modernism, but as the ex-Soviet Union testified, these huge moments still occur in reality and are, as such, a testament more to the ideals of a rejected modernism than a post-modernism whose history is one of randomness, of no logical progression (and progress) from one era to the next.

In its one-dimensional view of history, in its determination to ground everything into the here and now without the foundation and reasons and (potential) answers from any historical metanarratives, post-modernism betrays, “the dead, along with the majority of the living.”\textsuperscript{302} A history of exploitation makes the post-modernist vision of history - that of relativity and
randomness - appear questionable. After all, exploitation seems like a metanarrative that never simply vanishes, no matter what relative history is at play. "Would it not loom up for us as the most extraordinary coincidence – that a human history which according to some is just the ceaseless chance twist of the kaleidoscope should again and again settle its pieces into the patterns of scarcity and oppression? Why would it not be occasionally punctuated with episodes of peace and love? Why is there that in history which seems to resist definitive transformation, as a kind of internal drag or weighting?"303 The point is this: if all is relative, then why should it be that, "History, for the great majority of men and women who have lived and died, has been a take of unremitting labour and oppression, of suffering and degradation – so much so that, as Schopenhauer had the courage to confess, it might well have been preferable for many people never to have been born at all."304

It is a question that, without an underlying ethic of an emancipatory goal, cannot be answered: it is a question of ethics, ethics that post-modernism finds difficult to ask itself, for an ethic, after all, would suggest some type of metanarrative, at least on first inspection. It is a matter of looking at the genocide in Africa and Europe and asking the question – is it people alone that are responsible for these ‘inhuman’ acts, or do they act this way because of their material conditions? Could poverty, misery and disease, in short, be a reason for the barbarity that scars so much of the world, rather than merely ‘otherness’? Eagleton305 notes that: "One can have reasonable faith that this record might alter if one is able to account in some degree for its moral direness in non-moral terms – in terms, for example, of the kind of material conditions which bring about a permanent state of warfare, conditions which give rise to oppressive states and which make human exploitation the order of the day. There is no need to imagine that this would account for all human viciousness, or that it would relieve individual human beings of moral responsibility, or that changing these material conditions would produce a race of Cordelias. It is just a matter of recognising that to be good you have to be well-heeled, even if to be too well heeled breeds vices of its own. Most human beings placed in conditions of poverty and oppression will tend not to behave at their best …"306

Eagleton’s argument is further clarified in his reading of capitalism’s progressive tendencies which have already been mentioned - namely, and as Marx noted, that in its very quest for profit, it creates the material conditions for the freedoms that were analysed at the outset of this
dissertation. Creating this material condition, this dream of a social order ‘free of toil and want’, comes with a price – it is this dialectic that was meant to bring, deterministically, the onset of a free social order. But the theory, it seems, even the determinism, when transported from the confines of the ideological into the cold light of day, never did materialise. Like the project of modernity whose theory of enlightenment was, eventually, encapsulated and allied to the rise of the bureaucratic state, the determinism of Marxism was shown as not being feasible in the ‘real’ world. Reasons are posited by Eagleton as follows “Might this, for example, have to do with the fact that the realisation of individual freedom in the economic sphere then ends up undermining freedom (along with justice and equality) in society as a whole? Might not the anarchy of the marketplace necessarily breed an authoritarian state? Might not the forms of instrumental reason needed to control a hostile environment also be used to shackle and suppress human beings themselves?”

Modernism, like capitalism, contained its own contradictions, its own dialectic – as such, the project itself was one doomed from the start. It is argued that those that have suffered and toiled to bring mankind to a stage where they no longer have to work for concrete needs, have sacrificed their freedom for the freedom of others: just as in ancient Greece where the slaves worked for the material needs of the elite that were allowed space solely to ‘be’. Examples of great ideals filtered into the ‘real’ world and mutating into their opposites abound, not least the glimpses of socialism and communism that have blighted the last century. The question of whether this metanarrative, this hope for freedom, is totally void is one that Eagleton questions by noting that post-modernism, in inheriting these ideals, rejected them and, “the tragedy of a history whose ideals were bound to ring hollow to its inheritors because it was structurally incapable of giving them flesh. Postmodernism is in some sense the Oedipal child of that age, squirming with embarrassment at the gap between the big talk of the father and the feeble deeds. Because bourgeois society is a puny patriarch, incapable of universalising its ideas of freedom and justice and autonomy, its very conception of the universal becomes corrupted by this fact. But this is different from arguing that universality is specious as such – a move which pays modernity the extravagant compliment of having defined the concept the only possible way. There is little to be gained by replacing the abstract assertion of universality with the equally abstract rejection of it.”
Literature not only reflects social reality, but it also legitimises. As such, if culture ceases to exist somehow above the world and reality, if it ceases to be where values and ethics are valorised, in favour of a commercial culture that legitimises solely the system as it is, then culture, instead of existing as an oppositional force, becomes just another instrument of the status quo, as is evidenced, indeed, in the works of the Culture Industry. In this regard, Eagleton notes that, “if the aesthetic cannot articulate that value, then where else, in a progressively degraded society, is there to go? If the materialists can get their grubby paws even on that, then the game is surely up. It is no doubt for this reason that the in-fighting over something as apparently abstruse as literary theory has been so symptomatically virulent; for what we are really speaking of here is the death of civilisation as we know it.”  

Culture, and literature in particular, functioned in order to mediate between the real world and the sublime. When freedom, for instance, was something that was universal and covered by a grand theory, culture could still retain this within its form – but once, as it is in post-modernism, the very concept of freedom, of emancipation, becomes one of relativity, of non-universality, then the battle is all but lost, for freedom becomes itself embroiled in the battle. And literature, culture, can no longer hold the ideal. The ideal, once questioned, can no longer be an Ideal for all. Once the material conditions of freedom are challenged, and replaced by a relative vision of freedom dependent on context, the enlightening potential of culture is negated: and rather than negating social reality, what is negated is the possibility of freedom, this concept of freedom, at least, that has been discussed in this dissertation under the Ideals of modernism. Thus Eagleton maintains that: “What has happened is that culture is less and less able to fulfil its Classical role of reconciliation – a role, indeed, on which English studies in this society were actually founded. … For as long as the conflicts which such a notion of culture sought to mediate were of a material kind – wars, class struggle, social inequities – the concept of culture as a higher harmonisation of our sublunary squabbles could just retain some thin plausibility. But as soon as such contentions become themselves of a cultural kind, this project becomes much less persuasive. For culture is now palpably part of the problem rather than the solution; it is the very medium in which battle is engaged, rather than some Olympian terrain on which our differences can be recomposed.”
The ethic of modernism, the underlying strand of freedom and justice, has been surrendered by post-modernism for two reasons: because it was the project of modernity which seemingly failed, and because the assertion of any kind of universal freedom is a metanarrative, a grand theory which post-modernism, in its relativity, wishes not to impose upon the free subject. In terms of the novel, this action has similar consequences: there is no longer a norm for evaluation either aesthetically or ethically – the novel is what it is, and its evaluation comes from typically post-modernist moves such as, for instance, deconstruction. While it is not the aim of this dissertation to elevate modernism back into an arena which it has long since abandoned, it is also equally arguable that betraying the enlightenment ideals of emancipatory potential in art, is to allow art to drift into obscurity. Its potential effect, one of enlightenment and emancipation, is therefore seemingly abandoned by post-modernism.
10. Ethics, Aesthetics, Metanarratives, Autonomy and Norms

As a means of finding the norms for the evaluation of literature, this dissertation will attempt to suggest that an ethical dimension is required through which these norms will be ‘discovered’. This does not, however, entail a prescriptive normative vision that stresses how a cultural artefact should be produced or evaluated in accordance with some outside and all consuming metanarrative. In other words, an attempt will be made to explain why there is implied within the Frankfurt School an ethical norm that suggests that things, as they are, are not free – this, crucially, is not saying what freedom is or should be, but rather it investigates what freedom is (or what the concept thereof would suggest) of itself and supposes, consequently, that the way things are, are not free. Further, this dissertation does not wish to propose that only the aesthetics of high modernism can be used as a guide to cultural production and reception. A certain ethical standpoint needs to be taken into consideration in the evaluation of culture: this ethical standpoint will rest squarely in the realm of emancipation and enlightenment. It is, in line with Bonner’s notion, as already quoted, that, in evaluating the aesthetic ... there must also be a commitment by the critic to find emancipatory potential. This standpoint, however, is very problematic when the writings of the Frankfurt School are taken into consideration.

10.1. Autonomy

Much has been noted in what has come before on this very complex notion of autonomy, not least of which is its privileging of the production of the artwork over its reception. What follows, therefore, will be a summary of autonomy as explained in this dissertation.

It has been noted that capitalism forces upon the work of art external demands such as those of exchange and profit. The writer is thus incapable of creating outside the very process of commodification, since his very work, his art, has become commodified. The novel, a reified object as a direct consequence of its production, is now seen as being free of the author’s autonomy, with the result that the novel (as commodity) forces the writer into a position of commodity producer. As such s/he is no longer ‘above’ the social reality: the writer thus
experiences the work as having been 'expropriated'. The writer can no longer speak as an 'autonomous subject' for, in his/her new capacity as commodity producer, s/he is no longer able to express his/her own unmediated subjectivity. Crucially, it is not just works of so-called low or popular culture that fall into this non-autonomy, but also works of high culture, since all culture is enmeshed in the society of commodity exchange and reification.

With this firmly in mind, it is noted by Adorno that only autonomous works of art hold the promise of emancipation. The reasons for this are many and rests on the suggestion that autonomous art 'destroys the destroyer'. Adorno maintains that autonomous art will resist any assimilation into existing modes of production and exchange whilst, simultaneously, creating, in their aesthetic, images of contradiction and dissonance. That is achieved by their deliberate rejection of the dominant modes of production and exchange. This rejection is distinguished by this dissertation as an ethical norm: as Adorno argues in Prisms, autonomous works of art are not created for the market. But in that statement lies an underlying ethic that suggests that creating for the market (as evidenced in the works of the Culture Industry) does not lead to an enlightenment and consequent emancipatory potential of the artwork (in fact, as has been discussed, the very opposite applies within this dialectic). This will be elaborated on forthwith.

At this stage, however, it is to be noted that autonomous art, by not being created for the market, rests clear of the whims and the will of the market. In so doing, it negates the conception that all things are commodities, created solely for their exchange value. The autonomous work of art, again, by remaining somehow above the commodification of all under capitalism, suggests that there exists something more than production for exchange. Further, in remaining beyond ideology, it does not, as Adorno makes the point, demand change, it compels it, by providing this very - in terms of the dominant ideology - dissonant vision of cultural creation. That is achieved by making strange what is taken for granted, such as the notion that the sole function of the artwork is to generate profit, or, that the sole function of the artwork is as 'social glue'. It achieves this by using non-conventional forms, since autonomy suggests that, unlike the works of the Culture Industry, enjoyment is derived only when it art is received with concentration and attention. This includes the notion of the cultural product being evaluated in its social totality (which includes its production, distribution, reception, etc.), and that an immanent critique will be used which will, so to speak, immerse itself into the structure of the object. As such, it is the
aesthetic that will show the hidden antagonisms and contradictions, not only in the artwork itself, but in society in general. This is in contradistinction with artworks that place social content deliberately into the social novel.

Here, then, we have autonomy summarised, in a brutal way, for exposition. If this dissertation has understood the issue of autonomy correctly, the problem that one encounters is as follows: in stressing that the autonomous work of art resists assimilation into the market, there is implied an assertion that the writer (as artist) must be committed to creating such an autonomous artwork. Phrased alternatively, the artist must privilege the aesthetic over the content – or, perhaps more accurately, in great works of art, it is the aesthetic that lays the laws of what the content says. In such, it is the artist as autonomous individual expressing his/her individuality through the aesthetic that will lead to an enlightenment as to the 'unfreedom' of the eventual reader. The ethic that this dissertation wishes to draw out, therefore, implies that there must still be a commitment by the artist in 'allowing' the aesthetic to be the final consideration in the artwork's production; but, as such, it goes against the grain of autonomy proper, since there should be no such 'foreign' attachment, for the lack of a better term, to the artwork. But if the artist is to resist co-habitation with the dominant status quo, if s/he, as artist, must allow for the aesthetic of the artwork to dictate the content of the artwork, this is already to make an ethical judgement to oppose that status quo. And to make that judgement is already, or so this dissertation is implying, an ethical standpoint.

What is more, autonomy, in the work of Adorno, focuses on the production side. The question of whether evaluation should also be one of autonomy remains, seemingly, at least in the 'evidence' supplied in this dissertation, unanswered. Perhaps the answer to this lies in the fact that the autonomous artwork needs to enlighten. As such, there is the implied vision that those that receive it are in need of enlightenment. In this statement, again, there is a normative ethical implication which, as Adorno notes, is tantamount to saying that autonomous works of art are like messages in a bottle that hardly any of the shipwrecked are able to read. On the other hand, as was discussed in the section on Elitism, without autonomy, the artwork will become what it was trying to resist in the first place. Therefore autonomy, although suggesting an ethical dimension, needs to remain intact if the artwork wishes to maintain its enlightening potential. And thus this can be highlighted as a norm to the evaluation of culture.
In the problem of autonomy, such an implication rests on the idea that autonomous works of art are created in order to resist the dominant status quo. As such, there must be an implied ethic that stresses that the status quo needs to be resisted in the first place. It appears, then, that this rests on the question of how the dominant society needs to be opposed, rather than if it needs to be opposed. And, therefore, there is a normative ethic in the notion of autonomy. As to the question of whether autonomous works of art are even possible, as has been mentioned above when it was noted that, firstly, even complex and aesthetically autonomous texts such as *Ulysses* are now taught in universities, and secondly, albeit inter-related, that all art is caught up in the society of reification and commodification and therefore will - in all likelihood - be subsumed, will be tackled when the problems of post-modernity are discussed below.

10.2. Metanarrative and Aesthetics

It has been noted that the aspect of emancipation is one that has a central place in much of modernism’s evaluation and, as evidenced by Kafka’s reticence (as was noted previously) of writing for the market, also in its production. That is linked, to a certain degree, to the view held by Marx that the individual, once s/he is aware of his/her ‘unfreedom’, will, by this very cognitive act, already know how to change that state of affairs. Thus enlightenment as to the individual’s position in the world, is one that must remain crucial in the evaluation of the cultural product. The distinction between the products of the Culture Industry and those of high modernism or High-Art is directly linked to their ethical premise – to their holding (High-Art), albeit in their aesthetic, a promise of enlightenment, or a teleological strand that suggests an eventual goal of emancipation, as opposed to the regressive tendencies of the works of the Culture Industry. This, however, like the aspect of autonomy, is a troublesome issue for a number of reasons.

Language, it has been stressed, connects the subject to ideology and, in this regard, literature and the novel play a crucial part in cementing social norms for the individual in society. With the ever widening processes and modes of social control through the rise of technology, cultural production of the ‘industrial’ kind function in two ways: to restrict and repress revolutionary
potential in the individual, and to obliterate the individual’s individuality and happiness. It is as Eagleton has noted, that, “we live within societies whose aim is not simply to combat radical ideas – that one would readily expect – but to wipe them from living memory: to bring about an amnesia condition in which it would be as though such notions had never existed, placing them beyond our powers of conception.” 315 This dissertation has argued that it is the notion of emancipation that needs to remain intact, the notion that, enlightened as to his/her ‘imprisonment’, the individual will, therefore, know, equally, how to ‘recapture’ freedom.316 With further advances in technology, it is noted by the theory of the Culture Industry, so will there be a concomitant rise in the new modes of social control. And since language is where manipulation occurs, literature and the novel is one such place of social ‘indoctrination’.

This indoctrination, by the works of the Culture Industry, serves to replicate the dominant modes of production – as such, culture of this kind prevents the growth of a class consciousness and, consequently, aids in the repulsion of any oppositional or revolutionary praxis. The distinction between the works of art that hold an ethic of emancipation, and those of the Culture Industry which are seen as regressive, are found in a study of the aesthetic: the works of the Culture Industry replicate social manipulation and control and domination by replicating the world as it is – i.e., the receivers must sit and accept what is given to them uncritically and without thought. They cannot construct the meaning of the artwork, just like they are unable, or so it appears, to construct their own lifeworld. This in itself is false, since it can be seen that it is the individual who creates the society which then exerts control over the very individual. The Culture Industry negates that, and, instead, creates elements of escapism in its cultural production simply to justify its own domination of the individual by constantly replicating the way things are, with the final aim - through repetition as a means of indoctrination - to portray that the status quo is normal and universal. To a certain extent, then, one can equate this with the way in which capitalism is hardly even questioned anymore, as noted by Eagleton, as if it were the only natural way in which society should progress. The works of the Culture Industry, and the artists as quasi-factory workers that produce them, are in the direct employ of the market: Culture and art are thus created either for, or within, a zone that promotes the profit motive. Culture can then be seen as being in a dialectic vis-à-vis its exchange and use value. It is both a commodity (exchange value) and, at the same time, ideology (use-value). It is precisely here, in its use value, that potential
subversion can exist and is a reason why, at the risk of jumping the gun, post-modernism seeks to incorporate both mass cultural aesthetics and modernist aesthetics into its cultural production. Ideology, it has been noted, is the way in which norms are affixed to the individual and by which people's actions are controlled; the subject, in short, is thus subjected.

At the same time however, art's functioning in an emancipatory light is precisely where it appears not to function at all. Thus where the Culture Industry has ideology at its core, art has no function at all; it exists autonomously. As such, it demonstrates that things can exist autonomously of their function or the all pervading profit motive.

The interdependent structures that were mapped out by Althusser shows culture as being just one in a multitude of such linked structures. All other structures form binary oppositions to themselves since they all share the same (capitalist, in terms of this dissertation) mode of production. In culture, the binary opposition can be seen as one of control / autonomy, and one of regression / progression. What is more, the works of the Culture Industry display three central facets: standardisation of cultural production, pseudo-individualisation, and rationalisation of promotion and distribution techniques which is, as has been noted, not strictly to be found in the production process itself. Works that counter this within their aesthetic are those that hold an oppositional and (consequent) emancipatory potential. This is explained by noting Marx's ethic as being one, as posited earlier by Eagleton, of an aesthetic: it functions according to its own internal, autonomous, individual rules, and stands in contradistinction with what has been rendered vis-à-vis the products of the Culture Industry. The link between Marx and artistic production is precisely this – that 'great art' is produced free from immediate physical need (as well as free from outside forces) and therefore resists, as has been previously discussed, any 'assimilation' into existing modes of production and exchange. It is therefore here, in this type of creation, that the individual produces most 'freely'. This is the link to art's functionlessness.

The binary opposition between the works of the Culture Industry and the works of art that contain the possibilities of emancipation are thus as follows: where there is standardisation, the autonomous works of art resist assimilation into existing modes of production and exchange. Where there is pseudo-individualisation, the autonomous works of art will contain, in their aesthetic, images of dissonance and contradiction. They do not replicate reality (as do the works
of the Culture Industry) and, finally, they - autonomous, true works of art - offer images of alternative ways of being or, phrased differently, they offer visions that things can be different to the way they are, or appear to be. They negate, in short, and simply, the idea that everything is a commodity: they achieve this in their aesthetic, which estranges and resists assimilation into existing modes of production and exchange. As such, they are seen also, and equally as importantly, as transcending the status quo.

The writer, it should also be noted, does not produce outside the process of commodification: as such, literature, caught up in this reality, will show the contradictions of that reality. One such contradiction is the opposition between art and the products of the Culture Industry, where one negates and transcends, and the other replicates and seeks to maintain the status quo. Crucially, since it is noted that all structures within society are interdependent, it is suggested that an ethic that instils cultural criticism with emancipatory potential will have repercussions in the cognitive structure of that society – and the same can be posited for an evaluation of the aesthetic of a cultural product, since the aesthetic itself is an Althusserian structure.

The social determinacy of Marxism was seen, in the collapse of the former Soviet Union, as not being tenable in the real world: simultaneously, the Marxist/socialist determinist revolution in the Western capitalist world did not occur. A major reason for this was the use of culture as a weapon in the control of the individual in these capitalist societies through the process, for instance, of homogenisation, that was posited in the work of Gramsci. Therefore, culture is both responsible for the opposition of, and negation of, enlightenment whilst, in its dialectic, being responsible for holding the candle of that very enlightenment in its aesthetic. Thus, if social control exists in the cultural production of society, so too, then, does its antithesis, the potential for emancipation – an emancipation that rests on the furthering of an awareness of the tyranny of the false consciousness that is prevalent in society. In other words, in the social realm, there are unresolved antagonisms, and these are ‘brought out’ in art. This dialectic was outlined in the work of Adorno and it is here that this dissertation needs to pause, for contained within the theory of negative dialectics, and in the theory of identity / non-identity thinking, lies a central and seemingly contradictory element that this dissertation wishes to pose as a central norm for the evaluation of literature.
The Frankfurt School did not wish to impose yet another (to use Lyotard’s terminology) metanarrative to bear on the subject, a subject that is already dominated. To assign one all-encompassing theory to replace another is not to free the individual, although, certainly, one could, while enclosed within a certain sensibility and rationality, posit the hope that socialism would be a fairer system than capitalism (at least, in theory). The ethic of emancipation, with its history linked to that of the Enlightenment and German Idealism, can, and is, seen by many strands of post-modernism as yet another great narrative trying to dominate the individual. Thus, in this dissertation’s hope to posit some type of ethical premise to the evaluation of culture, this fundamental issue needs to be resolved. The problem here, in shorthand, is this: to evaluate culture by using a committed norm that seeks to find the possibilities of enlightenment (and hence emancipation) within the cultural product, is to bring to bear upon the object (the novel for instance) an ‘outside force’ through which the object itself will be dominated. Equally, however, by not imposing such an evaluation on culture, the emancipatory potential of art will, it is argued, place the emancipation of the individual further from what Eagleton notes as the ‘powers of our conception’. The possible solution to this problem can be found in the way the object, in negative dialectics, is studied.

Autonomous art and the works of the Culture Industry are, as noted, in an antithetical relationship. The truth of art, it has been stated, is in its ability to reformulate existing relations between subject and object and concept and object. Autonomous art seeks to break the ‘spurious’ reconciliation between object and concept. Negative dialectics does not wish to force upon the object under investigation an overwhelming concept that will seek to comprehend and dominate it in accordance with its own logic. In this, Adorno’s negative dialectics bares a striking resemblance to Lyotard’s anti-metanarrative postmodernism. At the same time, this dissertation has noted that there is an underlying ethical premise to the work of the Frankfurt School, an ethic of emancipation and of freedom. But negative dialectics does not hold a prescriptive way in which the artwork or the novel, for instance, should be evaluated. Adorno's negative dialectics does not focus on the primacy of the concept over the object, for it sees in this traditional philosophical stance merely a circular gesture. If one wishes to examine a work of art for its socialist tendencies, then one is seeking to dominate the object under investigation just as the object has already been dominated by other such metanarratives. At the same time, it is apparent
that some type of concept needs to be brought into the evaluation of the object. This, in Adorno, is found in the use of constellations, or ‘conceptual constellations’ which, as has been noted, are constantly shifting, since the reality of the object is in a constant state of flux. As a guide to understanding, examples of constellations would be the ethics of a free individual, the end of labour, and emancipatory potentials. Crucially, however, the concepts used here are not brought from ‘outside’ and imposed on the object – rather, the object itself will suggest the constellations that will be ‘used’ upon it. In terms of the literary novel, for instance, the antagonisms that are suggested within its aesthetic (the distance, for instance, between narrator and author, or the problems of creating literature for the mass market and publication) suggests the concepts of emancipation and the state of the individual’s autonomy in a market (profit-based) dictated society. Further examples of this claim are to be found in the aspect of autonomy.

It has been suggested earlier that the autonomous work of art will reside in a state of antagonism to the works of the Culture Industry and to the forces of the market. Thus, the object under investigation would have its own characteristics and properties, and the concepts that it suggests will show up the contradictions and discrepancies that reside within the object itself. A salient example here can be found in the realm of identity thinking, where the work of art and society is seen as identical. What is created, and what is reality, however - just as the relationship between concept and the object - are not identical, though through, for instance, exchange-value, they would appear to be just that. The individual or the particular, in short, is distinct from the general. Therefore the norm of applying an ethic of emancipatory potential upon the evaluation of an artwork, as this dissertation will propose, would seem, in the light of negative dialectics, as being untenable, for it would be imposing a metanarrative on the object and would thus be ascribing itself to an ‘undialectical’ and regressive tendency. In effect, that was the argument Adorno had with Benjamin over surrealism, and Lukacs over realism. Adorno’s point is that commitment is not necessary, because even in the most sublimated works of art, there is always a hidden ‘things should be otherwise’. Art’s function, after all, is its very functionlessness.

However, it has also been noted that without an underlying ethical dimension, an evaluation of the modernist aesthetic could easily become a co-option with the status quo, as was demonstrated in the brief discussion on the work of Trilling and the liberal cultural critics, working, as they were, within the dictates of McCarthyism, which forced them to deny any socialist or anti-
capitalist readings in the works by Kafka and Joyce. That is also evidenced in the work of Habermas, when he links much of post-modernist theory and production with neo-conservatism. By leaving out the emancipatory ethic of modernism, and its opposition to the market forces of production, for instance, the evaluation of modernism can, and did, become one that could be termed neo-conservative. In saying, to be blunt, that High Art and the works of the Culture Industry are different in terms of their aesthetic, does not instil into the work of art any emancipatory potential, except merely to delineate the difference between it and other forms of popular culture, in terms of the aesthetic. But this ignores the fundamental reason why the difference exists: the ambiguities of the system (economic) under which they were created and received. This point would seem to lead to a conclusion that there must be some type of commitment on the part of the cultural critic in finding emancipatory potential in the artwork. For without this very type of commitment, modernism’s reading and evaluation becomes ‘safe’ and, even more insidiously, becomes a norm for the production of what then is viewed as art (a norm, again to jump the gun slightly, against which post-modernist cultural production sought to struggle). This, it can be argued, is one way in which modernism was institutionalised.

Therefore, it appears as if a commitment by the literary critic, for example, to evaluate a literary object in terms of an ethical norm that searches for the object’s emancipatory (or enlightening) potential, is crucial if this very work of art is to be ‘saved’ from being consumed by the establishment. At the same time, this suggests bringing a metanarrative to bear on the literary artwork which will, as in a regressive reading, damage the autonomy and consequent emancipatory potential of the literary work of art. In order to find a reconciliation to this apparent contradiction – i.e., that an implied ethical norm for the evaluation of culture runs against the ‘spirit’ of negative dialectics, and yet, as posited by this dissertation, remains equally important in the evaluation of that very artwork - the aesthetic needs to be discussed, to show how there is already an implied ethic in the work of the Frankfurt School. This was posited already with regards to autonomy: similarly, this needs to be discussed in terms of the aesthetic if, as this dissertation wishes to do, it is to be shown that an evaluation of culture and literature must take into consideration an ethical standpoint that things should be somehow different and even, conceivably, better.
10.3. The Aesthetic

Marcuse makes the point that, brought back to life as 'classics', works of autonomous art lose their antagonistic essence, or their effects of estrangement. This itself implies that the work of art, whilst containing elements of antagonism, need, at the same time, to be evaluated as oppositional rather than as 'classics'. Great art, it is further noted, makes the ordinary into the extraordinary. Art is revolutionary when it departs from what is considered the norm and employs a deviation of style. In this, then, one can see the novel as a metaphor for life, where the content can be posited as social reality and the style as the relationship between the individual and the social. The content of great art is subservient to the style, to the form. It is content that is created by the form—and thus one can say that content is dialectically linked to the form, or the aesthetic. In a deconstructive reading, it would be the privileging of the form over the content. Great art, further, does not show the right way; it does not impose itself, it merely suggests that things could be somehow different with the individual. This stands in contradistinction to works of socialist realism that sought to demonstrate, through their committed content, that the proletariat was in a state of domination. As such, Classical Marxism sought to subsume the individual beneath its own metanarrative: the proletariat, in short, was prioritised above the individual. The link to the aesthetic is thus shown: in order to free the proletariat, or the people, it is the individual that needs to be enlightened, and the artwork functions in accordance with the aesthetic - an aesthetic that is freed from the constraints of 'outside forces' such as, for instance, socialist realism or economic pressures. Art thus subverts by elevating itself above the way things are and transcends the world in which it was created. It is the individual's own aesthetic, the individual's own individuality and subjectivity, that transcends the material base of the status quo. The aesthetic thus takes the content (as social reality) and reshapes it in accordance with its own logic, with the consequence that the individual is seen as existing somehow above the general. And it is precisely here that this dissertation wishes to propose that there exists an implied norm for the Frankfurt School’s thought.

This implied norm is not whether the artwork subscribes to a Marxist/socialist theory in content, but rather, and yet equally, does it oppose the status quo through its form: Does the artwork refuse to co-opt, does it refuse to follow the rules for the production of exchange-value products,
does it thus subvert through its own autonomy, individuality and truth as embodied by the commitment of its form to its own individuality and subjectivity? But in the Great Refusal to co-opt lies an ethical dimension. Deciding not to follow the rules implies that there is nothing to be gained in following the rules themselves. The aesthetic, again, makes strange. It estranges familiarity through its autonomy, and that estrangement leads to the potential for the creation of a new consciousness – a consciousness, as has been noted, that must be altered (the distinction between true and false needs for instance) if a new, ‘happier’ world should ever materialise. And it is the aesthetic, as the individual’s ascendancy over the social reality, that holds this potential. It is to be recalled that the cultural liberal critics abandoned the socialist ethic of modernism and, consequently, that New Historicism, when bringing ideology back into the literary text, saw modernism as part of the problem, leading to their conclusion that all culture is repressive. In this, one is reminded of the theory of the Culture Industry – with one crucial difference: that Critical Theory had always posited culture as being in a dialectic of both regression and its possibility for enlightenment.

Therefore, the following summary needs to be rendered in connection with culture and literature. In reading, so to speak, and evaluating a product of the Culture Industry ‘against the grain’, Critical Theory notes that its function is one of social control. At the same time, because there is seen to be a dialectic at work, the work of the Culture Industry will also show the possibilities of an emancipatory art. That link is found within the aesthetic, but, crucially, this dissertation wishes to posit that in order to see that there is imbedded within art both regressive and non-regressive tendencies, there needs to be an ethical premise that suggests that things, as they are, are themselves regressive. In other words, that to suggest that great art subverts, suggests in itself that subversion is something that should be aspired to. Thus the prioritising, in the work of Adorno and Horkheimer and Marcuse, of a certain autonomous work of art over those of the Culture Industry. Stated differently, the linking of so-called great art with its emancipatory potential, suggests that emancipation is elevated in the works prioritised by the Frankfurt School. It suggests, in short, that the Culture Industry imposes a certain condition on the individual which is regressive – which denies the individual both freedom (from labour, for example) and from happiness. Its ethical implication is that great art denies the way things are – it transcends the social reality – in order to achieve something better, something freer and happier. A return to le
bonheur. Thus, Critical Theory does not impose a metanarrative on the object of investigation, including, for the purposes of this dissertation, the literary text, but it does impose the ethical notion that things, the way they are, are taking away from the individual’s possibilities of freedom and happiness. Therefore, socialism or Marxism or capitalism or any metanarrative, is itself seen as regressive but, at the same time, a certain ethical standpoint that supposes that great art stands opposed to the status quo suggests that there is something ‘wrong’ with this very status quo, and that things need to be somehow different, and somehow better. And it is here that the ethical dimension of the Frankfurt School is determined, at least, in terms of this dissertation. And it is, equally, here where a normative aspect of the evaluation of culture will be applied. 317

In saying that there is something wrong with the status quo, it is suggested that there is something better with which it can be replaced. This ‘something better’ is found in the aesthetic of the great work of art. This new freedom and return to happiness needs now to be investigated in order to bring a semblance of order to what has been explored. Or, more succinctly, if it is implied that there is something rotten in the way things are, a clearer understanding of what great art seeks to oppose needs to be rendered, while, at the same time, also investigating whether art cannot only oppose but also succeed in the quest for emancipation from the ‘one-dimensional’ world.

It is noted that the way in which society is organised is the way in which it will progress. Thus a society that is organised around the pursuit of profit will organise itself around this very facet. In capitalism, this is readily found within the products of the Culture Industry, in its standardisation, for instance. Progress, for the Frankfurt School, does touch upon visions of freedom found in Classical Marxism. Freedom, in shorthand, would be freedom from providing the essential services (an end, it could be suggested, of enforced labour) needed for survival. If domination, further, is the way society is organised - as evidenced in the domination over nature, which was required for survival - all aspects of that society will be geared toward domination, including the literary text. A system, it has been noted, organised around the amelioration of the human condition, would valorise other concepts besides domination, control and indoctrination. Further, Hegel’s theory of the need for oppositional thought in order to progress into a new synthesis, is crucial here since it is posited that in the rise of technology, all oppositional thought (and art is such a thing) is destroyed by the way in which society organises itself around the satisfaction of needs.
Needs, however, are both true and false: a society that organises itself around profit will focus on false needs, since those false needs are necessary for its own sustainability. Culture is what advertises those needs. There exists thus a state of affairs that denies the individual his true needs. People are seen as enslaved in a one-dimensional, rational society. False needs are theorised as society’s needs imposed upon the individual, with the result that the individual succumbs to a false consciousness in which s/he rejoices in the belief that society is providing for his/her needs. Anything contradictory will, in this state of affairs, be opposed, since it is viewed as a threat to the fulfilment of those false needs. *One-dimensional man* supposes that all opposition will be either repelled or reduced to society’s needs. Oppositional art, for instance, will be used to further enhance the supposed progress and freedom of the system. But in so doing, by incorporating all oppositional forces, progress, in Hegelian terms, will be stunted. 318

It appears that even great art that opposes the status quo through its aesthetic and its autonomy will be assimilated by the social reality. That is what is meant by Marcuse’s term *desublimation*. Technology, in reproducing and displaying High Art on a massive scale, does not reject the oppositional force of High Art as much as it subsumes it and incorporates it within the all-encompassing social reality. Once the great works of modernism, for instance, are institutionalised, they lose their essence - their effect of estrangement - and readily become employed in the commodification of culture. High Art, in short, becomes exchange value instead of truth or use value, and its effect becomes meaningless and invalid. Works of High-Art become part of the material culture. And in so doing, they lose their truth. In their constant reproduction, they are no longer seen as being free from the underlying profit motive by which society is now organised. At the same time, without (or so this dissertation is attempting to establish) a commitment of evaluating culture through an ethical norm, any hope for the eventual freedom of the individual as individual from the exigencies of the capitalist system will, like the works of high modernism, become irrelevant and invalid.
10.4. Post-modernism

It is at this point that this dissertation needs to bring into its discussion the problematic aspect of post-modernism. If the works of high modernism have been institutionalised, does this imply that its very hope, its project of emancipation, can be seen as being invalid? In other words, if the works of high modernism, through their autonomous aesthetic, held the promise (at least as espoused in the writings of the Frankfurt School) of emancipation, and if that very aesthetic has now become part and parcel of everything from office paintings to car adverts, does this have the logical implication that this enlightening possibility, in its apparent desublimation, has failed? And does this very ‘consumption’ by social reality have the result that any emancipatory potential to be found in the artwork is thus invalidated? And further, could this kind of reasoning result, as noted by Eagleton, in post-modernism’s shying away from any notion of emancipatory considerations?

There are many readings of post-modernism, not least that of Readings who, as already noted, suggests that post-modernism “was but a provocative way to put the struggle in the foreground of the field of knowledge. Post-modernity is not a new age, it is the re-writing of some features modernity had tried or pretended to gain, particularly in founding its legitimisation upon the purpose of the general emancipation of mankind. But such a re-writing ... was for a long time active in modernity itself.”

The answers to the self-imposed questions need to be assessed if this dissertation wishes to imply that a certain ethical standpoint - that culture should be evaluated for its oppositional and emancipatory potential - can be supported. It is, in a way, bringing back the question of the project of modernity. As this dissertation reads this point, the project of modernity was one of highlighting an oppositional aesthetic over and above the works of the Culture Industry, for the objective of emancipation. In its aesthetic, post-modernism should be seen as continuing this project. This implies that the post-modernist aesthetic is itself permeated with the aspects that have been determined by this dissertation, aspects that are found in the aesthetic of modernism. This dissertation’s focus, here, is to establish that post-modernism is the continuation of modernism, or its attempt to continue with an aesthetic of opposition, an aesthetic that has not been institutionalised by the establishment. In other words, the aesthetics of post-modernism are
merely the continued (post?) aesthetics of modernism, or, its reaction against the institutionalisation of modernism's 'previous' works. In supporting this position, modernism and post-modernism need to be briefly separated for the benefit of exposition.

To begin with, the actual term post-modernism needs to be discussed. The 'post', in other words, has certain implications. That implication resides in the fact that the 'post' suggests that postmodernism itself comes after modernism: as McHale argues, "the term 'postmodernism', if we take it literally enough, a la lettre, signifies a poetics which is the successor of, or possibly a reaction against, the poetics of early twentieth century modernism, and not some hypothetical writing of the future.

"As for the prefix POST ... Postmodernism follows from modernism, in some sense, more than it follows after modernism." 321

All of this rests on the implication that modernism and post-modernism's aesthetics are linked. It also rests on the idea that modernism was not a project that remained in a state of non-fluctuation – its aesthetic, therefore, in order to remain subversive, needed to be continually advanced into new experimental forms in order to achieve the (potentially revolutionary) effect of estrangement. This is a point that has been made by Frank Kermode, who insists that postmodernism is merely the so-called persistence of modernism into a 'new' generation. Consequently, a label of neo-modernism would be considered more apt. 322 In this connection, McHale writes that, "this view of the so-called post-modernist breakthrough – namely, that it never happened – is widespread. For instance, Richard Kostelanetz has insisted that 'It is more apt to regard advanced art and writing today as extensions of earlier modernist developments ... Artworks that are currently considered 'innovative' neither close modernism nor transcend it'... Similarly, Jean-Francois Lyotard has written that 'Postmodernism ... is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant' ... And Barthes once asserted that the last major break in our conception of language, text and writing dates back to the appearance of Marxism and Freudianism, 'so that in a way it can be said that for the last hundred years we have been living a repetition.'" 323
This dissertation will argue that the so-called routinisation of modernism and the supposed exhaustion of the modernist movement did not bring an ‘end’ to modernism, but that its oppositional and estranging aesthetic merely ‘migrated’, as it were, into what is now called post-modernism. Certainly an investigation into this assertion, bringing to the fore all the arguments and counter-arguments, would need an examination all of its own. Therefore, in a summary fashion, the following points will be made with the sole intention of using supportive evidence as ‘ammunition’. At the same time, however, it is not this dissertation’s contention that modernism and post-modernism are the same ‘thing’, but rather that they share one facet, and that is an aesthetic of opposition. As to what they oppose - that is an argument of ethics - which will be discussed forthwith.

Modernism was always seen as being hostile to mass culture. That view rests on the implications, to a large extent, of the autonomy of the modernist work of art. Post-modernism, on the other hand, especially in the 60s and 70s in the USA, embraced the pop psychology of mass culture. In so doing, it wished to militate against what it saw as the demands of institutionalised modernism which had become, then, the dominating discourse in the way in which art should be produced. Thus, from promoting an autonomous aesthetic that promised, through its very form, not to co-opt with the status quo and to consequently hold the promise to enlighten with the potential of emancipation, the works of high-modernism suddenly found themselves as being lauded as the way in which art should be produced. As such, the works became part of the status quo and were, indeed, part of the ‘problem’ rather than, if this is itself tenable under post-modernism, the solution. Therefore, post-modernism wished to return to an aesthetic of opposition that it felt modernism was no longer able to offer. McHale notes that, “Catalogues of postmodernist features are typically organised in terms of oppositions with features of modernist poetics. Thus, for instance, David Lodge lists five strategies (contradiction, discontinuity, randomness, excess, short circuit) by which postmodernist writing seeks to avoid having to choose either of the poles of metaphoric (modernist) or metonymic (anti-modernist) writing. Ihab Hassan gives us seven modernist rubrics … indicating how postmodernist aesthetics modifies or extends each of them. … And Douwe Fokkema outlines a number of compositional and semantic conventions of the period code of postmodernism … contrasting these generally with the conventions of the
modernist code. In all these cases, we can see how particular postmodernist features stands in opposition to its modernist counterpart ....”

Again, in this very issue, one can see that there is an implication of an ethical dimension. If, as was noted earlier, post-modernism wished to foreground its opposition, this, it can be argued, implies that the way things were, were themselves seen as being in a situation that needed to be opposed. The question here is crucial: was post-modernism simply trying to oppose the works of modernism because it was now seen as the prevailing way in which art should be produced? Or was it because, still attached to modernism’s emancipatory vision, post-modernism wished to continue what Marcuse called the Great Refusal? It is this dissertation’s contention that the former applied: that postmodernism wished to continue an aesthetic of opposition that had been previously ‘found’ in the aesthetic of high modernism. But that opposition to the status quo and modernism itself, which had now become institutionalised, meant that the ethical foundation – that of emancipation as found in the works of modernism - was, like modernism itself, rejected by post-modernism. As Eagleton notes, it was a reaction against all the great promises of modernism, promises which it had spectacularly failed to realise in the real world. In saying this, however, one could align this oppositionary experiment of post-modernism with the works of surrealism to which Adorno ascribed very little possibility of emancipatory success.

In rejecting institutionalised modernism, post-modernism simultaneously seems to have rejected modernism’s hope for the potential of art. Post-modernism focused on opposition, but its opposition was no longer to that of the domination of the individual by society but, rather, an opposition to the aesthetics of the products of the Establishment of which modernism had now become part. Thus it opposed modernism and all that modernism stood for, including the hostility toward mass culture. Post-modernism sought to embrace mass culture (or the products of the Culture Industry) with the result that its (post-modernism’s) products, as Huyssen and Jameson have both noted, were quickly institutionalised too, as occurred in the 70s. It is therefore Habermas’ contention that much of post-modernism’s output is neo-conservative for this very reason; in rejecting modernism, it had also rejected the ethical foundation of modernism, as well as the necessary autonomy of the artwork. As such, post-modernism finds itself co-opting with the status quo. That is, to use the old cliché, tantamount to throwing out the baby with the bath-water.
Evidence for this is found in the aesthetics of post-modernism which are closely related, as discussed previously in the work of Jameson, with the aesthetics of high modernism. This dissertation therefore contends that there is no split between modernism and post-modernism in terms of an aesthetic of opposition. Post-modernism is following the project of modernity itself, which is why it has been linked to an almost ‘neo-modernism’. However, where there is a split is when the ethics of modernism are applied. Therefore, the very prefix ‘post’ in post-modernism is difficult to substantiate – ‘post’ in terms of its opposition to reified modernism is tenable, but ‘post’ in terms of its ethics (or post-freedom) is questionable. It is why the project of modernity, in Habermas’ terms, has been abandoned by the so-called discontents of modernity for, after all, revolutionary art must be both oppositional and transcendent. Transcendence, that is, from the status quo and all that that entails (including capitalist production). In some post-modernist works’ quasi-celebration of the market, as Eagleton pointed out, there is no transcendence.

Therefore, to state that the ‘post’ in post-modernism is a logical extension of modernism is to suggest that modernism achieved its goals. If so, post-modernism cannot be the logical follow-on from modernism since freedom, or, rather, the type of freedom linked to Marx and the Frankfurt School, has clearly not been achieved. Or perhaps, more correctly - post-modernism follows on from modernism when modernism realised that its project - that of emancipation through enlightenment via revolutionary texts that were autonomous from the prevailing conditions - were, in the real world, untenable. Which is to say that the ethical standpoint, as Schopenhauer would have it, that suggests that most people ever born would have been better off never having lived at all, is mistaken, and that the status quo is merely a moment in history, and will (already?) be supplanted with something fairer or, indeed, something even more inequitable. In all, as Lyotard notes, there is no seeming progress from one movement to the next, therefore to hope that a revolutionary art will bring about the dawn of le bonheur is to fall into the trap of placing a metanarrative on the individual. All is relative, and the follow up, as it were, to capitalism, is arbitrary. Art or culture, in enlightening the individual as to his/her place in the world, will not change history since there is no such thing, at least, in terms of its delimiting what is to come.

On the other hand, post-modernism’s suspicion of an ethical standpoint based around the vision of a freer society, as discussed eloquently by Eagleton, is also worth noting. His point, that the metanarrative of domination which, in an arbitrary ‘history’, seems unbelievably repetitive (with
no moments of freedom or justice) will not simply vanish by virtue of post-modernism's silence over it, stands as a counter-point and is repeated here for its importance. While it is very well to note that freedom, as is everything else, is relative, that does not change the fact that the domination of the individual by society is an ongoing saga. Nor does it change the fact that a society based around domination will have domination as its organisational ‘essence’. Furthermore, without an opposition to the way in which the market forces all to be created for profit, the works of post-modernism will become non-oppositional to this very central facet of society’s organisation. As such, it is, in many ways, non oppositional and neo-conservative.

This dissertation therefore contends that post-modernism is both a continuation of modernism (in terms of its aesthetics) and, at the same time, an abandonment of modernism (in terms of its ethics). And consequently, this dissertation has suggested norms for the evaluation of culture by focusing both on the aesthetic and the ethical, for these two are seen to be in a dialectic. It is the aesthetic that suggests an ethic. By abandoning the latter, any oppositionary value of the former is, consequently, invalidated.

Kierkegaard’s view, that, “the aesthetic … must yield ground to the higher truths of ethics,” is therefore implied.
11. Norms for the Evaluation of Literature as Conclusion

This dissertation will conclude by suggesting norms for the evaluation of culture. Since it is not the intention here to affix all-encompassing norms which will, as has been explained, have the result of dominating the cultural product in the way in which the individual is already seemingly dominated, the norms here simply suggest that there must be an ethical consideration to the evaluation of culture. At the same time, this dissertation will also ally itself to the way in which Critical Theory evaluates a cultural artefact: through its social origin, its content, its form, its process of production and in its reproduction, consumption and distribution. It is not the scope of this conclusion to re-introduce concepts that have already been explained, except in generalities.

Evaluation would imply that a certain orientation is brought to bear upon the object under investigation. In this regard, then, the enlightening potential of a work of art needs to be evaluated. It has already been noted how, evaluated without its (anti-capitalist) leanings, works of modernism such as those of Kafka could be re-installed into the Establishment as safe modernism. Without a commitment on the part of the literary critic, for example, to attach evaluation in accordance to the artwork’s enlightening (and consequent emancipatory) potential, the hope that art can be revolutionary, both in theory and in praxis, is lost. Again, to suppose that the totally administered state, to suppose that the rise of technology, to suppose that the domination of the individual by society, to suppose that reification, commodification and fetishism, and, finally to suppose that capitalism itself (be it late, post, etc.) will simply vanish in an arbitrary way without any type of opposition, is to betray, as Eagleton says, the dead as well as the majority of the living. Furthermore, and again following Eagleton and Althusser, it would further appear that the cultural revolution in the former Soviet Union does indeed attach culture with emancipatory potential. Therefore, an evaluation that is committed to finding enlightening potential in the object under investigation is what this dissertation believes to be a central norm in the evaluation of culture.

This brings this conclusion to the question of metanarratives. In stating that an ethical commitment is necessary for the evaluation of culture implies that a certain ethic hold true. The ethic that this dissertation has attempted to bring to the fore is not one that prescribes how society and the individual should be. In tracking the ideals of freedom from Marx through Adorno and Horkheimer to Marcuse,
the conclusion is drawn that there was never, as there should not have been, a normative aspect to the ethics of freedom. What there was, though, was the implied opposition to the way things are, that the very concept of freedom itself suggests what it is to be free, and that, when investigated in the light of present conditions, the concept (freedom) does not match up with the supposed (and frequently cited) freedom of the individual. Therefore, a commitment by the literary critic to discovering opposition in the artwork is necessary, if the project of enlightenment is to continue. This is not to substitute one metanarrative for another: solely, the implication is that the way things are, the way in which things are organised, is not assisting in the emancipation of the individual. As such, great art that transcends the status quo will itself open the doors to a furthering of utopian visions. It is, however, for the literary critic to evaluate and assign works of dissonance and opposition and enlightening potential as 'art', whilst 'condemning' all other products as examples of the Culture Industry. In terms of this, there is and must be an Elitist stance in the evaluation of literature. Again, revolutionary art must not only oppose, it must transcend.

Finally, as to the point of autonomy, it has been suggested that an enlightening and transcending art cannot co-opt with the way in which society is organised. As such, even though autonomous art may never be understood, read, or even published, the loss of autonomy would be the loss of a true transcending art and literature. Autonomy does not stress the way in which the form and the style of the artwork must be: what it does emphasise, however, is that there is an opposition between it and social reality. Any dissolution of this gap would make the artwork invalid in terms of its truth.

Thus one can see that there is a link between the aesthetic and the ethic: together, they can function to change the conception of what society is, and what, indeed, it could be. And this is found in the artwork, but only through a deliberate commitment by the literary critic to find the enlightenment and potential for emancipation in the novel. That would suggest an ethical premise that suggests that the way things are must be ameliorated: and that amelioration will not come of its own. Rather, and in one way, the enlightenment of this position can come from literature - but only if the evaluation of literature prioritises literature’s ability to oppose and transcend. As such, the work of the Frankfurt School, as apparently ‘negative’ and hopeless, still stresses the only way in which emancipation, through culture, can be derived. The fact that it hasn’t, and may never, does not make it invalid: it only makes it difficult. But to abandon this hope is to, seemingly, abandon all hope for the amelioration of life.
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Notes

1 Berman, R makes this point thus: “aesthetic discussion concentrated on the relationship between avant-gardist innovation and radical social transformation. The revolutionary optimism of Benjamin and Brecht hoped to harness the avant-garde immediately to political progress, while Horkheimer and Adorno viewed authentic art as the placeholder of a potential opposition to monopoly capitalism and the Culture Industry, i.e., in both cases, the contemporary aesthetic revolution was located within the terms of a profound social reorganisation.” Modern Culture and Critical Theory: Art, Politics and the Legacy of the Frankfurt School (1989:73)

2 This aspect is discussed under the heading of Ethics and Post-modernism, see p.125


4 See pages 125-132.

5 Eagleton, T, op. cit., p.7.

6 Ibid., p.20-21.

7 See pages 51-54 for a detailed discussion on this topic.


9 This is discussed below, under the title of Autonomy, as well as under the title of Aesthetics.

10 Eagleton, T, op. cit., p.22.

11 Ibid., p.23.

12 See pages 115-124 & 136-143 for a detailed discussion on metanarratives.

Further aspects of Marx's ideas on freedom, such as those of reification, are discussed on pages 57-64. However, the reification of money is worth noting here, only as an aside: ""The stronger the power of my money, the stronger am I. The properties of money are my, the possessor's, properties and essential powers. Therefore what I am and what I can do is by no means determined by my individuality. I am ugly, but I can bed the most beautiful woman. Which means to say that I am not ugly, for the effect of ugliness, its repelling power, is destroyed by money. As an individual, I am lame, but money procures me twenty four legs. Consequently I am not lame. I am a wicked, dishonest, unscrupulous and stupid individual, but money is respected, and so also its owner. Money is the highest good, and consequently its owner is also good."" Eagleton, T, Marx and Freedom (1997:33).

It is noteworthy that, in terms of the Frankfurt School, the most dynamic revision of Marxist theory was undertaken by Erich Fromm, who, whilst his work does not immediately concern this dissertation, introduced elements of psychoanalytical theory into Marxist historical materialism.

It is coincidental and yet noteworthy that Václav Havel, the ex-President of the Czech Republic, was actively smuggling Velvet Underground records during the 60s and 70s (the Velvet Underground being a pop-band 'created' by Andy Warhol) into the then Czechoslovakia.

See pages 14-24 for a detailed discussion of the Culture Industry.


This apparent contradiction is discussed under the title of In Defence of Elitism, see pages 87-90.

De Jong, M, op. cit., p.67

"Unlike his {Adorno's} friends Benjamin, Brecht and Kracauer, he felt little sympathy for the experiments in mass art using modern technological means that had been made by the Weimar left on the basis of Soviet models." Jay, M, Adorno (1997:120).


"The sources of Adorno's concept of the Culture Industry, as Andreas Huyssen has pointed out, are to be found in his own experience with the new, technologised, anonymous mass culture of the Weimar era, Nazi pseudo-folk culture and the American popular culture of the 1930s and 1940s. One might add his disillusionment with the proletariat, whose efforts to create an oppositional working-class culture Adorno accounted a complete failure." Jay, M, Adorno (1997:120).


26 The author as employee will be re-assessed under the heading *Autonomy* – see page 43.


28 See pages 64-79 and 143-152 for a detailed discussion on the aesthetic and its relationship to the ethical.


31 This is discussed on pages 80-85.

32 Found in Classical Marxism - generally, the contradictions in-built within a capitalist society would lead to the formation of class-consciousness where the proletariat's position, as the subject of history, would be uncovered and lead to an inevitable socialist revolution.


34 For a detailed discussion on this concept of Autonomy, see pages 43-46 and 134-136.


36 Reaction formations utilise the energy of a repressed wish to constitute a habit and/or a set of attitudes in reaction against it.

37 More on the concept of free-time will be analysed below because of its importance – see pages 25-30.

38 For a discussion on True and False Needs, see pages 32-37.


One can see in this the idea behind identity/non-identity thinking, which is discussed on pages 51-55.

See pages 57-63 for a discussion on use-value versus exchange value. This concept is also discussed in section 9.2 on Lyotard and post-modernism, as well as in the section 9.3 on Ethics and Post-modernism. See in addition section 10.2 on Metanarratives and Aesthetics.


Held, D, op. cit., p.92.

Marcuse’s analysis on both true and false needs is discussed in detail on pages 32-37.

Held, D, op. cit., p.930.

Ibid., p.94.

Such as the movies based on *Pulp Fiction*, for instance, which the big studios refused to handle at first, then, recognising its profit potential, spewed forth dozens of imitations, or even Hitler’s favourite movie, the 'classic' *King Kong*, the first of its type (adventure-fantasy).


Spaces between words and word-usage in this quote reflect, as far as is possible, the original usage thereof in the text.


Held, D, op. cit., p.96.

Ibid., p.98.


Ibid., p.164.

Ibid., p.164.
61 In this, the question of the use of drugs - both illicit and licit - would be interesting to the extent that drugs perhaps do not offer only a form of escape, but also a form of re-discovering altered states of perception where, it can be argued, freedom can be glimpsed (if the 60's LSD experiments are anything to go by, as is evidenced in the writings of Leary, Huxley, Owlsley and Burroughs). This is a reason, perhaps, why there is such reticence in legalising narcotics such as marijuana, but legalising 'downers' such as alcohol and Valium - as well as legalising happy-pills or anti-depressants: rather than finding a reason for depression, it seems simpler solely to alter the brain chemistry with drugs such as Prozac, with the in-built message that society is not 'wrong', the individual is.


63 Ibid., p.168: "Pseudo-activity is misguided spontaneity. Misguided, but not accidentally so; because people do have the yoke that weighs upon them. They prefer to be distracted by spurious and illusory activities, by institutionalised vicarious satisfactions, than to face to the awareness of how little access they have to the possibility of change ... Productive free-time is only possible for people who have outgrown their tutelage, not for those who under conditions of heteronomy, have become heteronomous for themselves."

64 For a discussion on Progress, from Marcuse's perspective, see pages 37-41


66 See, however, the section on Relevance, for a brief discussion on the historical significance of Critical Theory.


68 Ibid., p.634.

69 For a detailed discussion on the Aesthetic and the Ethic, see pages 64-79, and also 136-146.


72 In addition to the section on Marx and Freedom above, see also pages 80-85 for a further discussion on Freedom.


74 Ibid., p.8.

75 See pages 87-90 for a discussion on the concept and usage of the concept of the “people”.


77 As Max Horkheimer wrote to Paul Tillisch in 1942: “We can hope for no more than that, would day ever break, our writings will be recognised as a very little star that had shone, though barely perceptible, in the horrible night of the present.”

78 Dubiel, H, op. cit., p.103.

79 Ibid., p.100-101.

80 Answers to this crucial question are attempted in various sections of this dissertation – see, for instance, the discussion under the title, *In Defence of Elitism*, as well as pages 80-85.

81 This question is dealt with in the sections on Autonomy – see pages 43-46 and, also, 134-136.


84 Marcuse, H, *One-Dimensional Man* op. cit., p.16-17.

85 Ibid., p.16.

86 Ibid., p17.
As for the so-called underdeveloped countries, Marcuse provides the following answer: "What stands in the way of this great chance for a non-capitalist form of industrialisation is, unfortunately, the fact that most of these developing countries depend, for better or worse, on the developed industrial countries – either the West or the East – for their original accumulation of capital. At any rate, I believe that, objectively, the militant liberation movements in the developing countries today represent the strongest potential force for radical transformation." Cited in Wiggershaus, R, op. cit., p.614:

In other words, the "Great Refusal", discussed in detail on pages 64-85.

Marcuse, H, One-Dimensional Man op. cit., p.57.

Berman, R, op. cit., p.28.

Ibid., p.61.

"For Walter Benjamin, narrative offered such a critical perspective on mass culture. 'The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov' argued that the rise of the novel was coincident with the expansion of modern media culture. The loss of the 'craftsmanship' of traditional storytelling augured a culture of modernity in which fiction offered a plethora of 'newsworthy' experiences for consumption and self-identification, but failed to give meaningful shape to individual lives. 'Every morning brings us the news of the globe,' he wrote, 'and yet we are poor in noteworthy stories.' ... But novelistic discourse could in part free itself from the increasing homogeneity of media culture: 'the narrative achieves an amplitude that information lacks.'" David Suchoff, Critical Theory and the Novel: Mass Society and Cultural Criticism in Dickens, Melville and Kafka (1994:28):

Berman, R, op. cit., p.63.

Ibid.,p.66.

Ibid.,p.69.

In other words, reification, a concept discussed on pages 57-64.

David Suchoff makes the point that, "for Adorno, individual, critical autonomy – and in particular the ability of authors and readers to criticise the social discourses to which they were subject – always remained a strong philosophic and literary motif. Thought is always already different, he suggested, from the identifications that place it in the reified world of consumption and production, retaining its utopian traces amidst even the worst self-enforced suppression." *Critical Theory and the Novel* (1994:36).


*Aesthetic Theory* op. cit., p.7.


Derived from Kant, antinomies are, in short, contrary positions which can be defended equally by logical arguments.

"Immanent criticism of intellectual and artistic phenomena seeks to grasp, through the analysis of their form and meaning, the contradiction between their objective idea and that pretension. It names what the consistency or inconsistency of the work itself expresses of the structure of the existent. Such criticism does not stop at a general recognition of the servitude of the objective mind, but seeks rather to transform this knowledge into a heightened perception of the thing itself. Insight into the negativity of culture is binding only when it reveals the truth or untruth of a perception ..." Ibid., p. 32.


Ibid., p.8.

Ibid., p.359.


Held, D, op. cit., p.83.

Ibid., p.83.

Mediation is derived from Lukacs, who mediated to discover de-fetishisation, though Adorno found mediation in the form of 'transcendent critique' - as opposed to immanent critique, transcendent critique is viewing something from the 'outside', from the exterior.

For example, the determinism of discovered class-consciousness in the contradictions of capitalism.


Held, D, op. cit., p.215.

Ibid. p.217.


Ibid., p.61.
Fetishism is a term Marx used to explain how commodities are produced, not for consumption, but for exchange and profit: in this way, they begin to appear as if they have an existence beyond the producers and the buyers.

Zuidervaart, L., op. cit., p.74.

Ibid., p.76.

Where Adorno rejected Benjamin and Brecht's hope for the potential of enlightenment in the new technologies.

In as much as art can, as is evidenced in Lukacs's work, enlighten the proletariat on the nature of reification, with the hope (or aim) of leading to an annihilation of the dominance of exchange value.

Zuidervaart, L., op. cit., p.78-79.

Ibid., p.82.

Ibid., p.84.

Ibid., p.85.

Here is the potential of autonomous art, or, as Adorno would have it, autonomy being society's antithesis. But again, there is an implied ethic in the idea of 'genuine' freedom for, to mark this in a very simplistic way, the concept of freedom would differ widely, say, between Hitler and Ghandi.

Adorno's conception of domination is both one of technological dominance over nature and of social repression.

Zuidervaart, L., op. cit., p.91.

An elitist stance, which is discussed in depth on pages 87-89.

As evidenced in a discussion of characters' actions and reactions to certain events, for instance, or the behaviour and norms shown by characters, rather than an exploration of the aesthetics and form of the artwork.

144 Zuidervaart, L, op. cit., p.92.

145 Ibid., p.91.

146 Marcuse, H, One-Dimensional Man, op. cit., p.61.

147 Ibid., p.62.

148 Ibid., p.64.

149 Ibid., p.65.

150 Ibid., p.70.

151 Ibid., p.248.

152 See pages 125-132.


155 For a detailed discussion of the Frankfurt School’s relation to this, and other accusations such as the ‘fathers of terrorism’, see Rolf Wiggershaus op. cit., in particular the section titled The Critical Theorists and the Student Movement.


157 Ibid., p.xi.

158 Ibid., p.xi-xii.

159 Ibid., pxi.
A reason, then, why modernism was so lauded by the Frankfurt School: To show social reality (the content) as somehow extraordinary, as somehow mediated and 'estranged', is thus subverting social reality.


Heinrich Mann's quote illustrates this point: "An intellectual who accommodates the ruling caste betrays the spirit. For the spirit is not conservative and grants no privileges. It dissolves; it equalises; and it pushes through the ruins of hundreds of castles toward the final fulfillments of truth and justice and their completion, even if it is the completion of death." Berman, R, *Modern Culture and Critical Theory* (1989:45).

See pages 115-125 for a discussion of the metanarrative.


Ibid., p.6-7.

Ibid., p.8.

Ibid., p.8.

Ibid., p.10.

Ibid., p.19.

Ibid., p.19.


Ibid., p.41.

Ibid., p.43.


Ibid., p.95.
176 Ibid., p.97.
177 Ibid., p.98.
178 Ibid., p.99.
179 Ibid., p.101.
180 Ibid., p.109.
181 Ibid., p.112.
182 Ibid., p.114.
183 Ibid., p.110.

184 Aspects of this are to be found in: Douglas Kellner, *Critical Theory and the Culture Industries: A Reassessment* (Telos 62).

185 Jay, M, concludes thus: “It is not as the much-maligned guardians of this alienation that the humanities, not despite but because of their inevitable elitism, can justify whatever emancipatory role they may still play even in the grim aftermath of Auschwitz.” *Hierarchy of the Humanities* (Telos 62:144)

186 Suchoff, D, op. cit., p.136.
187 Ibid., p.36.
189 Ibid., p.38.
190 Ibid., p.29.
191 Ibid., p.41.
192 Ibid., p.71.
193 Ibid., p. 72.

194 Ibid., p. 72.

195 Ibid., p. 73.

196 Ibid., p. 72.

197 See, for instance, Douglas Kellner, *Critical Theory and the Culture Industries: A Reassessment* (Telos 62), and also, Peter Burger, *The Decline of the Modern Age* (Telos 62), for a full discussion of this.


199 Ibid., p.62.


201 Ibid., p.62.

202 Who would later be exposed as a FBI informant.


204 Gonzales, M, op. cit., p.209.


206 Ibid., p.656.

207 See page 100-110 and, in addition, pages 115-155.


209 Suchoff, D, op. cit., p.13.

211 Ibid., p. 15.

212 Ibid., p.17.

213 Ibid., p.21.

214 Habermas, J, Modernity versus Post-modernity (1981:8).

215 Ibid., p.9.

216 Ibid., p.10.

217 Ibid., p.11

218 Ibid., p.12.

219 The avant-garde was cited as artistic progression as opposed to the soviet models of art, which focused on realism.


221 See pages 97-100.

222 Huyssen, Mapping the Post-modern, op. cit., p.20.

223 Ibid., p.21.

224 Ibid., p.22.

225 And thus both modernism and postmodernism, in view of Habermas' point that the modern is a concept traceable back to the fifth century when the Christians denoted themselves as 'modern' in order to disassociate themselves from their Roman and pagan pasts.

226 Andreas Huyssen, Mapping the Post-modern op. cit., p.23.
It is also noted, as has already been established by Helmut Dubiel (see: *Theory and Politics* op. cit.), that much of Adorno and Horkheimer's work was influenced by the time of its writing/conception. He notes that these theories should be studied within a historical perspective, something that he finds lacking in Adorno and Horkheimer's work.

"When Horkheimer, Pollock and Adorno examine from the perspective of the 1940s the demise of the German labour movement, all of their relevant considerations are founded on the then-current judgement that the proletariat had disintegrated as a class consciousness, and therefore politically effective, subject of history. According to this judgement, the political function of Critical Theory could now consist only in reflecting upon the determinants of this disintegration." Dubiel, H, op. cit., p.70.


Ibid., p.30.

Ibid., p.35.

Ibid., p.36.

Ibid., p.45.


Ibid., p.60.

Ibid., p.63.


Ibid., p.18.

Ibid., p.19.
Ibid., p.22.

Ibid., p.24.


Kerouac, after the publication of On the Road, being its linchpin.

To which Burroughs seems always linked - being ascribed tags like the Godfather of punk, even!

Television companies, mass media, etc.


Though this point is contentious, the reasons are not important for the conclusions that will be drawn by this dissertation.

Adorno likened the products of the Culture Industry to air-conditioning.

Dubiel, H, op. cit., p.84.


David Suchoff op. cit., p.18.

Berman, R, op. cit., p.129.

Ibid., p.131.

Ibid., p.131.

Ibid., p.134.


Ibid., p.xxiv.

261 Ibid., p.56.

262 Ibid., p.57.


264 Readings, op. cit., p.64-65.

265 Ibid., p.65.

266 Ibid., p.66.

267 As opposed to romanticism as found in Hegel, for instance.

268 As found in humanism.

269 As found in Classical Marxism.

270 Ibid., p.67.

271 Ibid., p.67.


273 Readings, op. cit., p.68.

274 Ibid., p.xxxi.

Baudrillard's only hope, in fact, is that the people influenced by the mass media will, eventually, become what he terms 'unresisting imbeciles', with the result that the propaganda will no longer have any effect – a short hand way of saying, perhaps, that emancipation is possible when people have become so cretinised that they forget that they are not free in the first place. Thus freed from the idea of 'unfreedom', they are indeed now free - were, that is, the idea of emancipation even tenable which, in postmodernism, is already arguable.


Ibid., p.4-5.

Ibid., p.8-9.

Although, using the analogy of chess to death, one can move the pawn ten squares if one so wished - what prohibits this is *the rules of the game* which, importantly, have not been organised nor invented by the players themselves.


Ibid., p.17.

Ibid., p.17.

Ibid., p.17.

Ibid., p.18.

Ibid., p.19.

Ibid., p.19.

Ibid., p.30.

Ibid., p.40.

Ibid., p.:66,.

292 Ibid., p.105.


294 Ibid., p.28.

295 Lyotard notes that: “the future has already arrived, everything has already arrived, everything is already there ... I mean that we can neither expect the realisation of a revolutionary utopia, nor an atomic explosion. The explosive force has already entered things themselves. There is nothing more that we can wait for ... The worst case, the imagined cataclysmic event upon which every utopia was founded, the striving of history after a metaphysical purpose etc., any kind of ultimate goal now lies behind us ...” Cited in: Albrecht Wellmer *The Persistence of Modernity: Dissertations on Aesthetics, Ethics and Postmodernism* (1991:41).


297 The Classical liberal subject of emancipation.


299 Ibid., p.41.

300 Ibid., p.42.

301 Ibid., p.43.

302 Ibid., p.51.

303 Ibid., p.53.

304 Ibid., p.52.

305 Ibid., p.53-54.
A counter-claim is made by Albrecht Wellmer. "the Enlightenment had ... anticipated something other and something better than mere technical, economic and administrative progress. It looked for the abolition of tyranny and delusion through the abolition of ignorance and poverty. And we only have to look a little beyond the letter – not the spirit – of the Dialectic of Enlightenment in order to be able to add that even where the confidence of the Enlightenment has been exposed as a pious illusion (in the post-Kantian philosophy of German Idealism, and in Marx) this only led to the renewed entrenchment of the ‘totalitarianism’ of reason on a higher plane, namely in a dialectic of history whose rationality was revealed in the terror of Stalinism." The Persistence of Modernity, op. cit., p.60

Whether this determinism was one that needed the participation of the revolutionary proletariat or not, as discussed in The Two Marxisms, is irrelevant.


Ibid., p.63.


Ibid., p.8.

See page 72.

This autonomy is discussed by Adorno in Prisms, op. cit., under the heading: ‘Cultural Criticism and Society’.


This is not to prescribe the type of freedom that needs to be pursued; rather, it is merely stating that the continuation of an emancipatory literature and culture and evaluation is a pre-requisite if the hope of some type of freer individual is to ever materialise. Since it appears as if culture can subvert, as has been evidenced in the revolutions of the former Soviet Union, an abandoning of the hope of enlightenment through culture is, to a certain degree, an abandoning of the hope of freedom since, as Eagleton has made clear, the grand narrative of repression and domination of the mass majority of mankind is not something that is likely just to vanish on its own, nor vanish because cultural evaluation, for instance, ceases to acknowledge its existence. As such, this is a materialist notion, believing, as it does, that it is the consequences of history that influence the present.

The concepts of freedom for the Frankfurt School have already been rendered – and they are, as noted, in no way a prescription for the way things should be – but, crucially, in a similar way in which they prescribe what art should not be, they also prescribe the ways in which the individual is not free – and therefore there is an implied ethical premise – i.e., that things should be otherwise.

The following point is made in this connection by Ted Morgan: “But when the two surviving Beat writers {Burroughs and Ginsbergh – A.M.} joined the Academy, Ferlinghetti thought, it only served to prove Marcuse’s view that the dominant culture in capitalist society has a tremendous capacity to absorb outsiders, to ingest its own dissident elements. *Naked Lunch*, once banned, was now on college curriculums. In other countries there was no free speech, while in America you could say anything you wanted but no one paid any attention. The radical artist went into the ring to slug it out with bourgeois society, and found that he was punching a tar baby, which, unperturbed by his blows, stuck to him and enveloped him with its blandishments of success and fame. It was what Tom Wolfe and Joni Mitchell called the Boho Dance.” *Literary Outlaw: The Life and Times of William S. Burroughs* (1988:577)

“Post,” grouses Richard Kostelanetz, ‘is a pretty prefix, both today and historically, for major movements are defined in their own terms, rather than by their relation to something else … No genuine avant-garde artist would want to be post anything.’

“Joan Barth finds the term ‘awkward and faintly epigonic, suggestive less of a vigorous or even interesting new direction in the old art of storytelling than of something anti-climactic, feebly following a very hard act to follow.’

“And even more pungently, the term ‘post-modernist’, for Charles Newman, ‘inevitably calls to mind a band of vainglorious contemporary artists following the circus elephants of Modernism with snow shovels.’” McHale, B, *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987:3)

Readings, op. cit., p.53.

322 Ibid., p.4.

323 Ibid., p.236.

324 Ibid., p.7.