

Adorno's Negative Dialectics as Multinational Marxism

*By Dennis Redmond © 2002
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These are momentous days indeed for the Global Resistance, as we working people of Planet Earth, for all too long the administered objects of the brutal economic, political and cultural logics of multinational capitalism (a.k.a. globalization, neoliberalization, and consumerization, respectively), at last begin to think, organize and resist multinationally. After thirty years of continuous advance, neoliberalism has been stopped dead in its tracks by a previously unthinkable coalition of unions, developmental and welfare states, non-governmental organizations, and ordinary citizens, stretching all the way from Chiapas '94 to Paris '95, Bonn '96 to Seattle '99, and Prague/Millau '00 to Porto Alegre/Gothenburg/Genoa '01. In the economic field, neoliberal orthodoxy has crashed and burned in Russia, Argentina, Indonesia, South Korea, Poland and countless other countries; central banks around the world have junked monetarist orthodoxy; while the economies of East Asia and the EU have already shelled out roughly 2 trillion euro to bail out Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia during the late 1990s, and are gearing up for even bigger expenditures to come.¹ Culturally speaking, the hegemony of Madison Avenue, Hollywood and US consumerism is long gone, outflanked by the electronic commons of the Web and an astonishingly radical multinational media culture. Politically, the irresistible decay of the US from unquestioned superpower to a rickety, unstable Second World zone, incapable of counting Presidential ballots, and hopelessly addicted to inflows of foreign capital, forms the starkest contrast imaginable to the ever-increasing political strength, industrial prowess and cultural self-confidence of the European Union.

All this raises the bar for the multinational Left, and not simply in the narrowly pragmatic sense that the agents of global capital will learn from their mistakes, as they have always done in the past, and respond with a combination of new carrots and old sticks. The global scale and scope of the Resistance, its diversity and complexity, urgently requires a correspondingly enlarged theoretical perspective. More than ever before, we need theories of the world-system, maps of its power-constellations, and conceptual tools capable of navigating its global economic, political and cultural infrastructures. We will argue that Theodor Adorno's last completed work, Negative Dialectics, remains the indispensable source-text for such a project, a treasure trove of post-national concepts and multinational models capable of decoding the informatic speculations of multinational capitalism, analyzing its developmental states and powerhouse export-platform economies, and intervening in its class struggles.

In the Anglo-American world, two factors have conspired to delay the critical reception of Negative Dialectics. The first is the lack of an adequate English translation: E.B. Ashton's 1973 version, while a heroic first attempt, is riddled with so many basic terminological and conceptual errors as to be almost unusable. Fortunately, this particular obstacle need no longer detain us, thanks to a much-improved English translation, freely available to the public in PDF and text format at <http://www.efn.org/~dredmond/nd.html>>. The second factor is, of course, Adorno's own inimitable style, which is often misperceived as a species of baroque neo-Hegelianism or Teutonic obscurantism. Surprising as it sounds, what makes Adorno so difficult to

translate is not the sheer density of his texts (from a strictly grammatical point of view, Adorno's language is not significantly more abstruse than the canonic post-structuralisms), but their very simplicity: the diamond-like precision by which the smallest micrologies are scanned, accessed, and set in motion towards the largest world-historical constellations. What dismays or infuriates the unwary reader of Adorno, to be blunt, is the revelation of that normally invisible total system which Adorno's concepts render visible for us.

Perhaps Adorno's greatest contribution to the global Left was the insight that any critique of multinational capitalism – what Adorno called the total system, and what we refer to nowadays as “globalization”, that adjective in search of a mode of production – must be as totalizing as the system it wishes to critique: not in order to mimic that system, but precisely in order to break free from its logic. Theory must negate the central mediation of the world exchange-net, namely the category of the totality, down to its innermost core, namely the global commodity form; only by leveraging the Marxian insight into the contradictions of that form, i.e. the clash between the particular use-value and the universality of exchange, can the power of the totality be turned against itself. Most scandalous of all, Adorno insisted that the totality is not a thing, i.e. a single institution, corporation, group of leaders corporations or even a single marketplace, but is rather a social relation – that is to say, a global aesthetic, political, theoretical and economic constellation, all at once. This has the significant consequence that the global Resistance ought to be as complexly socialized as the global division of labor itself – a polite way of saying, the realms of cultural, theoretical and economic praxis must respect each other's local differences, while cooperating on a global level.

Needless to say, this is not quite what the 1960s activists who streamed in to hear the Frankfurt School's lectures thought they wanted to hear, and there is no small measure of irony in the fact that Adorno's greatest work, as initially unpalatable to the counter-cultural Left as it was to the arch-conservatives of the Right, should be one of the rare examples of a multinational praxis which successfully outlasted that era. To use a science-fiction metaphor, Negative Dialectics hibernated for almost thirty years beneath the permafrost of neoliberalism's Ice Age like some extraterrestrial landing-craft from Heiner Mueller's more fortunate galaxies, its neural nets patiently scanning the communications systems of the total system, its satellite uplink radiating messages from emancipated star-systems on unknown wavelengths. What has changed in thirty years is not, to be sure, the text itself, but rather our collective capacity to decode its narrative machinery, something closely tied to the emergence of the global theory-market in the post-1968 conjuncture.

To grasp why this is so, we need to step back for a moment and take the measure of Adorno's debt to the work of two other thinkers: Karl Marx and Adorno's messianic doppelganger, indispensable counter-player and friend, Walter Benjamin. One of Marx's fundamental innovations was the economic genealogy, a.k.a. the mode of production. The genealogy was always an ambidextrous concept, designed to shuttle between two distinct logics: first, the internal or immanent dialectic of national capitalism, namely the realm of ideological nationalisms, wars of national unification, and national class struggles; and second, the external or transcendent dialectic of the world-market, namely the realm of global accumulation and unequal exchange, imperialism and colonialism. What Adorno grasped very early on was that the genealogy is always and everywhere a cultural and

political mediation, as well. Rather than moving the class struggle out of the factory and into the symphony hall, as all too many critics have alleged, Adorno realized that the symphony hall was the necessary structural equivalent of the factory in the realm of culture, or what Bourdieu would call the emergence of a specialized national musical habitus (teachers, composers, musicians, instrument-makers, music critics) operating within a national musical field (conservatories, symphony halls, opera-houses, etc.).

The limit-point of Adorno's early musicology was, of course, the Central European musical field, something which comes home to roost in his lack of a theory of jazz modernism. In fact, it was not Adorno but Benjamin who first ventured beyond the national cultural field, by mobilizing the economic trope of the lumpenproletariat – that disreputable mass of beggars, jugglers, petty criminals and adventurers, memorably sketched by Marx's 18th Brumaire as the inverted truth-content of the French financial oligarchy epitomized by the Second Napoleon – on behalf of an internationalized theory of aesthetics: this is the famous diagnosis of Baudelaire's poetry as versified Blanquism, the symbolic equivalent of the Paris Commune in the field of lyric poetry.² With the benefit of hindsight, we may complete Benjamin's analysis with the cognition that the Second Empire did more than just intensify the industrial exploitation of the proletariat and secure the rule of the French finance aristocracy; it also set in motion an aggressive, expansionary colonialism, resulting in the annexation of present-day Vietnam. In a very real sense, Ho Chi Minh and the Vietcong were the postcolonial cadre of the Paris Commune, something nicely confirmed by William Duiker's excellent biography of Ho, which details the young revolutionary's continuous flight from the clutches of the French colonial police, his sojourn in Paris during the 1920s, and most significant of all, his extraordinary achievement in assembling a revolutionary cadre amidst the fratricide of the Soviet purges – successfully eluding the tentacles of the French Sûreté, the Chinese Kuomintang, and the Soviet NKVD, on his way to replicating the same feat against the full-bore military might of the Japanese, French, and finally US Empires.³

All this sheds a new light on Benjamin's 1940 Theses on History, that encrypted telegram to Brecht's generation-born-later, which the New Left would rediscover, decode and disseminate decades later. The central achievement of the Theses was to set the messianic rupture or temporal break (the famous revolutionary chance which was just as infamously missed) of late 19th century modernism in motion towards its spatial antipode, a.k.a. the demesne of monopoly capitalism. Early modernism crashes into late modernism, and national-monopoly temporality falls into monopoly-national space, in a manner strikingly reminiscent of the closing moments of Orson Welles' Citizen Kane (1940), wherein the aisles of detritus piled up in Xanadu disclose that exquisitely Benjaminic allegory of transience called "Rosebud" – aisles halfway between the neon-lit rebus or Surrealist junk-pile, and the gleaming shelves of the 1950s department store. Put another way, if Benjamin was not quite the central theorist of May '68 – something better ascribed to Jean-Paul Sartre's Critique of Dialectical Reason – then one can make a case for Benjamin as the unheralded theorist of the Prague Spring, a.k.a. the Second World leverage-point or hinge between the First World counter-cultural uprisings and the Third World anti-colonial revolutions.

This may explain why Benjamin's final project, the unfinished Arcades project, was far more than an archeological dig into the prehistory of the strip mall. Its implicit goal was nothing less than a theory of mass-culture capable of bridging the gap between

the monopoly-era modernisms of the semi-periphery and the metropole, a.k.a. the yawning divide between Brecht and Capra, Klee and Hitchcock, and Soseki and Welles. This is precisely what Fredric Jameson would deliver some thirty years later in Marxism and Form, namely that dialectic of national-allegorical form and international-monopoly content whose ultimate terminus would be the cultural logic of postmodernism. In terms of form, the chance which was missed in 1940 was realized in 1971. In terms of content, however, things are a bit more complicated, due to the key innovation of Benjamin's 17th thesis, which proposes the messianic "Stillstellung", a.k.a. the zero-hour or temporal gradient of the constellation, as a crucial theoretical index of the historical process. What is at issue is the contradiction between the subjective experience of temporality in capitalism and its abstract generality – or as Marx pithily put it, the contradiction between the immediate transformation of sweat, brains and muscle-power into labor-time, versus the mediated transformation of congealed labor-time into exchange-value (the work-rhythms of the global factory, versus the rhythms of global accumulation).

Adorno's key contribution here, which ranks as one of the most spectacular turns in the history of critical theory, was to particularize the Benjaminic generality, by transforming the notion of temporality as *the* index of *the* constellation into *an* index of *a* constellation. Whereas Benjamin always regarded the constellation as an essentially temporal construct, that is to say, as the speculative cast or Mallarmean throw of the world-historical dice designed to explode the bad continuum of prehistory, Adorno realized at some point in the early 1940s that there can be no temporal cast without a spatial continuum, or put more concretely still, there can be no monopoly labor-time without a corresponding monopoly market-space. What instigated this realization was, of course, the exile of the Frankfurt School in North America, an experience which forever de-provincialized the School's thinking, while exposing Adorno to the most advanced sociological and empirical research techniques of the day – techniques which provided a unique window into the marketing and financial superstructures of US monopoly capitalism, at that point the most advanced mode of production on the face of the Earth.

In a nutshell, the members of the School realized there was a pressing need for a theory of monopoly content adequate to Benjamin's theory of monopoly form, almost two decades before Sartre came to much the same conclusion in the introduction of Critique of Dialectical Reason. The upshot was the double-barreled revolution of Adorno and Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment (1944) and Adorno's Minima Moralia (1945), the first great attempts to think through the monopoly object and the monopoly subject, respectively. Whereas the first text transformed an almost unclassifiable admixture of sociology, anthropology, historiography and ethnography into the Ur-forms of cultural studies and critical legal studies (though not quite critical anthropology, the specific achievement of Claude Levi-Strauss' Tristes Tropiques), the second ranged freely across the most abstruse reaches of philosophy, aesthetic theory, modernist aesthetics and consumer culture, on its way to inventing the space of micropolitics. Minima Moralia represents, indeed, a stylistic high-water mark which Adorno would not equal until the publication of Negative Dialectics: the cultural moment when Bloch's Expressionistic text-blocks crash into Benjamin's Surrealist feuilletons, a.k.a. the birth-hour of the US Empire.

What fell by the wayside after the 1940s, on the other hand, was Dialectic of Enlightenment's rickety anthropological framework, a.k.a. the concept of a monopoly-era

mimesis or tool-making productivity which mediated between the juridical infrastructures of capital and the sociological determinants of the culture-industry – or what amounts, in retrospect, to the Central European scansion of the Organization Man. The text's crucial weakness, in retrospect, was its lack of sociological registers capable of grasping the MacLuhnite or Parsonian organizational forms of monopoly capitalism as a concrete content, as opposed to an allegorical form (Adorno would retrospectively concede as much in a passage in Negative Dialectics, which singles out Max Weber's indispensable contribution to the notion of the constellation).⁴ The chance which was missed in 1944 was realized in 1976, when Pierre Bourdieu's magisterial Distinction delivered a ground-breaking sociology of symbolic capital as the axial hinge or mediation between the national class fraction and their global niche market (the habitus and the field), something Bourdieu later leveraged into theories of educational and cultural capital, and the first great diagnosis of Eurocapitalism.

Why, then, did Adorno turn to Husserl and the phenomenological antinomies of Against Epistemology in the mid-1950s, long after phenomenology had been swept from the field by the Central European ontologies and Francophone existentialisms? We will suggest that what seems to be an abject retreat to the 1920s was, in reality, a strategic flanking maneuver or Long March through the rocky wasteland of the mainstream philosophic modernisms. The goal was not simply to rub the phenomenologies against the grain of their historical successor, namely the monopoly-era positivisms, but to think through the restorative revolutions of post-WW II Europe, a.k.a. the twin administered modernizations of Stalinization and Americanization, from the standpoint of form. From an aesthetic standpoint, the 1950s marked the crucial transition from international to multinational forms, i.e. from the late modernisms of Beckett and Genet to the earliest postmodernisms of Wilcox' Forbidden Planet and Hitchcock's North by Northwest, and there is a sense in which Against Epistemology documents a similar moment in the ideological field, namely the transition from the international philosophical schools to a genuinely multinational theory-market. This is most evident in Adorno's luminous asides on cybernetics, mathematization and scientification, the striking prefiguration of those post-national meditations on nominalistic form carried out by the 1970s post-structuralisms (Foucault's biopolitics, Derrida's dissemination, Lacan's Symbolic, Kristeva's chora, etc.) imaginable. What the post-structuralist accounts of Western Europe's late-developing consumer society did not and could not deliver, on the other hand, was the mass mediatic content of the consumer culture (something nicely captured by Derrida's comment in the late 1970s, to the effect that America *is* deconstruction).⁵

What is most extraordinary about Adorno's work in the 1960s, however, is its relevance to the post-Cold War or multinational era: Adorno did not so much anticipate post-structuralism or postmodernism, so much as these latter retroactively anticipated Adorno. Beginning with the Three Studies on Hegel in the early 1960s, Adorno's texts turn towards the rosy dawn of globalization like a heliotrope towards the sun, spinning out finer and finer mediations, and tracking the latter's course with cybernetic precision. At some point in the mid-1960s, cybernetic quantity turned into informatic quality – a moment preserved in the textual bedrock of Negative Dialectics, as the narrative fault-line separating the first three sections of the text from the last three. Whereas the "Introduction", "The Ontological Need", and "Negative Dialectics: Concept and Categories" are organized around a cluster of recognizably neo-national and international

themes, ranging from the existentialisms, the phenomenologies, and the fundamental ontologies of the 20th century to the Cold War consumerisms of the mid-20th century, the last three sections follow a distinctly post-national narrative logic. To summarize briefly, the “Metacritique of Pure Reason” sets the antinomies of the 18th century concept of freedom in Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason in motion towards the juridical antinomies of the Cold War power-blocs; “World-spirit and Natural History” tracks the categories of natural and social history from Hegel to their terminus in the natural-historical praxis of the Cold War technocracies; while “Meditations on Metaphysics” draws out the great themes of bourgeois metaphysics against the backdrop of its theological predecessor, thereby illuminating the nascent space of metaphysics’ post-national successor.

This conjuncture of freedom, natural history and metaphysics is nothing less than the prodigious reinvention and expansion of the Frankfurt School’s original 1940s synthesis – that is to say, the rewriting of the Hegelian doctrine of the Good, the True and the Beautiful into critical theory’s tripartite scheme of critical philosophy, applied sociology and modernist aesthetics – into their multinational successors, which we still need to identify. True to form, it is not until the very end of the “Meditation” that Adorno provides us with the pass-key we need to access the advanced codes of the “Metacritique” and “World-spirit” sections: this is the self-reflection of dialectics, a.k.a. the meditation on the multinational division of labor, the crucial lever which sets the entire spectrum of the 20th century Marxisms into motion:

To do this, dialectics, at once the imprint of the universal context of mystification and its critique, must turn in one last movement against itself. The critique of everything particular, which posits itself absolutely, is that of the shadow of absoluteness over the critique itself, of the fact that it, too, against its tendency, must remain in the medium of the concept. It destroys the identity-claim, by honoring it in its testing. That is why it only reaches so far as this latter. The latter stamps the former as the magic circle with the appearance [Schein] of absolute knowledge. It is up to its self-reflection to cancel it out, exactly therein the negation of the negation, which does not cross over into a position. Dialectics is the self-consciousness of the objective context of delusion, not something already escaped from this latter. To break out of the latter from inside, is objectively its goal. The power to break out grows in it from the context of immanence; what would apply to it, once more, is Hegel’s dictum, that dialectics would absorb the power of the opponent, turning it against the latter; not only in what is dialectically individual but in the end in the whole.⁶

While the objective context in question is that of the total system, a.k.a. late monopoly capitalism, what Adorno suggests here is startlingly contemporary. In order to break the baleful spell or bane of a system which has no “outside”, at least in the classical 19th century sense of pre-capitalist modes of production or regions not yet fully integrated into the world-market, praxis must not content itself with a local position or even a set of positions within that system. Rather, it must dare to rise to the level of the concrete: it must, to reappropriate a term monopolized all too long by the culture of big biz, *go global*. Only the global theory-cognition can negate the global finance-speculation, by disclosing the multinational content which that speculation would like to gloss, displace or otherwise recontain. If the three great slogans of 1968 – “The whole world is watching”, “The personal is the political” and “Imagine the impossible” – were meant to

broadcast global ideals, then the multinational proletariat has, to paraphrase Marx, *no global ideals to realize*, but only a concrete world to win.

What soars beyond the wildest post-structural, postmodern or neoliberal speculation is the insight that this global cognition is not reducible to any specific set of concepts or subjective positions, but is objectively mediated by the antipodes of equivalence and non-identity. Identity, as Adorno famously wrote, is the Ur-form of capitalist ideology,⁷ but this does not mean that non-identity is un-ideological; rather, identity and equivalence function as the subject and object of the total system, or more precisely, as the compulsory subjectivity and the objective commodity form of late monopoly (a.k.a. early multinational) capitalism. It is only by accessing both that the subjective potential slumbering in the concept of the totality, as well as the objective potential lurking in the matrix of the total system, can be disclosed:

The exchange-principle, the reduction of human labor to an abstract general concept of average labor-time, is Ur-related to the identification-principle. It has its social model in exchange, and it would not be without the latter, through which non-identical particular essences and achievements become commensurable, identical. The spread of the principle constrains the entire world to the identical, to totality. If the principle meanwhile was abstractly negated; if it was proclaimed as an ideal that, for the greater honor of the irreducibly qualitative, things should no longer go according to like for like, this would create an excuse for regressing into age-old injustice. For the exchange of equivalents was based since time immemorial exactly on this, that something unequal was exchanged in its name, that the surplus-value of labor was appropriated. If one simply annulled the measurement-category of comparability, then what would step into the place of the rationality, which was indeed ideological yet also inherent as a promise in the exchange-principle, is immediate expropriation, violence, nowadays: the naked privilege of monopolies and cliques. What the critique of the exchange-principle as the identifying one of thought wishes, is that the ideal of free and fair exchange, until today a mere pretext, would be realized. This alone would transcend the exchange.⁸

This passage does more than just anticipate one of the central insights of the global justice movement, namely the critique of neoliberal dogma (the unholy trinity of marketization, deregulation and free trade) as a distorted socialism of the rich, designed to socialize losses, privatize profits, and enrich a tiny elite of stockholders at the expense of virtually everyone and everything else on the planet. By insisting on the utopian moment of free and equal exchange, Adorno transforms the total system's greatest strength – its global scale and scope – into its own worst enemy: suddenly, every local mediation teems with global contradictions.

What indelibly stamps Negative Dialectics as the first great document of multinational Marxism is its incomparable capacity to *think* the multinational, by accessing entire sets or clusters of contradictions, across the widest variety of conceptual levels and intellectual disciplines imaginable. These clusters are arranged in multinational templates (what Adorno calls “models”) designed to shuttle between the smallest movement of the concept, and the largest configuration of the totality. It should be stressed that these models are *not* the same thing as the constellations mentioned previously; rather, just as each constellation represents an ensemble of concepts, so too does each model represent an ensemble of constellations. In a nutshell, the concept, the constellation, and the model are designed to access the levels of the local, the national and the multinational, respectively.

The parallels to Fredric Jameson's border-busting program of cognitive mapping, as well as the sophisticated mapping techniques of Pierre Bourdieu's Eurosociology, are not only striking, but should be pushed to their logical conclusion: namely, that where Jameson and Bourdieu multinationalized the field of aesthetic theory and sociology, respectively, Adorno did something similar for the modernist philosophies. By rechanneling the planetary-sized theoretical voltages of monopoly labor-time into the power-grid of multinational market-space, Negative Dialectics opens up the hyperspace junction to the 21st century: the model-analyses of freedom, natural history, and metaphysics, released from their metaphysical scaffolding, stand revealed as the first great theories of the multinational juridical sphere, post-Cold War geopolitics, and global theory-market, respectively. The dialectical shock of this moment, the moment when theory escapes the gravitational field of the exchange-net and hurtles towards Heiner Mueller's more fortunate galaxies, is the revelatory shock of Paris 1995, Seattle 1999, and Genoa 2001, namely the awe-inspiring moment when neoliberalism's hideously destructive web of trade deals, IMF austerity packages, and global financial flows became suddenly, nakedly *visible*: the moment, in retrospect, when theory became a material force in the electronic commons.

To be sure, this is only one of countless other strands linking the conceptual toolkit of Negative Dialectics to the complex, multifaceted reality of multinational class struggle, each of which deserves the most careful explication and analysis in its own right (my own initial contribution to this Herculean task is available online in book format at <http://www.efn.org/~dredmond/GS.html>). If we cannot do justice to the complexity of the multinational dialectic in a single essay, then Adorno does at least give us the means to convey something of its aphoristic power, by means of the micrology.⁹ We will therefore close this essay not with any definitive conclusions, but with three micrological speculations on some of the most urgent issues of the contemporary era: the critique of neoliberalism; the relationship of postcolonialism to postmodernism; and finally, the emergence of post-Cold War or multinational geopolitics.

1. Critique of neoliberalism. One of the bedrock tropes of neoliberalism is the notion of an objective break or rupture between the Cold War and post-Cold War eras (translation: the triumph of Wall Street bubble-artists over socialism, history, and, in some of the wilder informatic utopias, the space-time continuum itself). The micrological analysis of neoliberalism goes further than merely analyzing the contradictions in the ideology of free trade or the mantra of deregulation per se, contradictory though these latter indeed are; rather, it must attack neoliberalism at the latter's point of greatest strength, namely its monopoly over the information commodities which intermediate global trade and financial flows. The economic version of such a critique might be a postmortem of the dotcom stock bubble, which foundered on the reality that the Web operates more like a library than a utility service (i.e. is designed to make information transfers less and less expensive to a wider and wider audience); a sociological version might want to document the paradox of how dotcom capitalism spawned open source communism. A cultural critique of neoliberalism, on the other hand, might want to explore the surprisingly egalitarian and progressive electronic commons spawned by the information culture (everything from i-mode to the 1990s videogame).

2. *Convergence of postcolonialism and postmodernism.* In the realm of theory, there is a remarkable passage in Gayatri Spivak's provocative and engrossing Critique of Postcolonial Reason, which pencils in Adorno's concept of the micrology on Derridean tracing-paper, as it were.¹⁰ Such affinities are not an accident, but are the inevitable product of a far-reaching historical convergence between postcolonialism and postmodernism, triggered by the rise of multinational capitalism. Postcolonialism was invented as a discipline due to the profound crisis of Third World nationalism as a political and cultural project, and it is no accident that the greatest innovations of postcolonialism – one thinks of Spivak's subaltern, or Aijiz Ahmad's path-breaking work on semi-peripheral nationalism in Southeast Asia – come very close indeed to Adorno's notion of non-identity, simply because they focus on what those nationalisms omitted or excluded from the official roster: women, indigenous peoples, the rural peasantry, the neocolonial proletariat of the favelas, etc. The postmodernisms at their radical best did something similar, by rubbing the grain of post-1968 micropolitics against the multinational consumer culture (most famously, in Jameson's diagnosis of postmodernism as the cultural logic of consumer capitalism). A micrological analysis of the theory-market might conceivably grasp postmodernism and postcolonialism as the immanent and transcendent poles of a still larger dialectic: that of the multinational. Put more provocatively still, the erasure of the Second World would not mean the end of history, but merely the end of the artificial buffer zone protecting the First World from the Third, in the sense that from now on, whatever happens in the peripheries recoils immediately into the metropolises, with consequences both for good (the global justice movement) and for ill (global terrorism a la September 11).

3. *Geopolitics.* One could be forgiven for suspecting that the micrology was invented for the sole purpose of analyzing the euro, given the fact that Adorno lived and taught in Frankfurt, home of the European Central Bank and the financial heartland of contemporary Eurocapital. On the purely economic level, the success of the euro was never in serious doubt, thanks to five decades of integration, the presence of the world's most stable social democracies, plus significant wealth redistribution from the richer EU countries to the poorer ones; the real significance of the common currency, however, is its status as the bellwether of an unprecedented process of political and cultural unification. The European Union is, in short, a textbook case of the whole turning out to be far greater than the sum of its parts. While certain aspects of the EU – in particular, its plush welfare states, electoral systems run on the principles of proportional representation, publicly-financed campaigns (not to mention that amazing innovation, still unknown in the US, called the majority vote), universal health insurance and generous pension schemes, and far-sighted ecological and environmental policies – are a shining beacon for the multinational socialisms of the future, the single market is also reproducing many of the worst aspects of US neoliberalism (social and economic polarization, neocolonialism in the Europeripheries, racism and violent revanchism). The micrological analysis of the Eurostate would have to grasp the immanent contradictions of Eurocapitalism – the struggle between French-Benelux dirigisme, Italian and Iberian neo-corporatism, and Central European and Scandinavian social democracy (British Thatcherism, for a number of reasons far too complicated to go into here, was never in the running) – in terms of the 50-year transformation of Western Europe from a bombed-

out semi-periphery in the post-WW II era to a prosperous junior partner of the US Empire, and finally to its current status as a full-fledged superpower. The cultural version of such an analysis might want to concentrate on the EU's multinational media culture; one could also imagine an economic analysis of Eurocapitalism, which analyzed the EU in the forcefield between US neoliberalism and East Asia's keiretsu capitalism. Most urgent of all is the construction of what might be called a micrological Europolitics, capable of building a multinational labor movement while pushing the EU in a progressive direction – a project which increasingly preoccupied Pierre Bourdieu during the last years of his life. One of the essential tasks of the Resistance movements of Prague, Gothenburg and Genoa will be to critically assimilate Bourdieu's remarkable achievements (particularly the 1998 Pascalian Meditations), while recuperating their profound affinity with Adorno's conceptual oeuvre, and thereby driving the multinational dialectic still further.

Footnotes

1. One of the little-known secrets of the 1990s expansion is that a period widely hailed as the pinnacle of privatization was, in reality, fuelled by the biggest government spending spree in world history. In a paper published by the Bank for International Settlements, Hiroshi Nakaso, an official at the Financial Systems Division of the Bank of Japan from 1993-2000, estimated that the total bank bailouts in Sweden, Norway and Finland during the early 1990s amounted to 4%, 3% and 7% of these countries' GDP, respectively; the US S&L bailout cost 3% of US GDP, while Japan's bank bailout of 1997-2001 cost 14% of Japanese GDP, or roughly \$630 billion. (Hiroshi Nakaso. *BIS Papers No. 6 – The financial crisis in Japan during the 1990s: how the Bank of Japan responded and the lessons learnt*. Bank of International Settlements, October 2001. <http://www.bis.org/publ/bispap06.htm>). Japan also launched a number of emergency stimulus packages during the 1990s to keep its economy afloat, totaling somewhere between \$400-500 billion. The biggest stimulus package of all was launched by West Germany, which spent €1 trillion (roughly \$1 trillion US) from 1990-2000 to rebuild East Germany. The future EU countries also pumped significant amounts of liquidity into the less wealthy EU countries (approximately 4% of the annual GDP of Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain from 1989-1999) and Eastern Europe, via debt writeoffs and subsidized loans from the European Investment Bank. Here are Eurostat's figures on EIB loans in 1999 to select Eastern European and Maghreb countries, expressed as a percent of total GDP and as a percent of total domestic investment.

<u>Country</u>	<u>EIB Loans 1999 (€ million)</u>	<u>Loans as % GDP</u>	<u>Loans as % Total Investment</u>
Latvia	98	1.72%	8.58%
Romania	396	1.22%	8.11%
Slovenia	375	2.01%	8.04%
Bulgaria	120	1.12%	6.97%
Lithuania	84	0.91%	3.79%
Slovakia	270	1.46%	3.75%
Morocco	263	0.82%	3.55%
Estonia	35	0.74%	2.63%
Tunisia	132	0.70%	2.49%
Czech Rep.	270	0.55%	1.82%
Hungary	170	0.38%	1.27%
Egypt	188	0.23%	0.98%
Poland	347	0.24%	0.85%

(Data: OECD Accounts, World Bank 2000 World Development Report, Eurostat.)

Last but not least, here are the figures for Japan's total financial assistance to southeast Asia from July of 1997 through the end of 1998, the worst period of the crisis, courtesy of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (at an exchange rate of 110 yen = \$1 US):

Country	Assistance as % total assistance	Assistance as % recipient's GDP
Thailand	\$10.2 billion	6.2%
South Korea	\$6.01 billion	1.3%
Indonesia	\$5.89 billion	3.2%
Malaysia	\$2.90 billion	3.6%
Philippines	\$2.73 billion	4.9%
Singapore	\$1.67 billion	2.1%

2. In the early pages of Negative Dialectics, Adorno observed that the undialectical quotient or theological pessimism in Benjamin's thought was the flip side of an astonishingly productive aesthetic optimism – the unmediated faith in the speculative power of the modernist work of art, whose greatest document is the Proustian category of the Name: “Benjamin, whose original sketch of the Arcades project combined incomparable speculative power with micrological proximity to the substance of the matter [Sachgehalten], remarked later in a correspondence concerning the first, authentically metaphysical layer of that work, that it could only be realized as something “impermissibly ‘poetic’”.⁸ This declaration of capitulation designates the difficulty of philosophy which does not wish to go astray, as much as the point where its concept is to be pushed further. It was probably due to the wholesale adoption of dialectical materialism as a world-view, as it were, with closed eyes. That Benjamin did not however decide on a definitive outline of the Arcades project is a reminder that philosophy is more than just bustle, only where it exposes itself to total failure, as the response to the absolute security which is traditionally smuggled in secretly. Benjamin's defeatism towards his own thought was conditioned by a remainder of undialectical positivity, which he secretly carried along from his theological phase, its form unchanged, into his dialectical one.” (My translation). Theodor Adorno. Negative Dialektik. Suhrkamp Verlag: Frankfurt am Main, 1973. (29-31).

3. William Duiker. Ho Chi Minh: A Life. Hyperion Press, NY: 2000.

4. See the “Constellation in Science” section: “How objects are to be disclosed through constellations is to be gathered less from philosophy, which did not interest itself in this, than from scientific investigations of merit: in many cases the achieved scientific work was ahead of its philosophical self-understanding, that of scientivism. One need by no means start out from its own content, according to metaphysical investigations like Benjamin's Origin of the German Tragedy-Play, which grasp the concept of truth itself as a constellation.⁶ One could return to a scholar of so positivistic a bent as Max Weber. He indeed understood the “ideal types”, quite in keeping with subjectivistic epistemology, as an aid in approaching the object, excluding every substantiality in itself and to be relinquished any which way. But just as in all nominalism, however null and void it may consider its concepts, something of the constitution of the thing strikes through this and reaches beyond the thought-practical advantage – not the least motive for the critique of unreflective nominalism – so are the material works of Weber derived far more from the object, than the southwestern German methodology would lead one to expect.” (My

translation). Theodor Adorno. Negative Dialektik. Suhrkamp Verlag: Frankfurt am Main, 1973. (166).

5. Derrida's comment is less naïve than it sounds, or put differently, his naivete was more far-sighted than the hard-headed pragmatism which dismissed post-structuralism and the media culture alike as marketing stunts. Deconstruction's greatest document – Derrida's 1973 Glass – generated its speculative energies from a telecommunicatory dialectic, if you will, between Genet and Hegel, those convenient symbols for the post-1968 micropolitical movements and an ossified PCF, respectively. What Derrida must have intuited about the US media culture of the late 1970s was the spectral presence of a similar set of micropolitical conversations, on a rather different set of cultural frequencies – something confirmed by the spate of progressive TV serials of the era: Sanford and Son, Mork and Mindy, and All in the Family surely represented a profound change from the Cold War media culture of the 1950s and early 1960s. It is no accident that the depoliticized post-structuralisms and postmodernisms which flourished in the US during the late 1980s and early 1990s either deleted or glossed over the micropolitical charge of Derrida's concepts; the upshot was to transform a potentially progressive telecommunicatory speculation into an utterly conformist species of informatic absolutism, a.k.a. early neoliberalism, a mere apologetics for the apparatus of neoliberal big biz.

6. (My translation) ND:397-398

7. "Identity is the Ur-form of ideology. It is consumed as the adequacy to the thing suppressed thereby; adequacy was always also subjugation under dominating ends, to this extent its own contradiction. After the unspeakable effort which it must have cost the human species, in order to establish the primacy of identity even against itself, it rejoices and basks in its victory, by turning this latter into a determination of the vanquished thing: what this last experienced, it must present as its in-itself. Ideology owes its power of resistance against the Enlightenment to complicity with identifying thought: indeed with thinking at large. It demonstrates therein its ideological side, that it never makes good on the assertion, that the non-I would in the end be the I; the more the I grasps it, the more completely the I finds itself downgraded to an object. Identity becomes the authority of a doctrine of adjustment, wherein the object, according to which the subject would be directed, pays back to the latter what the subject inflicted on it. It is supposed to accept reason against its reason. That is why the critique of ideology is not something peripheral and intra-scientific, something limited to the objective Spirit and the products of the subjective one, but philosophically central: the critique of the constitutive consciousness itself." (My translation). Theodor Adorno. Negative Dialektik. Suhrkamp Verlag: Frankfurt am Main, 1973. (152).

8. (My translation) ND:149-150

9. Reduced to its simplest form, the micrology is the smallest discernible element or link by which the constellation is to be read. It's worth noting that the micrology's leading historical forerunners, the Freudian case study and the Weberian ideal type, did

something similar, in the sense that the Freudian neurotic symptom was the local instance of the global libidinal drive-economy, or the way that Weberian rationalization expressed the juridical instance of capitalist accumulation. But whereas the case-study and the ideal type shied away from the radical insight into the nature of capitalism by retreating to the safe haven of natural history – for Freud, this meant the ultimately instinctual genesis of the drives, and for Weber, jurisprudence as the basis of national markets – Adorno dissolves this natural history back into social history, by linking the micrology to the macrological level of the totality: “Absorption into the particular, dialectical immance raised to an extreme, necessitates as one of its moments the freedom to also step away from the object, which cuts off the claim of identity... In the praxis of cognition, the resolution of the irresolvable, the moment of such transcendence of thought comes into play in that only as a micrology does it employ macrological means. The demand for stringency without system is that for thought-models. These are not of a merely monadological sort. The model strikes the specific and more than the specific, without dissolving it into its more general master-concept. To think philosophically is so much as to think in models; negative dialectics is an ensemble of model-analyses.” (My translation). Theodor Adorno. Negative Dialektik. Suhrkamp Verlag: Frankfurt am Main, 1973. (39).

10. “Yet we might consolidate our critique in the following way: the relationship between global capitalism (exploitation in economics) and nation-state alliances (domination in geopolitics) is so macrological that it cannot account for the micrological texture of power. Sub-individual micrologies cannot grasp the ‘empirical’ field. To move toward such an accounting one must move toward theories of ideology – of subject formations that micrologically and often erratically operate the interests that congeal the micrologies and are congealed in macrologies. Such theories cannot afford to overlook that this line *is* erratic, and that the category of representation in its *two* senses is crucial.” Gayatri Spivak, Critique of Postcolonial Reason (263-4). Spivak comes very close indeed to identifying what mediates between the levels of the economic and the political, namely the consumer culture, but then stops just short of taking the next logical step, i.e. rising to the concrete realm of multinational aesthetics: “My view is that radical practice should attend to this double session of presentations rather than reintroduce the individual subject through totalizing concepts of power and desire.” (264) Indeed it should, but it cannot do so by retreating to the Derridean double session, that postmodern update of the Nietzschean eternal return: to paraphrase Adorno, what represents the representations is itself represented, and the ultimate limit-point of this “represented” is the multinational commodity-form. No theory of multinational aesthetics without a theory of the multinational commodity form.