

CRITICAL POLITICAL THEORY AND RADICAL PRACTICE

SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PATHOLOGY

A Framework for Progress

R.C. Smith



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Society and Social Pathology

A Framework for Progress

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Introduction

1.1 IS SOCIETY SICK?

Can society actually be sick? This is a question that Erich Fromm (2002) asked in his widely celebrated study *The Sane Society*, set in 1950s America. It is a question which this book, almost 70 years later, endeavours to investigate in detail, both empirically and philosophically. But why, one might ask, should such an endeavour be considered important?

As Fromm writes: “Nothing is more common than the idea that we, the people living in the Western world [...], are eminently sane” (p. 3). Can it be that, contrary to *sociological relativism*, the only thing “normal” about society is its fundamental ailing? Can it be that the mainstream view of pathology, which focuses mainly on the individual’s *lack of adjustment* to the established patterns of behaviour and ways of life in society (p. 12), is actually fundamentally misguided? “Can we be so sure”, Fromm asks (p. 3), “that we are not deceiving ourselves?” If the standard impulse of the neurotic, to whatever degree, is to operate in belief that his or her “compulsive rituals”, “hysterical outbursts” or cycles of irrational reaction “are normal reactions to somewhat abnormal circumstances”, then “[w]hat about ourselves?” (p. 3).

As we will learn throughout this work, society is not only ailing and in crisis. It is caught in a pathological cycle of ritual social crises. These crises have just as much to do with economics, politics and one’s larger social environment as they have to do with health, psychological well-being and

deeply searching questions regarding broader conditions of collective flourishing and individual subjectivity.

In offering a comprehensive study along empirical, scientific and philosophical lines, the following research investigates how an incredibly large range of issues relevant to our contemporary lives are deeply socially interconnected, as are the attitudes society engenders.

Climate denial and counter-progressive movements; the destructive obsession of mass consumerism; the domination of nature and the psychology of environmental degradation; violence and the genesis (as well as effects) of hypermasculine culture; bigotry, racism, patriarchy; dominant attitudes and the rise in right-wing rhetoric; authoritarianism; psychopathy and emerging patterns of mental disturbance; conformity and ideology—this book investigates all of these issues and more in relation to a systematic, comprehensive, critical conception of social pathology. But can such phenomena really be understood as pathological and interconnected?

As Nafeez Ahmed has already shown, different forms of crises ranging from dwindling oil reserves, terrorism and food shortages are each symptoms of the same ailing system (Ahmed 2010). But what about psychic life? How does psychology and the subject fit within the larger, complex picture when it comes to the systemic nature of contemporary crises, its unfolding path of destruction and also to that same system's general reproduction? In much the same way as the scientific approaches in systems theory, which reveal precisely the global interconnected nature of contemporary crises on a structural level, this book lays out a study of the pathological character of such crises.

As opposed to viewing different crises as isolated phenomena, the following study expands on the systems view of human society that particular crises are entwined in much broader global trends and processes (Ahmed 2010). The steep rise in depression, the prevalence of health inequalities, the increasing emergence of new existential disorders, the phenomenon of "toxic stress", the naturalizing of consumption disorders, issues of desensitization and subject (de)formation, emotional repression, deficiencies of empathy and hardening attitudes—inasmuch as these phenomena relate to social pathology, they will be investigated as symptoms of an ailing society.

Thus, in considering the complex relation between social and individual psychology, the following research attempts to advance Fromm's study by first asking whether society can make people sick. If so, how have people organized and continue to practise such a destructive way of life? Why is there such resistance to progressive innovation, movement

and transformation? What about the notion of popular irrationality? How might we aim to break pathological cycles of society and ultimately begin developing a more reconciled, healthy society? How do we begin to establish a culture of social and individual healing? How do we frame what's going on around us, all of the negative and critical realities, so as best to understand those realities and a deeper vision for society's transformation?

The immediate chapters are an attempt to answer these questions. In the first half of this book in particular, I will attempt to tie together the individual threads of numerous social issues, and show how they knit together a much broader picture of ailing society and its cycles of ritual crises. After several years of independent research, retrieving data and obtaining insight from hundreds of sources from across a broad range of academic disciplines and fields of study, I hope to establish piece by piece a radically objective view¹ of the status of the modern social world and its overall direction.

Emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary research and seeking connection with empirical analysis, scientific research and study, philosophy and social movements, I will begin with an enquiry into whether our contemporary neoliberal, global capitalist social world—its forces, processes and cultural motivations—has any ties to various mental and physical health issues. Although much of the empirical data available fails to make connections between society and a deeper critical theory (CT) of health, throughout this book, I intend to introduce a new concept of, and conceptual framework for, understanding the systemic links of needless social suffering in all its forms. One step further, I endeavour to present one of the most comprehensive, systematic and complete studies of social pathology to date.

At the heart of the broader social-political, economic context is what will be described as the anatomy of human destructiveness (Fromm 1973)—or what we will come to learn as being the *pathology of human destructiveness*. In describing the findings of my extensive several-year research and study programme, we will cross the borders of a number of academic disciplines and fields, including psychology, neuroscience, neurophysiology, medical science, biology, anthropology, epistemology, among many others. We will come to learn both a global and western view of social pathology. That is, in contrast to the pitfalls of sociological relativism now common in mainstream social science, we will come to understand a much more reconciled, advanced, critical and comprehensive idea of society, its core functioning and its systemic social psychological ailments. Inspired by CT

and informed by an intensive cross-disciplinary, methodically innovative approach,² questions fundamental for social scientists and engaged readers alike will be explored.

As for the opening question—why such a study should be considered important—there is, as will become abundantly clear, no more a fundamental course of analysis than that which concerns society and its pathology and discontents. At a time when, in social and political theory, critique has nearly exhausted itself, where an endless wave of criticism exists and yet critique seems to rarely translate into anything transformative, at the core of the situation today is simply the issue of health and well-being. For reasons we will address much later in this work, a positive theory of health and well-being is only adequate when critically framed and rooted in the negative. As Lambert Zuidervart (2015) writes: “What a critical social theory really needs to address is why hunger, poverty, and other forms of human suffering persist despite the technological and scientific potential to mitigate them or to eliminate them altogether.”

This is the basic, core human sentiment from which the following research emerged and continues to move. Motivated, in part, by my studies and pursuits in the natural sciences, this book looks at the prevalence of unreason and irrationality in contemporary society as a key symptom of social pathology, indicating not only “a deficit of reason” (a notion we’ll discuss much later) but also a deficit of general health and well-being. As I wrote some years ago: In considering any notion of a social-systemic alternative to capitalism, we also need to consider the individual, emotional, psychological, cognitive, relational, economic, biological, and so on needs of people. Purely economic or political theories don’t cut it. In turn, if the ultimate measure of change that might help inspire a more critically massive movement and a genuine growth of rationality is whether needless social suffering is successfully being relieved at the level of ordinary people, then here is our compass to help us navigate the “truth context” when it comes to measuring “social progress”. This is an important point moving forward, because it is this truth context that will help us to continue to identify and define fundamental, meaningful change and transformative progress across all spheres of social life.

To borrow from Theodor Adorno, “suffering is a condition of all truth. For suffering is objectivity that weighs upon the subject; its most subjective experience, its expression, is objectively conveyed” (Adorno 1992b, pp. 17–18). One of the ultimate measures of truth when it comes to social critique is the existence of needless suffering. The often misun-

derstood idea that contemporary society is “healthy” or, in other words, “positive” and “rational” is itself a disorder linked to contemporary living conditions. Though often ignored in the mainstream, the conditions of modern capitalism have, as will be discussed, introduced new social, economic and political forces, as well as certain distinct structural and cultural motivations which, in many ways, naturalize needless suffering and irrationality. And it is, as we will see, undeniable that these developments have had major implications when it comes to subject development, mental health and human behaviour. From the mounting evidence of a mental health crisis to the social and individual reproduction of dominant, coercive and authoritarian relations, in order to actually transform society and aspire to create a rational social world, we must first come to understand all of the ways it is sick and the manner in which the legacy of ailing society exists within the deepest fabric of the individual. The very notions of “progress” and “well-being” and even “reason” and “democracy” depend on it.

And for that reason, one can say that this book is, in many ways, a document of suffering inasmuch as it represents the earliest expressions of a social philosophy of hope, progress, well-being and social rationality. The innovative approach to conceptualizing social pathology will help the academic and non-academic reader explain a variety of psychological, social and political trends. It is, moreover, from out of the idea of letting suffering speak in all its forms—the immense suffering all around us—this research originally emerged several years ago. The result, I hope, is a widely illuminating discussion that reveals the intricate social and deeply personal connections between society and the individual subject, social conditions and mental health, and culture and human patterns of behaviour. Deeper yet, the evolution of human society will come into question as well as systematic cycles of domination throughout history, and how the legacy of historical trauma lives in the present day.

1.2 MOUNTING EVIDENCE OF A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Ernest Becker (1973) once commented: “In times such as ours there is great pressure to come up with concepts that help men [and women] understand their dilemma; there is an urge toward vital ideas, toward a simplification of needless intellectual complexity. Sometimes this makes for big lies that resolve tensions and make it easy for action to move

forward [...]. But it also makes for the slow disengagement of truths that help men [and women] get a grip on what is happening to them, that tell them where the problems really are” (p. 1). One such truth is the relation between social structures and systems—that is, one’s sociohistorical-cultural context—and the development and formation of the subject. Relatedly, another such truth is the relationship between society and mental health (Schumaker 2001).

In Chap. 2, we will discuss this complex relation in significant detail. Meanwhile, a brief survey of empirical data will prove an important opening. As many may already be aware, the notion of social pathology, from which this book was originally conceived, was first developed in detail by the early generation of the Frankfurt School. Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse offer two notable contributions in this regard, drawing connections between society and the subject, between social structures and systems and individual health. With that said, as a vital notion which has since been taken up by Jürgen Habermas and Axel Honneth, it was actually Erich Fromm who provided the most sharp and comprehensive theory of pathology. But much like the previously mentioned projects, Fromm lacked comparative data on mental health. Noting at the outset of *The Sane Society* that this data was not available at the time, he instead turned to referencing statistics on suicide, homicide and alcoholism (Fromm 2002, pp. 6–7). He argued that, although material needs were being increasingly met, high suicide and alcoholism figures “make it plain that we deal here with symptoms of mental unbalance” (p. 10). What was striking, according to Fromm, was that “the most prosperous countries in the world, show the most severe symptoms of mental disturbance” (p. 10), leading him to draw on the question of whether modern civilization satisfies the most profound needs of human beings (p. 11).

Admittedly, comparative data is still generally lacking today. But from the many fragments available, there is enough to illustrate a more up-to-date picture. So, was Fromm’s basic core hypothesis correct? Does it remain relevant in our contemporary times?

Let us begin by considering, for instance, the World Health Organization (Kessler 2008) World Mental Health Survey Initiative, which was carried out in 28 countries around the world. In this report, it was disclosed that there is a clear and definitive global burden of mental health disorders (Kessler et al. 2009). Moreover, in a separate study, it was estimated that by 2030, depression will be the second highest cause of disease burden (World Health Organization 2010). According to another systematic review and

meta-analysis of mental disorder statistics from 1980 to 2013, common mental disorders are said to now be highly prevalent globally (Steel et al. 2014). These broad conclusions are supported by a wealth of particularly focused research and seem to support Fromm's basic thesis. But in order to further the point, let us expand our scope of consideration.

In 2001, it was estimated that one in four people in the world will be affected by mental or neurological disorders at some point in their lives, with over 450 million people suffering from such conditions at the time of the study (World Health Organization 2001). In Europe, 27% of the population is said to have suffered a mental disorder in the year previous to the last survey, and these figures are likely to underestimate the actual severity and magnitude of the problem.³ If that's not disturbing enough, 2014 research found that suicide accounted for 17.6% of all deaths among people aged 15–29 years in high-income countries (World Health Organization 2014). In fact, suicide rates have increased 60% worldwide in the last 45 years (World Health Organization 2010). In the UK, in particular, suicide was one of the leading causes of death in in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics 2015).

The Mental Health Foundation (2015) in the UK supports these statistics, citing major depression as the second leading cause of disability throughout the world. They estimate a staggering one in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem in any given year. Furthermore, mental health problems are said to be the largest burden of disease in the UK. According to the Health and Social Care Information Centre (2012), anti-depressant prescriptions account for the largest annual rise in items dispensed in the UK, with “just under 46.7 million prescriptions for antidepressants [...] dispensed in England in 2011; a 3.9 million item (9.1 per cent) increase on 2010”.

In Canada, it is estimated that one in five Canadians experience a mental health problem in any given year (Smetanin et al. 2012), and according to Statistics Canada (2015) the country averages 11 suicides a day. In 2013, a study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development found that Canada, another country whose economic organization (like the UK) is notably closely based on American corporate capitalism—a system subject to intense critique by Fromm—is the third highest consumer of anti-depressants among 23 developed countries surveyed. In fact, it has been revealed that “antidepressant use has soared in rich countries over the past decade”, with some countries seeing as high as a 50% increase (Tencer 2013).

Similarly, in the USA, it was estimated that approximately one in four adults suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in any given year (The Kim Foundation 2016). According to The Kim Foundation (2016), the 2004 US Census suggested 57.7 million people aged 18 or older suffer from mental health issues.

That's not all. A 2014 survey by the National Institute of Mental Health, a primary source for such statistics, concluded that there were an estimated 9.8 million adults aged 18 or older in the USA with serious mental illness. When it comes to children and the continuing of widespread prevalence of mental unbalance, the same institute estimated that one in five children have had a seriously debilitating mental disorder. This does not factor in an even more staggering 46.3% of children to have suffered less severe mental disorders. Moreover, a recent poll found that children and young people are growing up in a "toxic climate" (Jerrom 2014). Pressure to get "good grades", widespread bullying and insecurity about weight are just a few reasons cited (Jerrom 2014). In various studies and research, this toxic climate with its equally toxic pressures has been clearly linked to the marketization and neoliberal intensification of the education system (Amsler 2015; De Graaff 2012; Giroux 1998, 2012, 2014a, 2015; Holt 1991, 1995; Kohn 1999; Mulcahy 2008; Titchiner 2017).

Additionally, the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (2016) has suggested that anxiety disorders affect 40 million adults, while research undertaken by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2014) indicates 9.3 million adults suffer "serious mental illness", understood to be different than the 45.9 million Americans who suffer other forms of mental illness. It has also been found that a massive 75% of people with severe mental illness are tobacco-dependent, while 44% of all cigarettes in the USA are consumed by people with psychiatric histories (Torgovnick 2008). Obesity and diabetes are also linked (Torgovnick 2008).

1.3 BEGINNING TO MAKE THE SOCIAL CONNECTION

If these statistics and reports are not convincing enough of the mounting evidence of a mental health crisis, there is an overwhelming body of clinical research within critical social work studies that substantiate a clear link between the negative social, economic and political determinants of society and various mental health issues (Bailey and Brake 1975; Carniol 1992, 2010; Ferguson 2009; Gray and Webb 2013; Lavalette 2007;

Mullaly 2007). Although, as I will highlight later, many works within critical social work studies lack a more comprehensive framework, what we observe is the tracing of clear connections between modern social conditions and the impact those conditions have upon individual behaviour and psychological well-being.

Indeed, despite the prevalence of mental health issues, those who suffer from such disabilities are understood to be among the most marginalized groups (Chambers 2010; World Health Organization 2010). Generally speaking, we can draw a fairly clear connection between worsening socioeconomic circumstances and depression (Lorant et al. 2007). This includes unemployment, poverty and housing unaffordability (Hudson 2005).

To expand on this point, in the UK, recent surveys concerning mental health statistics also highlighted association between the presence of a disorder and a low adjusted household income (Health and Social Care Information Centre 2009). Inasmuch that alcohol-related deaths are on the increase since 1994, strong links are drawn between such causes of death and social-economic deprivation (Office for National Statistics 2016). And this really is just the tip of the iceberg. Insofar that alcohol was recently conclusively linked to at least seven types of cancer (Connor 2016), a report by the World Health Organization (2011) clearly linked death, disease and injury associated with alcohol consumption to economic status.

These links will most likely not be surprising to the engaged, critical reader. But what about those within the “middle-class life of prosperity” of whom Fromm concerned himself? What of the increasing negative social conditions he hypothesized and its possible connections with alcoholism and suicide as pathological phenomena (Fromm 2002)? More importantly, and more to the point, is it true that (1) society is sick and (2) contemporary capitalist societies have a significant impact on mental health and what Fromm (p. 11) described as the “sanity of people living under our system”?

One startling case study might be found in the example of Moritz Erhardt, a 21-year-old intern for Bank of America Merrill Lynch in London, who died after working for 72 hours straight without sleep (Taylor 2014). Taken in isolation, this example proves nothing. It may not even be conclusive, as the coroner found, that Erhardt died of exhaustion (Kennedy 2013). But what this terrible tragedy highlighted, in the very least, is the commonality of such extreme working habits of a worsening capitalist culture (Kennedy 2013). “This unflinching dedication to the job—indeed

the job with the utmost virtue of wealth production—indicates a set of moral and social values increasingly used to describe both individual and national economies” (Taylor 2014). This assertion is affirmed and substantiated by numerous studies (Brick 2006; De Graaff 2016; Gray 2009; James 2007; Kasser et al. 2007; Schumaker 2001, 2016; Walkerdine and Bansel 2010). In short, writes J.D. Taylor (2014), “productivity, growth, entrepreneurialism and drive are ‘virtues’ both of the effective individual and the expanding economy. By contrast, depression, crisis, zero-hour insecurity and burnout are used to describe both ‘failing’ economies and individuals who must work harder to perform.”

As for empirical data, the research cited above—which really only scratches the surface—already begins to lend an answer. The poor are disproportionately affected by mental disorders (Funk et al. 2012) throughout the world, and yet it has also been found that “adolescents reared in suburban homes with an average family income of \$120,000 report higher rates of depression, anxiety and substance abuse than any other socioeconomic group of young Americans today” (Novotney 2009). Millennials who come from more or less affluent backgrounds in the UK now spend 488% more on rent than the baby boomers (Resolution Foundation 2016). There is reason to speculate this trend is similar also for young people in the USA and Canada, among others. But this is not the only growing intergenerational divide. Food prices continue to also rise (FAO 2016), while Millennials look set to be the first generation to earn less than their predecessor (Elliot 2016). It is no surprise, furthermore, that millennials are considered the “generation on edge” (Heck 2015), as young people throughout the world experience unprecedented levels of anxiety and depression. Socioeconomic precarity is certainly one key factor. As one commentator recently put it: “We’re sold the dream, but fear a nightmare future.”⁴ As this book will show, understanding the actual experience of and reasons for this generation being on edge requires a more holistic analysis concerning the conception of contemporary life as a whole.

Although the types of depression and their causes may vary, the psychological detriments of corporate capitalism have been analysed by many in psychology (Azar 2009; Kasser et al. 2007; Luthar et al. 2014). As Oliver James (2008a) highlights in his book *The Selfish Capitalist—Origins of Affluenza*, mental illness nearly doubled between the 1980s and 2000s. In an (2008b) article on his book, he suggested that: “citizens of Selfish Capitalist, English-speaking nations (which tend to be one and the same) are twice as likely to suffer mental illness as those from mainland western

Europe, which is largely Unselfish Capitalist in its political economy. An average 23% of Americans, Britons, Australians, New Zealanders and Canadians suffered in the last 12 months, but only 11.5% of Germans, Italians, French, Belgians, Spaniards and Dutch.” James’ book references interesting data sources, including similar WHO studies cited above, highlighting not only the impact one’s environment has on their mental health but also underlining the correlation between income inequality—socio-economic status—and emotional distress.

In considering James’ book, the big difference between the time when Fromm wrote *The Sane Society* and now is neoliberalism. As we’re observing in Millennials and young people throughout the world, younger generations are growing up in an increasingly hostile, hardened and alienated social world.

Neoliberal capitalism is as much about total economic administration, the complete crystallization of the commodity form and unbarred forces of economic coercion anterior to the nation-state, as it is about preserving the reality principle and performing unending violence to the individual subject, who, after so many years, threatens to wilt under the weight of intensified systemic oppression, coercion and insecurity.

Through the intensification of the ideology of capitalist development, neoliberalism has exercised systematic attacks on remaining *social* infrastructure. Social benefits have been cut. University tuition is on the increase. Corporatization across most industries has led to increasing competition and precarity. Finally, in the midst of these wider global processes, the colonization of the social world and, impliedly, also that of the ego, as well as the deepening of social, economic and environmental crises, has resulted in tremendous suffering, implicitly and explicitly.

This is a social world which, contrary to the generally progressive direction of core humanistic and Enlightenment values (Bronner 2004; Smith and De Graaff 2016), has moved further away from a transformative, innovative, democratic and environmentally sustainable vision of life. Indeed, entire waves of research and reports are currently being published describing the full force of neoliberalization. With very little transformative hope available, it is no wonder why social and political pessimism among the younger generations is increasing. The surveys and studies referenced in this book reveal as much.

If Fromm was concerned with understanding the impacts of a particular form of capitalism in the 1950s and the psychological ailments of the affluent middle classes in particular, today, a widely referenced reality

of the neoliberal phase of capitalist development is an increase in pressure, in demand and in inequality. James' (2008a) diagnosis of the emergence of neoliberalism over the last 30 years, for example, highlights a clear connection between the socioeconomic-political system, its structures and processes and detrimental effects on mental health. And it's not simply hyperbole. In a recent report, the US National Research Council and Institute of Medicine re-affirmed the connection between poverty and mental and physical health problems (Woolf and Aron 2013). Finally, tying all the threads together as part of a "bigger picture" analysis, Carl Walker (2008) analyses the human cost of recent political and economic events as main contributors to the rise of depression, particularly in the USA and Britain (since 1980).

The overwhelming picture and connections which are starting to emerge can be elucidated further, when considering several frequently cited examples in sociological research and various studies in psychology. In observing how the economic and political spheres create social and individual pathology, we read and observe clear links between labour, work cycles, relationships and what I will later term *psychologically disintegrative effects*.

Consider, for instance, how under neoliberal capitalism, it has become common practice that in many places when workers are let go, they are not replaced. Instead, the additional work is downloaded on the others, especially middle-level staff who have more to lose. Then there is the example of the very much contemporary phenomenon of the continental work shift of four days of 12 hours on and three days off, not to mention night shifts at factories or in retail, such as supermarkets. In these instances, not only are the hours gruelling and the labour cycles extremely unhealthy, companies are now increasingly hiring many workers just below full-time so they don't have to pay insurance and other benefits. In all of these examples, which are very much prevalent trends today, we can draw a clear connection between work conditions and high levels of stress. The disintegrative effects of such destructive work cycles, pressures and precarious conditions, we will learn in this book, not only have serious impacts on individual well-being but also have their effects on family life, on social relationships and on children, with many studies already citing neglect and isolation as a result of exhaustion, mental imbalance and stress.

As Bertrand Russell (2004) once wrote in *In Praise of Idleness*, "A great deal of harm is being done in the modern world by belief in the virtuousness of work." Russell's point here reminds me of a passage by Albert

Camus (2004) in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*, wherein Camus observes—in typically sharp phenomenological fashion—the spirit crushing absurdity of the 9-5, Monday-to-Friday work routine. Individuals or parents come home at six or six thirty. Then it’s dinner. Homework. Maybe a few beers. TV. Bedtime. And tomorrow it’s the same cycle all over again. Leaving home early because of the long commute, arriving home late. Work is the nucleus around which one’s life, those tiny moments of freedom and happiness, however fleeting, must orbit. It’s no wonder isolation and individualizing of families occur. In late-capitalist society, all one does—the entire vision of life—is basically about going to work, eating lunch at work, maybe even staying late at work and then going home and either catching up on more work or spending whatever little time doing what one wants, before going to bed and repeating the process. “Profit maximizers” is the term ascribed to people, and everything must fit around capitalism’s systemic-structural needs of constantly consuming more energy and also the ideological drive towards constantly obtaining more profit and achieving more growth. “The company must”, we are told, “stay ahead of the competition”. Within this historical dynamic, the idea of the virtue of work has crystallized in the individual. And as will be discussed in Chap. 4, there is a distinctly pathological aspect to this false virtuousness of “work”, especially when “work” is no longer defined according to one’s needs and deeper interests and passions.

In closing: even when it comes to more mainstream research, it is widely understood today that there are a number of basic social factors behind mental health (Mind 2016). Understanding these basic factors already begins to lead one towards ascertaining the connection between social conditions and individual well-being. Commonly over a dozen factors are cited (Mind 2016), most notably: abuse, trauma, neglect; social isolation or loneliness; discrimination; severe or long-term stress; unemployment; disadvantage, unemployment and debt; homelessness; poor housing; and so on.

Moreover, in a rather detailed piece of research by the WHO (2014), it was concluded that social determinants are behind many common mental health disorders. Social inequity, systemic inequality, economic disadvantage—that is, socioeconomic causes—comprise a range of determinants identified in the report (pp. 16–18). While mental health issues were once again perceived as prevalent, it was noted that poorer mental health was found in women, poorer groups and among those who reported weak social support (p. 16). The conclusion was clear: “A two-way relationship

exists between mental disorders and socioeconomic status” (p. 16). Additionally, it was noted that, upon “a systematic review of the literature”, one can conclude “the prevalence of depressed mood or anxiety” is “2.5 times higher among young people aged 10 to 15 years with low socioeconomic status than among youths with high socioeconomic status” (p. 16).

However, in the contemporary social context in which the broader consensus is of prevalent social ailing and disturbing mental health patterns, individual pain and suffering has become depoliticized (Flair 2014). In so many of the empirical studies, the data made available is for all to see, and yet “we ignore the ways in which structural oppressions—capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy—create misery” (Flair 2014).

1.4 MORE THAN A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

From a clinical and social psychological perspective, all of the findings stated above will be met with little surprise. Environment clearly affects one’s psychological functioning or psychopathology (Butterworth et al. 2009; Jenkins et al. 2008; Rehkopf and Buka 2006; Rutter 2005; Weich and Lewis 1998). But if that’s not enough, some have even argued that *most aspects* of mental illness and psychological well-being are influenced by social factors (Mechanic and McAlpine 2002). These factors are further reduced to gender, social class, race and ethnicity, as well as household patterns, not to mention social institutions (Mechanic and McAlpine 2002). In other words, a more political form of critique begins to emerge.

But it’s not just mental health which feels the effects of negative social determinants. To word it in terms of humanistic psychology (Rowan 2001; Smith and De Graaff 2016), it is the *whole human being* that is affected. Consider, for example, recent research by the Royal College of Physicians (2016) which highlights the relation between systemic air pollution and various physical health issues, including suppressed lung growth, asthma, heart disease, foetal brain growth damage and the onset of diabetes.

Additionally, research out of the USA has linked California’s air pollution to rising rates of illness, not least asthma, allergies and even premature births (Marsa 2013). It has also been found that certain toxic chemicals, including those used in industrial agriculture, affect brain development in children (Walton 2014). Then there are, of course, numerous scientific studies on the effects of pesticides not to mention chemical toxins more generally on human beings and the environment, such as systematic

research from 2007 on cancer health effects (Bassil et al. 2007). Finally, the Whitehall Studies, which, most recently, explored the relation between social position and health, drawing links between job strain, job demands and risk of coronary heart disease (Kuper and Marmot 2003).

In truth the amount of literature in the area of sociology of health is overwhelming (Peter 2008; Timmermans and Haas 2008; White 2002). Recently a symposium was held at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to discuss the many ground-breaking advancements in research and knowledge, linking, quite clearly, the role of structural and social determinants in fostering and shaping the health of individuals, for better or for worse.⁵ The title of the symposium was quite direct: “*Poverty can make you sick: from social determinants to biological markers*”. The strong scientific investment in this area has brought deeper meaning to the notion of social epidemiology, as well as interesting new conceptual frameworks for analysing inequalities in health (De Stavola 2016).

Furthering the point, it is fairly conclusive that there is an impact of social determinants on cardiovascular disease (Kreatsoulas and Anand 2010), and these extend beyond class, concerning more generally the systematic degradation of the environment within capitalist societies (Cereseto and Waitzkin 1986; De Graaff 2016; Doyal and Pennell 1994; Foster 1993; Foster and Magdoff 2011; Haynes 2009; Juniper 2014; Roberts 2015; Van Kerckhove 2012). Even on a molecular level, the extreme levels of air pollution today have been linked to epigenetic changes that may actually trigger asthma (Pandika 2015). It is suggested that heavy pollution leaves behind molecular scars, and these scars can be passed down from generation to generation (Pandika 2015).

What’s more, because cardiovascular disease is experiencing such a rapid increase across the world, the magnitude of this increase has shifted scientific research efforts to study social determinants of health—that is, the “causes of the causes” (Kreatsoulas and Anand 2010). One is reminded, again, of the previously cited links between systemic air pollution and various physical health issues. To add to the point, with the intensification of work and also the general precariousness experienced under neoliberalism (Aguiar and Herod 2006; Braedley and Luxton 2010; Burchell et al. 2002; Hardy and Choonara 2013; Lambert and Herod 2016; Nadasen 2013; Smith 2012; Verhaeghe 2012; Walkerdine and Bansel 2010), there has been an increase in stress (Schrecker and Bambra 2015a, b). Such chronic stress or what has been called “toxic stress” (Harris 2014) has had a dramatic impact on individual health, so much so that perhaps it’s

not too much to link these detrimental processes with, for example, a 44% increase in rates of allergies in the UK (Taylor 2014). Numerous studies have shown that long-term stress has serious impacts on the human immune system. The more one gets run down, the odds increase of contracting a variety of physical and mental illnesses (American Psychological Association 2006; Herbert and Cohen 1994; Kiecolt-Glaser and Glaser 2002; Salleh 2008; Watts 2012).

1.5 DRAWING SYSTEMIC LINKS: THE PATHOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF CONTEMPORARY CRISES

So far, we have only scratched the surface when it comes to investigating the deeper processes and trends of our contemporary neoliberal capitalist social reality. And yet, it is quite apparent that there is something profoundly ailing about contemporary society. Fromm's thesis, at least one first look, appears valid. And yet, the following question remains: how should we position ourselves in order to analyse such diverse critical realities? Is it accurate to view these phenomena (and others) as interrelated, to whatever degree? Can it be concluded that the countless examples of negative social phenomena observed across the whole of society and across all dimensions of life are actually symptoms in themselves of pathological society?

Here, I suggest that the scientific approaches in systems theory and system thinking offer important conceptual tools when it comes to understanding the pathological and systemic character of contemporary crises and their interrelation.

In 2010, Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed, a young preeminent scholar in systems theory, convincingly argued that our particular period of time is defined as the crisis of civilization. In offering an overwhelming body of cross-field research, Ahmed argued that instead of seeing different crises as isolated or disconnected, we must begin to see the precisely interrelated nature of global crises (Ahmed 2010). Financial meltdown, dwindling oil reserves, climate change, international terrorism and food shortages need to be considered as part of the same fundamentally ailing system (Ahmed 2010).

In short, Ahmed offered one of the first systematic global historical analyses—a “Big Picture” account of socioeconomic, political development. His research (and that of others) highlights the systemic interconnections between a number of global crises: from water scarcity and food insecurity

rity to climate change; potential energy crisis; food insecurity; economic instability; forced migration; international terrorism; mass surveillance and increasing militarization (Ahmed 2010, 2013a, b, 2014a, b, 2015a). The scientific approach of systems thinking allows for us to outline the “crisis of civilization” generally in terms of its precise structural-systemic properties. Crises are defined as global, industrial and capitalist in nature (Ahmed 2010; King 2011, 2012, 2015a, 2016), as well as understood as events, trends, patterns and processes rooted in a single global system (Ahmed 2010). Social unrest (King 2015) as well as a diversity of other contemporary phenomena as institutional racism (Svenonius and Edlundh 2014) and the rise of xenophobia and right-wing rhetoric can be considered here as well.

Although the notion of the “crisis of civilization” could be perceived as alarmist, there is an overwhelming body of research which suggests the contrary. For example, in our attempt to grasp the overwhelming pathological nature of global systemic crises, we may consider as further evidence new scientific models supported by the British government’s Foreign Office (Ahmed 2015b). These models, which are being developed at Anglia Ruskin University’s Global Sustainability Institute (GSI), show that if we don’t change course, that if the status quo persists, in less than three decades, industrial civilization will essentially collapse (Ahmed 2015b; Jones et al. 2013; Turner 2008). Catastrophic food shortages, triggered by a combination of climate change, water scarcity, energy crisis and political instability are cited as key issues (Ahmed 2015b). Even Lloyds (2015), a specialist in the insurance market, has released a study for the insurance industry entitled *Food System Shock*, detailing potential impacts of acute disruption to global food supply as part of its “emerging risk report”.

If the picture is still not clear enough, it was estimated recently by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (2015) that one in nine human beings—that is, approximately 795 million people of the 7.3 billion people in the world—suffered from chronic undernourishment. On top of this, a study by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) (2015) reports that lower grain yields and increase in crop prices across the developing world, as a direct result of climate change, will further increase malnutrition rates, leading to a 20% rise in child malnutrition. The report, which also draws similar systemic links between hunger and violence, appears to be one of the many reports highlighting the precisely interrelated nature of global crises today.

Furthermore, a 2016 research article published by the IFPRI, *Global linkages among energy, food and water: An economic assessment* (Ringler et al. 2016), emphasizes the point.

These phenomena may not, in a traditional sense, seem pathological. They are, again, more or less structural crises. But it is the psychology of their manifestation and of the maintenance of a destructive status quo that is precisely what is so very pathological today. Featuring a view of the system as a whole, recent developments in systems approaches to understanding society offer us an important framework that allows us, in combination with other conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches, to clearly delineate the rationality or irrationality of the global system in general and the pathology of our current socioeconomic, political state of affairs in particular. It also contributes to our wider understanding of what I shall term the pathological—*inertial*—perpetuation of negative social conditions. In more concise terms, we might describe this as the pathological character of contemporary crises. In another way, it relates to the pathology of human destructiveness—a level of analysis which accounts for both structural and psychological foundations of contemporary crises.

Keeping with a systems view for the time being, what we learn in and through this scientific field of study is not only the systemic and, indeed, global nature of interconnections between crises (Ahmed 2010, 2013a, b, 2014a, b, 2015a). We learn, additionally, a significant amount about the structural antagonisms behind those crises and, finally, about how in order for the global system of capital to reproduce itself, it requires very particular structural conditions.

In other words: at the heart of the contemporary social problem is the issue of the reproduction of the system of capital. Systems theory and thinking enable us to understand the dynamics of global political economy, and especially how capitalist societies as complex social systems reproduce themselves *structurally*.

In classical systems theory, for example, the function or operation of complex social systems is understood to usually involve what we might consider in critical social philosophical terms as the social, economic, political, physical and biological dimensions of human society. Systems theory and thinking, in this regard, offers a very unique way of illustrating the interconnectedness of all factors and the constant flow between factors that perpetuates the system. Systems must, we learn, take in inputs of matter, energy and information in order to constitute and reproduce themselves (King 2013, 2014, 2015). “The system of capital” in particular, then, is

from a systems point of view, understood as “a high-input system” (King 2015). Moreover, “the [capitalist] system’s reproduction, the sustaining of its structure, requires very high quantities, tons of inputs of energy, materials, and information and a corresponding high-input-oriented accumulation regime aimed at regulating the input-output flows” (King 2015). When we break down the system dynamics of contemporary political economy, we understand in more scientific terms that it:

is a precise result of the conditions by which structured forms of energy, materials, and information flow through, and are reproduced in, our social system with its overarching logic of capital. Societies, in order to exist as systems, must continuously reproduce specific structures, over time, in order to maintain their integrity against perturbations from the environment. If any one of these structures is removed, the system will undergo a crisis. (King 2013)

In short: the system of capital—especially its current accumulation regime—is extremely unsustainable, affirming what many have long speculated.

But while we can critically analyse the precise conditions in which structured forms of energy, matter and information flow through contemporary capitalist societies and while we can also discern specific structural requirements—or, in more accurate terms, the structurally necessary components required for capitalism’s continual reproduction (King 2013, 2015, 2016a)—one thing that is often left undeveloped is the subject-level of reproduction.

1.6 THE NEED FOR A PROGRESSIVE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SUBJECT

With the exception of Uri Bronfenbrenner (1979) and a select few others, rarely do systems theory and thinking reach down to the level of a comprehensive theory of the subject—a comprehensive, cross-disciplinary philosophy of the subject. Consider, for example, Marx’s notion of social metabolic reproduction (King 2016b). As Robert Drury King (2016b) writes, in systems thinking, this concept “refers to the processes through which society’s direct inputs and outputs of energy, matter, and information” assist “the maintenance of the structurally necessary components required” for a particular system’s “continual reproduction”. In addition

to this theory, I would like to propose that another structural component of reproduction refers to the subject, psychology and social pathology.

To put it another way: negative or unhealthy social systems—which we could perhaps discern as social systems that function, at least in part, on the basis of “surplus repression” (Marcuse 1969)—are reproduced largely on the basis of pathological patterns of human action and behaviour. In this book, the focus will be on introducing extensive research and a thorough framework—philosophically and empirically—that lends to the most systematic and comprehensive theory of such pathological patterns.

To summarize: the purpose of my proposal here is to contribute to a deepening of our understanding of structural cycles of growth, collapse, and social regeneration (King 2016b), particularly by emphasizing that on the level of *lived experience*, pathology plays a vital role when it comes to societal reproduction and the resilience of capital in and through the patterns and behaviour, as well as general cognition and psychological status, of the subject.

Additionally—and as I have alluded—one of my basic theses in this book explains that pathology is a vital concept when it comes to a broader social philosophical framework which seeks to understand the interrelated structural, social, psychological and environmental problems the global system of capital (as well as other pathological societies) produces and maintains.

Bracketing further discussion until later, the point is that more and more we are learning that human beings are intimately connected to their environments (social and nature) in many complex ways: physically, bio-chemically, emotionally, psychologically, and so on. In studying the relation between the subject and their sociohistorical-cultural conditions, one learns that just as individuals may be pathological so too can societies be pathological. In fact, as I will disclose later on, it appears quite conclusive that the two are often caught in what we might describe in light of Marcuse as a “vicious circle” (1966, 1969a). Social pathology strengthens, I will show, individual pathology inasmuch as individual pathology, intensified by pernicious social conditions and damages, strengthens society’s pathologies and discontents.

In closing, we will learn throughout this work that non-pathological society is one which may still evidence individual pathology. In discerning the difference between pathological and non-pathological society, to put it simply, the issue ultimately has to do with whether society damages its own members or, oppositely, whether it fosters what will be described as

healthy and more reconciled relations between ourselves, each other and the natural world. Here, universals are asserted; however, in updating and critically retrieving Fromm's theory of pathology, I will seek to ground these universals in a much more concrete framework that was developed, in part, on the critical retrieval of humanistic thought (Smith and De Graaff 2016).

1.7 WHY SOCIAL PATHOLOGY?

In medical terms, general pathology can be understood in terms of the study and evolution of disease. It is the study of the functional manifestations of a disease and also its genesis. Similar to medical science, we can in many ways draw an analogy between general pathology as the study of a social disease and systemic pathology as the study of social pathogenesis (i.e., the development of a diseased condition). General pathology, in the critical sociological sense developed in this book, represents social pathological effects on an individual and community level, whereas systemic pathology represents social pathological effects on the level of systems, structures and institutions as they relate to the subject. It is, for the sake of definition, a micro-macro distinction. Individuals can suffer social ailment inasmuch as social phenomena can be the product of social ailment.

In most cases, social pathology has identifiable systemic links. In drawing out these systemic links, we've already started to understand that the rising recorded levels of ailment indicate the social pathological anatomy of needless suffering. Taylor (2014), when writing on the issue of "anxiety machines", reflected that "Rising recorded levels of these ailments may signal a greater awareness and ability to self-diagnose these conditions, one could argue; but this alone doesn't sufficiently explain why anxiety disorders began rising first of all." In turn, he suggested "Anxiety and fear are psychological marks of domination in all social structures", and that, similar to what was discussed above, "a specific anxiety and fear emerges in financial capitalism through the accelerating demands and pressures of working and living in the neoliberal era". He cites research on the growing trend of bullying in the workplace, in this case among social workers, drawing a connection between this trend and "Greater insecurity in the workplace [...], which further reinforces the cycle of stress, depression and suicide."

These views correlate with Schumaker (2001), among others. Of course we cannot psychologize all of society's problems, as this would lend to a

distorted one-dimensional view of reality. But with that being said, even though there are many interrelated factors, it is important to understand that all social problems have a psychological disintegrative effect. A study of mental health and systemic physical health issues helps us explain psychological trends and, in turn, the pathological character of contemporary crises. This includes the steep rise in depression, “the increase in the prevalence of existential disorders, the emergence of consumption disorders” (Schumaker 2001), the increase in hardened social attitudes and personalities, the marked rise in violent crime, among many other interrelated issues.

From the drastic increase in mental illness among academics, which has been linked to pressures of greater job insecurity and an increasingly marketized education system (Ward and Shaw 2014), to a notable pattern of work-related suicides (Venturi 2014), are we not at the point where an objective analysis of the pathology of contemporary neoliberal capitalist society and its detrimental effects on the subject begin to crystalize? Considering the brief selection of research and data offered in the first few pages of this work, is it not reasonable of us to ask whether society *is* sick and whether it is producing or fostering sick people? Fromm writes, for instance:

Mental health cannot be discussed meaningfully as an abstract quality of abstract people. If we are to discuss now the state of mental health in contemporary Western man, and if we are to consider what factors in his mode of life make for in-sanity and what others are conducive to sanity, we have to study the influence of the specific conditions of our mode of production and of our social and political organization on the nature of man. (Fromm 2002, p. 76)

Systems theory, from a structural standpoint, shows us that society—civilization—is sick through a study of the interrelated structural-systemic crises it produces. A study of social pathology, similarly, shows us that society—civilization—is sick through a study of the interrelated crises of the subject in the emerging patterns of mental and physical disturbance. More to the point: it is more often than not the case that social pathologies are systemically connected. In this sense, we will see why Fromm is absolutely correct in his reference of “the specific conditions of our mode of production and of our social and political organization”. As was noted earlier, Ahmed (2010) links systemic crises to political economy, and there is little

question, as we will learn in later sections of this work, of the link between neoliberal capitalism and contemporary forms of social pathology.

At the current juncture, we have already begun to touch on the economic dimension of our modern social reality and how this exploitative, alienating, authoritarian system based on the psychic principle of automation conformity (Fromm 2002) affects the individual. Directly related to our mode of production, one is further reminded, for example, of a recent UK-based survey, where “stress accounted for 35% of all work related ill health cases and 43% of all working days lost due to ill health” (Health and Safety Executive 2015). The Labour Force Survey by the same organization has also found that “An estimated 1.2 million people who worked in 2014/2015 were suffering from an illness they believed was caused or made worse by work.” Indeed, the more we survey the vast amount of data available, the more we begin to understand the association between work-related health problems, overwork and job insecurity. This does not factor in the reverse: namely, poverty and unemployment and the obvious effects they have emotionally, psychologically and physically.

Additionally, as the Society for Occupational Medicine (2015) reports, mental health is the most common work-related ill-health problem. This correlates with a large European survey concerning the prevalence of work-related stress and psychosocial risks which has shown that “about a half of workers consider the problem with work-related stress to be common in their workplace” (Eurofound and EU-OSHA 2014). The most frequent causes cited? Job insecurity, working long hours or excessive workload, and harassment and violence at work are among the top issues. Overall, the report cites that work can have “positive consequences for individuals’ health and well-being if working conditions that promote job quality are present, such as social support, meaningful work, work–life balance and the ability to influence how the work is organised”. Perhaps this is what has inspired Sweden to experiment with shorter work days, and even debate a possible reverting to a maximum three-day workweek.

However, in general, the global trends seem to be only getting worse as work and work-related stress intensify under neoliberalism. For instance, the number of people working excessive hours has risen by 15% since 2010, with well over 3 million people now working more than 48 hours (Trades Union Congress 2015). This is by no means an isolated phenomenon, as a global comparative analysis of working-time laws, policies and actual working hours has revealed that one out of five workers are working longer than 48 hours per week (Lee et al. 2007, p. 63). In the USA

it was estimated that a whopping one-third of Americans are living with “extreme stress” and, perhaps unsurprisingly, money and work are cited as main causes of both extreme and general stress (American Psychological Association 2007).

Up to this point we have considered only a very small selection of the overall research on which this book is based. To be sure, much more is to follow. And yet, no facet of this endeavour will have meaning unless we make the accurate connections. Those connections are not only social, cultural, political and economic. They have to do, in essence, with the demoralization of the social, political and economic dimensions of life and the resultant normalization of the pathology of destruction and *dehumanization*.

In studying the social determinants of mental health, it is extremely difficult, if not high impossible, to quantify the basic core realities of what’s unfolding around us. It is equally difficult, in philosophical and theoretical terms, to accurately capture a CT of health without resorting to conjecture. What I am speaking of here is the phenomenology of daily life within a capitalistic reality—that is, the reaction, however embedded, to adjustment (Fromm 2002, p. 156). Human beings are very resilient creatures. We can create moments of happiness, however fragile or fleeting, in the midst of some of the worst circumstances. Viktor Frankl’s *The Will to Meaning* (1969) attests to this point. And yet it remains to be asked: in the midst of very limiting and negative social circumstances, can happiness really be happiness at all?

What of those passing moments of daily life, which are difficult to capture and conceptualize, and yet offer a critical moment of reflection on one’s reality? I am speaking of the phenomenology of that moment, however extreme and explicit or implicit and fleeting, when one feels depressed about having to go to work the next day, when they rather be doing something else, something of more personal existential interest. What is that common cultural acknowledgement, that cultural narrative or tale, of “bullshit jobs” (Graeber 2013)? From a psychological perspective, what is the modern phenomenon of the “bucket list”? All those things one wants to do in life but can’t.

It is entirely valid to enquire into what kind of quality of life and happiness exist within contemporary neoliberal capitalist society. Can we achieve better? Can we create a better society and more healthy and reconciled social conditions for ourselves and each other? As will become incredibly clear, general notions of “happiness” today are essentially

based on performances of constant adjustment and self-deception. “I *am* happy” one says in attempt to convince oneself, all the while racking up debt and going from one bill to another. Likewise, “I should be happy” or “why am I not feeling happy?” are such common cultural statements insofar as they are symptomatic of the contemporary search for happiness in a social world which does not readily foster conditions for the free-flourishing subject. Pseudo self-help, now one of the biggest sections at many corporate book stores, exists almost entirely on the basis of unhappiness and the search for something more, for something meaningful and transformative.

What I am referring to here is a point which will be discussed extensively in the following chapter. The short of it, meanwhile, is that most people are unable to pursue their own interests—their own *existential projects*—and this is a key underlying factor of a deeper unhappiness, stress and the increasing exhaustion of meaning from contemporary life.

One brief and striking anecdotal example can be found in reference to the experience of old friends of mine, who had just entered art school in Ontario, Canada. During the height of new neoliberal reforms in which education became even more conditioned towards a very specific capitalist vision of life, I recall several instances in which the art programme’s emphasis was no longer on the joy and passion of art, on honing one’s skills and developing one’s passion but primarily on how the individual is going to make a living as an artist. Entire curricula were reformed, restructured based on the manufacturing of what sells. At the time, there were so many stories of student’s dispiriting experiences as these young people were being plunged into a state of depression, into suddenly feeling a lack of passion and life about their art. Education became more about having to look at oneself as an entrepreneur. And this is no coincidence. The entrepreneur is, after all, “the great symbol of our age”, neoliberalism’s “crowning subjective type” (Laurence 2015). This is because “the entire existence of the entrepreneur serves the market alone. Their very being serves the marketization [...] of all life. The entrepreneur is [...] the human mask slapped on the face of capital” (Laurence 2015).

The bigger picture outside of this anecdote about the experience of art students in Ontario is that, as we read in countless studies in education (e.g., consider research by Alfie Kohn or John Holt), such conditioning now starts in day care, preschool, kindergarten and grade school: what Fromm describes as the great adjustment and accommodation and denial of one’s interests and feelings.

This last point leads us towards an interesting question. In 2013, in a study by the Joseph Rountree Foundation, it was found that, in the UK, more than half of the people living in poverty have a job (Dixon 2013). The limiting effects of poverty are of course well understood and yet, why is there, when it comes to middle-income families, validity to the question: “Have you ever wanted to pursue something different, explore a different life interest, and have been financially unable?”

If you assume that the basic existential thesis is correct, namely that meaning and the freedom to pursue one’s interests are central to a reconciled, free and healthy life, is it a surprise that the world’s economic superpower, the USA, has made no gains in the self-reported happiness of its citizenry (Helliwell et al. 2012)? “Instead”, as we read in World Happiness Report (Helliwell et al. 2012), “uncertainties and anxieties are high, social and economic inequalities have widened considerably, social trust is in decline, and confidence in government is at an all-time low”. The authors of the report continue:

In an impoverished society, the focused quest for material gain as conventionally measured typically makes a lot of sense. [...] Now consider the opposite end of the income spectrum. For most individuals in the high-income world, the basic deprivations have been vanquished. There is enough food, shelter, basic amenities (such as clean water and sanitation), and clothing to meet daily needs. In fact, there is a huge surfeit of amenities above basic needs. [...] Yet all is not well. The conditions of affluence have created their own set of traps. [...] Obesity, adult-onset diabetes, tobacco-related illnesses, eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia, psychosocial disorders, and addictions to shopping, TV, and gambling, are all examples of disorders of development. So too is the loss of community, the decline of social trust, and the rising anxiety levels associated with the vagaries of the modern globalized economy, including the threats of unemployment or episodes of illness not covered by health insurance in the United States. (Helliwell et al. 2012)

In the most recent 2016 report, “a general rise in the inequality of happiness” was noted, while “preliminary evidence” was offered which suggests “that countries with more equal distributions of well-being have higher average life evaluations” (Helliwell et al. 2016). But what is perhaps most striking, in the last four World Happiness Reports,⁶ is perceived freedom to make life choices is less than satisfactory. Thus, it really is a matter of how we frame the question, taking into considering one’s current experience and one’s possible aspirations if they lived in a more reconciled

social world, where we begin to more accurately obtain a sense of happiness and adjustment—or the pathology of adjusted happiness.

This notion of the pathology of adjusted happiness is one that will reappear later. Meanwhile, to conclude Chap. 1, I would like to turn our attention to the possible connection between all that has been discussed above and a general observation with regard to political trends and social attitudes. In the UK, where I have resided for the past several years, there has been a notable hardening of attitude politically, in the media and among the people. This observation is supported by recent articles in political theory and media studies (Fuchs et al. 2013), and is also reflected in research and surveys on political attitudes (Binder 2013; Rae 2013; Taylor-Gooby and Taylor 2015; Curtice and Ormston 2015).

Indeed, it is quite conclusive: political attitudes in the UK have been hardening not only in recent years (NatCen 2016) but also as part of a much more long-term trend, according to research that has been tracking changing attitudes for over 30 years (British Social Attitudes 2016; Taylor-Gooby and Taylor 2015). This has coincided with a rise in right-wing politics, not only in the UK but also throughout Europe (Foster 2016).⁷ In the USA, similar trends can be observed, with the Trump phenomenon still gaining significant momentum (at the time of writing).

These trends, as we will see throughout this book, are not unpredictable. In fact, they make sense when we consider the much wider picture. It has been shown time and again that hardened social attitudes more often than not find political orientation on the right side of the spectrum (they can of course also appear on the left of the political spectrum), to whatever degree (Baran 2013; Bronner 2014; Cattacin et al. 2005; Childs and Whitley 2011; Heaven et al. 2011; Hibbing et al. 2014; Onraet and Van Hiel 2013; Onraet et al. 2013; Pratto et al. 1994; Rosenberg 2014). Substantial research has shown, in systematic detail, not only the psychology of right-wing attitudes which correlates generally with a sort of hardened, hostile, reactionary, anxious and deeply insecure personality. Recent studies have also started to look into the neurological, cognitive and behavioural aspects of right-wing attitudes and how they're connected to a generally dominant orientation (interestingly, also, new models have shown a convergence between right-wing attitudes and extreme left-wing attitudes). Is it reasonable to assume that, as the social-economic Darwinism of the neoliberal project continues to take hold, this process of hardening and its correlation with the emergence of increasingly cold, irrational or unreasonable social-political attitudes will continue?

In political theory, numerous discourses have emerged arguing that there has been an identifiable general gradual swing to the right over the last 30 or 40 years, particularly when it comes to the *framing* of political debate, pop-

ular political vision, and how we approach or view policy conflicts. When it comes to the formal process of voting and the election of a political party, it is generally true that over time, voter's swing from left to right (and vice versa). But it's not the pattern of this swing that is actually in question. When employing frame analysis (Goffman 1986), which is in short a scientific method for examining linguistic and conceptual patterns, we can see that over decades the way in which people have defined, constructed and framed issues within popular political discourses over recent decades (Hope 2010; Reese 2001), there is a very clear gradual movement to the centre right (what we'll consider as a hardening of attitudes).

Moreover, if the methods of frame analysis help us understand broader trends and patterns of narratives (Benford and Snow 2000), including how people understand situations and sociohistorical-cultural activities—how an issue is defined and problematized (Hope 2010)—is it accurate to assume that this issue of a general gradual process of right-wing framing is somehow systemically connected to a wider process of subject development? How might it relate, moreover, to the wider notion of pathology discussed in this book (i.e., a hardening of attitudes)? Perhaps, from the perspective of development psychology, there is more than a generational aspect to such a reality. As Adorno and Horkheimer argued (2002), modern capitalism is entwined in the production of increasingly dominant subjectivities, not to mention cycles and patterns of behaviour. Yet, how do we update, advance and also validate such theses?

Furthermore, how do we even begin to explain and connect all of the realities that we have so far touched on? Can social pathology reveal deeper historical trends and processes with regard to the “crisis of civilization”? Can a critical conception of social pathology—positioned against the status quo view, which we will discuss in Chap. 3—offer the necessary framework to guide and support the process of individual and social, cultural healing? Can a critical conception of pathology help explain the emergence of and connections between the various social phenomena so far introduced in this book? Likewise, how might a comprehensive, systematic theory of pathology deepen our view of the contemporary social world, the sort of subjectivities it produces or fosters, and of the foundational requirements for society's potential transformation?

Quoting Fromm, Schumaker (2016) writes: “The real task is somehow to treat a sick culture rather than its sick individuals. Erich Fromm sums up this challenge: ‘We can't make people sane by making them adjust to this society. We need a society that is adjusted to the needs of people.’” Or, perhaps to word it more accurately, what is needed is a dialectical

approach. And yet on what philosophical grounds might we, in a comprehensive fashion, offer a foundational framework to guide this process of self-healing as well as social, cultural healing?

NOTES

1. By “radically objective”, I am alluding to a critically retrieved notion of objectivity, as discussed in R.C. Smith and Arnold De Graaff (2016), ‘Reclaiming the Enlightenment and Imaging a New Social World: Grounding Normativity’, Heathwood Press.
2. See, for example, <http://www.heathwoodpress.com/methodology/>.
3. General data and statistics on prevalence of mental disorders in Europe can be found here: <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/mental-health/data-and-statistics>.
4. This quote is from an interesting commentary in The Guardian on millennials and anxiety. See: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/15/millennials-anxiety-generation-y-housing-careers>.
5. You can read more about the symposium here: <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/newsevents/events/2016/03/poverty-can-make-you-sick-from-social-determinants-to-biological-markers>.
6. One can review the last four World Happiness Reports here: <http://worldhappiness.report/>.
7. The New York Times (2016) has published a guide to the most prominent of Europe’s right-wing movements: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/world/europe/europe-far-right-political-parties-listy.html>.

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An Alternative Conception of Social Pathology

2.1 MAINSTREAM THEORIES OF SOCIAL PATHOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION

The research presented in the previous chapter led us to draw several important connections. However tentatively, in considering a variety of crises across the whole of society, a line of enquiry began to open pertaining to the notion of social pathology. Is society sick? Are the many different crises described related, in whatever way, to ailing society? These guiding questions still beg for an answer. Before we can address them in more detail and, likewise, before we can begin to develop a comprehensive understanding of social pathology and its potential legitimacy as a notion, it would be helpful to first engage with a progressive examination of different theories of pathology. This will help us begin to reach a more clear definition, before finally turning to an in-depth examination of research and data available, including also several case studies.

2.1.1 (i) *Sociology of Health*

In medicine, pathology is the study of the causes and effects of illness. This course of research is usually conducted in a laboratory environment. However, social pathology in the medical sense can also entail the study of the relation between disease and social environmental conditions. A particularly good example of this can be found in the growing movement

that is currently emerging under the designation sociology of health, which essentially seeks to identify and understand the *social determinants of health* (Kreatsoulas and Anand 2010). Here the issue of the inequality of health is one primary focus. But generally the wider motivation is to examine the interaction between society and health.

Similar to more popular sociological notions of social pathology, sociology of health still often remains stuck within the status quo boundaries of mainstream social sciences, often failing to question more deeply the wider status of society. That is to say, the structural causes of the social determinants of health still generally seem to go unchallenged. Thus, within this particular field of research, hypotheses will be drawn regarding the wider social determinants of health in relation to water and sanitation, agriculture and food, access to health and social care services, unemployment and welfare, working conditions, housing and living environment, education and transport (Bambra et al. 2010). These are by no means superficial links. Lack of clean water and appropriate sanitation, or generally poor working conditions, and their relation to health is an important focus of study. But it nevertheless remains the case that there is a real difficulty among researchers in identifying and understanding the much broader systemic and structural context that produces inequities of, for example, water and sanitation, or poor working conditions, or even lack of access to health care. Inasmuch as these particular issues are tied to social determinants of health, they are not in themselves the root of the problem.

If sociology of health—or a study of the social determinants of health—seeks to understand “the causes of the causes”, we could say that what they really need to address are the causes of the causes of the causes. What I mean by this will become clearer in time. Meanwhile, it suffices to say here that what the sociology of health lacks is a broader social philosophical and transdisciplinary framework. This field would greatly benefit from a deeper critical conceptualization of social health and well-being, including a fundamental concept of social pathology, which, as we will learn, would provide greater accuracy when attempting to conceptualize the actual social determinants of health.

With that said, it is clear there is incredible potential in this area to help formulate what I will later describe as a critical theory (CT) of health. More progressive and potentially transformative research in sociology of health seems to be increasingly undertaking a holistic approach to understanding health, including a growing consideration of the economic and social conditions and how such conditions may influence disparities in

health (Marmot and Wilkinson 2005). This is a positive start, especially considering that the distribution of these disparities and their negative influence is slowly beginning to take central focus (Carey and Crammond 2015). A glimpse at the potential of such a course of analysis can be found, for example, in an article by Gemma Carey and Brad Crammond (2015). In this article, which was appropriately titled *Systems change for the social determinants of health*, the authors take a systems view of social determinants and assess potentially transformative “leverage points” to “create change within the system”. Here we can see how research is beginning to find its way to the core of the problem: systemic-structural manufacturing of health inequalities.

2.1.2 (ii) *Mainstream Theory in Social Sciences*

In mainstream social sciences, however, a less than satisfactory approach remains the norm. Borrowed from the medical usage of the term, here psychologists and sociologists generally employ “social pathology” to refer to problems or behaviours that violate what are considered to be “social norms”—actions which moreover are deemed to have a negative effect on society. It is often considered within the context of a theory of “social problems” (Merton and Nisbet 1961).

Consider violent crime, for example, or what is termed in the UK as “anti-social behaviour”. In mainstream sociology aberrations, deviations and the normalcy of human society are three key coordinates of analysis, wherein “pathological phenomena” are often linked to the idea of maladjustment. Any human behaviour that is considered a deviation from the norm is therefore designated under the notion social pathology. “Substance abuse, violence, abuses of women and children, crime, terrorism, corruption, criminality, discrimination, isolation, stigmatisation and human rights violations”—these are just some of the “pathological phenomena” described, for instance, by the International Consortium for Mental Health Policy and Services.¹ The same organization cites the 1997 Report on the World situation about how “Many contemporary social problems are global in nature and are shared by many countries” and references the example of violence against woman based on a 2001 report by the World Health Organization:

Violence against women is a public health concern in all countries. An estimated 20% to 50% of women have suffered domestic violence. Surveys in

many countries reveal that 10% to 15% of women report that they are forced to have sex with their intimate partner. The high prevalence of sexual violence to which women of all ages are exposed, with the consequent high rate of post-traumatic stress disorder, explains why women are most affected by this disorder.

From this, a definition of social pathology is offered as often leading “to a flood of social, economic and psychological problems that undermine well-being [...] and therefore need to be considered in developing a mental health policy that promotes population mental health well-being and addresses issues that contribute to mental illness”. In considering such an account, we already begin to obtain a sense of the less than satisfying mainstream sociological theory of pathology. As Milena Büchs (2007) explains:

The concept of social pathology applies the medical metaphor of pathology to describe and explain social problems. From this perspective those individuals and groups who deviate from social norms, or institutions that do not fit with core social norms, are “sick” or pathologic and a risk to the society’s “health.” Social pathology was a very influential model in nineteenth-century American and European sociological writings on social problems. The concept is closely related to those of social disorganization and deviance. However, social disorganization focuses on the malfunctioning of social institutions and structures rather than on the individual. The concept of deviance became popular in the 1950s. It was strongly influenced by the concept of anomie (Durkheim, Merton) and is similar to social pathology in that it focuses on the individual criminal. When the concept of social pathology became famous, many authors using this concept also applied Darwinist and evolutionary models to the analysis of society.

The concept of social pathology becomes, moreover, a sort of “umbrella term” for “various social problems” (Piotrowski 2006, p. x). Przemysław Piotrowski reflects, furthermore: “It is at the discretion of scientists—representatives of social sciences—to provide explanation of the causes and mechanisms of pathological phenomena in order to enable the implementation of appropriate prophylactic and preventative measures” (p. x).

This can be, admittedly, a positive and potentially transformative endeavour. However, inasmuch that “the term social pathology embraces social problems that are present in common consciousness, and are perceived as detrimental and destructive to individuals, groups, or the entire

society” (p. x), it is often employed within the frame of *sociological relativism*, which Fromm (2002) successfully revealed as deeply inadequate. One of the several reasons is that an inadequate framing can be found in how, just as we read in much of the literature available, it is treated as though “each society is normal inasmuch as it functions, and that pathology can be defined” mostly “in terms of the individual’s lack of adjustment to the ways of life in his society” (Fromm 2002, p. 12). Of course, an analysis of an individual’s lack of adjustment can bring about some interesting insight into the complexities of the subject, not least when it comes to certain social, economic and cultural deficiencies. But such a course of study—such a framing of pathology—ultimately fails to grasp the actual complexity, multidimensional depth and structural-systemic magnitude of the issue. Such a framing represents, to put it more concisely, a positive positivist theory of pathology as opposed to a critical one. In Sect. 2.2, we will further address this particular dimension of mainstream sociological treatment of pathology in relation to a discussion on the difference between what Max Horkheimer terms “traditional theory” and “critical theory”.

Meanwhile, the primary concern here is that if social pathology is understood as having to do with general patterns of “deviant behaviour” set against the status quo of social order (Büchs 2007), what is there to be said of the status of the actual social order? Do social conditions not, in turn, play a role in fostering types of human action and behaviour? Indeed, if “social pathology” in the popular sense is conceived along the lines of actions and behaviours which differ from established social norms, what about a questioning of the status of these very norms? CT has shown quite clearly and undebatably that social norms—that is, the customary rules that govern behaviour in groups and societies (Bicchieri and Muldoon 2011)—can and often do become distorted within the context of “damaged life” (Adorno 2005). Inasmuch that norms are generally seen within sociology in terms of the constraining of human behaviour (Bicchieri and Muldoon 2011), “social norms are” also “seen as central to the production of social order or social coordination” (Bicchieri and Muldoon 2011).

To add to the discussion, “democratic norms of freedom” may often be “made explicit in various rights, including civil rights of participation and free expression” (Bohman 2005). But it has also been shown that such norms are not only “often violated explicitly in exercises of power for various ends, such as wealth, security, or cultural survival” (Bohman 2005) but democratic norms can also become damaged. Their very concept can

become mutated, hollowed and made subservient for less than democratic or emancipatory ends (Smith and De Graaff 2016). Such is what gives meaning to the notion of immanent critique, as exercised, for example, by Theodor W. Adorno.

Moreover, in mainstream sociology rarely does it seem that the foundation of social norms and their mediation—such as in the case when any such norm might be shaped by the inherently unjust systems, structures and institutions of capitalist society—are also brought into question. For this reason, it can be shown that the mainstream concept of social pathology is actually also often a product of a certain social-political and economic paradigm.

Ian Marsh (2013), in his book *Theory and Practice in Sociology*, furthers the account when he writes:

As far as functionalist writers such as Parsons and Merton were concerned, social order depends upon a common value system. This consensus view of the normative order not only informs members of society of what is good for society but also indicates that social problems are anything which challenges the core value of society and disrupts social order. In what Becker refers to as a ‘social pathology model’, society is seen as an organism which remains healthy so long as its functioning parts are well maintained; social scientists see themselves as doctors capable of diagnosing ‘objective conditions’ which may threaten this equilibrium. (Marsh 2013, p. 206)

In short, rather than a critical approach which signals a more emancipatory or transformative analysis, the notion of social pathology is generally employed within the confines of negative society. In fact, a deeper critical distinction between healthy and more or less reconciled social conditions and negative social environments is left wanting.

That is to say that mainstream sociological accounts are generally unable to reveal the ailing reality of society as a whole, lacking in both universal and critical normative criterion for fundamental critique of society and its norms. One example of the overall inadequacy of mainstream sociological theory in this regard can be found when addressing the issue of racism (Vera and Feagin 2007). Keeping a more “structural (or institutional) view on racism at bay as an explanation for racial outcomes”, mainstream sociology fails “to grasp racism as a structural phenomenon”, instead often “regarded as (1) a disease afflicting certain individuals, (2) a phenomenon that does not affect the social body and its institutions, and

(3) a social problem that has to be analysed “clinically”, that is, by separating the “good” versus the “bad” [...] through surveys on racial attitudes” (Vera and Feagin 2007, p. 85).

One could say, with perhaps more than a little hint of irony, that the mainstream conception of pathology is in itself pathological—a product of what, in critical terms, we might describe as the deficit of reason. It lacks imminent critique and therefore also the ability to “wrest truth from ideology” (Zuidervaat 2015). Inasmuch it serves as the basis to classify human actions that contradict ideals which align with notions of stability, with the status quo of what Fromm (2002) would call alienated social relations, social pathology is often employed as a conceptual tool for the reproduction of fundamentally bad social conditions: training to work, repressive emotional patterns, capitalist notions of family unity, discipline of the will and so on.

The idea, therefore, is basically to understand the causes of “social disorganization as a disturbance of the harmonious relationship between the various parts of culture and society”.² As Marcuse (1966, 1969a) would say, this appropriation of the concept of pathology serves not the lessening of “surplus repression” but its deepening. An example of such an approach is especially prominent in Beeghley (1999), Braun (1995), Lemert (1951), Merton and Nisbet (1961), Odum (1927), Peck and Dolch (2001) and Winslow (1972) to name a few. Here we see that poverty, for example, is a notable point of study in many mainstream sociological works. There is quite evidently a fascination with how poverty affects human behaviour, and yet, it is rare to read at any point a systemic evaluation of the causes of poverty and, once again, of the systemic-structural links between poverty, individual suffering and disorganization. The primary focus, as noted above by Büchs, is mostly on the individual or on how social experiences may affect the individual. Social pathology in the sense of societal ailment or sick society is more or less absent.

Thus, while there is an appeal to norms within mainstream sociological accounts, the emancipatory and progressive value of such norms (Smith and De Graaff 2016) needs to be brought into question. Consider the issue of human rights today. “The ending of the Cold War heralded a ‘springtime’ for human rights and liberalism, but the advent of the ‘war on terror’ has also shown that the cascade of human rights norms might also be open to reversion, as particular states reinterpret or reject previously espoused principles” (Dunne and Hanson 2009). As James Bohman (2005) writes:

In detailed historical analyses, feminist and ethnomethodological studies of the history of science have been able to show the contingency of normative practices. They have also adopted various interpretive stances. Feminists have shown how supposedly neutral or impartial norms have built-in biases that limit their putatively universal character with respect to race, gender, and disability. [...] The biases inherent in these operative norms have been unmasked in various critical science studies and by many social movements. For Longino, such criticism suggests the need for a better norm of objectivity.

The difficulty, as CT has long had to contend, is to perform critical social research and to criticize the current state of affairs with norms that do not entirely fall within or have been critically retrieved from the “damaged” present. When it comes to contemporary Frankfurt School CT, the reliance is more on “ideas of historical development, learning, and progress” which grounds “its conception of normativity” (Allen 2016, p. 4). Amy Allen, in her book *The End of Progress*, works from this definition and provides a framework for the decolonizing of the normative foundations of CT, as she develops “an alternative framework for thinking about history and the question of normative grounding” (p. 5). Correctly returning to the importance of the critical normative horizon of the enlightenment, an account of which can be read in Stephen Eric Bronner (2004), Allen offers a progressive critical retrieval of the idea of norms aligned more accurately with a transformative and emancipatory framework, one which, I suggest, aligns with the CT of pathology and health illustrated in this book. However, it should also be mentioned that in a recent paper on grounding normativity leading up to the completion of this book, it was suggested that Allen’s project can be taken further (Smith and De Graaff 2016). In the same paper, an alternative framework for understanding objectivity was also introduced—one grounded in a positive vision for rejuvenating human reason and rationality.

2.1.3 (iii) Normativity

Moving forward, if mainstream sociological accounts of pathology seem to lack a framework for acknowledging how normative principles can become an instrument of power, domination and oppression, as opposed to the enlightenment view in terms of a liberating force, this problem has everything to do with the normative principles of reasoning in their sociohistorical-culture context (Smith and De Graaff 2016). To solve this problem, one must formulate and put into practice a concrete notion of

historical normativity (Allen 2016). This involves, similar to the notion of praxeology, an “inquiry into the “knowing how” of practical normative knowledge, that is, how it is that norms are ongoingly interpreted, realized, and enacted under particular social and historical circumstances” (Bohman 2005).

One example can be found today in the actual experienced limits political participation and how these limits alter the nature of our understanding of democracy, democratic institutions and its practice. If in contemporary society, democratic norms such as in the idea of democratic self-rule and critically rational public debate cannot be realized as a result of the wider status of social-political and economic institutions within capitalist society, the very norm of democracy itself must come into question. So, too, must the wider socioeconomic-politic circumstance set against the capacity of democracy to entrench itself. As Bohman writes in the context of globalization:

A critical theory of globalization is a practical or praxeologically oriented theory that sees the “fact of globalization” in relation to the goal of realizing the norms of human emancipation and democracy. The central and still open questions for such a practically oriented social science are the following: what available forms of praxis are able to promote the transformations that could lead to new forms of democracy?

He goes on to reflect: “A critical praxeology of realizing norms in multiperspectival institutions might add that it is also a reflexive question of putting such organization in the larger context of a project of human emancipation”, while “A critical theory of globalization does not only point out the deficits of current practices, but shows the potential for properly organized publics to create new ones.” Thus, adds Bohman: “In a period in which philosophy cooperates with empirical sciences and disciplines, Critical Theory offers an approach to distinctly normative issues that cooperates with the social sciences in a nonreductive way.” Rather than just asserting, from a neutral and relativist point of view, the existence of norms, the very domain of a critical approach to social pathology intersects with the “inquiry into the normative dimension of social activity, in particular how actors employ their practical knowledge and normative attitudes”. Bonham concludes:

Perhaps one of the more pernicious forms of ideology now is embodied in the appeal of the claim that there are no alternatives to present institutions. In this age of diminishing expectations, one important role that remains for

the social scientifically informed, and normatively oriented democratic critic is to offer novel alternatives and creative possibilities in place of the defeatist claim that we are at the end of history. That would not only mean the end of inquiry, but also the end of democracy.

When it comes to a comprehensive, systemic and methodologically innovative theory of social pathology, such a course of analysis assumes that pathology refers not only to the individual subject but also to the status of the social and of social facts. As new pathologies continue to emerge in relation to racism, sexism and colonialism, and along with them new critical theories, how these social pathological phenomena also become, or already were, structurally or institutionally entrenched, is a major site of enquiry. This is especially so if we follow Fromm's initial critical theorizing of pathology in line with a radical "normative humanism" and, most importantly, normative enlightenment grounds interested in human well-being, health and emancipation.

Having said that, let us now return to a closing profile of mainstream sociological accounts of pathology. Nineteenth-century French sociologist Emile Durkheim is a good place to start, as he was and continues to be an inspiration to contemporary mainstream sociology and sociological theories of pathology. Durkheim, for those unaware of his research, saw social deviance as necessary in order for society to identify its rules and boundaries—that is, acceptable actions from the unacceptable. However, as was alluded, it remains to be questioned whether the very framing of the acceptable from the unacceptable is ideological or critical in scope.

C Wright Mills (1967) offers a good example in relation to unemployment. In many contemporary western capitalist societies, unemployment is frowned upon and even ridiculed. Mills, distinguishing between personal troubles and public issues (Mills 1959, 1967), writes:

When, in a city of 100,000, only one man is unemployed, that is his personal trouble, and for its relief we properly look to the character of the man, his skills, and his immediate opportunities. But when in a nation of 50 million employees, 15 million men are unemployed, that is an issue, and we may not hope to find its solution within the range of opportunities open to any one individual. (Mills 1959, p. 9)

Mills was aware that modern capitalist governments and institutions tended to profile or frame structural and public problems as private indi-

vidual concerns, thus deflecting the deeper realities of an actual issue. Thus social problems become individualized, a trend which Mills was highly critical of, not least in relation to the notion of pathology. In his critique of what he termed the professional ideology, Mills described the important concern with studies of social pathology at the time and how they focused on individual adjustment as opposed to structural causes and the need for structural transformation.

Returning to the example of unemployment, which, in mainstream sociology, is considered a “pathological phenomena”, the normative principle of capitalist society is very clear. To refuse employment, or to choose to live outside of the realm of the capitalist definition of labour—thus, to refuse the ideology of work (Sperber 2013)—is deemed unacceptable. Even those who are disable and thus unable to work, are often viewed as “invalids” or “waste product” within the neoliberal capitalist social context (Read 2010; Owen and Harris 2012). It has even been argued that a “Victorian moralising of inequality” is reemerging (Read 2010). Often dehumanized, the emerging views of unemployment—coinciding with the increasing hardening of views references in Chap. 1—says more about the negative status of the normative value of work and the ailing culture in which such a value has taken place, than it does about human labour in a positive, emancipatory sense. Elliot Sperber (2013) writes:

Notwithstanding this culture of work’s ideological claims to the contrary, jobs are less preconditions for freedom than impediments to freedom’s concrete realization. Beyond consuming most of workers’ waking hours (consuming that which constitutes the precondition for freedom—time), jobs also wreck people’s health, vitiating freedom in the sense of bodily movement as well. Moreover, that people are compelled to work a job—irrespective of the job’s need, or function—demonstrates the consanguinity of jobs and dependency, rather than in-dependency. Some may counter at this point that needing a job is just a natural, unavoidable fact—that people must work to live. But the inordinately excessive amount of time that people devote to work in the US (and capitalist societies in general) is less a natural fact than a cultural one.

Indeed, let us not neglect to consider the fact that when people talk about “good jobs” they are not necessarily discussing the correction of some pressing problem, or providing some truly desired service, or satisfying some actual need. When people discuss “good jobs” they are primarily discussing ways to make money. If one can turn a solid profit selling known carcinogens, such will count as a “good job”—irrespective of the fact that such enterprises wreak far more concrete, objective harm than good.

Indeed, rather than challenging the very institution of work—the very status of human labour—a deviant behaviour could easily be classified in terms of willing unemployment. Such a view of pathology only affirms and strengthens the extremely harmful neoliberal Victorian moralizing of the issues, laying blame at the fault of individual, while failing to formulate an accurate critique of the moral deficits of broader structural and political arrangements. The lesson, once more, has to do with the current status of the social environment, culture, along with its political and economic ideologies and institutions, which play a significant role in the shaping of norms along not emancipatory but ideological lines which are potentially harmful to both society and the individual.

One last example I will draw, in closing, has to do with the event of mass riots and looting in England in 2011, sparked by the death of Mark Duggan, a local man shot by police in August of the same year. The riots were considered as “the worst disturbances of their kind since the 1995 Brixton riots”.³ Here, the mainstream and popular response was as is anticipated in this chapter. The individuals involved were seen as deviants, misfits and animals. The mainstream response was generally reactionary and didn’t evidence much attempt to try to understand the events. Criminal behaviour was, understandably, chastised. Calls for “justice” and appeals to “society” were often employed, although these so-called norms were never really given much substantiation and were mainly abstract, used a reference for the demonizing of the actions of the individual rioters. Many people called for the use of riot-police, further the violence.

But as various studies have since exposed socioeconomic and political dimensions of the reality behind the events. Unemployment and neoliberal cuts, poverty, social exclusion, moral decay at the top of society, were all less conformist, less reactionary and more critical conclusions to be drawn, revealing deeper insights into the rioting and looting as a symptom of ailing social conditions.⁴ Indeed, events can be traced to what we shall consider in this book as deeper pathologies of society, including also the various pressures of consumerism (Treadwell et al. 2015).

2.2 MAINSTREAM SOCIAL SCIENCE, PATHOLOGY AND THE QUESTION OF NORMS

If we are to move beyond the mainstream notion of social pathology, integrating along the way various theories of pathology in relation to social deviance, we still must necessarily confront the issue of normativity. In

other words, what coincides with the development of a more comprehensive, complete and critical conception of social pathology is the development of a framework for grounding normativity. As Ronjon Paul Datta (2009, p. 133) asks: “what social scientific criteria are there for making normative judgments about why and how western civilization should change?” This is, admittedly, a “highly pertinent question” (Datta 2009, p. 133). The normative foundations of CT already go a long way in providing us with the appropriate footing, both for the adequate response to the deficits of mainstream social scientific theories of pathology and for the development of a new critical conception of pathological society.

As we touched on in the previous section, there is clearly distinguishable and identifiable tendency within the social sciences to discern what may be called “deviant behaviour”—such as in the case of looting—without examining or providing explanation for what would character a more reconciled situation. Even in cases of inequality, which is an extremely popular subject of study today, the normative basis for challenging inequality and formulating a clear social-structural, systemic alternative is left wanting. Datta (2009, p. 134) is entirely correct, when he writes:

“There has been a marked contemporary tendency to assume that inequality generates undesirable social outcomes without offering a clear justification of what counts as desirable, thus unwittingly endorsing already existing dominant conceptions. In a similar way, it is assumed that more inclusive social institutions are also desirable without, again, the examination of the questions of “include in what?” and crucially, in Nietzschean terms, “for what?””

One of the biggest issues within the social sciences today, is that researchers seems to “bracket why we should identify dominations (be it in the form of economic exploitation or varieties of exclusion, for example), and struggle for their abolition” (Datta 2009, p. 134). In turn, Datta correctly points out that, “An important legacy of Critical Theory is that it has” generally “avoided these pitfalls”. Notable fourth-generation Frankfurt School researcher Douglas Kellner (2014) affirms as much when he writes: “In opposition to the subjectivism and relativism, often bordering on nihilism, [...] critical theory, by contrast, advances the conception of a critical and normative theory which is committed to emancipation from all forms of oppression, as well as to freedom, happiness, and a rational ordering of society.” Indeed, “Since the 1960s”, it has “played a significant role in challenging both positivist and structural-functionalist accounts of [...] how societies, as totalities, worked”. In his review of Axel Honneth’s *Pathologies of Reason: On the Legacy of Critical Theory* (2009), a book

which will be brought into focus a little later, Datta cleanly summarizes one of the main features of CT in this regard:

The task of Critical Theory involves explaining how social conditions impede a rational understanding of the causes of the distortions of reason that in turn undermine the use of reason in democratic will-formation and hence also, to the concrete means for transforming dominations from which stem distortions of reason. Consequently, the possibilities for emancipation from those dominations are blocked. Reason is held to be an inherent capacity of all humans, but defined precisely as the capacity of self-reflection and self-critique that drives people to improve their lives, their conditions, and indeed become freer. Pathologies of reason include capitalism and the pervasiveness of instrumental rationality (i.e., means-ends thinking, in which everything, including human life, becomes only a means to an end, reducing human subjectivity to mere objectivity). Structural dominations undermine the resources for appealing to reason when advocating for transforming the conditions that impede freedom (and with it, the free use of reason). With a rational appeal for freedom impeded, the legitimacy of emancipatory political projects also takes a blow. (Datta 2009, pp. 134–135)

The social sciences are not immune to getting caught up in sociocultural developments—nor are the natural sciences, for that matter! This is why, many years ago, Max Horkheimer rejected positivist concepts of science in the development of the programme CT, as such concepts of science profess “the dogma of the invariability of natural laws” transferred into unjust social domains (Horkheimer 1989). Science, in this case, fails to be aware of how it is or can be mediated through concepts and cognition subject to negative social conditions. As an individual who works in the natural sciences, this appears to me to be one of the most valid points of critique with regards modern science and, at times, its lack of social consciousness in practice. Moreover, as Doug Kellner explains:

“dominant positivist conceptions of science”, according to Horkheimer, are “unhistorical” [...]. Positivism, he asserts, “roots its theories in isolated facts and ultimately evinces unsupportable metaphysical presuppositions and methodological limitations” (Horkheimer 1989). Yet Horkheimer maintains that: “materialism has in common with positivism that it acknowledges as real only what is given in sense experience, and it has done so since its beginnings” (ibid., p. 42). Sense experience, however, is mediated through concepts, and both sense perception and cognition are subject to social con-

ditions and historical change. Thus, notions of absolute intuition, whether through the senses or cognition, are to be rejected.”” (Kellner 2014; quoting Horkheimer 1989)

This is in no way a rejection of the importance of empirical foundations, both in philosophy and science. Rather, it is a rejection of positivist notion of “facts”, which should not necessarily be conflated with “scientific facts”. Positivism is a particular philosophy of science, and its view do not necessarily reflect that of “science” or the foundations of the scientific method.

In any case, in many mainstream social scientific studies of pathology, there is a clear presence of what Horkheimer terms “traditional theory”. Now also termed “foundationalism”, traditional theory is essentially “the attempt to ground theory in theoretical postulates which form the foundation of its theory upon which the traditional theorist builds its theoretical constructions” (Kellner 2014; reference Horkheimer 1989). From the position of CT, which aims to reveal “the relationships between ideas and theoretical positions and their social environment, and thus attempts to contextualize or historicize ideas in terms of their roots within social processes” (Kellner 2014), many respective mainstream social scientific conceptions of pathology find themselves as a part of the very dominant, coercive—indeed, pathological—social conditions that they ought to be railing against. There is perhaps no clearer an example than the mainstream view of social pathology in relation to its preserving, whether intentional or not, of the capitalist values, goals and market demands of the individual in terms of the popular distinction between adjustment and maladjustment.

After an extensive survey of the research in psychology in particular, and across the social sciences in general, I believe it is fair to posit that there is a clear and unmistakable parallel between with the mainstream definition of pathology and contemporary strands of psychology—for example, cognitive behavioural therapy, which has been appropriated and employed not to serve general emancipatory aims, but to treat the individual so as to ensure “healthy adjustment” to the status quo of neo-liberal capitalist society and its pathological reproduction of repressed, alienated, exploitative and instrumental (Fromm 2002) mode of social relations.

What I am indicating here—in anticipation of a future discussion—is not only a critique of traditional definitions of “social pathology” in relation to contemporary movements within psychology. I am also indicating

the way forward when it comes to a deep project of *critical retrieval*. One of the basic issues today—whether in psychology or the social sciences more generally—is how many mainstream concepts and conceptual tools—that even goes for philosophical concepts (Adorno 1992b) or enlightenment concepts (Bronner 2004, 2005, 2014a)—are co-opted to serve the maintenance of highly unjust societies and the status quo of a capitalist system of values, not only along institutional and structural-systemic lines but also in terms of general emotional, psychological, cognitive and other modes of being.

I think, in large, Horkheimer’s critique of “traditional theory” and Doug Kellner’s reflections on the “crisis of social theory” continue to serve as an accurate reminder of what is theoretically required in the background as we seek to develop a comprehensive notion of social pathology. We should, to start, oppose the separation between social theory, science, and philosophy, and aim for a sort of synthesis between philosophy and the specialized sciences (Kellner 2014). As Doug Kellner (2014) reflects, one of the first major conceptions of critical social theory was formulated on the basis of such a synthesis of social science and philosophy, wherein Horkheimer envisioned:

“a program of supradisciplinary research which would investigate current social and political problems. This project would unite “philosophers, sociologists, economists, historians, and psychologists in an ongoing research community who would do together what in other disciplines one individual does alone in the laboratory—which is what genuine scientists have always done: namely, to pursue the great philosophical questions using the most refined scientific methods; to reformulate and to make more precise the questions in the course of work as demanded by the object; and to develop new methods without losing sight of the universal””. (Kellner 2014)

In short, while it is occasionally mistaken that CT operates on the side of some sort of rejection of science, Kellner summarizes the position rather well: “philosophy without empirical scientific research is empty, just as science without philosophy is blind” (Kellner 2014).

The implications of this position are vast. What we come to learn, or at least this is a conclusion I have personally drawn after years of working within CT, is that mainstream social scientific assertions about human nature, the subject and universal laws of behaviour are, even if the researcher doesn’t admit to such, a form of social theory. As I wrote

at the outset of a previous book: most every theoretical or philosophical project contains fundamental assertions about the subject which, acting as a basic presupposition, inform implicitly or explicitly the body of all its future insights. It is, in other words, what we might call a core perspective. And it is no coincidence, as Fromm (2002) shows, that many or most mainstream social scientific views, which certainly fit in one way or another with the designation “traditional theory”, very clear assumptions about the subject which lead to extremely problematic theoretical norms.

In the example of a positivist approach, CT helps strengthen the awareness that such a social theory is also a form of social practice which reproduces dominant forms of social activity. However, if positivism—much like sociological relativism—functions to support the authoritarian and dominant status quo, as researchers who seek to illuminate the perspectives of the colonized frequently argue (Benfell n.d.), one of the issues is that mainstream social sciences do not always possess the critical capacities to acknowledge that its own theoretical posturing is bound together with social processes. This is why, in the end, there is a very real and identifiable problem today with regard to the failure within mainstream social sciences to perceive its own lack of autonomy and social determination.

On the contrary, facts are socially mediated (Adorno 1998). Science, in practice, is also involved in social processes of production and reproduction. Too frequently in history has it become conformist, uncritically submitting to the dominant instrumental, quantitative and capitalist or even fascistic values (Benfell n.d.). Positivism is, in part, one of the key reasons why science has become vulnerable to such manipulation. Unaware of its social determination:

“theory was absolutized [...] and became a reified, ideological category” (ibid., p. 194). Consequently, “The scholar and his science are incorporated into the apparatus of society; his achievements are a factor in the conservation and continuous renewal of the existing state of affairs, no matter what fine names he gives to what he does” (ibid., p. 196). (Kellner 2014)

With that said, if “social critique and transformation require delineation of historical alternatives and normative values which can be used to criticize existing states of affairs and to argue for alternative values and organization of society”, one of the most pressing issues today concerns the grounding

of normativity (Smith and De Graaff 2016). Historically, and as with the present, emancipatory values are already available to us, even in spite of their need for critical retrieval (Smith and De Graaff 2016). Most if not all of these values are indebted to the enlightenment (Bronner 2004; Smith and De Graaff 2016; Trevor-Roper 2010; Pagden 2013). Such values as reason, progress and science (Bronner 2004; Pagden 2013). Then there is equality, cosmopolitanism and democracy, not to mention more humanistic or common human values as the free-flourishing of the human subject, individual and collective freedom, initiative, discovery, exploration and the transformation of society (Bronner 2004; Smith and De Graaff 2016). Indeed, while the enlightenment has its problems, and, as we observe in the dialectic of enlightenment, has suffered numerous moments of betrayal, leaving it in need of critical retrieval (Smith and De Graaff 2016) and decolonization (Allen 2016), Stephen Eric Bronner (2004) is absolutely correct when he asserts that the enlightenment project continues to have much to offer. Inasmuch as it was about liberating life, society, culture and our common human values from the authority (Smith and De Graaff 2016), the enlightenment offers key pieces of a foundation for common universal values and norms—values that are not static or abstract, but, when critically retrieved, can be grounded in a phenomenological (“lived”) ethics.

There is, moreover, no coincidence that the enlightenment displayed a core humanistic underpinning, as humanistic thinking (Smith and De Graaff 2016; Trevor-Roper 2010). And, equally, it is no coincidence that in his systematic study of social pathology, Fromm relied heavily on both enlightenment values and a humanistic framework. Out of the need to ground normativity and provide an alternative to “insane society”, Fromm turned to humanism and thus, too, to core humanistic values. In many ways, this is what makes Fromm’s analysis so attractive to many people. He speaks to lived experience, he speaks to common values and common experiences of suffering we all share. However, as we will see in just a moment, it is also around the point where he asserts his humanistic model where his project becomes theoretically and practically problematic. In the same way that it was a task of mine (along with Arnold De Graaff) to offer a comprehensive alternative framework for the retrieval of the enlightenment and also the first steps at a retrieval of humanistic thought more generally; a key dimension of this book is to expand on these efforts, particularly (albeit not exclusively) as they relate to the work of Fromm (and many others).

2.3 A CRITIQUE OF ERICH FROMM'S HUMANISM: TOWARDS A CRITICAL, NORMATIVE ALTERNATIVE

One of Fromm's greatest achievements in *The Sane Society*, which remains a main inspiration behind this book, has to do with his critical dissection of popular notions of pathology. This is not to neglect other significant aspects of his analysis, including his study of human beings in capitalistic society, his thesis on "social character", as well as his study of human agency and "the human condition", among other things. In many ways, he was incredibly progressive for his time. But where Fromm particularly succeeds is in offering a convincing case towards the reframing of pathology, in that he challenges the very core belief in "mental health and society". Fromm brings into question notions of adjustment and stability. Turning them on their head, he reveals deeper insight regarding the difference between the meaning of adjustment and stability within the context of healthy social conditions as opposed to their meaning in pathological society. "Regardless of whether we speak of "mental health" or of the "mature development" of the human race", writes Fromm, "the concept of mental health or of maturity is an objective one, arrived at by the examination of the human situation and the human necessities and needs stemming from it" (Fromm 2002, p. 70). Differentiating between various forms of society, as well as different notions of mental health, Fromm lays out an alternative vision social and individual health, well-being and flourishing. David Ingleby offers a perfect summary in his introduction the second edition of Fromm's book. He writes:

One's ability to achieve mental health, and the way in which one does so, depends to a small extent on individual factors, but is largely a question of what a society makes possible. This is what is radical about Fromm's notion of mental health: it "cannot be defined in terms of the 'adjustment' of the individual to his society, but, on the contrary [...] must be defined in terms of the adjustment of society to the needs of man". This notion, according to Fromm, is in conflict with the two other widely received conceptions of mental health. One is the view of mainstream psychiatry, which defines mental health and conformity. This presupposes that existing society is already adequate to meet human needs. Seemingly opposed to this is Freud's pessimism, which follows Hobbes in asserting that no conceivable society can meet the needs of man, because these needs are intrinsically anti-social in nature: mental health is thus only possible in a relative sense. (Ingleby 2002, p. xxx)

The general direction of Fromm's analysis remains, I suggest, correct. Since *The Sane Society* was first published, 60 years have passed, and in those 60 years, the horizon of Fromm's analysis, what it points towards, the orientation it seeks to provide in terms of two competing views of society and social values, remains situated on the progressive edges of western thought. Both the pessimistic and relativistic view and the mainstream conformist view are, we will see, terribly misguided. Between them, a third alternative is available. However, how Fromm reaches his conclusions, the models and framework he presents along the way, are problematic. When reading *The Sane Society*, it is as though Fromm sensed what direction was needed, he intuited certain conclusions, but at times he struggled in his working his way towards them. Allow me to explain.

Fromm is undeniably right when he asserts that "mental health cannot be defined in terms of the "adjustment" of the individual to his society", although we learn that even in more healthy and reconciled social conditions there is always going to be some degree of adjustment. In principle, the established view that the individual must adjust to society is a central tenant of authoritarian structures and values of social organization. In a study of the "authoritarian personality", Adorno et al. (1982) substantiate as much. More recently, medical, anthropological and psychological studies of various dimensions of authoritarianism (Altemeyer 1996; Bayer and Shotter 1998; Canetti et al. 2009; Duckitt 1992; Duckitt and Farre, 1994; Etchezahar and Brussino 2013; Furnham 2015; McLeod 2014; Smolík 2008) further this understanding, as well as that of the persistence of such social phenomena as prejudice, dominant personalities, hierarchical worldviews and violence (Akrami and Ekehammar 2006; Benjamin 2006; Bronner 2014b).

Moreover, one reads in the most recent and advanced studies on authoritarianism very clear empirical and theoretical affirmation of Fromm's key thesis regarding pathological society and its links to authoritarianism and finally also various dimensions of human destruction. Such advanced and detailed research, which helps fill in some of the holes in Fromm's analysis, substantiates the notion that pathological society, just as we began to witness in Chap. 1, hinders the development of mental health (Fromm 2002, p. 70). It is not surprising, after years of being immersed in the overwhelming body of study and research from across numerous disciplines, that contemporary neoliberal capitalist society is linked to the generation of hardened, cold and authoritarian personalities, to whatever degree on the scale of such a personality disorder.

This last point anticipates a much broader discussion in Chap. 3. Meanwhile, it is very clear that we can affirm, substantiate and expand Fromm's assessment that "whether or not the individual is healthy", depends less on the individual, and more on "the structure of his [or her] society" (Fromm 2002, p. 70). Bracketing a deeper engagement with this thesis until later, what is important to note here is that, in order for Fromm to distinguish between these views—between conformist and pessimistic views and his own—and introduce an alternative critical conception of mental health and the "pathology of civilizations", he had to develop an alternative framework and model. The goal in doing so, quite simply, was to substantiate the "objective conditions" in which one can make such judgements. The entire validity and legitimacy of Fromm's analysis in *The Sane Society* depend on the systematic establishing of the objective and normative foundations of his analysis (Fromm 2002, p. 71). He writes, for example:

This view that mental health is to be determined *objectively* and that society has both a furthering *and* a distorting influence on man [or woman], contradicts not only the relativistic view [...], but two other views. (p. 71)

These two other views have already been noted above. And although his critique of both, especially the popular belief that capitalism and the western capitalist way of life "corresponds to the deepest needs of human nature and that adjustment to this way of life means mental health and maturity", is very sharp; Fromm has been subject to a few different forms of criticism. In this chapter, I will focus on two particularly notable sites of criticism. The first, and most important series of comments, have to do with his critique Freud, especially Freud's instinct theory. The second series of comments concerns Fromm's humanism, particular as he attempts to establish a framework for the development of an alternative against "insane society".

Contrary to widely referenced and documented criticism by Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse, I will explain in this chapter why Fromm was correct to challenge Freud. Throughout the remainder of this book, the case for why Fromm was right to attempt to move beyond Freud's instinct theory will become increasingly clear, as an alternative and cross-disciplinary framework begins to emerge. For the time being, and in relation to possible criticism concerning his humanistic thinking, I argue that the essence of Fromm's radical normative humanism is in response to

two deeply problematic poles. The first concerns the serious limitations of Freud's instinct theory. The second concerns the serious deficiencies of B.F. Skinner's Behaviorism. For Fromm, while at times he evidences problematic—albeit not unrecoverable aspects of humanism (Smith and De Graaff 2016)—the essence of his thinking is simple:

2.3.1 (i) *Fromm's Radical Humanism*

Allow me to begin with the latter. In recent decades, criticism of humanistic thinking has emerged, especially in the form of postmodern critique. This criticism concerns, generally speaking, the tendency within humanism to assert abstract notions of human nature, which, it is claimed, are employed or in the least can be used to serve dominant, racist and imperialist ideologies. We can describe this position in terms of antihumanism, such as in the work of Jacques Derrida or Michel Foucault. Indeed, in spite of their variations, poststructuralist are generally unified in their antihumanism (Sherman 2009, p. 33). The irony of much of antihumanist discourse is that its representatives eventually become, what Tony Davies describes in his book *Humanism* (1997), “humanist anti-humanists”. In the last few years' articles, attempt to reconcile Foucault's antihumanism with his return to human rights are case in point. Nevertheless, antihumanism essentially coincides with a rejection of universalism—that is, a rejection of concepts pertaining to human nature or humanity as relative. There is also a common rejection of the notion of autonomous subjects, or, more accurately, of the efficacious subject.

It is undoubtedly true that humanism has its problems and is in need of critique. But antihumanism collapses on several fronts (Malik 1996, 2002, 2005, 2009a, 2012a, b, 2014) and what is needed today, as Jürgen Habermas notes, is a critical retrieval and reworking of humanism. This includes, as Kenan Malik (2012b) writes, decolonization. It also requires, along epistemological lines, that we repair the damaged universal-particular relation (Smith and De Graaff 2016). A good example of this is read in Malik's (2009a) *Strange Fruit: Why Both Sides are Wrong in the Race Debate*. Here we read how multiculturalists today, who rely on certain humanist underpinnings, reproduce the same error as nineteenth-century racial scientists. “The roots of the racial ideas that would flourish in the nineteenth century”, followed the “transformation of enlightenment attitudes” towards a more distorted form that “helped mutate the eighteenth century discussion of human variety into the nineteenth century obses-

sion with racial difference” (Malik 2013a). Today, multiculturalists come extremely close to the distortions of racial scientists when they promote essentialism (Malik 2009a). This is not the appropriate venue to disentangle the debates, or to work through in the detail required what are the specifics to a fundamental critical retrieval of humanism. What can and should be noted, however, is that Malik (1996, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2009a, b, 2012a, b, 2013a, b, 2014) has already made significant progress and this work is, in many ways, indebted to his efforts, as he successfully retrieves humanism and core enlightenment values, argues for their critical advancement, while also untangling the complexities of the anti-colonial debate (among others) in the twentieth century.

Having said that, it may be useful to work through Fromm’s radical humanism, particularly as illustrated in *The Sane Society*, for the benefit of a later discussion. To start, it has already been noted that Fromm needed an alternative framework and normative basis against “insane society”. For this reason, the book is essentially laid out in a logical order, opening with a critique of the social conditions at the time, Fromm turned to a consideration, as David Ingleby (2002, p. xxiv) notes, “of where criteria can be found for diagnosing the ‘pathology’ of society”. Thus Fromm employs a humanistic framework. Ingleby reflects, moreover, “These [criteria], according to [Fromm], must be based in a conception of man’s essential nature” (p. xxiv). In sum, Fromm “evaluates modern society in terms of the extent to which it permits this nature to flourish, and finds it in every respect wanting. Finally, he considers the nature of the changes which would have to come about in order to make a more truly human existence possible” (pp. xxiv–xxv).

The major issue with Fromm’s humanistic framework, however, is that he explicitly claims to base his concepts and hypotheses on “scientific” considerations (Ingleby 2002, p. xxxviii). And yet, writes Ingleby, “on closer examination they prove to be merely metaphysical in nature” (p. xxxviii). In essence, it is not overly critical to say that: “Fromm is thus a moralist, who in an attempt to give his ideals credibility has attempted to reify them into scientific laws” (p. xxxix). His concept of human nature embodies a set of ideals (p. xxxix), which lends some credibility to a certain component of Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse’s criticism that we’ll address later. As Ingleby summarizes:

These [humanistic] concepts are crucial to Fromm’s argument, since (as Freud had observed) there are no criteria for discussing the pathology of

whole societies, unless a concept of “sanity” can be found which lies outside any particular culture. [...] The nub of the problem is that Fromm attempts to define the relationship between man and nature in a timeless, universal way [...] As Schaar and Snippe have noted, he commits the “naturalistic fallacy” [...]. Perhaps, however, his naturalism should be seen as a rhetorical device. As Martin Jay puts it, his concept of human nature was “not a fixed concept like the Roman *natura*, but rather an idea of man’s potential nature, similar to the Greek *physis*”. (Ingleby 2002, p. xxxix)

To conclude, Fromm’s humanistic framework evidences what I describe as the worst of old-school humanism. His arguments are weak and confused. Many of his concepts are abstract. While his reliance on a consensus by religious thinker, the supposed “awakened ones”, to justify his universalistic statements (Ingleby 2002, p. xivii). In his asserting an abstract theory of human nature, he essentially repeated the same failure of other humanistic thinkers before him. In fact, one could say that on this account there’s really nothing “radical” about Fromm’s “radical humanism” is troubling in *The Sane Society*.

On the other hand, none of this takes away from the positive aspects of his analysis. Fromm’s critique of capitalism, and human beings in capitalism, is deeply revealing, especially as he integrates more empirical and clinical dimensions to his research. When approaching Fromm’s analysis in *The Sane Society* today, we have to utilize a highly nuanced approach. Fromm, like many other thinkers in the twentieth century, juggled two aspects of analysis: a commitment to universalism and normativity, in Fromm’s case via abstract humanism, and revolutionary social critique. Historical context of the writing plays a significant role. But beyond that, and in spite of the clear and definitive pitfalls of Fromm’s framework, it is important to recognize that, as Ingleby reflects in typically concise fashion, “Fromm’s concept of the “essential nature of man” is not a *descriptive* concept but a *normative* one” (Ingleby 2002, pp. xxxix–xI). When we understand his humanistic framework in this way, “it is possible to resolve the apparent contradiction in the criticism of him by Adorno, Marcuse and Jacoby” (p. xI). While Fromm rightly identifies the role one’s sociohistorical-cultural circumstance plays in subject formation, as we will learn in his critique of Freud’s instinct theory (Sect. 2.4), he also simultaneously employs an abstract ideal of what he views as a more healthy, reconciled universal alternative (p. xI). More concisely, Fromm is particularly sharp in analysing human beings as they are, hence his argument that we will considered

in moment regarding the social meditation of the subject. It is his abstract ideal that is the most significant problem. The question is:

Is it possible to formulate a new, critical and comprehensive theory of social pathology by appropriating, at least in part, Fromm's theory of pathology in *The Sane Society*, without endorsing his abstract humanist and idealist commitments? I argue that it is possible. And, it is so without losing the significant importance of a humanistic underpinning, except, in the case I present, the alternative framework represents a critically retrieved humanism. Moreover, although this book in no way gravitates solely around the work of Erich Fromm, it does quite explicitly attempt to formulate an "alternative normative critical humanism" grounded not in an abstract theory of human nature but in broad interdisciplinary research that bridges the gap between the empirical, the scientific and the philosophical.

Furthermore, one of the deepest underlying struggles for Fromm, which ultimately results in his subscribing to an abstract humanism, is that he cannot, within his theory of pathology, locate sites of resistance and social spaces—let alone experiential moments—where the "mediating subject" (Sherman 2007) still exists. In other words, we can draw an analogy between the struggle of Fromm and that of Adorno, as we will explore in Chap. 3. The core tension in Fromm's *The Sane Society* has to do with the exact same tension that is present in essentially all of the major works by the first generation Frankfurt School, including Adorno and Marcuse. That tension is a general product of the Frankfurt School's *totalization of theory and of transformation* (Smith 2015b; Zuidervaat 2007). And this problem, as lived and evidenced in the early Frankfurt School, really is a legacy of both Sigmund Freud and György Lukács, both of whom had a significant impact on the development of CT.

From this perspective, we can begin to understand what Fromm was trying to grasp, even if he failed to do so in more accurate terms, when he writes: "Whole nations, or social groups within them, can be subjugated and exploited for a long time, but *they react*" (Fromm 2002, pp. 18–19). As Fromm reflects, people may react in a number of ways, whether through gradual failure "to perform the functions which should serve their rulers" or by the "accumulation of hate and destructiveness" (p. 19). The reaction may be, indeed, to establish more free and emancipatory conditions (p. 19), or, in turn, equally troublesome coercive, authoritarian and dominant social dynamics that are more or less that old with a new face. In any case, what Fromm couldn't locate or conceptualize in a concrete way—and

herein lies one of my main theses—was how this *reaction*, particularly in a positive or transformative sense, is a testament to the existence of the *mediating, efficacious subject*.⁵ If the “whole of society” is pathological, if “the whole of society can be sick”, owing, again, to Freud, what Fromm cannot locate is where transformation might occur. He is right to want to return to the individual in some capacity, to manoeuvre towards universal values and the enlightenment humanism, and to locate transformative possibility in individual health—in the subject. But he simply lacked the appropriate tools, the data and the research. It is also true that, in the end, Fromm was in many ways stuck within the limits of CT and psychoanalysis of the time.

If, however, we can succeed in offering an alternative framework—a comprehensive foundation, which supports both the existence of the efficacious subject within coercive, dominant and pathological society, and, too, the concrete possibility of alternative values and norms, then we will have rescued Fromm’s suspicions and validated what he could only really intuit. If my thesis is accepted, then we can support the intention of *The Sane Society*, advanced it and ultimately ground its suspicion is an actually radical and progressive programme of research and study.

2.4 FROMM’S CRITIQUE OF FREUD’S INSTINCT THEORY

For Fromm, who it should be noted was the only expert associated with the Frankfurt School when it came to the actual clinical and empirical basis of Freudian theory (McLaughlin 1999), Freud’s theories not only became seen overly pessimistic. One of his main concerns had to do with the validity of Freud’s instinct theory (Fromm 2013).

Fromm, who studied in detailed both the life and the work of Freud, identified very clear disparities between earlier and later periods of Freudian theory. This lead him more or less to an illuminating dissection of Freud’s dualistic form of thinking, particularly as he traced Freud’s turn from a drive or instinct theory pertaining to desire and repression to an account of the struggle between Eros and the death instinct (Fromm 2013). In many ways, Fromm was extremely nuanced in his treatment of Freud, and maintained a great sense of admiration towards his theories even after his challenging them (McLaughlin 1999).

For an assortment of reasons, it is fair to say that Fromm’s critique was not received very well by other members of the Frankfurt School. Having moved away from “stressing the centrality of instincts”, instead emphasizing “the importance of culture and interpersonal relations and

an existential analysis of human psychic isolation that gave rise to what he would later call a “fear of freedom” (McLaughlin 1999), Fromm would eventually be excluded by his former peers and more or less cut loose from the Frankfurt School.

The most notable criticism came from Adorno and Marcuse. Both reacted hostilely, labelling Fromm a “revisionist”, a title which he would struggle to shake in the years that followed the well-documented confrontation (Rickert 1986). Adorno’s criticism in particular soon became conventional wisdom within CT (McLaughlin 1999). This critique was then further popularized by Marcuse, which was accepted and propagated as valid by the New Left (McLaughlin 1999).

Now, for the reader not familiar with the Frankfurt School and its key arguments, Adorno and Marcuse’s rejection of Fromm’s theory of pathology will no doubt come across as esoteric or, perhaps worse, as an “in-house” philosophical debate limited to some “enlightened inner circle”. Such an opinion is not inaccurate. Debates within CT—past or contemporary—often are frustratingly esoteric, and can easily become abstract. But the rejection of the critiques of Fromm by Adorno and Marcuse are nevertheless important with regard to the flow of my main argument. In considering Adorno and Marcuse’s criticism, and in reflecting on the research directions by Fromm, this will ultimately contribute to an overall deepening and contextualizing of the alternative conception that is at the heart of my research. It will also contribute to a sort of critical retrieval of CT, which, as a secondary aim, has a particular relevance to the themes of this book. In engaging however briefly with Adorno and Marcuse’s criticisms, I will thus strive to be as concise and as practically applied as possible. Let us begin with a summary by Neil McLaughlin, when he reflects:

Marcuse’s initial attack on Fromm was the major theme of a larger essay on “neo-Freudian” critiques of orthodox Freudian theory (Marcuse 1955). Marcuse, drawing implicitly on Adorno’s critique, argued that Fromm and other “revisionists” had transformed powerful and radical Freudian ideas into conformist banalities. Marcuse argued that even though Freud and most psychoanalysts were committed to bourgeois society, “psychoanalysis was a radically critical theory” (Marcuse 1955, p. 221). Marcuse likes his Freud straight and defends such speculative and “metaphysical” ideas as the death instinct and the hypothesis of the primal horde. The purging of Freud’s metapsychology from psychoanalysis has meant that the “explosive connotations” of Freud theory of the unconscious and sexuality “were all but eliminated.” (Marcuse 1955, p. 226)

The central theme of the revisionists, according to Marcuse, is that the present environment causes more conflicts than allowed for in the orthodox Freudian biological model focused on sexual instincts and the first five or six years of life. As Marcuse puts it, revisionists, “move from past to present,” from biology to culture and from constitution to environment, discarding libido theory and substituting “relatedness” (Marcuse 1955, p. 226). The result is an eclectic and banal theory and “the laboring of the obvious, of routine wisdom (Marcuse 1955, p. 227)”. (McLaughlin 1999)

Were Adorno and Marcuse right to criticize Fromm? The answer is complicated. For reasons I will explain Adorno and Marcuse are correct in some areas, but they are also deeply misguided in others. Regarding the latter, it turns out that the more we disentangle the debate, the more we reveal what is actually a *core antagonism* that has since plagued the early Frankfurt School.

First, it should be reiterated that Fromm was correct to challenge Freud’s concepts of “libido” and “the death instinct”. As Ingleby reflects, “the contortions of the other members of the Frankfurt School, in their attempt to “read” Freud’s instinct theory in a way which will fit into revolutionary social theory, seem to be much less plausible than Fromm’s critique of this theory” (Ingleby 2002, p. xI). As the saying goes, hindsight is 20/20. If one reason Marcuse sought to hold onto the Freudian biological model is because it offered foundation for understanding the constitution of the human being, and revealed insight into the early years, this position is no longer relevant or applicable (Smith 2013). The knowledge, understanding and theory relating to human constitution and early childhood development has advanced so far beyond Marcuse’s use of the Freudian biological model, that his criticism in this regard no longer stands. In fact, as we shall see in this book, contemporary research actually validates Fromm’s position more than Marcuse’s. It does so precisely insofar that Fromm drags the subject back into the social dialectic more successfully than Marcuse.

Moreover, I agree with Kieran Durkin’s (2014) assessment, particularly in relation to the above point, that Adorno and Marcuse’s position in their confrontation with Fromm reveals more about the internal struggle of their own projects than the deficiencies in Fromm’s development. Adorno’s theory of the subject, in spite of the disagreement of the validity of certain aspect of Freud’s theory, is very close to that of Fromm in several fundamentally important ways. Indeed, even though Adorno “relies

on the idea of unconscious libidinal drives”, in his critique “of Freud’s division of consciousness” Adorno argues “that Freud’s idea of the unconscious is undialectical” (Sherman 2007, p. 225). And the main point of Adorno’s critique, particularly as laid out in his well-known (1968) article *Sociology and Psychology*? Adorno writes:

The more strictly the psychological realm is conceived as an autonomous, self-enclosed play of forces, the more completely the subject is drained of subjectivity. The objectless subject that is thrown back onto himself freezes into an object. It cannot break out of its immanence and amounts to no more than equations of libidinal force. (Adorno 1968, p. 81)

In this passage, also quoted by David Sherman (2007, pp. 225–226) in his influential book *Sartre and Adorno: The Dialectics of Subjectivity*, we learn as Sherman summarizes: Adorno argues “that the psyche must be dragged back into the social dialectic” (p. 226). And, truth be told, Marcuse adopts a similar position (p. 226). Approached in this way, the differences between what Fromm was trying to achieve and Adorno and Marcuse’s respective positions, seems overstated. Both Adorno and Marcuse want to drag the subject back into the social dialectic and, the latter especially, wants to ultimately preserve the notion of the “mediating subject” subject (Sherman 2007). Years later, after Adorno and Marcuse would write and publish their most influential works, the defence of Freud’s biological materialism seems a strange position to adopt. Contrary to the view that a challenge towards Freud’s instinct theory represented a sort of subversion of the radical edge of CT rooted in psychoanalysis, thus leading to comments that Fromm was “conformist”, in retrospect Fromm’s sociological “revision” ultimately proves far more radical a line of critique than what either Marcuse or Adorno are able to achieve. This point is emphasized especially when we consider the need to ultimately critically retrieve and advance the projects of Adorno and Marcuse so as to meet the standards of contemporary understandings in psychology.

Saving this last point until later, the entire basis of discussion so far has incredible implications when it comes to re-engaging with Fromm’s *The Sane Society*. For contextual purposes, let us address in more detail the validity of Fromm’s critique of Freud. In attempting to rescue Fromm’s work from many illegitimate criticisms, John Rickert (1986) and Daniel Burston (1991) offer a much needed response. In Rickert’s impactful article, for example, we read:

Freud's characterology had been developed within the framework of an *individual* psychology. Thus, while it could—in principle, at least—explain the individual's character structure in terms of libido theory, it found it much more difficult to give an adequate account of *social character*. Specifically, Freud's theory could not answer in any satisfactory way the question of why a given class should have developed a certain kind of social character. [...] A similar difficulty plagued the attempt to reconcile Freud's account of character with the view that social character is essentially formed by the socioeconomic structure. [...] If one were to retain Freud's account of character and at the same time acknowledge the impact of economic forces, [...] it would be incumbent upon one to show how the capitalist mode of production gave rise to certain early experiences that led to the fixation of libido at the anal stage of development, thereby producing an anal character structure. Fromm apparently believed that no convincing connection of this kind could be made. [...] In response to this dilemma, Fromm developed a theory that could show the connection between the economic conditions and the prevailing character traits as well as explain why a particular class should have a specific kind of social character. Both aims were achieved, and the difficulties of Freud's theory avoided, by denying the libido's role in the formation of character. This meant that the impact of social reality was not mediated by the sexual instincts. Rather, the socioeconomic structure directly molded human energy and passions in such a way as to produce the traits required for the continued functioning of the given social order. (Rickert 1986, pp. 358–360)

In this incredibly accurate passage by Rickert, we read that Fromm was trying to push psychoanalysis forward by critically retrieving and integrating Freud's theory with what I interpret in *The Sane Society* as a more holistic approach, one which was able to more precisely account for how the subject is mediated *socially*. This reading of Fromm, which I consider correct, positions Fromm's general vision incredibly close to that of Adorno. In aiming to bring the subject back into the social dialectic, for Fromm was quite serious about undertaking a dialectic approach in *The Sane Society*, what he achieved more successfully than those who continue to work in traditional Freudian theory, including Lacanian psychoanalysis, is the development of an "analytic social psychology" which can serve as a vital tool for a deeper investigation of "how society forms dominant character types which reproduce social structure and submit to social authority" (Kellner 2013).

To further the point, let us consider the following. In no way abandoning Freudian theory, one of the greatest achievements of *The Sane Society*

is how, after his critique of Freud, Fromm would go on to examine and sketch out in detail numerous character types within capitalist society. He writes:

For Freud, man [or woman] is driven by two biologically rooted impulses: the craving for sexual pleasure [Eros], and for destruction [death instinct]. [...] Man's aggressiveness, Freud thinks, has two source: one the innate striving for destruction (death instinct) and the other the frustration of sexual desires, imposed upon him by civilization. [...] On the basis of his concept of man, that of his inherent wish for unlimited sexual satisfaction, and of his destructiveness, Freud must arrive at a picture of the necessary conflict between civilization and mental health and happiness. Civilization, to Freud, is the product of instinctual frustration and thus the cause of mental illness. Both positions, the "adjustment view" and the Hobbes-Freudian view of the necessary conflict between human nature and society, imply a defense of contemporary society and they both are one-sided distortions. Furthermore, they both ignore the fact that society is not only in conflict with the *asocial* aspects of man, partly produced by itself, but often also with his most valuable human qualities, which it suppresses rather than furthers. (Fromm 2002, pp. 72–75)

This passage evidences, in essence, Fromm's attempt at developing a progressive project. Characterology based in libido theory is ultimately unable to accommodate a progressive and critical social psychology (Fromm 2014; Rickert 1986, p. 358). On this point, and in highlighting the important emphasis Fromm makes on dragging the subject back into the social dialectic—not unlike Adorno—"the socioeconomic structure" is now understood more clearly to have "*directly* moulded human energy and passions in such a way as to produce the traits required for the continued functioning of the given social order" (Rickert 1986, p. 360). In short, and perhaps most crucially:

The force that most powerfully shapes character, according to Fromm, is the whole network of social relationships that make up the individual's experience. And the main factor determining the nature and quality of those relations is the given socioeconomic structure and resulting practice of life. A particular social character, then, does not develop because of certain experiences of overstimulation or frustration during one of the phases of libidinal development. Rather, it develops in direct response to the child's experience of social reality as constituted by the requirements of a particular socioeconomic system and transmitted by the family environment. (p. 360)

2.5 FREUD'S INSTINCT THEORY AND BEYOND: TOWARDS A MULTIDIMENSIONAL AND INTEGRAL VIEW OF THE SUBJECT

Regarding Fromm's critique of Freud: my argument in this section is that he was right to challenge Freud's instinct theory. This will, undoubtedly, be considered a controversial claim within the field of CT, considering the deep relationship between Freudian theory and the Frankfurt School tradition of thought. But after a wide and extensive survey of literature and research, it seems quite clear that, in spite of the overwhelmingly negative reaction that Fromm received at the time, his position has only become increasingly validated.

In this section, which anticipates many points of discussion in a later chapter on an alternative philosophy of psychology, I seek to briefly touch on and expand a critique of Freud's instinct theory. With that said, it is important to note that while I argue we must move beyond Freud's instinct theory, at no point am I to suggest that instincts are not a dimension of the subject. Rather, the position I take is one which argues that Freudian theory requires critical retrieval. Although there is no room in this book to pursue such an incredibly complex task, the purpose of this section is to draw out the core issue with Freud's theory of the instincts, whilst introduce one of the books main theses: the need for a complex, multidimensional and *integrative view of the subject*. Within this view, Freudian theory continues to represent an important dimension.

2.5.1 (i) *Qualifying Statements*

Aside from the question of social pathology, at the heart of this book is also the issue of subject development. This involves questions of how a human being develops—or how a child changes during the course of his/her growth (Litowitz 1999)—and how social conditions, positive or negative, affect that development. “Every psychoanalytic theory from Freud's earliest models to the latest post-Freudian versions” attempt to capture a theory of development in some way (Litowitz 1999). Freud's theories claim to describe universal developmental stages, which do not depend upon specific environmental responses, cultural or social or otherwise (Litowitz 1999). Thus significant emphasis is placed on biology in the development of the psyche (Moritsugu et al. 2016).

Outside of certain movements within CT and more traditional pockets of psychoanalysis, Freud's instinct theory and biological model is generally considered highly questionable (Benjafield 2010; Benjamin 1988; Black and Mitchell 2016; Blum and Hoffman 2016; Gomez 1997; Buirski and Kottler 2007; Rogers 1951, 1959; Schneider et al. 2001; Shane et al. 1997; Simanowitz and Pearce 2003). In fact, Freud's theories in general are being increasingly challenged, or shown as not possible to prove (Dvorsky 2013). Many have either already discarded his theories as postulation without scientific validation or have used them as guidance knowing they are flawed or incredibly abstract. As Axel Honneth put it:

Only dogmatism can today still blind one to the fact that a string of premises of Freudian theory have [...] become highly questionable. Developments in infant research, in developmental psychology generally, but also in evolutionary biology, have cast doubt on central and basic assumptions of the psychoanalytic view of young children. (Honneth 2009, p. 126)

Even contemporary theories of the unconscious, which many have labelled one of Freud's greatest accomplishments, are continuously seeking to establish differentiation from Freudian theory (Romand 2012), rooting their concepts in Gustav Fechner's earlier hypotheses. Additionally, while efforts at reforming classical Freudian theory have been attempted by the likes of Jacques Lacan and his contemporary followers, which is a popular movement in psychoanalysis today, particularly or primarily in theory and through the work of Slavoj Žižek, this too can be argued for different reasons to be deeply inadequate when weighed against more up-to-date cross-disciplinary research programme (Smith 2013).

Indeed, from a wide survey of literature, and from a discussion with different clinical practitioners and psychotherapists, it is clear that Fromm's challenging Freudian instinct theory is, in present times, a less than controversial course of critique. This lends to the belief that when reading Freud today, as Fisher and Greenberg (1996) argue, what is required is a significant amount of nuance. His theory should be evaluated, they claim, in terms of specific hypotheses rather than as a whole (Fisher and Greenberg 1996; also cited in McLeod 2013). One reason for this, quite simply, has to do with the many "unresolved contradictions in Freud's writings", including what has been summarized as an unevenly developed system of ideas that are not integrated into a logical, systematic whole (Boag 2014).

2.5.2 (ii) *Defending Freud: The Future of Freudian Theory*

Putting aside different criticisms of Freudian theory and also what I perceive to be the need for a project of significant critical retrieval, there is also much to defend.

There is no doubt Freud's legacy still remains very strong in such areas as child psychology and developmental psychology. One of Freud's many great achievements was that he brought awareness to the importance of early childhood experience. Additionally, much of recent and more progressive developments in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, including also humanistic psychology, express an indebtedness to Freud (Elliot and Prager 2016; Rowan 2001, 2002). One could argue that ongoing developments in object relations, interpersonal and self-psychology—fourth-wave psychoanalysis in Heinz Kohut and beyond—continue to evidence the important legacy of Freudian theory. And as much as I agree that it was right of Fromm to challenge Freud's instinct theory, he could have formulated his arguments in a more accurate and progressive way.

McLaughlin (1999) writes that it is difficult “to find serious defenders of the death instinct, the primal horde or orthodox libido theory” today. This is generally true. An example frequently cited refers to object relation studies within psychoanalysis, and the finding that interactions with others are more than merely an outcome of attempts to maximize instinctual gratification (Simanowitz and Pearce 2003). But we also read in object relations studies attempts to find a continued place for some of Freud's theory. And this has since become a site of struggle. In fact, since the period between the 1970s and 1990s, where many turned away from Freud's biological framework—including his theory of development and of the mind—and where many “post-Freudian” advancements occurred, in recent years there's been a renewed interest (Litowitz 1999). How do we account for this?

The situation, as far as I can tell, is that after the three waves of psychoanalysis since Freud—Ego Psychology, Object Relations and Self Psychology—there is very little left of Freud's instinct theory. It has, to put it bluntly, been largely surpassed and, in truth, there's not a lot left to be preserved that is progressive enough to match today's advancements in knowledge. Even the concept of the unconscious, as I noted above, has gone through drastic changes. With that said, whatever does remain retrievable in Freud's instinct theory is, generally, what has been largely taken over by neuropsychology and brain studies. Consider, for instance,

research concerning the neurological dimension of trauma and development broadly speaking. Thus, if the argument, in advancing the debates, is that that whatever Freud hinted at in a one-dimensional way from out of his biological model needs to be put in a multidimensional view, what actually needs critically retrieving and advancing here is the *neuropsychological dimension of social and individual pathology*. Social pathology affects our brains as well, individually and collectively, and there is also a subconscious collective and individual social pathology, which, in offering a more comprehensive theory, we must take into account.

When it comes to progressing Fromm's critique more particularly, the truth is that, outside circles of traditional psychoanalysts, Freud's biological model is seen as incredibly outdated. Of those who work on the level of practice and within the field of application, few seem to actually hold onto notions of Eros and Aggression as primary motivations of human behaviour. The same can be said of Freud's psycho-sexual stages of development.

The core tension, in any case, is the lack of a more complex, multidimensional and integral perspective. The core issues with Freud's instinct theory and biological model is that it is reductionist. While possibly suggestive of what we're now learning as deeper realities concerning the *neuropsychological dimension*—similar, for that matter, to his contrary in Jean Piaget—Freud's overemphasis on instincts is too one dimensional and, as an overall framework, it is ultimately revealed as being severely limited. Instincts become seen as the basic motivation of all human activities. In other words, humans are nothing but their instinctual drives: aggression, sex and possession. It lends to the incredibly distorted view of the "nature of the beast" led by Konrad Lorenz and others. Survival and procreation, violence and competition, all heavily influenced by evolutionary theory, begin to take hold when it comes to the established view of human nature. And these connections are no coincidence. Freud credited Darwin on a number of occasions (Litowitz 1999). That Freudian views are being adopted by neoliberalism's social Darwinism is no coincidence.

In short: his overemphasis on biological factors is less than emancipatory, regardless of how much one attempts to "read" his theory in the context of revolutionary social theory.

As for Fromm, inasmuch as he was right to challenge Freud, he too ultimately emphasizes too much of a one-dimensional view. In spite of the direction I believe Fromm wanted to go, namely towards a more multidimensional view, his issue was that, at the time of his writing *The Sane Society*, he didn't have much else to lean on in terms of an alterna-

tive theoretical framework. The incredible advancements in fourth-wave psychoanalysis, object relations, self-psychology and humanist psychology would come well after Fromm's death in 1980. In this sense, what is most astounding when revisiting the work of Fromm today is how, on my reading, he begun to anticipate numerous future developments across the whole of psychology years before they actually took place.

A good example of what I mean can be found in recent advancements in self-psychology and fourth-wave psychoanalysis, especially in the work of Daniel Stern (1971, 1974, 1977, 1985), not to mention the works of Robert D. Stolorow et al. (1987), Robert D. Stolorow and F. Lachmann (1980), George E. Atwood (1984), Johanna T. Tabin (1985), Morton and Estelle Shane (1997), Bernard Brandchaft (2010), Peter Buirski and Amanda Kottler (2007) among others. Here we observe an incredibly progressive research programme which has successfully bridged the gap between psychoanalysis and developmental models (Cassidy 1999, p. 614). What we learn here is a fundamentally radical and transformative contribution to understand the human subject. Contrary to the orthodox Freudian theory—and also Lacanian theory for that matter (Smith 2013)—we learn how, rather than the process of self-differentiation beginning with the intervening of the father, it is a closer reflection of reality to understand that the infant already begins the process of self-differentiation almost directly after the zero-point of birth (Stern 1971, 1974, 1977). As I summarized in my (2013) book on a critique of Slavoj Žižek and Lacan:

In Daniel Stern's widely influential book *The Interpersonal World of the Infant* (1985), it is observed how the infant develops in a series of overlapping and interdependent stages or layers, which begin within the first month of birth. These overlapping and interdependent stages are increasingly interpersonally sophisticated, wherein four main senses of *self* begin to develop shortly after zero-point.

“[T]he sense of an emergent self, which forms from birth to age two months; the sense of a core self, which forms between the ages of two and six months; the sense of a subjective self, which forms between seven and fifteen months; and a sense of a verbal self” (ibid.). According to this theory of subjective development, which remains normatively rooted in a phenomenological study that is normatively engaged with the infant in development, even before two months there is evidence of an emerging self. At the age of “two to seven months”, moreover, the infant gains enough experience.../ [to] create an organizing subjective perspective that can be called a sense of a core self. (Stern 1985; cited in Smith 2013a)

On the basis of Stern's studies and the systematic research around early childhood development broadly referenced in my past research (Smith 2013), which affirm the conclusions reached by the well-known "baby watcher" studies and the "still face" experiments (Tronick and Adamson 1980), we can determine that the infant already expresses agency at the "zero-point" of birth (Goldberg 2000). To emphasize this point, we can determine that the findings of the "still face" experiment by the "baby watchers" (Tronick and Adamson 1980)—perhaps one of the most concrete, conclusive studies of early subject development to date—illustrates how crucial it is to understand the infant as an agent, who is therefore able to engage with surroundings and influence the mother and restore contact with her whenever there is distance or need.

According to Stern, moreover, between the first and second year of development, the subject continues a complex and highly interrelated process of differentiation and it is only at the second year, where the infants agency is *already active* and blossoming, that the "infant's life language emerges" to provide for a verbal form of self-creating efficacy and thereby "a new domain of relatedness", which develops on the basis of an already existing field of subject-subject relations therefore moving "relatedness onto the impersonal, abstract level intrinsic to language and away from the personal, immediate level" (Stern 1985).

In addition to these points, it is worth taking note that McLaughlin (1999) also links "interesting work in psychoanalysis" which "rejects instinct theory and deals with, as Fromm suggested it must, relatedness and identity" in Greenberg and Mitchell (1983) and Benjamin (1988). McLaughlin goes on to write how Karen Horney, another to be labelled a "revisionist", is now also "being rediscovered as an early proponent of feminist object relations", while other important work has been associated with "the emergence of interpersonal psychoanalysis, an important school of thought within contemporary Freudian theory. In addition, Fromm's position on Freudian theory has gained new influence in recent years" (McLaughlin 1999).

Why is this important? Firstly, this research and countless others related to early subject development support a critique of Freud's biological model. Secondly, it shows precisely how, in the earliest years of infancy, the subject possess active and efficacious agency—mediating agency—whilst undergoing a process of social mediation. These are incredible—indeed, revolutionary and transformative—developments in our understanding, the implications of which will become clear in time.

But what such advancements contribute toward, most importantly, is a multidimensional view. This multidimensional and integral view, in the face of the continued doubt of the future of Freudian theory, revives its place within a much more complex picture of the individual human being.

2.5.3 (iii) *An Alternative Multidimensional, Integrative Theory*

As I said at the outset, it would take a lot of careful critical retrieval to appreciate Freud's theories and incorporate them within an integral, multidimensional view of human motivation and behaviour. Focusing purely on his theory of the instincts, neurologically based "instinctual drives" are increasingly proven today to be one dimension of human reality. But it is just one dimension of a far more multidimensional and complex reality, which includes the biological, biochemical, emotional, psychological, subconscious, cognitive and social-cultural (Smith 2015c). Each of these dimensions (and more) plays a role within the whole of a person's motivations and actions. Furthermore, countless research is available which shows that there are many other aspects to human motivation and behaviour. If the problem with Freud's theory here is that it is overly reductionist, a critical retrieval would therefore entail its *integration within a broader multidimensional framework*. Such a holistic, multidimensional view of the subject ultimately allows us to give the biological as well as the neurological aspects their rightful place.

In the last decade alone, significant advancements have been made within neuro and cognitive science. As Honneth (2009, p. 127) also notes, certain aspects of Freud's theories are beginning to find confirmation here. On this level, an integrative and holistic view can accommodate Freud's biological model. We can integrate and account, for instance, neural-physiological disturbances that give rise to rage reactions, sexual addictions and so on. and the deepening of awareness of what could be most effective in terms of understanding and therapy. We can account for how the libido plays a role in human reality, and how, in later works in the 1920s, he begins to soften his view on instincts, particularly in relation to a more comprehensive consideration of anxiety in young children (Honneth 2009, pp. 133–139). On this last point, we see quite clearly how Freud was inching closer to more contemporary understanding in object relations studies.

To sum up, in an integrated perspective, most of Freud's theories could be retrieved and appreciated for their value and (limited) place *in the whole*. Ego psychology, object relation theory and self-psychology developments within psychoanalytic theory are a good illustration of the basic value of Freud's theories and the radical shift that has taken place—the humanizing of Freud's views, even within psychoanalysis. And this leads to my main thesis in this book, namely that a progressive alternative philosophy of psychology (see Chap. 5) requires a critical, normative humanistic foundation. Throughout the remainder of this work, I hope to show how such an alternative, integrative and multidimensional approach can contribute to a more complex, thorough and advanced concept of social pathology.

2.5.4 (iv) *Concluding Thoughts*

It suffices to say at the current juncture that self psychology and object relations has represented a clear part of a greater integrative alternative model, which signals a closeness, even if indirectly, to the earlier advancements by Fromm. Then, too, we have humanistic psychology which emerged as a direct alternative to Freud and Skinner (Rowan 2001), a key thinker of which was Carl Rogers, whose theories are arguably more relevant today than when originally conceived (Kahn 1998; Davis-Washington, n.d.; Smith and De Graaff 2016). Furthermore, inasmuch as psychoanalysis—particularly fourth wave—is deeply influential to my formulations, it is the transformative and revolutionary potential of humanistic psychology (Rowan 2001; Smith and De Graaff 2016) that is the primary inspiration. And while the radical potential of humanistic psychology, especially when critically retrieved (Smith and De Graaff 2016), is far too often understated within CT, due to criticism towards humanism more generally, the present study of social pathology will show in just what way it should be a significant part of the foundation which informs a new, radical and critical conception of social pathology.

Consider, as one example, a recent critical engagement with Carl Rogers (1942, 1951, 1953, 1959, 1961, 1962, 1965, 1983, 1993) in the context of a more overarching critical retrieval of the enlightenment and humanistic values (Smith and De Graaff 2016). Here it was displayed in full colour the deeply transformative and revolutionary vision to be found in humanistic psychology, as well as a radical alternative and normative anthropology with concrete clinical, philosophical, phenomenological and empirical roots.

Fromm was right, in many ways, to find inspiration in enlightenment humanism. It's just that, as we discussed, he formulated his framework in a deeply problematic and abstract way. Today, however, it is possible to ground humanistic values in a concrete, interdisciplinary philosophical and empirical framework, one which lends weight to the revolutionary notion of a phenomenological ethics (Smith and De Graaff 2016). The emphasis here, particularly in a research paper co-authored with Arnold De Graaff, was not so much on a non-possessive caring and emphatic understanding, although this is one important feature. Rather, our early efforts at critically retrieving humanistic psychology indicate one dimension of a broader alternative anthropology which can support the important recognition, such as in our section on human nature, that as humans we are *both* capable of horrific violence and that children from early on can also learn and prize empathy, care and helpfulness.

Moving forward, and to close the present discussion, Adorno and Marcuse were right to place Fromm in the pool of idealist ethics. But it was incredibly short-sighted, if not disingenuous of them, to be so deeply critical of Fromm's humanistic leanings and intuitions. This goes double for Adorno, who, while a faithful subscriber to classical Freudian theory, was, as David Sherman put it, "ultimately a humanist of sorts" (Sherman 2007, p. 178). To approach it another way: it's unfortunate that Adorno more or less reduced, as McLaughlin (1999) writes, "Fromm's revision of Freudian theory" as the inevitable departure "from a truly radical critique of modern society—substituting soft-hearted therapy for rigorous analysis". This is clearly not the whole picture.

Additionally, it is undebatable that: "Fromm [...] is not fully aware of his own rootedness in the spirit of capitalism, and therefore cannot see—as Marcuse so acidly pointed out—that the ideals he propagates are also a product of the system he denigrates" (Ingleby 2002, p. xIvii). Beside the fact that Adorno and Marcuse owe a great deal to enlightenment humanism—as does Freud for that matter—they were right to criticize Fromm's return to an idealist ethics as evidenced in his abstract universal humanism. But they, too, in their criticism of Fromm, reveal the deeper inadequacy of their own respective positions.

For example, if for Marcuse, Fromm revives an idealist ethics by, as McLaughlin (1999) points out, "suggesting that it is possible to write of personality, care, responsibility, respect, of productive love and happiness in the context of a totally alienated market society", this is more a statement against Marcuse's (and Adorno's) totalization of theory and transforma-

tion than it is an indictment against Fromm's sensitivity towards how, even in the worst of social circumstances, moments of care and empathy can break through in the most socially and individually transformative fashion. In fact, this latter view is far more empirically grounded and widely validated than Adorno and Marcuse's overwrought and at times near total pessimism. A good example of this can be found in how Adorno, writes Honneth, "to a certain extent [...] saw all forms of practice as already permeated by instrumental attitudes" (Honneth 2009, p. 67). For Marcuse on the other hand, when writing on Fromm:

the "style alone betrays the attitude" (Marcuse 1955, p. 232)—the revisionists are moralistic not political, conformist not critical. Marcuse claims that Freud's writings are full of irony, insight and a willingness to squarely face the inevitable conflict between instinctual necessity and society. In contrast, the neo-Freudian "mutilation" of the instinct theory simply accentuates the positive, preaches about "inner strength and integrity (Marcuse 1955, p. 233)," turns social issues into spiritual concerns and defines neurosis as a moral problem. The writing style of the neo-Freudians, according to Marcuse, "comes frequently close to that of the sermon, or of the social worker, (Marcuse 1955, p. 232)" suggesting "the Power of Positive Thinking (Marcuse 1955, p. 233)." Marcuse rejects both therapy and traditional radical politics as solutions to the modern dilemma, instead arguing for a "fundamental change in the instinctual as well as cultural structure" (Marcuse 1955, p. 238). The first step towards this radical project must be an internal battle within the left, a defence of orthodox Freudian ideas against revision. (McLaughlin 1999)

Although many articles have been written on the Adorno, Marcuse and Fromm debate, few have actually picked up on how it is deeply revealing of the innermost core problem of the early Frankfurt School tradition: the totalization of theory (Smith 2015a). It is fairly evident when re-reading *The Sane Society* today that Fromm sought, even if he didn't directly realize it, to avoid the serious problem his Frankfurt School colleagues had generally succumb. We witness, moreover, an unwavering sensitivity and compassion towards individual struggle and suffering, and an attempt to find hope in a "wholly sick society".

His characterology is not dissimilar, in certain particular ways, with the findings read in Pierre Bourdieu's (1980, 1984, 1986) highly influential research. What Fromm achieves, or sought to achieve, is a much more balanced, multidimensional approach when it comes to understanding the

complex dialectical relation between the individual subject and his/her sociohistorical-cultural situation, particularly in terms of how that situation might shape their subjectivity. For that reason, we can say that he takes Marx's notion of how social conditions play a significant part in shaping consciousness to its most progressive conclusion (Rickert 1986, p. 360). Not entirely realizable via Freud's theory, even in spite of forceful efforts, Fromm essentially attempted to put forth a much broader empirical and philosophical framework for understanding precisely how the socio-economic system not only shapes character structure but also essentially aims to foster certain social character structures for the benefit of its structural-systemic reproduction (Rickert 1986, pp. 360–362).

To add to the above, Fromm ultimately “agreed with much of Marcuse’s analysis of capitalism but dissented from his almost total rejection of “the possibilities within “modern market society”” (McLaughlin 1999). Indeed one could, in a sense—albeit from another angle and with focus on different concerns—liken Fromm’s sensitivity towards the possibility of prefigurative alternative developments—what I have previously called the “scattered fireflies in the dark desert of neoliberal capitalism” in relation to John Holloway’s (2010) influential book *Crack Capitalism*.

Granted, Marcuse may have been “right that Fromm’s practical suggestions for social change were not well worked out, but Fromm’s critique of modern capitalist society was perceptive and powerful even if his strength was not as a political strategist or organizer” (McLaughlin 1999). Besides, it may be true that Marcuse’s more optimistic work *Eros and Civilization* contained a vision of emancipation and liberation, not unlike Fromm’s *The Sane Society*, and that in this work Marcuse employed a method for reading Freud beyond Freud (Moore 2016; Parton 2015) but the issue that rarely gets addressed in Marcusean scholarship is how Marcuse ultimately gets stuck in Freud’s instinct theory and struggles to development a sufficient framework for what we will discuss much later the need for a theory of the “differential transformation of society” (Zuidervaat 2007).

2.6 AXEL HONNETH, SOCIAL PATHOLOGIES AND THE LEGACY OF CRITICAL THEORY

Two other popular contributions within CT towards the notion of social pathology come by way of Axel Honneth and Jürgen Habermas. Unfortunately, due to limitations of space, I cannot offer a thorough treatment of Habermas’ thesis. Aside from the odd passing comment in

the advancement of this work, such a task will have to wait for a separate future opportunity. I will however be entertaining here a brief discussion on Honneth (1996, 2009), who has made particularly notable attempts in recent time at advancing a concept of pathology. The reason this engagement is important in passing is because what is also involved in our consideration of a new conception of social pathology is a retrieval, advancing and revitalizing of CT. At times, the following section may appear esoteric to the uninformed reader, but in the development of this book some of the key points will be opened up and become much more integrated. This is especially so when it comes to the vitally important notions of the “deficit of reason” and social irrationality or unreason which we will learn about in a moment. Reason and its deficit are key points in the development of a critical conception of pathology—they reside at the very heart of this book—as they help us understand the social world and the phenomena which that social world may tend to produce. Consider, for example, the rise of Donald Trump or “climate denialism”, are these not characteristic of an irrational social world? What about extreme environmental degradation and the political-economic ignorance of such devastation? Likewise, what of all the empirically verified issues we reflected on in the introduction, and the lack of any sort of rational response? Indeed, what a concept of social pathology reveals is that, despite scientific advancement and technological development, irrationality and unreason remain a significant aspect of our contemporary social world. How do we explain this? This is, for all intents and purposes, the fundamental question.

For Honneth, it should be noted at the outset, diagnosing social pathology is perceived as almost an essential task of CT. His books, *Pathologies of Reason: On the Legacy of Critical Theory* (2009) and *Freedom’s Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life* (2014) are two particular points of focus in the discussion that follows. The former being most revealing in this regard, as Honneth displays a particular underlying sensitivity towards how the orbit of critical social theory centres on the notion of social pathology. Thus, the concept of social pathology, and the assumptions that come with it, is seen as a vital part not only of the legacy of CT but of its future as well. I agree with Honneth on this point, and would add that, if the notion of social pathology is a “distinctive critical resource of Frankfurt School Critical Theory” (Freyenhagen 2015, p. 131), impliedly, it is the persistence of needless social suffering which, empirically and philosophically, grounds the normative truth context for critical social theory moving forward (Schick 2014). As Honneth notes,

moreover, it is the essentially unique place of CT moving forward to perform fundamental social diagnosis and strategize how to alleviate “social evils” (Honneth 2009, p. 140). Honneth writes:

Critical Theory presupposes that this subjectively experienced or objectively attributable suffering among the members of society must lead to that same desire for healing and liberation from social evils that the analyst must impute to his or her patients. Moreover, in each case, the interest in one’s own recovery is supposed to be documented by the readiness to reactivate, against any resistance, those rational powers the individual or social pathology has deformed. All thinkers belonging to the inner circle of Critical Theory expect in their addressees a latent interest in rational explanation or interpretation, since only winning back an integral rationality can satisfy the desire for a liberation from suffering. It is this risky assumption that permits a different connection of theory to practice than the Marxist tradition provides. The critical theorists share with their audience neither a space of common objectives nor one of political projects but, rather, a space of potentially common reasons that holds the pathological present open to the possibility of transformation through rational insight. (Honneth 2009, p. 40)

I think what is incredibly important to acknowledge is here how, in my opinion, the most progressive and advanced reading of the Frankfurt School is one not limited in application to a critique of capitalism. Frankfurt School CT is best understood, as I see it, as a critique of domination *writ large*. This point will be returned to and elaborated on a number of times moving forward. Meanwhile, I have great respect for Honneth’s arguments in *Pathologies of Reason*. There are moments within this text that seem to bring a critique of domination into full colour. In turn, his contribution to a theory of social pathology is important, exemplified for instance by Honneth’s revisiting of Adorno’s social theory, particularly his reading of Adorno’s study of the pathogenesis of the bourgeois subject, in which Honneth asserts a reading of Adorno in terms of a “contribution to a “physiognomy” of social reality” (p. 55; also see pp. 62–65).

Within this discussion by Honneth, we read once more, as Kate Schick (2014) wonderfully illustrates, how in “reified society”—that is, the “frozen life conditions established by capitalism” (Honneth 2009, p. 55)—suffering, as a general experience and as “it is “transcendentally” presupposed everywhere” via the experienced “loss” of one’s “distorted self-realization and happiness through the restriction of their rational capacities” (p. 68), holds the key to unlocking the grip of a hardened, deformed social world.

To repeat Adorno's line once more: "The need to let suffering speak is a condition of all truth. For suffering is objectivity that weighs upon the subject" (Adorno 1992, pp. 17–18).

"Adorno owes the thesis that every restriction on reason, every loss of our rational potentials, implies psychic suffering", writes Honneth, "to Freud's implicit anthropology" (p. 68). At the heart of this thesis is not only an account of the "physiognomy of the capitalist form of life" (pp. 54–56). It is the idea that, owed to Lukács (p. 55), "the social spread of commodity exchange had led to a deformation of human practice because it forced subjects to take an objectifying attitude not only toward nature but also toward themselves and their fellow human beings".

To add to this by offering a practical example, one of the arguments we read in Adorno's analysis of the "physiognomy" of capitalist life particularly concerns coercive economic organization and the alienation of labour. Taking directly from Marx's theory of alienation, he saw like Marx that the capitalist organization of labour disfigures human beings.⁶ One can draw on countless practical illustrations, whether it is the vexed financial worker cited in Chap. 1 or the hardened, downtrodden and subdued coal miner. The taxing, stressful, exploitative, repressive effects neoliberal capitalism's intensifying labour has on the human body can be witnessed every day on the streets of the typical western city. Inasmuch as we can draw differentiation between necessary and socially surplus labour, the issue is that, rather than working ever closer towards emancipating and transcending the need for the toil of human labour—such as in the example of automation, which would allow for people to focus their individual labour according to their own limits, interests, projects and needs—people are becoming increasingly reduced to being instruments or appendages of capital. Some theories claim this is for the purpose of control. But the main point here is that, within the capitalist vision of life, the individual is exploited, more so today through indirect forms of domination via structures of economic coercion (this will be elaborated in time), and part of this exploitation process concerns estrangement with one's own labour. The psychological not to mention developmental consequences of this reality are vast, as we have begun to learn.

Adorno, as with others, is right to link wider notions of disfigurement and deformation with socioeconomic-cultural state of affairs. It is on the basis of this general thesis which propels Lambert Zuidervaart (2007) to note in his book *Social Philosophy after Adorno* that, for Adorno, any possibility for reconciliation would imply the overthrowing of the "life

denying principle of modern society”. That principle is generally reduced to what is called the principle of universal exchange. This is a specifically oriented term—largely the product of jargon—which will mean little to the unaware reader. But we can translate it more practically. As I write in a previous paper, for instance: for Adorno, the principle of “universal exchange” is a hardened, *objectifying attitude* inasmuch as it is also linked to an abstract analytic structure—a distorted form of reason that is often referenced in CT as “instrumental reason”, which isn’t necessarily the same as instrumental rationality that is a natural product of human cognition. That is, this distorted form of rationality represents the internal logic of the system of capital—human reason becomes distorted as it pulled into being subservient to the rule of capital, wherein everything, all phenomena, tend to get reduced to the status of mere “object” which can therefore be manipulated, controlled, exploited or dominated (Smith 2015a).

This “life denying principle” is, in a very important way, connected to the pathology of reason, or what “signifies the deformation of human reason” (Honneth 2009, p. 61). In fact, Adorno sees “the reification of commodity exchange as the cause of a deformation of reason” (p. 61). He does so in the sense that he locates how, at the heart of the matter, commodity exchange—that is, the central principle of exchange within modern capitalist society—coincides with, or necessarily results in, the colonization of the ego (Sherman 2007, p. 213). Thus, as Honneth correctly summarizes: “Adorno relies on Freud’s psychoanalysis to show that in psychic suffering and impulsive reactions there constantly lies a dormant interest in an unrestricted capacity for reason, the realization of which would be a humane form of life” (Honneth 2009, p. 56).

Reserving further consideration of these points until later, Honneth’s account so far seems accurate. Barring one or two minor complaints, his reading of Adorno up to this point is agreeable. When Honneth describes, through Adorno, “the manifestation of a deformation of our original capacity for reason” (p. 63), it is as though the work of Adorno himself is emerging through the pages. “Adorno’s analysis of capitalism is”, I would say as well, “in its bases and its execution a depth hermeneutic of a pathology of human reason” (p. 63). Adorno’s approach reveals, as we will later see, a “model of behaviour represented by action oriented purely toward exchange value”, which makes “comprehensible the extent to which the capitalist way of life has driven our rational capacities toward merely instrumental, egocentric application” (p. 63).

The issue with Honneth is not his scholarship. It is where he takes it or where he goes with it after *Pathologies of Reason*, which, Fabian Freyenhagen (2015) argues, is when things become problematic.

2.6.1 (i) *Pathologies of Reason*

In *Pathologies of Reason*, Honneth (2009) opens the volume on “The Irreducibility of Progress: Kant’s Account of the Relationship Between Morality and Reason”, which then leads into a discussion on “A Social Pathology of Reason: On the Intellectual Legacy of Critical Theory”. In the latter, Honneth addresses conflicts with regard to reason, its actualisation, and the understanding of it as a learning process. He offers a critique of Habermas in this regard, particularly Habermas’ “systematic breakdown of the various learning processes, an analysis he grounds on the variety of ways in which human beings relate to the world through their linguistic practice” (Honneth 2009, p. 32). Honneth writes, moreover, that Habermas expects “human rational potential to develop along at least two paths: one directed toward an increase in knowledge of the objective world; the other toward a more just solution to interactive conflicts” (p. 32). The issue, however, is that:

the gain in differentiation comes at the cost of no longer being able to consider historical growth in rationality together with those social conflicts which, following Weber’s sociology of domination, were more clearly before the eyes of early Critical Theory. In Habermas’ work, we find a gulf between the dimension that, for instance, Bourdieu investigated in the cultural formation of monopolies, and rational learning processes—a gulf whose presence is fundamentally inconsistent with the original concerns of the critical tradition. (p. 32)

For Honneth, “Critical Theory requires a post-Idealist version of the thesis that Hegel outlined in his conception of the actualization of reason” (p. 32). This is a fairly accurate point, and one may even recall Adorno and Marcuse’s criticism of Fromm as touched on earlier in this chapter. The implications of this is a direct challenge towards Habermas’ conception of rationality. Honneth writes:

In contrast to the Habermasian approach, which carries out such a differentiation on the basis of the structural particularities of human language, there may be a superior conception that ties the aspects of social rationaliza-

tion (in an internal realist sense) more closely to the ability of *socially established values to disclose problems*. In that case, invariant values of linguistic communication would not reveal the direction in which the rationalization of social knowledge is to proceed. Rather, the historically produced values present in social spheres of meaning would play this role. (pp. 32–33; emphasis added)

The reason it is valuable to recount these considerations by Honneth is because, ultimately, in considering the “pathology of reason”, he argues that “the concept of social rationality must [...] take on an ever-wider and more differentiated meaning”, not least because the need to incorporate “foreign and new, non-European, points of view” (p. 33). This is fairly apt and, generally, Honneth is on point when he concludes that we need, “to be able to take into account the multifaceted nature of learning processes” (p. 33). In drawing out his own account of CT, “from Horkheimer to Habermas”, he concludes:

According to that tradition, the process of social rationalization through the social structure that is unique to capitalism has become interrupted and distorted in a way that makes pathologies that accompany the loss of a rational universal unavoidable. One finds the key to this thesis [...] in a concept of capitalism energized by a theory of rationality. (p. 33)

Saving this last point until an early discussion in the next chapter on the dialectic of enlightenment, dominant and instrumental reason, for Honneth it seems quite clear that he understands how “the institutional reality of modern capitalism” represents “an organizational form of society that is structurally tied to a certain, limited state of rationality” (p. 33). In a number of previous papers, including a recent article on grounding normativity, I elaborated on this limited state of rationality in some detail (Smith 2015a, e; Smith and De Graaff 2016). In any case, two important points are worth noting. In anticipating the arguments to be made in Chap. 3, it should be highlighted that, in seeking to “reconcile Habermas’ advance with ‘the original concerns of the critical tradition’”, writes David Owen (2014), Honneth “now recognizes the need for CT to include a genealogical dimension (a point already present in Adorno)”. Honneth, in turn I agree with, also seeks to take, as Owen summarizes, “a more Hegelian approach”, and this approach “leads Honneth to take the task of social philosophy as a distinctive enterprise concerned with pathologies of reason in a more psychoanalytic direction than Habermas’ later work

exhibits". This is especially evident in later essays in *Pathologies of Reason*, not least Honneth's discussion on Freud. Thus, psychoanalysis is to return once more into the fold and be given a renewed place in CT.

As Barret Weber (2009) comments, Honneth "contends that CT ground itself not in any necessary historical position or even speculative destiny for the proletariat but, rather, in a wide array of historically situated critiques that render the diagnosis of social pathology (in all of its varying forms) to be important to alleviate 'social evils'". Inasmuch as I see CT as an inclusive project which, in its advanced form, seeks to draw on numerous sources across disciplines and works towards what Lambert Zuidervaat recently termed "differential transformation" across the whole of society, a number of Honneth's arguments appear both timely and fitting. Honneth's book *Pathologies of Reason* contributes in several important ways to the ongoing project to critically retrieve, advance and progress Frankfurt School CT.⁷

If the main argument of *Pathologies of Reason* pertains to the "deficit in social rationality", Weber (2009) summarizes quite concisely that: "This form of critique, [Honneth] argues, produces symptoms, and the debt to Freud is noted periodically." Honneth argues, moreover, "that CT take the difficult step of outlining sociological explanations for the precise practical roots of defective symptoms in history, apathy, capitalism, positivism, fetishism, reification, and other recognizable objects of critique in the history of CT" (Weber 2009). For Honneth, CT moving forward must take as its central focus the complex task of analysing these symptoms, locating their roots in practical reality, offering detailed, systematic and comprehensive sociological explanation. Such explanation must be, in my own words, foundational in scope, truly drilling to the very core of the particular issue whilst referring back to the broader universal, global structural-systemic context: *capitalism*. This is not because, as we will discuss later, that social pathology begins and ends with capitalism. Rather, the reality is that global neoliberal capitalism is the definitive context in which contemporary social life is currently situated historically. A new system could emerge, which may be more or less pathological. Such represents the precise historical situatedness demanded of CT (Sherman 2007, p. 239). Honneth (2009, pp. 257–258), it would seem, understands this point quite well.

What's most interesting is that, following his critique of Habermas (as noted above), Honneth offers an interesting view on theories pertaining to the "consciousness of the proletariat". He writes, for example:

Critical theorists, not unlike Lukács [...], perceive capitalism as a social form of organization in which practices and ways of thinking prevail that prevent the social utilization of a rationality already made possible by history. At the same time, this historical obstruction presents a moral or ethical challenge because it precludes the possibility of orientating oneself in terms of a rational universe, the impetus to which could only come from a fully realized rationality. Whether the concept of capitalism, grounded in a theory of rationality and underlying the interpretation of history outlined here, can once again be recovered today is certainly an open question. (Honneth 2009, p. 35)

Why is it an open question? According to Honneth, the answer is the result of a few different conclusions. First, “The possibilities for organizing the activity of a capitalist economy seem too multifarious, as well as too mixed up in other non-rationally purposive patterns of social activity” (p. 35). Second, and for the reasons stated above, “to reduce the attitudes of the actors involved to a single pattern of instrumental rationality” (p. 35) is viewed as problematic. Third, “Newer studies suggest [...] that, in capitalist societies, those attitudes or orientations most rewarded with social success are those whose fixation on individual advantages demands merely strategic associations with oneself and other subjects” (pp. 35–36). Thus, if “we cannot exclude the possibility of still interpreting capitalism as the institutional result of a cultural lifestyle or of a product of social imagination in which a certain type of restricted, “reifying” rationality is the dominant practice”, how we approach the conflicts in terms of the complexity of our modern social reality can still be reconciled (p. 36). In fact, Honneth claims, they are already within “Critical Theory” which “transcend[s]” these points. He writes, moreover:

Its central representatives share not only the formal scheme of diagnosing capitalism as a set of social relations of blocked or distorted rationality but also the idea of the proper method of therapy. The forces that contribute to the overcoming of the social pathology are supposed to stem from precisely that reason whose actualization is impeded by the form of organization present in capitalist society. [...] It is from [Freud’s] psychoanalytic theory that Critical Theory takes the thought that social pathologies must always express themselves in a type of suffering that keeps alive the interest in the emancipatory power of reason. (p. 36)

From this passage, we begin to see how close Honneth comes to the position we’ve already begun to mark in this book. With that said, the

biggest issue I have with Honneth's account, which relates back to this book's core thesis, concerns how "reason" as a notion remains relatively abstract. It seems to me that, in *Pathologies of Reason*, Honneth continues to evidence the long-standing position that if only we win back an integral rationality, this would be the answer to social pathology. It is possible I am overstating things a bit. But if this reading is correct, Honneth's overall framework is nowhere near progressive or advanced enough, and remains stuck in what I would consider an outdated view—a sort of neo-rationalism, which is based on the assumption of a privileging reason as a one-sided or one-dimensional solution to a far more complex problem. In this sense, if I am correct in my assessment, a friendly, critical retrieval of Honneth would push debates forward by suggesting that: yes, "reason" needs winning back, but so does neurological functioning as well as physical, organic, psychic, communication, solidarity and so on. All of these exist in interrelation (Smith 2015c; De Graaff 2016). One cannot necessarily be privileged over the other, or else we once again run the risk of a one-sided view that goes against a more reconciled notion of "experiential coherence" (Smith 2015c). Instead, as we will see later, it is only through recognizing a more *integral view of the human subject*—as informed through a cross-disciplinary theory of human subjectivity—and through the winning back of said individual subject, where might we finally rejuvenate human reason and come to understand its full potential. Thus, I am in complete agreement with Honneth on the centrality of the status of "reason" and the deficit of rationality as a fundamentally core issue. As I have stated, it is this issue that represents one of the primary inspirations behind this book. But his framework is a bit too limited.

Moving forward, as Freyenhagen points out in his article *Honneth on Social Pathologies: A Critique*, "Honneth does not just set out the idea of social pathology, but ascribes a particular version of it to Frankfurt School Critical Theory as constitutive of its approach" (Freyenhagen 2015, p. 134). Although it is debatable whether social pathology is a red thread that unites all thinkers of the Frankfurt School, particularly if we follow Honneth's claims that such a notion is tied up with an organicist conception of society (Freyenhagen 2015, p. 136), I tend to think that its central importance is commonly shared. But the real issue is not so much this debate, it is the eventual outcome of Honneth's account and Freyenhagen's particular interventions, which reveal how a more thorough and complete notion of pathology might be framed.

2.6.2 (ii) Freyenhagen's Critique

Freyenhagen (2015) captures very sharply some of the core issues with Honneth's account of pathology, as he traces the developments of Honneth's arguments dating from a 1994 paper titled "Pathologies of the Social" to more recent works, such as *in Freedom's Right*. After brief consideration of *Pathologies of Reason*, Freyenhagen comments for instance on the way in which Honneth begins with an intriguing, if not at times conflicted, account (pp. 131–134). He then reflects how, in moving to consider more recent articles, "Some of the same points reappear from the first paper—such as the ethical dimension of social pathologies, in contrast to the dominant liberal concern with moral categories like justice—but Honneth presents three fundamental specifications as constitutive and distinctive of Critical Theory's use of the idea of social pathologies" (Freyenhagen 2015, p. 134).

On three fundamental fronts, Freyenhagen (2015, pp. 134–135) summarizes Honneth's attempts to advance: (1) "Following Hegel, the idea is that a social pathology is given whenever a society falls short of the 'objectively' already possible rationality." [...] Thus, both the notion of social pathology and normality are tied here to rationality and its historical unfolding". (2) In considering the deformation of rationality, we learn, to quote Freyenhagen, there is "one specific cause": namely, capitalism (p. 135). Here we understand, "a narrowing of perception implies a narrowing of rationality—to instrumental rationality in the service of self-interest—and leads to a variety of social ills (not least the exploitative, alienating relations of capitalism). [...] While Honneth does not explicitly say so, the social pathologies that capitalism causes reveal it to have structural deficits, such that—at least for the first generation of Critical Theory—the only cure is to rid us of capitalism" (p. 135). And, finally, (3) how in Honneth's theory of social pathology, Freud's influence shines through: "(a) deficits in rationality always find expression, however indirectly, in experiences of suffering; and (b) this suffering motivates, and can be alleviated only by, the search for the very aspects of rationality whose suppression led to the suffering in the first place" (p. 135).

From here, after tracing through Honneth's positions as they more or less developed, Freyenhagen then turns to Honneth's most recent work, *Freedom's Right* (published after *Pathologies of Reason*). It is this most recent contribution to the notion of social pathology that Freyenhagen spends most of his time dissecting. After working through Honneth's

arguments, Freyenhagen reaches the following conclusion: what Honneth is actually doing, particularly in proceeding from *Pathologies of Reason*, is moving more and more away from capitalism as a focus. As Freyenhagen argues: in seeking to further his account of CT and social pathologies of reason, Honneth “talks about this idea in a way that generalizes away from capitalism as a cause to such pathologies being due to the ‘structural organization of societies’” (Freyenhagen 2015, p. 136).

What Freyenhagen reveals in his critique of Honneth is thus quite interesting, and certainly relevant to this book. In *Freedom’s Right*, the notion of justice plays an incredibly important role for Honneth, particularly as Honneth attempts to challenge the increasingly hegemonic liberal conception of justice. Freyenhagen writes, furthermore: “Honneth describes juridification as a consequence of the normative structure of legal freedom—its own tendency to become one-sided. The decoupling from capitalism as (direct) cause of social pathology happens already in Habermas—for him, juridification is a social pathology that can arise from the structural organization of societies, but it is not necessarily caused by capitalism” (Freyenhagen 2015, p. 135).

The main issue I have with Freyenhagen’s account is how, in seeking to correct Honneth’s “generalizing away from capitalism”, he tends to insert too much of a one-dimensional conception of social pathology. To put it another way: on the one hand, I agree that Honneth seems to eventually move further and further away from a critique of capitalism. On the other hand, in compensating for this mistake, Freyenhagen proposes too much of a limited understanding of pathology as predicated almost entirely on the capitalist social world. The claim becomes too much the reverse, namely that an overcoming of capitalism would spell the end of social pathology. This is inaccurate, and does not reflect the broader research.

Social pathologies—much like the pathology of societies—are extremely diverse and broad in scope. It is inaccurate—or, at least my research suggests it is inaccurate—to claim that all social pathology is necessarily tied to capitalist forces of production and its general mode of highly repressed, alienated, instrumental social relations. Do the institutional and structural forces of capitalism produces, deepen or intensify social pathology? It appears incredibly clear that this is the case. And to suggest that all pathology is not tied to capitalism, this should not be misinterpreted as assuming the position of Axel Honneth (1996, 2013) in his increasing distance from a critique of capitalism as a central source of contemporary forms of social pathology (Freyenhagen 2015).

The fact of the matter is that I hope to show why a far more nuanced and complex analysis is required. I suggest, in sum, that a more up to date and more broadly informed perspective—having considered countless research and data across the whole of psychology and within a number of other fields, including anthropology—indicates that all societies, including those which were not necessarily capitalist in the strict sense of the term, were more or less pathological. It may also exist, whether in similar or altogether different forms, within a social universe built on stable, anti-capitalist structures (Fiumara 2015). To add to this, the argument in the advance of this book is that how any possible anti-capitalist universe is defined, is predicated on the greater or lesser degrees of pathology. I believe that a wider body of research outside the limits of established views in CT suggests that there may also be some form of social pathology, inasmuch that society is intimately linked to the subject, and individual pathology is to greater or lesser degrees a constant human reality. The proper framing is thus, in transcending capitalism, which is deeply pathological and which intensifies individual pathologies, we might organize more healthy and reconciled social conditions that, in turn, could lead to the lessening of social and individual pathology.

Second, what a radical concept of pathology requires is a broader framework for understanding broader forms of domination, exploitation and control which may not be entirely tied to the capitalist universe. To absolutely conflate all social pathology with capitalism fails to account with actual psychological and emotional pathologies which are not necessarily based on or rooted in one or any broader societal pathology. What is required is a far more nuanced analysis, one which can support normative critique of pathological norms in capitalist society while also maintaining a negative dialectical critique of the social world and its potential transformative alterations, both in terms of existing institutions and structures and in terms of internal causes of pathology across the history of human society (Smith 2015a). Such an approach appears, to me, to be more grounded.

My proposal, therefore, is one that does not abandon a critique of “the process of a deformation of rationality” which, in the tradition of CT, has one specific cause: capitalism (Freysen 2015, p. 135). On the other hand, the following list of possible pathologies can have one or any number of roots: substance abuse, violence, abuses of women and chil-

dren, crime, terrorism, corruption, criminality, discrimination, isolation, stigmatization and human rights violations.⁸ Another phenomenon cited by the International Consortium for Mental Health Policy and Services concerns, for example, violence against women:

Violence against women is a public health concern in all countries. An estimated 20% to 50% of women have suffered domestic violence. Surveys in many countries reveal that 10% to 15% of women report that they are forced to have sex with their intimate partner. The high prevalence of sexual violence to which women of all ages are exposed, with the consequent high rate of post-traumatic stress disorder, explains why women are most affected by this disorder. (WHO Fifty-Fourth World Health Assembly, Provisional agenda item 10, A54/DIV/4, 10 April 2001)

Indeed, violence against women—oppression and patriarchy—has a clear capitalist dimension today (Blank 2014; Brown 2012; Gordon 1996). But violence against women, patriarchy, also existed in pre-capitalist societies (Dermineur 2009; Hurst 2015; Kaser 2008; Murray 2005). No doubt that patriarchy throughout the world today is necessarily linked with a critique of capitalism, thus becoming the central focus of contemporary social criticism, patriarchy is in no way capitalist dependent. Domination, too, existed in pre-capitalist societies, as did discrimination, abuse and other violations, as revealed by study after study of historic societies. It is important to maintain this balance of perspective, without losing sight on the crucial reason why capitalism is the central focus of social critique today.

To offer one other very brief example, which harks back to earlier calls for an alternative integrative philosophy of psychology and CT of social pathology: if we can determine that mental health issues, such as depression, are not solely rooted in the social, what this suggests is that negative (pathological) society is not by any means the sole cause of mental affliction. On the same point, but from another angle, just it was argued that Freud's instinct theory can only really be seen as one dimension of human reality, so, too, is social context or even genetics. Consider, for example, a recent scientific expedition into the DNA of more than 450,000 people (Regalado 2016). This, the largest depression study carried out to date, has moved our understanding ever closer to locating sources of ill mental health on a genetic level, with potentially 15 regions of human genome linked to a higher risk of struggling with

serious depression. There has long been a suspicion of biological and genetic links to depression, and now we're beginning to see evidence of this empirically. Yet, at no point do these findings undermines the social links as well. Even in cases where depression is primarily genetic—the genetic dimension made depression higher risk for that individual—to what extent is that risk intensified or nullified also by social conditions? In the same way that genetics isn't the sole cause of depression, same too should be said about the social. The main issue is that sociohistorical-cultural circumstance—that is, social, economic, political and cultural conditions—plays such a significant role in fostering mental imbalance. This includes not only the social production of pathology but also the intensifying or strengthening of genetic, biological, or previous personal pathological tendencies, realities and struggles. Thus, again, the clearest insight into objective reality requires multidimensional, integral and methodologically innovative approach.

To conclude, the point is that instead of “generalizing away from capitalism” as Honneth does (Freyenhagen 2015, p. 135), we should aim to maintain normative critique of social pathologies in relation to capitalism, including pathologies of reason (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002; Honneth 2009)—and of cognition—while also acknowledging pathologies in relation to a more broadly informed analysis of the “structural organization of societies” (Honneth 2014; cited also by Freyenhagen 2015, p. 135) and of personal pathologies.

To put it differently, I think a more accurate reflection of reality is a theory which undertakes a sort of tripartite analysis: a significant portion of deeply concerning pathologies are related to capitalist society, but pathology can and does also exist outside of capitalist social contexts and, in turn, mustn't always be conflated with the issue of emotional pathology.

Thus my argument is that in the present analysis, we must ensure that we also maintain focus on the bigger historical picture which, today, certainly entails the overcoming of capitalist society and working towards a more just, actually democratic and egalitarian society while also maintaining an equally radical and progressive *critical philosophy of history*. This approach, to put it yet another way, not only allows us to identify and emphasize how capitalism is part of the core problem today, we can also position a critique of capitalism historically and, too, as part of a broader philosophy of history which recognizes pathology in all of its particular and historically contingent forms.

2.7 TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTION OF SOCIAL PATHOLOGY: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL, INTEGRAL, NORMATIVE APPROACH

Despite my minor complaints with regard to Freyenhagen's interventions, my own position aligns in multiple ways with his own. For example, let us consider a particularly illuminating passage from his critique of Honneth regarding "normative individualism", which, seemingly also inspired by Adorno, concerns how:

Society can only be ill if, in some broad sense, individuals within it (or affected by it) are ill (in the broad sense that their well-being and/or self-realization is detrimentally affected). This need not mean that the ill that befalls society is exactly the same as that that befalls individuals. It need also not mean that the individuals realize that they are ill because society is ill, or even that they realize that they are ill at all. It even need not mean that the social processes in question have to negatively affect the individuals directly involved in carrying these processes out. But it does mean that if, for example, consumerism is a problem because it leads to disinterest in common affairs, this must involve, however indirectly, that consumerism is bad for individual human beings—not just so that we can find out that society is ill, but as part of what it is for society to be ill. (Freyenhagen 2015, p. 146)

One can further substantiate this analysis when considering the hundreds, if not thousands of examples—practical, clinical or otherwise—of the deep relation between social reproduction, social pathology and the subject. Making broad and deep connections within the whole of psychology provides us with important insights regarding the actual scope of such practical political concerns as the alternation of general social coordinates on behalf of a more just, egalitarian and enlightened view of social organization. Clinically speaking: the instrumentalized psychological and cognitive paradigm widely considered to characterize contemporary capitalist life and experience is pathological. The deepest, most fundamental level of this pathology, I argue, concerns a real existential fear and real psychological trauma (to varying degrees within the individual), and thus there is clear indication of how the social also becomes entwined with individual pathology. Moreover, not only is it a significant systemic trend within western capitalist society to manufacture fear, to exploit fear, as a number of detailed studies show; the production of a repressed, highly traumatized subject is also a fundamentally significant trend that we can discern and

systematically analyse in relation to the forces, structurally and institutionally as well as cognitively, emotionally and psychologically, which creates the loop of social reproduction.

Furthermore, it will become all the more clear in both broadly philosophical and practical psychological terms that the entire capitalist vision of life is predicated to a large degree today on a social pathological cycle. This cycle is certainly existentially driven to a certain extent. It is also ideologically maintained and, even more practically, based on significant—or “surplus”—repression and trauma, the latter affecting the whole human being (emotionally, psychologically, bodily, cognitively, existentially etc.).

However, to say that the broader social pathological cycle is also ideological—we will learn in Chap. 3 that this is to mean that social pathology becomes ideology in practice. In other words, it begins to operate within the realm of ideology. On this understanding, how we define ideology consists of an actual vision of life—the capitalist vision of life—which constitutes a significant portion of one’s orientation with the world, with one’s *self* and other people.

Ideology critique, as sometimes considered in CT, risks reification and abstraction if it is not grounded in practical concerns, antagonistic experiences and subject-related developments in the course of daily experience. The individual terrified to quit their job to pursue their life’s passion, even if they openly recognize that their job is actually killing them, is not an ideological problem. It is a problem, firstly, of deeply critical humanist concern within the scope of a dominating, exploitative and controlling social environment. On the other hand, the individual who openly embraces the dominant, exploitative and controlling psychology and social-systematic practice of contemporary life, there is a real element of ideology here. However, this ideology—this unquestionable faith in the system and values of capitalism—which we also frequently observe today, is rooted in a broader social pathology. That is to say that the fear of freedom, of the possibility of “otherwise” (Fromm 2001; Smith 2015c) and the opposite of a complete embrace of the *status quo* are equally pathological in their own way. They are, at the root, tied together. What is also common about these two poles on the spectrum of psychological experience is the presence of existential threat, fear and anguish, as existentially and social manufactured.

Additionally, the argument I have started to prepare suggests that, as we previously discussed, an analysis of social pathology concerns the opposite of adjustment and maladjustment. It seeks to challenge the

very socioeconomic-cultural context in which these designations serve as an instrument. Rather than seeing the alleviation of social pathology as important for the maintenance of social health as an instrument of preserving the status quo—considering, moreover, that the very concept and institutional view of “social health” has been appropriated to maintain the unjust practice of the capitalist social system—a critical assessment of social pathology is tantamount to a critically retrieved notion of health (Alderson 1998; Nathenson 2010; Scambler 2002; Shaw and Stahl 2011; Unger et al. 2011; Vandenburg 2004). In the process, a radical concept of social pathology intersects with ideology critique insofar that it must challenge proposals of reformist orientation as well as prescriptive measures that reproduce the status quo. One can look at this dialectically in terms of the use of *immanent critique* on behalf of the need to *transcend* current social-systemic conditions.

2.7.1 (i) *From Fromm, Beyond and Back Again*

In the remainder of this book and the theory of social pathology that will follow, we will work towards perhaps the most important elements of my thesis: an alternative philosophy of psychology and the construction of a framework for how we might begin to develop a new transformative culture of healing and therapy. What we will learn along the way is that by “social pathology”, the clearest and most accurate meaning in the most simple and fundamental sense, refers to the relation between social systems and structures—such as those in contemporary neoliberal capitalist society—and the development, actions and behaviours of the subject as well as the general common issues of unhealthy psychic and emotional life.

Such a concept of social pathology not only is social, political, economic and cultural, but also refers to a critique of the dominant cognitive paradigm and other important issues, such as a critical analysis of the violent and dominant epistemology of everyday life (Titchiner 2017). In this sense, Honneth is not too far off in his earlier works, *Pathologies of the Social* and *Pathologies of Reason*, when he talks of self-realization in relation to a more reconciled social life. It is a definition of social pathology which is both supported by systematic research within and across psychology and theorized, in broader social philosophical terms, by the likes of Theodor Adorno in his analysis of the genesis of the bourgeois subject as historically related to the unfolding of capitalism’s institutions and structures. However, while Adorno’s CT, which will be a focus in the next

chapter, certainly supports the concept of social pathology that I have been working towards so far and will more directly conceptualize moving forward, it is Fromm who offers the most systematic analysis. As Collin Harris (2010) writes:

The many glaring ills of contemporary Western society have come into sharp focus in the socio-political and philosophical thought of the past two centuries. The cultural pathologies of modern Western society abound, embedded in every dimension of our lives, manifesting themselves in various forms pathological behavior. Within conventional psychological and psychoanalytic frameworks, such matters are often (perhaps mistakenly) treated as essentially individual phenomena. Poor mental health in society is a matter of individual maladjustment. In response to this hopelessly reductionist approach, Erich Fromm proposed the much more radical notion of a fundamental “unadjustment of the culture itself.” Perhaps conceiving of social pathology as an individual deviation from an otherwise healthy and well functioning whole is a false start. It is certainly within the realm of possibility that modern Western society is haunted by what Fromm called a “pathology of normalcy”—when the “normal” functioning of society is itself a disturbing pattern of collective pathology.

As we touched on earlier, despite his project’s shortcomings, Fromm’s analysis represents a significant milestone in how we should understand social pathology. His notion of a “pathology of normalcy” is particularly apt.

In a culture in which the individual is enmeshed in a myriad of complex social structures, systems, and institutions wielding enormous force and influence over daily life, it is appropriate to at least critically address whether the social order itself is in fact sane. The general theme of the following analysis is that Western society is indeed trapped in this pathology of normalcy, rooted in what are fundamentally anti-human properties of capitalist social relations and economic and cultural institutions. It is both the concrete conditions of these arrangements and the values that underlie them that will shed light on the psychological state of contemporary Western society. (Harris 2010)

Contrary to Honneth, whose overall project has become increasingly reformist and theoretically questionable (Freyenhagen 2015), and whose distinction between social pathologies and misdevelopments coincides with a less than adequate perspective of pathologies (Freyenhagen 2015) that differs from “social accumulation of individual pathologies or psychological disorders” (Honneth 2014; also quoted in Freyenhagen 2015),

I would like to argue towards a different conceptualization. This alternative conceptualization is, once again, informed by an extensive cross-disciplinary and systematic research programme (Barnes 1939; Lemert 1951; Kelman 1958; Wood et al. 1994; Braun 1995; Gilbert, Fiske and Lindzey 1998; Goode and Maskovsky 2001; O'Connor 2001; William 2001; Freedheim and Weiner 2003; Büchs 2007; McLeod 2007a, b; Fuchs, T., and Schlimme, J., 2009; Fromm 1955, 1960, 1964, 1994, 2010; Aronson et al. 2010; Freyenhagen 2015). It also intersects with Freyenhagen's (2015) analysis, where he argues that what is "calling out" today is, in fact, a radical alternative conceptualization than that which is proposed by Honneth and Christopher F. Zurn. Whether my own intervention and conceptualization throughout this work—introduced in part one and developed further in part two—is similar to Freyenhagen's view is a question currently without an answer.

With that said, Freyenhagen offers some indication of direction, when he writes that "an alternative proposal of how to do [conceive of pathology] is necessary", particularly along the lines of a theory "that leaves space for radical social critique and that conceptualizes them in terms of detriments to individual well-being that is *socially caused*" (Freyenhagen 2015, p. 151). For Honneth, on the other hand, he "seems to want to go further: for him, social pathologies are not socially caused individual ills, but social ills that may or may not be also appear as individual ills" (p. 145).

In pressing on in this work, Freyenhagen's position as well as that of Honneth will come close. A conceptualization that recognizes, in a very deep way, socially caused detriments to human well-being, will be offered and substantiated. In the process, Adorno will serve as an important social philosophical basis for such deeper conceptualization of social pathology, as well as Fromm. In combining the two—not to leave out Marcuse or Horkheimer—the aim shall become clear: to "approach social pathologies less as a unified set of phenomena with the same necessary and sufficient conditions than as a set of related and partly overlapping phenomena". Additionally, and to further affirm Freyenhagen's direction of thought, this book has intended and will continue to: "carry out a research programme of a constellation of phenomena that mainstream liberal theory either cannot capture at all or only inadequately—a programme that, at the same time, does not domesticate social critique or eschew normative individualism" (Freyenhagen 2015).

In combination of both of these theoretical points, I believe that my position advances Freyenhagen's (2015) critical intervention. Indeed, as

I shall illustrate in Chap. 3, we need to recognize the relation between social pathology and cycles of domination and violence produced and reproduced in and beyond capitalist societies. Such a view of social pathology does not only concern psychological or emotional life. Grounded in CT—in a broader social philosophical perspective—an analysis of social pathology also concerns cultural practices and interpersonal relationships; it concerns the whole human being, from epistemology and transforming the standard mode of cognition (Smith 2015c) to a theory of non-violent communication (Gates et al. 2000; Rosenberg 2004; Sears 2010; Larsson 2011; Bowers 2012).

One step further, what I am speaking of here is the transformation of the whole of life and how we relate with one another, ourselves and the world (Smith 2015c). A significant part of the sociohistorical-culture process of emancipatory transition is understanding the legacy and depth of social pathology, as revealing for instance in the *dialectic of enlightenment*.

The established idea, moreover, which almost broaches the realm of ideology—that revolutionary societal transformation simply starts with class and ends with its abolishment—is naive. And here I think Honneth (2009) is absolutely correct, when, as Weber (2009) summarizes, how:

Contrary to various forms of determinism contained even in Left-Hegelianism—a tradition he otherwise wishes to preserve as an irreducible foundation of CT—Honneth argues that ‘the working class does not automatically develop a revolutionary readiness to convert the critical content of theory into society-changing practice as a result of the consummation of the mechanized division of labour’ (37). He cites Eric Fromm’s *The Working Class in Weimar Germany: A Psychological and Sociological Study* (Cambridge, 1984) as an example of the empirical as opposed to speculative aspirations of some important parts of CT. Honneth then moves on to one of his most important arguments: he contends that CT ground itself not in any necessary historical position or even speculative destiny for the proletariat but, rather, in a wide array of historically situated critiques [...]. But he opposes the view that a ‘submerged rational capacity’ contained in the premises of CT will necessarily reveal itself out of responses to social injustice(s). To the contrary, the author contends that a critical consciousness has to be arduously developed by reflecting on the history, theory, and sociological context of injustice and defective rationality. This is to be done without necessarily reifying the results of that study in the form of anew dogma or idealism. (Adorno’s unrelenting critique of idealism is alive and well in Honneth’s book)

This position owes a lot to Adorno, and it is no coincidence that a significant part of the next chapter focuses on integrating Adorno's social philosophy with more up-to-date contemporary bodies of research.

In any case, just as it is incorrect to absolutely externalize all issues of contemporary social and personal life, and approach the situation as though if capitalism were to be abolished so too would all the ills of the world, which I think is a position Honneth comes close to—we really must begin to see emancipatory societal transformation in much more multidimensional, integral and complex light (Fiumara 2015).

If there is one particular complaint I have with Freyenhagen's critique of Honneth, it has to do with a small but important point regarding his position on socialization. Moreover, it would seem that Honneth is absolutely correct when, as Freyenhagen comments (2015, p. 146; citing Honneth 1996, pp. 370, 374, 383), that "social pathologies are characterized by a dynamic process of development, which is described in terms of an "incessant circle" and as having its own logic. Thus, the diagnosis of social pathologies is not simply the diagnosis of a state of affairs, but rather of social processes, which, if not stopped or reversed, will lead to a further deterioration—just like an infection of the body". On the other hand, Freyenhagen seems to miss the mark when he expands his critique towards Honneth's attempt at developing a "universalistic standard" as well as a "formal anthropology and ethic" (pp. 132–133). He comments, for example: "How, given that we are socialized within specific contexts which also set limits to our language use and imagination," it is difficult to "lay claim to a standard that is meant to hold outside of this context [...] even universally" (p. 134). This view seems to echo the same compliant I raised earlier about CT's tendency to totalize theory and transformation. For purposes of clarity, let us consider the following.

There is, I agree, reason to be critical of Honneth's "weak formal anthropology" that "outlines the universal conditions of an unforced articulation of human life ideals" (Honneth 1996, pp. 393–394; also cited in Freyenhagen 2015, p. 133). But the issue is not that, in my own words, an alternative anthropology or alternative universal values are unavailable to us in the present. Likewise, although it is not easy, it is nevertheless possible to evoke moral and ethical norms and their violation. It is just this sort of thinking, in terms of the opposite, that has had CT stuck for decades. Thus, in certain particularly ways, both Honneth and Freyenhagen need updating. Consider, for example, Freyenhagen's view when he writes:

Second, one might dispute that a universalistic standard—if there is one at all—is accessible to us. How, given that we are socialized within specific contexts which also set limits to our language use and imagination, can we lay claim to a standard that is meant to hold outside of this context, or even universally? (Freyenhagen 2015, p. 134)

In addition to this, Freyenhagen cites an example found in Marx, where he “famously denied that the idea that all human beings suffer hunger is informative, since hunger satisfied in one way is radically different from hunger satisfied in another way” (2015, p. 134). He comments that Marx, “and Hegel before him—can be read to insist that whatever we can say about a formal ethic and anthropology will be too abstract and empty to guide us in our practical endeavours, or will just reproduce the context-specific substance from which it is meant to be independent” (2015, p. 134).

First, a radical concept of societal principles and ideals (Bronner 2004; Smith and De Graaff 2016; Zuidervaart 2007) are very much available to us today. Second, an alternative anthropology—however tentatively we may conceptualize—is also discernible (Smith and De Graaff 2016). As Adorno writes in *Minima Moralia* (2005, p. 50), “The splinter in your eye is the best magnifying glass.” In other words, “the limitations of one’s *Einstellung* are also the perspective from which an objective truth can be wrestled—that is, one that is “revelatory”” (Sherman 2007, p. 105). To put it differently: Freyenhagen is not wrong to acknowledge that “we are socialized within specific contexts which also set limits to our language use and imagination” (Freyenhagen 2015, p. 134). What he lacks, however, is a radical and progressive philosophy of the subject which, while acknowledging that the subject is *socially mediated* (as I will elaborate in Chap. 3), and therefore the stuff of his/her sociohistorical-cultural circumstance; the subject is also efficacious and can effect those very same sociohistorical institutions and structures (Sherman 2007). If nothing else, this is one of the direction implications of Adorno’s negative dialectics, of which, it would seem, Honneth portrays some sort of understanding.

Second, perhaps I am over extending my complaint, for I do not know this to be true, but it would seem that Freyenhagen struggles in the same way many still seem to struggle in CT, when it comes to grasping societal transformation as a *transitioning process* (Smith 2014). The problem, to state it again, is that once theory becomes too total, once transformation has been totalized, we lose sight of the particular instances, the particular

cracks, which does reveal a universal standard or an alternative possibility, however fragile or limited. The main issue is not so much that an alternative horizon of progressive and emancipatory norms is not available but it is that they often lack proper grounding (Smith and De Graaff 2016). A significant part of this grounding, which Honneth seems to lack, and Freyenhagen struggles to locate, is an alternative anthropological, epistemological and cosmological framework, as well as what has been described as a negative and phenomenological (lived) conception of ethics which, in turn, is based on an alternative vision of life that may inform, on the field of praxis, the principles or habits with respect to the morality of right or wrong conduct (Smith and De Graaff 2016).

It may be true that right now, in the direct instance of this present historic moment, we cannot entirely glimpse a final, complete alternative to capitalism. But, as the enlightenment philosophes already knew too well, a critical notion of progress does not have a final, absolute end (Bronner 2004; Smith and De Graaff 2016). Emancipatory change is a constant process and struggle. Today, countless alternatives are available that more or less align with an emancipatory politics of the present (De Graaff 2016). Indeed, countless people are imagining and experimenting with post-capitalist alternatives, contributing to a broader and more progressive transitional notion of revolutionary societal transformation. Is it true that, such as in certain instances of contemporary social movements (discussed at the end of this book) that sometimes evidence traces of social pathology or negative characteristics associated with the capitalist mode of social relations, such as in the case of “instrumental reason”? Yes, without question. But that is also precisely the point, capitalism’s coercive legacy cannot be rid of overnight. This is one of the many important lessons of the early Frankfurt School. This puts even more emphasis on the notion of transition and on healing and a new culture of therapy.

In any case, it may be true that in 10 or 15 years’ time, these immediate alternative possibilities may not—or likely will be not—as radical as they once were. But such is precisely what a fundamental alternative philosophy of systemic change must predicate and keep open to. Again, much can be learned from the enlightenment philosophes. The more phenomena reveal themselves (Smith 2015c; Smith and De Graaff 2016; De Graaff 2016) and the more alternative possibilities reveal themselves, the direction of an emancipatory politics, due to its internal demands and normative foundation (Bronner 2004, 2014a), continues to challenge that we can do better and achieve more.

To add even more to this point: as a many-sided process of social and human transformation (Smith 2014) and deep healing that spans the structural, institutional, psychological, emotional, interpersonal, cultural, existential and so on, I think a key aspect of grounding an alternative concept of social pathology is to ensure it is rooted in an equally alternative philosophy of social, structural-systemic change. This alternative philosophy of societal transformation intersects with calls for a theory of “differential transformation” (Smith 2015b; Zuidervaat 2007). It also represents or, coincides with what I have suggested and will call for an emancipatory politics of healing and therapy (Fiumara 2015) as a constituent part of a potential process of societal transformation. This “new culture of healing and therapy” is not only individual—that is, it doesn’t only concern a “journey within” (Parton 2015a)—but it also concerns the ailing social whole, which cuts across the structural, institutional and interpersonal.

Saving this point until later, if recent examples of violent state repression across the USA “is symptomatic of the neoliberal, racist, punishing state emerging all over the world”, wherein one of the only modes “of control left by corporate-controlled societies is [direct] violence”, we also have to remember that, outside of a critical analysis of state control there is also a significant part of the general populous who actively supported and continue to support such violent and oppressive tactics by corporate-controlled societies in effort to preserve the status quo. To understand this active defence of the economic and political status quo—a state of affairs which directly runs against the total well-being of the individual and society—we must, as Adorno already began, to question the relation between culture and psychology as well as culture and economics (Clune 2012).

The general coordinates of neoliberal capitalist society are set against a vision of social life and “social progress” of any real decency or emancipatory values (Bronner 2004; Smith and De Graaff 2016). The irony is that, the enlightenment—enlightenment values—remains, as bad faith, a central belief in much of mainstream culture, and yet manifest as counter-enlightenment (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002). Advances in science, technology and medicine are celebrated as evidence, empirical or spiritual or otherwise, that contemporary capitalism delivers a promise of emancipation, health and well-being. It is thought to reward one’s faith in capitalism as vision of life (De Graaff 2016). And yet the issue today—and herein lies an important factor when it comes to social pathology—is how it is often overlooked how these developments are shaped and largely thwarted by negative social forces capitalism actively produces and maintains.

Penicillin is a terrific example, because irrespective of one's politics, most people celebrate its development as a triumph of humanity. While celebrating this historically significant achievement, the question of how access to penicillin is blocked by capitalist social relations, by one's ability or non-ability to pay for treatment—this reality of neglect of treatment and social exclusion is often repressed or simply ignored in mainstream (Feenberg 2015). One may assert the usefulness of ideology critique in this regard; but what's important to point out is that ideology is not only a reflex of capitalist interests, especially if we consider the diversity of class interest that underlines a faith in the capitalist vision of life. In other words, it is not simply exploitation. It is driven also by a deeper existential motivation and, indeed, a faith in free market principles—in an ultimate vision of life based on the economic as a sort of religious foundation which pervades all aspect of personal life and the many differential spheres of society (Zuidervaart 2007; Smith 2015c; De Graaff 2016).

2.7.2 (ii) *Critical Normative Humanism*

Thus, in turn, we might ask what the attraction is when it comes to a preservation of the status quo for some people. What sort of threat does a non-preservation of the status quo represent for people, whose status, sense of security and even identity is intimately entwined? What beliefs and desires, what faith and existential security is present? How can the desire for a capitalist utopia be trained against actually existing capitalism? (Clune 2012).

Likewise, if the enlightenment remains culturally significant (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002; Bronner 2004, 2014a), if belief in enlightenment values—however distorted and warped these values have become and however much they have been appropriated by counter-enlightenment tendencies (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002; Bronner 2004, 2014a)—how can we understand the desire for enlightenment within capitalist contexts as revealing of the actual counter-enlightenment realities of global capitalism? To be clear, what I am indicting here is a far deeper course of human enquiry; it concerns, or, at least, anticipates my argument in the final chapter of this book concerning a “critical normative humanistic perspective”.

On the other hand, we cannot forget the role social pathology actively plays in the production and reproduction of all or most facets of contemporary social life. Part of this pathology—or, I should say,

one of the pathologies—is unquestionable “surplus repression”. A key concept for Marcuse, as are the psychoanalytical concepts of the “reality principle” and the “performance principle”, the key point about surplus repression is how: “Repression disappears in the grand objective order of things which rewards more or less adequately complying individuals and, in doing so, reproduces more or less adequately society as a whole” (Marcuse 1969a, p. 51). The excessive or surplus repression characteristic of contemporary capitalist society and the implications of this deepening repression on the subject is frightening to say the least. The fact that such direct repression is tolerated today attests in more ways than one to a key argument Adorno makes throughout the course of his entire social philosophy.

Moreover, if one of the only modes of control left by corporate-controlled societies is direct violence, especially when confronted with movements against rising inequality and injustice, we also need to ask: why doesn’t the population in western countries more generally and more actively rise up about deepening inequality in the neoliberal context, especially in the face of increasing violence? The answer isn’t always entirely to do with violent state repression. Though oppressive state force certainly plays a part, it’s not always the downfall of movements or the reason social movements don’t become mass movements.

In terms of the need for a mass movement and its general non-existence, we have to look at social passivity and repression from all angles, including the possibility of existential fear and misshaped forms of desire playing a role.

Helaine Olen (2015) writes in her intriguing study, for example, that in part it is because a “culture of shame” has developed. To put it differently, the argument is that contemporary capitalist culture shames the oppressed, the poor—those at the very bottom—to which I reply: is this not, even implicitly, another materialization of social pathology in the context of dominant social relations? If so, is there not an existential dimension present within the twisted notion capitalist-determined self-preservation drives? There are cases, moreover, when even those slightly off the very bottom, but nevertheless within the poverty bracket, shame those below them. What is that cycle of oppression, if not another form of domination and control—self-preservation “run amok”, as it will soon be described—in accordance to the principle of scarcity? How do we account for traditional “lower classes” oppressing, dominating and exploiting other “lower classes”?

2.7.3 (iii) *Beyond Class*

As I have alluded, a strictly traditional class analysis which many Marxists seem caught up in and unable to move beyond or advance, cannot by itself answer this question adequately. For Olen, she goes so far to align her study with a critique of mainstream psychology as evidenced in the emergence of the superficial “self-help” industry—a critique that, in a way, echoes Adorno’s (1968) own statement in *Sociology and Psychology (Part II)* when he laments: “in reality the individual psychological dynamic is replaced by the partly conscious and partly regressive adjustment of the individual to society”. What Adorno is describing intersects in many ways with the notion of “contract society”:

What arises is a “contract society” that enshrines as right the egocentrism that is characteristic of infantile psychology. In referencing Daniel Horowitz, Schmookler identifies a personality type built around ambition, a sense that time is money, and an obsession with progress (defined in material terms). A new worship of success and self-fulfillment through economic competition, positing material wealth as the measure of all value, became integral to capitalism’s cultural code. With the development of capitalist society, traditional religious virtues gave way to the secular forces of initiative, aggressiveness, competitiveness and forcefulness. (Harris 2010)

It is along these very precise lines that Fromm (2010) developed the notion of a “pathology of normalcy”. In *The Fear of Freedom* (2001), he writes, moreover:

In the mechanisms we have been discussing, the individual overcomes the feeling of insignificance in comparison with the overwhelming power of the world outside himself either by renouncing his individual integrity, or by destroying others so that the world ceases to be threatening. Other mechanisms of escape are the withdrawal from the world so completely that it loses its threat (the picture we find in certain psychotic states), and the inflation of oneself psychologically to such an extent that the world outside becomes small in comparison. Although these mechanisms of escape are important for individual psychology, they are only of minor relevance culturally. I shall not, therefore, discuss them further here, but instead will turn to another mechanism of escape which is of the greatest social significance. (Fromm 2001, pp. 158–159)

This particular mechanism is the solution that the majority of normal individuals find in modern society. To put it briefly, the individual ceases to be himself; he adopts entirely the kind of personality offered to him by cul-

tural patterns; and he therefore becomes exactly as all others are and as they expect him to be. The discrepancy between “I” and the world disappears and with it the conscious fear of aloneness and powerlessness. This mechanism can be compared with the protective colouring some animals assume. They look so similar to their surroundings that they are hardly distinguishable from them. The person who gives up his individual self and becomes an automaton, identical with millions of other automatons around him, need not feel alone and anxious any more. But the price he pays, however, is high; it is the loss of his self.

In his humanistic psychoanalysis, Fromm develops several important frameworks still relevant when it comes to call to advance a critical conception of social pathology. Harris (2010) writes, when reflecting on Fromm:

For any system to survive, it must develop a means of channelling the human energies within society in accordance with the needs of the system, into cognitions and behaviors that ensure the continued functioning of society. If it becomes a matter of conscious choice whether or not to adhere to dominant social patterns, the system could be endangered. In its purest and most effective form, the character structure operates at the unconscious level, ensuring people “want to act as they have to act, and at the same time finding gratification in acting according to the requirements of the culture.” As Adorno pointed out, “it is part of the mechanism of domination to forbid recognition of the suffering it produces.”

To conclude: when considering, as we have begun to do, the relation between capitalism as a dominant, coercive and authoritarian system and the (de)formation of the subject, what stands out in most of the research I have reviewed is the consensus that, as Harris (2010) explains, “capitalist institutions subsidize our social atomism by systematically favouring values that concern people as separate individuals and discouraging the fulfilment of needs as an interconnected community”. However, the struggle we’re up against is also, in a sense, more than capitalist structures, systems and relations itself. I think it is a reasonable assessment when surveying and considering a wide range of research that it is in no way a guarantee that, in a society based on anti-capitalist systems and structures, that cycles of domination and violence, that social pathology, would cease. Anti-capitalism can take any number of forms, even authoritarian and dominant forms—those which continue “the grain of insanity” of systemic cycles of domination (in an Adornian sense). Coming from a deeper and more

foundational perspective can inform us of the complexity of the challenges we face and how to overcome them in an emancipatory way. Fromm, to his credit, was also particularly good here, especially when, for example, in a critique of Soviet Communism, he talks about the (authoritarian) logic that people will once again have to adapt to when the new system is in place. In other words: what Fromm is highly critical of is a politics which reproduces past bad social circumstances by relying on the logic of a sort of top-down “total social integration” which forces a more or less totalized single (ideological) model onto society without considering the differences of people’s needs in each particular sociohistorical-cultural context. Perhaps this isn’t too far from Honneth when he reflects on the dangers of the risks of “totalizing ideology” and “elitist specialized knowledge” (Honneth 2009, pp. 44–45). Here, the universal is just as damaged as it is in global capitalism or the sham of representative democracy in the era of neoliberalism. A single vision of a “revolutionary alternative” is forced onto every society, coercively and even sometimes self-dominantly, bending people at will and creating an entirely new “sub-ordinate populous”.

On the other hand, if contemporary society is deprived of decency, justice, health, solidarity, democracy and egalitarianism, these enlightenment values can also help guide how we move forward. They require significant critical retrieval, it is true. But as I will discuss later, a reclamation of the enlightenment is important for several reasons (Bronner 2004; Smith and De Graaff 2016). If society today, broadly speaking, is characterized by explicit and also silent suffering, trauma and ailment, critically retrieved enlightenment values and morality show how an actual egalitarian, democratic and enlightened society would be based on the opposite: healthy subject development, healing and total well-being—individually, socially, and environmentally. “The sicknesses that pervades contemporary Western society” demands a “radically virtuous alternative of normative humanism”, writes Harris (2010). Such a humanism, as I argued alongside Arnold De Graaff, can gain much from enlightenment values and humanistic psychology considering that, once upon a time, radical humanism was a cornerstone of certain, more progressive strands of radical enlightenment thought.

However, humanism—even that of Fromm—and a positive notion enlightenment values, as I have said, requires significant critical retrieval and social philosophical advancement (Allen 2016; Smith and De Graaff 2016). Although such a project of critical retrieval has already started to be devel-

oped in a past paper (Smith and De Graaff 2016), in the concluding sections of this book a few additional comments will be added. I will also expand on the idea of the need for “a radically virtuous alternative of normative humanism” in the context of a critical retrieval of the enlightenment as a culturally significant movement, arguing that positive (universal) enlightenment values, those, for example, not dissimilar to what Adorno sought to recover and write toward, find direct expression in humanistic psychology. The significance of my analysis in this regard has to do with my assessment that radical alternative praxis requires grounding in and direction from an engaged foundational critical social philosophy, which, in turn, itself requires grounding both in CT (one pole of an emancipatory social analysis), what I term a critical existential-humanistic perspective, and in a more broader alternative philosophy of psychology. In the process, I will then offer an account of such a framework and perspective in relation to the idea of *emancipatory transition* as an expression of a *new culture of healing and therapy*.

NOTES

1. See, for example: http://www.qcsr.uq.edu.au/template/Context/Societal%20Organisation/Social%20Pathology_Intro.htm.
2. See: <https://www.questia.com/library/psychology/abnormal-psychology/social-pathology>.
3. See Peter Jackson’s article for BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-14436529>.
4. For an overview, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_England_riots.
5. The ideological reaction—that is, the dominant, authoritarian and coercive one—which fits perfectly with Fromm’s profile of negative character development—will also be considered in relation to the genesis of the bourgeois subject in the context of a discussion on the dialectic of enlightenment.
6. This was first pointed out to me by David Sherman in private correspondence.
7. See, for example, the project laid out by Heathwood Institute and Press: www.heathwoodpress.com.
8. For more accounts of social pathology, see the Mental Health Policy Template developed by the International Consortium for Mental Health Policy and Services: <http://www.qcsr.uq.edu.au/template/Explanation.htm>.

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History, Systems of Domination and Moral Norms

3.1 SICK SOCIETIES AND HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

As a whole, if we are to understand social pathology, conceptualizing the complex interconnection between the individual subject and his/her social conditions is the first place to start. In studying the relation between one's sociohistorical-cultural conditions and the impact those conditions have on the individual subject, as we have already begun to do, we will be able to pave the way for a more comprehensive analysis of society and its pathology and discontents. Laying out an extensive framework to help us understand this relation will be the primary task of Chaps. 3 and 4.

One incredibly important argument that we will discuss in this chapter, in particular, concerns how although life within capitalism as a social, political and economic system will be the focus of intense scrutiny, all societies, just like individuals, can be pathological to a greater or lesser degree (Edgerton 2010). This is an important feature of my present thesis. In a survey of literature on the history of human society, it would appear fairly safe to conclude that social pathology as defined in this book is a recurring characteristic across cultures and epochs. Overcoming the pathological development of human society is, to borrow the words of Kenan Malik (2014), “a historical challenge”. That is why although capitalism—or contemporary life within neoliberal capitalist society—may take a central focus in the present study, due to the fact that capitalism as a particular social formation is what defines our present social world, this particular period

of human social development is also part of a significantly broader history. For this reason, if the intention is to look at the facts, the realities and the many social phenomena, which define a large part of modern life, in an attempt to understand why needless social suffering persists and why irrationality prevails, to accomplish this task, we must also come to grips with a radical philosophy of history and development. Such a philosophy of history intersects with and combines numerous disciplines, from anthropology and archaeology to psychology. And it will help us contextualize a framework for understanding both the ongoing process of pathological development throughout history and the ongoing process pertaining to our present conditions.

One terrific example of what I mean by introducing such a framework can be found, for instance, in Kent V. Flannery and Joyce Marcus' (2012) study *The Creation of Inequality. How Our Prehistoric Ancestors Set the Stage for Monarchy Slavery and Empire*. Although overwhelming in places, this work provides a substantial case—indeed, copious amounts of evidence, including significant archaeological detail—with regard to an anthropological view of the historical evolution of human society, from hunter-gatherer life to more recent human social developments. Tracing a comprehensive survey on the development of social inequality, what I have attempted to describe elsewhere as “the grain of insanity” (Smith 2015b) operating behind the fundamental processes of human organization—what Flannery and Marcus identify is a certain destructive “social logic”—generally consistent across cultures and societies throughout history. This destructive logic—to be otherwise termed the pathology of human destructiveness—becomes especially prominent, we learn, the more societies crystalize along the lines of hardened hierarchies.

In *The Sane Society*, Fromm notes of a similar pattern with regard to an underlying dominant rationale, not so different, we will learn, than Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. For instance, Fromm speaks of “the development of the human race” and “the degree to which man [or woman] is aware of himself as a separate self depends on the extent to which he has emerged from the clan and the extent to which the process of individuation has developed” (Fromm 2002, p. 92). One of Fromm's basic complaints is that, in understanding the process of healthy individuation, societies which “command” the individual ultimately undermine the process of healthy subject development. For this reason, he is led to conclude that in co-operative relationships based on mutuality, “no one would dare to think of commanding the

other person” (p. 92). Instead, the relation would be based on “help” which “lies in the mutual feeling of love, friendship or simply human solidarity” (p. 92). Fromm’s analysis here reminds one in many ways of Richard Gunn and Adrian Wilding’s (2013) critical interventions when it comes to Honneth’s notion of “recognition”, particularly as they develop the concrete philosophical idea of “mutual recognition” as a way of describing intimate subject-subject relations, as opposed for instance to the “alienating” and dominant subject-object mode of relations found within capitalism. In many ways, their framework also confirms Fromm’s study, as we can see in *The Sane Society* how Fromm wants to show how we can reverse the pathological historical developments—such as the dependence on hardened hierarchies—and offer an alternative to exploitative, alienated and commanding relations. This comes out, for example, in his reflections on the breakdown of the principle of “human solidarity” in relation to the process of individuation in the “primitive clan” and “feudal society”. He writes, moreover:

The member of a primitive clan might express his sense of identity in the formula “I am we”; he cannot yet conceive of himself as an “individual,” existing apart from his group. In the medieval world, the individual was identified with his social role in the feudal hierarchy. The peasant was not a man who happened to be a peasant, the feudal lord not a man who happened to be a feudal lord. He was a peasant or a lord, and this sense of his unalterable station was an essential part of his sense of identity. When the feudal system broke down, this sense of identity was shaken and the acute question “who am I?” arose—or more precisely, “How do I know that I am I?” This is the question which was raised, in a philosophical form, by Descartes. He answered the quest for identity by saying, “I doubt—hence I think, I think—hence I am.” This answer put all the emphasis on the experience of “I” as the subject of any thinking activity, and failed to see that the “I” is experienced also in the process of feeling and creative action. (Fromm 2002, pp. 60–61)

One of the many fantastic accomplishments by Fromm is that he understood that social pathology had to be contextualized within a much broader historical framework. On this point, he’s not too far away from Adorno. Insofar that he would spend significant time offering a critique of capitalism and the exploitative, coercive, commanding values underlying the capitalistic system (p. 92), Fromm also saw capital as part of “the dead past” (p. 92). Thus he writes:

Capital employs labor, and not labor capital. The person who owns capital commands the person who “only” owns his life, human skill, vitality and creative productivity. “Things” are higher than man. The conflict between capital and labor is much more than the conflict between two classes, more than their fight for a greater share of the social product. It is the conflict between two principles of value: that between the world of things, and their amassment, and the world of life and its productivity. (p. 92)

The main point here, and as evidenced in quite an extensive body of research, is that a study of social pathology does not, to put it succinctly, begin and end with capitalism, as some have seemed to suggest. As Fromm (2002) correctly argued, past communist societies—Soviet Communism being a particular focus—were also deeply sick, destructive and confused in their own ways. Contrary to certain critics of Fromm, “Laying bare the ills of communism does not, as many suppose, constitute a vindication of capitalism: ‘our’ problems remain” (Ingleby 2002, p. xviii). The point, we will learn, especially from the perspective of social psychology, evolutionary psychology and anthropology is that no society was perfect (Edgerton 2010). In truth, few have remained so balanced and unbiased in their assessment of the history of society than Fromm. He rejected both Western Capitalism and Soviet Communism on the basis that both were dehumanizing and characterized by “alienation”, among other things (Fromm 2002).

At the same time, a critical study of social pathology does not serve the idealization of primitive societies, which, too, have been found to often be cruel, confused and misled (De Graaff 2016; Edgerton 2010). Primitivism, which is the appeal to the primitivist society as the flipside of capitalist development, is deeply misguided and an incoherent anti-modernist response to the problems of modernity (Smith 2015c). This is not to say that we cannot learn things from certain indigenous communities (De Graaff 2016; Smith and De Graaff 2016). Rather, the point is that a theory of pathology and pathological development must be much deeper and also far more nuanced.

In *Sick Societies* (2010), Robert B. Edgerton surveyed a vast range of ethnographic writings, offering case studies of various cultures from around the world. In his timely and much needed challenge against relativism, Edgerton dispels the myth of primitive utopia while also presenting a detailed examination of more modern cultures. One of the many lessons of the book, I think, is that we have to look at societies and cultures accord-

ing to a scale of pathological severity. Another lesson, which relates to our upcoming discussion on Adorno, refers to the way in which Edgerton reveals the extent of domination throughout the history of human society. One can immediately deduce two points: human beings are cruel, chaotic and malevolent species and will always be that way. Or social conditions play an immense role in fostering a wide-ranging scale of human behaviour. I would suggest, at the outset, that the answer lies somewhere in between.

Take, for instance, detailed and in-depth studies of the continuum of violent and peaceful societies in Marshall Sahlins' (1974) *Stone Age Economics* and in Susan George's (1989) *How the Other Half Dies*. More recently Leslie Sponsel (2016) has also published a terrific article on "The Anthropology of Peace and Nonviolence". These are but three of an overwhelming list of literature which affirm the core thesis that human beings are capable of great cruelty and of great care and love, offering detailed study of the continuum of violent and peaceful societies. In all cases, the social is conclusively shown to have incredible impact on human behaviour. In the case of Sahlins' and George's research, they highlight how lack of scarcity and self-sufficiency made for more peaceful co-existence. Additionally, De Graaff (2016) notes that many traditional tribes had ritualized ways to sublimate and reduce aggression (stick fighting and beating each other chests, especially with more distant tribes; other tribes also dealt with this by gifting and joint meals). It is also noted that some had more open and easy ways of dealing with sexuality. In short, the key point is essentially unanimous:

Human beings, as we have witnessed in the last century alone, are capable of the most cruel and barbaric acts. But human beings are also capable of the opposite. At the heart of the matter is not so much universal assertions pertaining to human nature, but the question of social conditions and the social fostering of behavioural patterns. It is easy to make biased statements about universal human nature. Ultimately such statements violate particularity—all the instances in which such an assertion is clearly not evidenced in the moment. Thus, what is required is a view of human motivation and behaviour as being incredibly complex, and, at its core, deeply influenced by social, historical and cultural circumstances.

A particularly extreme example can be found in studies of child soldiers, the exploitation of the psyche and the manipulation of behavioural patterns, as well as the psychological impacts of these realities (Betancourt et al. 2013; Schauer and Elbert 2010). A couple of particular studies by

the Society for Research in Child Development (2010), including those cited above, bring social context into direct focus. We learn that inasmuch as these exploited children underwent severe “hardening” in the developmental process—with a significant percentage a witness to or an actor behind significant violence—the ability to heal and later rediscover interpersonal empathy is possible. From a young age, these children are trained to hate, to become consciously stunted, and thus be employed as instruments of violence and barbarity. At the same time, the terrible effects of such a gruesomely manipulative process and violent experience are not irreversible.

When it comes to less extreme contexts, in recent years, a wealth of research has been published confirming this view that human beings are neither inherently good nor bad, and that social context plays a significant role (Fiske et al. 2010). Human behaviour is conclusively understood to be both social and adaptive. In the area of social work, it is widely held, both from an empirical and from a philosophical point of view, that changes in patterns of behaviour relate significantly to processes of social interaction (Chavis 2012; Schriver 2010; Van Wormer 2010). Moreover, it is often noted that change towards more healthy or more destructive habits are made through social interaction (Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman 2009). This view coincides with a number of particular subjects of study in relation to social ecology, from anxiety and depression to identity formation and moral values. A particularly illuminating example can be found for instance in studies on the ecology of homelessness (Nooe and Patterson 2010). Here, homelessness is viewed “as the result of interactions among risk factors ranging from individual conditions to socio-economic structures and environmental circumstances”. And while a “broad conceptual model of homelessness” understands the economic manufacturing of homeless—thus bringing a critique of political economy into focus—it also “examines biopsychosocial risk factors”, and thus seeks to employ a multidimensional response to homeless (Nooe and Patterson 2010). The basis of this response, to put it simply, is the understanding of the extreme impacts not only homelessness can have on the individual but also the affects the general social ecological landscape can have on the level of individual psychologies and behaviour.

Even from an archaeological perspective, we are learning a significant amount about the importance of sociohistorical-cultural contexts in relation to the many complexities of human behaviour, not only when it comes to cultural sensitivity and ethics but also the values of a broader

emancipatory archaeological viewpoint (Hamilakis and Duke 2007), which contributes significantly to a critical philosophy of history and of development.

With that said, if we recognize that human behaviour is an incredibly many-sided issue, whilst also acknowledging the significant role social context plays, the following question begs answering: to what extent do negative or pathological social contexts shape or reproduce negative or unhealthy patterns of behaviour? The difficulty in answering this question is to not become overly reductionist in approach.

For example, it may be the case that human beings, as well as a wide variety of other animals, evidence similar types of social behaviour. When reduced to certain specific behavioural categories, these similar types include such basic phenomena as aggression and bonding (Gibbs et al. 2008, pp. 256–259). But as we’ve been observing, human behaviour also possesses a variety of cultural, political, economic and psychological influences (Fiske et al. 2010).

Similar to our previous discussion on instinct drives, we can understand that societal conditions—one’s sociohistorical-cultural context—plays an important role in shaping behaviour. But it is only one dimension (however important of a dimension it might be) of a much more complex reality, just as we can understand that instincts are one dimension of a much more complex reality. To the same extent that we can determine the individual isn’t purely driven by his or her instincts, the subject is also not passively socially determined. The subject, we will later learn, is also an efficacious agent that can affect the very institutions and structures which comprise of his or her sociohistorical-cultural circumstance (Sherman 2007, p. 6). Indeed, recent developments in neuroscience show just in what way the efficacious agency “is an integral part of human biology” (Rose 2005). In a sense, what is disclosed within this particular course of analysis is the flawed nature of the free will versus determinism debate. From the view of an expansive and broadly informed perspective, both positions are incorrect (Rose 2005). The debate is, in other words, based on a false dualism (Rose 2005)—a false core antinomy of modern thought (Smith and De Graaff 2016). Instead, as is becoming increasingly understood, the relation between the subject and society—or social conditions—is dialectical.

Bracketing this last point until later, it is largely due to the inadequacy of the free will versus determinism debate—likewise, from another angle, the orthodox Freudian view versus B.F. Skinner’s behaviourism—that a more integrative approach to understanding social pathology is required. Part of

this integrative approach is based on the understanding that human behaviour is neither totally socially determined nor completely free from social influence. It looks philosophically and scientifically at how the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of human beings are influenced by a variety of factors. These factors include the social presence of others (Fiske et al. 2010) and how one's sociohistorical-cultural circumstance plays an important role in shaping one's subjectivity (Sherman 2007). Additionally, we can further point out that, if we are to undertake a more multidimensional approach (Smith 2015d), the many dimensions behind human behaviour also include personal emotional histories, social psychological aspects as well as physical, biological, cognitive, relational and social-cultural dimensions among others (Hutchison 2015). To put it concisely: these multiple dimensions of both individual subject and social environment exist in a dynamic interaction, which contributes to the production of human behaviour from several points of intersection (Hutchison 2015).

On this understanding, the main thesis presented in this book seeks to understand human behaviour not according to a one-dimensional model or framework, but how, from a dialectical or dynamic interactive perspective, it is affected by genetic inheritance, psychological and emotional development, as well as by general experience (social or otherwise). The ways in which people develop are shaped by social experience and by sociohistorical-cultural circumstances within the context of their genetic, biological and so on "facticity" (to borrow from Sartre).

To clarify what this means more practically, let us consider the pressing issue of "climate denial". From a purely critical theoretical point of view, such as the one noted in Chap. 2 represented by Honneth, we could make an incredibly strong case that the phenomenon of "climate denial" is a direct result of the pathologies of reason (i.e., the "deficit of reason"). It is, in other words, a product of the deficit of reason in contemporary society. This assertion would certainly give credence to the mainstream response that climate deniers are essentially irrational or, perhaps worse, unreasonable. Consensus among climate scientists is overwhelming (De Graaff 2016). The science, the clearly rational analysis of the evidence is for all to see, and the irrational or reactionary response by climate deniers is generally one that could be said to have identifiable links to social pathology. But there are also other dimensions to the problem which we need to understand in order to establish a consensus on how to successfully combat such irrational behaviour and unreasonable subjectivities. Such an understanding very much

depends on a conception of social pathology, particularly in relation to self-development and also eventually the genesis of hardened political attitudes (Baran 2013; Onraet et al. 2013). We also have to understand the particular existential sociological dimension of the general political attitudes associated with “climate denial”. These attitudes, as previously noted, are widely referenced as being linked with prejudiced, anxious, insecure and paranoid subjective tendencies in thought and action. They are predominantly on the right side of the political spectrum, and typically evidence various pathological deformations. The question that fascinates me, however, is whether in modern social history, where people are feeling more anxious than ever before (Horwitz 2013), this social-historical and culture context is linked to the deficit of reason and the rise of irrationality, particularly in relation to the recent re-emergence of the far right throughout the world.

We live in a time which could be perceived as being characterized by tremendous existential threat. Climate change, energy crises, terrorism, mounting resource scarcity, and so on. If the typical right-wing climate denier can be linked with the general personality disorders often associated with right-wing politics—personality disorders which tend to be dominant and angst-ridden—perhaps it is possible to then speculate that such anxious and reactionary attitudes are adaptive (Horwitz 2013), as a response to something perceived threatening. This would make sense if, in turn, we considered a social ecological view in relation to a critique of right-wing attitudes concerning issues of political economy, where climate change clearly represents a challenge against the principles of free market capitalism (Klein 2015; Nyberg and Wright 2015). If theoretically and empirically sound, such an analysis would offer deep insight into the psychology of climate denial and into particular pathological developments when it comes to the right-wing psyche.

In terms of developmental psychology, we can see moreover not only how things like religion, class status, racial oppression, gender oppression, community models and dynamics—each characteristic as an aspect of one’s social reality—play a role in shaping one’s sense of identity. (This is all the more heightened in especially authoritarian dynamics.) We can also see how, in shaping one’s sense of identity, these social points of developmental interaction also become markers for one’s sense of existential position in the world (Smith 2015d). This is an incredibly significant hypothesis, because it offers insight into not only the formation of individual preferences but also why human beings may actively defend pathological social

conditions—namely, out of fear to preserve a sense of “ultimate security” and “totalized orientation” in the world (Smith 2015d).

With that said, insofar the subject, in the earliest phases of the developmental process through to adolescence and adulthood, develops many social connections, there is, I will argue, a clear and identifiable difference between social pathological settings of development and non-pathological settings of development. It is common knowledge, as we have already touched on, that the basic aspects or characteristics of a child’s social settings have a direct impact or effect on their development. The effects of this setting play a role not only in fostering one’s sense of *self* and their view of the world but also in terms of how an individual learns to think, interact and behave. Almost always, pathological conditions of development appear authoritarian in this regard, orientated towards more or less coercive means of instruction, reward and punishment (Adorno et al. 1982).

Deeply revealing examples of this in a contemporary capitalist society are found within studies in mainstream education (Holt 1991; Kohn 1990, 1993, 1999; Seifert 2004; Titchiner 2017). It is no surprise, moreover, that social pathologies become visibly noticeable in education, especially early education (Titchiner 2017) inasmuch that social pathology has such a profound relation with the process of subject development. Many critical educationalists often note this impact, and dissect mainstream contemporary educational models, such as those based on US models, as authoritarian, coercive and geared towards producing very limited aspects of one’s overall development as a human being.

In response to this reality, alternative educational movements have emerged—for example, A.S. Neill’s Summerhill School. However, the struggle encountered by such alternative education environments as Summerhill, which focuses on providing a more healthy, free-flourishing and reconciled environment for childhood development—that is, as non-pathological development as far as possible—is based on the fact that they cannot escape the wider historical, cultural and economic conditions of society (De Graaff 2012). In other words, even though they may seek to establish alternative spaces within which an individual can develop along more healthy lines, these educational spaces still exist within pathological society. And the social, cultural as well as economic influences ultimately seep through.

The issue, in essence, is that all pathological societies seem to evidence systems for *regulating* as opposed to emancipating human behaviour. The

view certainly extends well beyond the biological pessimism to emerge in the nineteenth century (Malik 2013). This account also connects back to right-wing or general politically authoritarian attitudes, including left-wing variations that we observe today (Adorno et al. 1982; Baran 2013). Entwined with capitalism and its project based on coercion and power, universal views of human nature are presented as unwavering laws. Dominant and authoritarian attitudes are fostered, which themselves produce and reproduce views and attitudes that seek to “command” (Fromm 2002) and regulate behaviour. Fromm’s (2002) critique of Fascism and Nazism is particularly revealing in this regard, as his is general characterology. We learn, for instance, that these societal developments: “are pathological in the purest sense, being a regression to an earlier stage of development—an infantile dependence on irrational authority, an ‘escape from freedom’ into a new idolatry of leader and nation” (Ingleby 2002, p. xxxv).

Adorno and Sartre also offer equally important studies at the intersections of the various issues discussed, coming to similar conclusions that commanding attitudes and structural-systemic attempts to regulate human behaviour are direct developments of a sick society. They ensure social functioning along the lines of deeply repressive processes for the benefit of social control. Thus, both of these influential thinkers come to understand in their own way, how “the aim of fascist propaganda”, which is based on the manipulation of the collective psyche and, in Freudian terms, the exploitation of instinctual drives, is premised on colonization of the ego (Sherman 2007, p. 226). Similarly, the same issues are also linked with capitalism, in that: “If the ego fails to differentiate itself by virtue of the fact that it has been colonized by the institutional structures of society (bourgeois or fascist), it not only cancels itself out as an agent”—that is, pathological attitudes pertaining to the deficit of reason—“it also immediately transmits to the unconscious those social aims that would otherwise be subject to the critical capacities of a well-functioning, *mediating ego*” (p. 226; emphasis added). This general line of analysis is perhaps all the more relevant in the neoliberal era of capitalist development, where a vision of human life and behaviour is propagated on the basis of valorizing the idea of individuals as self-interested, competitive, violent and driven for power (Spencer 2015).

A good example we commonly observe in daily life concerns the accusation that “human beings are greedy”. Consider for instance the popular response to the Libor scandal, which attempted to moralize the greed and corruption behind the actions of the bankers involved. Could it not

instead be said that: “These are traits assumed by our economic system and the peculiar way it seeks to control people, in order to mold them into compliant laborers and consumers” (Spencer 2015). This is a serious question.

In closing, the neoliberal theory of the human being is actually a reflection of innate human characteristics, even though human beings are very much capable of acting in self-interested, competitive and violent ways. Rather, from a complex and integrative social ecological point of view, they are understood first as characteristics of the social, economic and political system that governs the social. In this sense, and as we will discuss later, pathological society *is* pathological firstly on the basis that it tends to foster *maldevelopment* and thus the general *opposite of a well-functioning, mediating subject*. These repressive conditions—fascist, capitalist, communist or otherwise—are deeply ailing precisely on the basis that they are premised on the deformation, hardening and closing-down of the subject. Such conditions exist, we will learn, on reducing individual and cultural sensitivity as a result of a generally dominant cognitive and psychological paradigm, one which reduces responsiveness (Fromm 2002, p. 195) and also tends to foster withdrawn and hardened patterns of behaviour.

3.2 DIALECTIC OF ENLIGHTENMENT REVISITED: SOCIAL PATHOLOGY IN RELATION TO SYSTEMIC-STRUCTURAL CYCLES OF DOMINATION

Inasmuch that within CT it is often acknowledged that pathological society is tied to systems of domination—in other words, pathological society is coercive, dominant and authoritarian—today we can say that this *regulating of behaviour* is often utilized as a principle of control. As Keith A. Spencer writes:

The idea that humans possess inherent traits is known as “biological determinism”—the notion that traits we observe in ourselves are natural, products of our biology, not of the cultural and historical situation we live in. For instance, one may see a homeless man sleeping on the sidewalk and assume he is a failure at life because of his genes, or say that women are incapable of being serious scientists because of their sex, or that all men must harbor aggression because of their biology.

Racism and sexism flow freely if you take biological determinism for granted, and conservatives often use biological determinism as a fallback for

their arguments—despite the fact that anthropologists are near-ubiquitous in their assertion that that biological determinism is flagrantly false. “All cultures have sex, aggression, etc., but whether and how it is expressed is subordinate to the cultural order,” anthropologist Marshall Sahlins writes.

Could it be, as Adorno et al. (1982) argued in their famous study on the authoritarian personality and its social production, that capitalism as a social-structural and systemic formation is a dominant social order which produces destructive personality traits? A growing body of interdisciplinary research, including both a philosophically and empirically oriented study, suggest this is very much the case (Akrami and Ekehammar 2006; Benjamin 2006; Bronner 2014; Childs and Whitley 2011). It is also no coincidence that within this research, dominant attitudes, linked very much to capitalist social forms, almost always evidence a hierarchical view of the social and natural world, thus integrated with the naturalization of inequality as part of the stratification of social groups. Such social stratification is, today, tied to mainstream discourses on inequality. But it is ultimately socially and economically manufactured. Indeed, if we concede that social stratification is socially and economically manufactured—that is to say, social inequality is not a law of nature but a product of negative society—what we tend to observe today is how this stratification is formed around the neoliberal capitalist value of competition. Social Darwinism may, once again, be referenced in this book as a basic descriptor of such societal conditions. But so too are long-standing issues of “the racial logic of Orientalism” also entwined (Smith 2006). As Andrea Smith wrote in her article as part of a highly influential feminist anthology: there continues to be a designating or marking of “certain peoples or nations as inferior and as posing a constant threat to the well-being of empire” (Smith 2006, p. 68). Orientalism, we could say, is entwined with the pathology of reason, if we consider how it’s both a function of a certain cognitive paradigm and of a particular “logic” that “anchor of capitalism” (Smith 2006, p. 67).

As I will argue later in this chapter, it is no coincidence that pathological society is entangled with a certain dominant cognitive architecture (Smith 2015b, c; Smith and De Graaff 2016) or what some have termed a violent epistemology (Titchiner 2017). It is no coincidence, moreover, that Adorno (1992b) criticized a similar cognitive paradigm revealing that it had very real practico-ethical implications. This comes out, for instance, in his critique of “identity thinking”. Bracketing further discussion on

this until later, what inspired Adorno's wide referenced "critique of identity" was the systematic elimination of the Jews during the Holocaust, wherein the subject of the Jew was reduced to an object of hate in the name of a particular identity politics. If the Jews in Europe had been exterminated in the name of "identity"—that is, if they were identified as "the Other" and systematically categorized through their yellow stars—then the epistemological question of identity thought (likewise "instrumental reason", the reverse of healthy reason) becomes one of the most urgent ethical questions of our time (Smith 2015d; Smith and De Graaff 2016). Adorno sensed, on my reading, that there was something profoundly important in the very epistemological context of the unspeakable barbarity at Auschwitz, a point which was recently affirmed in David Sherman's (2007) important book.

It is possible along these lines of analysis to not only draw systemic connections between contemporary racism, the persistence of prejudice (Bronner 2014) and Smith's (2006) article on the three pillars of Orientalism. We can also draw connections with core antagonisms of modern thought (Smith and De Graaff 2016) and the social, structural-systemic context in which such a violent, dominant cognitive paradigm takes place today. Similar, no doubt, to past societies (Edgerton 2010; Flannery and Marcus 2012) which too were entwined with systemic cycles of domination (Smith 2015b), competition and conflict are front and centre.

As found in the scientific analysis of Human Society as part of "Project 2061" by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, conflict and competition have played a significant role in human society, while today, social circumstance is a key facet behind fostering certain types of social behaviour. To paraphrase:

People, groups and even entire cultures today must compete: for resources, power, status and even economic supremacy. Individuals compete for jobs and wealth. Individuals compete for status. Family members compete for attention and recognition. Nations compete for territory. Countries compete for military supremacy.¹

On a micro and macro scale, the cycle repeats, as one constantly vies to "get one over the other". This cycle is based, in essence, on coercive power: people, groups and nation-states compete for influence and to acquire the coercive power to set the rules, to establish the hegemony on ideas and cultural thought and thus to also ensure oppressed socially strati-

fied groups cannot in turn attempt to retake control. From the perspective of a critical philosophy of history, these global trends and patterns refer to what I shall term later as a clear account of social-systemic cycles of domination (Smith 2015b) produced within and naturalized by pathological society.

This brings me to one of the issues that will be featured in the background of this chapter. The false universalization of contemporary social ailment: that is, by essentially taking social injustice, inequality and oppression that are products of a coercive, dominant and pathological society and universalizing them as a law of nature, one basically claims that the fundamental systems in which contemporary society depend are thus unalterable. Not only does this displace the source of needless suffering, deflecting critique from broader economic, political and social structures and institutions, it manifests an abstract law of human nature and fails to do justice to all of the positive aspects of human reality. In failing to see the systemic context of social injustice, inequality and violence in both modern and historic societies, we grow blind to the hopeful possibilities of future social health and individual well-being.² It is just this sort of *hardening effect* that will be one focus of the following discussion.

Inasmuch that there are universal standards against which we can judge whether a society is pathological and destructive or more healthy and reconciled (Bronner 2004; Edgerton 2010; Smith and De Graaff 2016), a critique of pathology is one that is rooted, we will learn, in a critique of domination *writ large*. That is why this book, instead of emerging in bias and arguing from one political ideology against another, attempts to move instead from very basic core critical humanistic and Enlightenment values. Human freedom, inclusiveness, justice, equality, egalitarianism, cosmopolitanism, interrelational or intersubjective harmony are but a few such values (Smith and De Graaff 2016).

In considering the overwhelming evidence of societal ailment at the outset of this book—each particular negative reality and each systemically interlinked crisis—what already seems clear is that, within neoliberal capitalism, there is *a fundamental conflict of values* (Smith and De Graaff 2016).

On the one hand, this conflict of values relates to global political economy. Empirically, we can discern a direct connection between contemporary crises and the system of global capitalism. However, [...] the state of the contemporary social world is not isolated from broader global trends and patterns, as well as particularly historical cycles and configurations. At the

heart of the crisis of civilization is a moral and ethical conflict centred on two generally very different visions of life and society—an egalitarian, ecologically just and actually democratic vision on the one hand, and an alienated, exploitative, destructive global capitalist vision on the other hand. (Smith and De Graaff 2016)

In order to best understand this conflict of values, we must also come to grips with a progressive and critical philosophy of history (Smith and De Graaff 2016)—indeed, a broad and foundational social philosophical framework—one which can help inform us of the bigger picture and which can help us understand the negative trends. According to this philosophy of history and to this critical anthropological view of human society (Flannery and Marcus 2012; Graeber 2014), the particular turn of consideration I am indicating here is one widely in agreement with perspectives within CT.

3.2.1 (i) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

The Frankfurt School, particularly the first generation, were some of the most pioneering when it came to attempts to conceptualize and understand the full effects of social pathology. Underlining many of their theories was, perhaps unsurprisingly, a critique of domination in all its forms. Today, we can expand early Frankfurt School critique along political lines as a critique and rejection of hardened hierarchies—as well as the sexism, racism, bigotry, prejudice, inequality, elitism, oppression and rule of representatives overrepresented—which now pervade our society. Already, we have touched on the work of Fromm, albeit casually and in passing, whose critique of domination is especially illuminating. Later on, Fromm's systematic study of pathology will become a central focus. In the meantime, it is some of Adorno's key theses that will be the focus of this chapter early on, particularly his analysis of domination—that is, three tightly inter-linked modes of domination (Zuidervaat 2007, p. 121)—in relation to a study of society and the subject. This will allow us to begin to develop a comprehensive and foundational social philosophical framework to support a more detailed discussion on a theory of social pathology in Chap. 3.

To begin, it is safe to say that a long-standing suspicion within CT, dating all the way back to Max Horkheimer's inaugural address in 1931 which laid out the basic direction of the Frankfurt School Program of Social Research (Horkheimer 1989), was that social structures, systems

and institutions are, in many ways, entwined with the issue of subject formation (Kellner 2014).

To put it another way, social structures, systems and institutions—regardless of whether they are positive or negative—are entwined with self-developmental processes and the types of identities engendered (Buirski and Kottler 2007; Fonagy et al. 2005; Goffman 1973; Lichtenberg and Kaplan 2014; Western 1985). In even simpler terms: the process of subject development, of *self*-development, which is illuminated in the research emanating from self-psychology, for example, is entwined to varying degrees in the sociohistorical-cultural structures that contextualize one's general situation in the world (Sherman 2007).

The subject is, as we will learn, always inextricably a part of the social world (Sherman 2007, p. 77). This was a feature of a preparatory analysis of mine in relation to a discussion on critical social systems theory (Smith 2015b). My analysis here was set in the context of wider engagement with Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer's seminal book, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1964/2002). In this paper, I reflected, moreover, on the existential and, impliedly, material dimension of the dialectic of enlightenment, particularly in relation to Adorno and Horkheimer's widely referenced "domination of nature" thesis (Smith 2015b). The significance of this revisiting of *Dialectical of Enlightenment* was threefold.

Originally published in 1964, Adorno and Horkheimer's seminal text remains one of the most relevant critiques of the deeper processes and trends of modern western society. Tracing the roots of "the self-destruction of enlightenment" (p. xvi), their research can be described as "an interdisciplinary experiment" (Bronner 2004). "Neither a work of history, anthropology, sociology, nor politics", Adorno and Horkheimer "instead combined these disciplines to remarkable effect" (Bronner 2004). Providing one of the most fundamental accounts of society's longstanding entanglement in blind domination (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002, p. xviii), they essentially "turned the accepted notion of progress upside down" (Bronner 2004). In doing so, not only did they illuminate patterns of "blind domination" (Zuidervaart 2007, p. 121). They revealed, even if unintentionally, what I will later describe as certain fundamental characteristics of the pathology of contemporary western society.

The scientific method of the Enlightenment, according to the authors, may have originally intended to serve the ideals of human liberation in an assault upon religious dogma. Yet the power of scientific reason ultimately wound

up being directed not merely against the gods, but all metaphysical ideas—including conscience and freedom—as well. “Knowledge” became divorced from “information,” norms from facts, and the scientific method, increasingly freed from any commitment to liberation, transformed nature into an object of domination, and itself into a whore employed by the highest bidder. (Bronner 2004)

One of the more basic arguments presented in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and, too, in Adorno’s own analysis with regard to the psychology of civilization (Fischer 2013) has to do with the author’s well-known thesis concerning the “domination of nature”. Here, we understand in particularly existential terms (Smith 2015b) that irrational fear or anxiety not only once drove Myth but also drove the Enlightenment’s eventual regress to irrationality. According to Adorno and Horkheimer, the domination of human beings’ natural environment was made possible by controlling human beings’ inner nature—what we may also equate to as psychological repression—which thus ultimately leads to a limitation of the human horizon to cycles of self-preservation and power (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002; Sherman 2007; Zuidervaat 2007; Cook 2011; Smith 2015a). This particular point of argument will re-surface later on. Meanwhile, in psychological terms, I intend to argue that we can equate these cycles of self-preservation and power to the problem of the pathology of the hardened and colonized ego (Smith 2016), which has subordinated itself to the specific socioeconomic system in the interest of individual self-preservation (Parton 2015a; Smith 2015b, 2016).

A progressive reading of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in this regard is one which, I suggest, combines Adorno and Horkheimer’s seminal social philosophical theses with contemporary research in psychology, wherein the author’s “domination of nature” thesis—including a critique of the modern genesis of instrumental reason, scientism and technicism—refers simultaneously to the systemic or structural workings of capitalism as well as to a radical existential thesis (Smith 2015b) based on the notion of “self-preservation gone wild” (Cook 2011). It is this notion of “self-preservation gone wild” which, to some extent, underlines what we term as the pathology of human destructiveness. This refers to what I previously described as the transhistorical ideology of domination (Smith 2015b). More practically, we could say that this refers to an attempt to understand the historical process behind the evolution of human society, explaining why it tends to produce and reproduce pathological characteristics: domination, coercion and exploitation.

Moreover, by understanding the “betrayal of the Enlightenment” as a continuation of the impulse towards identity and mastery, which is rooted in the existential thesis of irrational self-preservation drives (Smith 2015b), we are able to ground the study of how the basic impetus of instrumental rationality or, indeed, a distorted and mutated form of “enlightenment reason” is to essentially attack the very thing it is supposed to serve (Smith and De Graaff 2016). Instrumental reason coupled with the hardened, closed nature of “constitutive subjectivity” (Adorno 1992b; Sherman 2007) employs the cognitive tactics of the domination of the object and of one’s *self* for the benefit of increasing control of (internal and external) nature.

In a research paper which directly preceded this book, entitled *Reclaiming the Enlightenment and Imagining a New Social World: Grounding Normativity* (Smith and De Graaff 2016), this argument was expanded. If the Enlightenment was about liberating society and our common human values from the authority and control of the Church and the closed structure of medieval society, it has regressed—or, more accurately, has the tendency to regress—to replicating now global trends of domination.

Rather than reproducing these arguments, one is welcome to revisit key research (Smith 2015b; Smith and De Graaff 2016). Due to lack of space, I cannot fully elaborate on the dialectic of enlightenment, the significance of its core theses nor some of the issues pertaining to that work and how we might progress its main course of analysis. These lines of discussion can, again, be reviewed in a selection of past papers. With that said, it is worthwhile to continue a passing summary account by noting two especially important arguments relevant to our ongoing engagement. Inasmuch that Adorno and Horkheimer offer a number of explanations as to where things have gone wrong, one of their central arguments concerns the critical analysis of what will be described as the emergence of a certain analytic structure (Sherman 2007). This analytic structure will be addressed along the lines of a critique of a certain cognitive paradigm (Cook 2004; Smith 2015d).

Tracing the general tendency of the Enlightenment’s regress to myth, of reason’s regress to irrationality to the extent that hopes for “rational society” have been vanished by the prevalence of irrational social practice, this analytic structure or cognitive paradigm has already been shown to be particularly dominant and coercive in anthropological, epistemological and cosmological terms (De Graaff 2016; Cook 2011; Sherman 2007;

Smith 2015a, e; Smith and De Graaff 2016; Zuidervart 2007). However, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that these issues didn't start with the Enlightenment, as they trace the problem back to "primitive objectification" (Smith 2015a). Moreover, along anthropological and epistemological lines, the example I used from past research about how certain nature religions, in response to nature as fate, deified a particular dimension of life in an attempt to obtain mastery of nature, is especially illuminating (Smith 2015a, e; De Graaff 2016). Here, we learn how nature religions deified a particular dimension of life in an attempt to obtain mastery of nature:

Dialectic of Enlightenment is best read as an account of the human inclination to constantly drive toward establishing a sense of (existentially-centered) dominant security in the name of the absolute, there is no better example of primitive objectification than in how certain nature religions, especially those who, in response to nature as fate, deified "fertility". In this case, "fertility" was made absolute—it was universalized as an absolute faith-based principle—while the other dimensions of life were perceived as inferior or secondary. The objective of such deification? To master nature, or, at least, achieve a sense of mastery over nature. Was it possible that nature be actually mastered? No. But the existence of the drive to do so is precisely what is important to acknowledge. Moreover, the mythic concept of fertility in the past was really an effort to obtain a (false) sense of control over pure fate, not only in terms of pregnancy and childbearing, but also in terms of an attempt to control the fate of future harvests, and so on. Thus human beings turned the concept of fertility into the god of Fertility—into an Idol, an absolute or "totalized experiential orientation" in order to achieve a (false) sense of ultimate security in the midst of extremely precarious life. [...] In the same way that the deification of the concept of fertility resulted in the securing of a "totalized experiential orientation", so too does the drive of distorted reason aim toward a certain analytical and explanatory schema which, in turn, fosters a *totalized and reductionistic approach* to the phenomenal world (i.e., an absolute, ideological view of the world). Adorno's critique of the principle of "universal exchange" is more than telling in this regard. In the case of both myth and instrumental reason, it has already been described how everything tends to get reduced to the status of mere 'object' which can therefore be manipulated and controlled—where everything can be absolutely accounted for. Thus the statement by Horkheimer and Adorno that the enlightenment confuses "the animate with the inanimate, just as myth compounds the inanimate with the animate". (Smith 2015a)

Contrary, for example, to William Leiss' (2011) argument about the lack of domination of nature in primitive society or pre-historical social formations, I previously showed how this line of argumentation is beside the point because what matters (and what we must deal with in terms of achieving a truly emancipated society) is that conceptually the attempt to control nature, to absolutize along distinct epistemological and cognitive lines, was present. I first introduced this hypothesis in *Consciousness and Revolt* (2015d) via a critique of epistemology and the formation of what I term "totalized experiential orientations". To the detriment of their work, there has been a lack of understanding of the significance of the link Adorno and Horkheimer drew between myth and enlightenment (Smith 2015b), and what this link actually reveals when it comes to understanding certain underlying problems of the modern social world (Smith and De Graaff 2016).

Most importantly, in understanding the existential dimension of the dialectic of enlightenment, this allows us, I have argued, to deepen a critical theory of society and ultimately strengthen an emancipatory social-systemic analysis. My contention is that it will do so precisely in the sense of opening up the dialectic of enlightenment to an even more significant historical, anthropological and psychological programme of study, one which combines existential and humanistic perspectives, and ultimately makes us aware of how societal transformation reaches all the way down to the subject, similar to what Glenn Parton describes as the "journey within" (Parton 2015) or what is identified in humanistic psychology (e.g., Rogers 1983) as well as in certain strands psychotherapy and psychoanalysis as reconciliation in relation to a complex theory of personality and issues of self-structure, internalization, disintegration, anxiety, threat, defence, maladjustment and distortion (Benjamin 1977; Brandchaft 2010; De Graaff 2016; Fonagy et al. 2005; Gruenewald et al. 2004; Fromm 2002, 2010; Illeris 2007; Lichtenberg and Kaplan 2014; Rosenberg 2012; Shane et al. 1997; Tracy et al. 2007).

Inasmuch that some thinkers have recently criticized Adorno and Horkheimer's "domination of nature" thesis, their criticism largely misses the point (Smith 2015b, 2016). A correct reading of Adorno's "domination of nature" thesis is one which understands that at no point do Adorno and Horkheimer claim power and reason are absolutely identical (Sherman 2007; Zuidervaat 2007; Cook 2011; Allen 2016). It is very clear when reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that, through a critique of domination, the book concerns how reason becomes entwined with,

if not in the service of, power. Another way to put this is that human reason becomes subservient to dominant, coercive and pathological social systems. In the contemporary sense, reason becomes an instrument of “capitalism” as opposed to being in the service of humanity, progressive development and an egalitarian vision of life. Sherman (2007) states the issue well, namely that the relation between reason and domination is historically contingent. Furthermore, Amy Allen (2016) elaborates the point when she writes: “If, however, the relationship between reason and domination is historically contingent, and if it doesn’t involve a reduction of reason per se to domination, then the paradox emerges from a certain process of rationalization and is not internal to reason as such” (Allen 2016, p. 170). To state the issue once more for the purpose of undeniable clarity: the issue is not a critique of “reason” as a whole, but a particular distortion and use of reason and human rationality as an instrument of dominant, exploitative and unjust social circumstances, which, in the end, is actually a most unreasonable use of human reason!

In the same sense that a critique of scientism is not the same as a critique of science as a whole, it is particularly fruitful to read relevant sections of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as a critique of a certain distortion of “reason” as both conceptually and historically contingent (Allen 2016, p. 170). This is what gives possibility to the hope of a positive conception of enlightenment reason because the focus of study is a particular deformation of reason (Smith 2015a, e). As Allen summarizes: “In this sense, Horkheimer and Adorno do posit an essential tension between enlightenment rationality in the broad sense and power relations understood as the control or domination of inner and outer nature” (Allen 2016, p. 171). To quote Allen in full:

The source of the fascist and totalitarian regression to barbarism that Horkheimer and Adorno witnessed as they wrote this text in the early 1940s, against the backdrop of the war and the horrors of Nazism, is not merely the concrete historical or institutional forms of enlightenment thinking: it appears to be enlightenment rationality itself, which they describe as “corrosive” and “totalitarian”. The key to this shocking claim lies in the meaning of the term “enlightenment”. It refers not—at least not exclusively and not even primarily—to the historical epoch of European Enlightenment that began in France and flowered in Germany in the eighteenth century, but rather to a more general process of progressive rationalization that enables human beings to exercise greater and greater power over nature, over other human being, and over themselves. It is the latter meaning of “enlighten-

ment” that allows Horkheimer and Adorno to link enlightenment rationality with the will to mastery, control and the domination of inner and outer nature; this will to mastery comes to fruition in the historical period known as the Enlightenment, but it does not originate there. (Allen 2016, p. 167)

3.2.2 (ii) *An Empirical View*

Here, we may insert another point pertaining to the philosophy of history and of development. What I have previously described as “systemic cycles of domination between human beings”, particularly in relation to the dialectic of enlightenment, may have long been a feature of history. But empirically, we can observe how the trend very much remains the norm today (Pratto et al. 1994), with “group conflict and group-based inequality.../pervasive in human existence”. Felicia Pratto, Jim Sidanius et al. strike this point in the opening paragraph of their widely acknowledged study *Social Dominance Orientation: A Personality Variable Predicting Social and Political Attitudes* (1994). They write: “Currently, every continent is enduring some form of ethnic conflict, from the verbal debate over multiculturalism in the United States and Canada to civil war in Liberia and Bosnia. Other conflicts between groups are ancient: the European persecution of Jews, ‘Holy Wars’ waged by Christians and Muslims around the Mediterranean, imperialism in South America, and anti-Black racism in northern Africa and else-where” (Pratto et al. 1994, p. 741). For the authors of Social Dominance Orientation, their theory postulates in a way not so different from Adorno’s own suspicions—and that of CT more generally—that societies minimize group conflict by creating a hierarchical consensus on ideologies, which promote the superiority of one group over others (p. 741). It is argued that this dominant logic promotes or maintains group inequality, providing the tools that legitimize discrimination (p. 741), intersecting with certain aspects of Adorno’s social philosophical critique of “identity thinking” and “constitutive subjectivity” in *Negative Dialectics* and *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. To work smoothly, we learn that these ideologies—or, better yet, this ideological campaign to establish hierarchy—begin to appear as self-apparent truths or, as Pratto et al. call them: “hierarchy-legitimizing myths”.

Of course, one must consider how social-economic and political forces also play a vital role in fostering or supporting the development of the sort of dominant ideologies that the authors of Social Dominance Orientation systematically dissect. Although the critique by Pratto et al. doesn’t go far

enough in this regard, their study highlights how social dominance orientation nevertheless plays a vital role in the production and reproduction of systemic levels of domination, including contemporary political economy (pp. 743–745).

By contributing to consensual or normalized group-based inequality, legitimizing myths help to stabilize oppression. .../For example, the ideology of anti-Black racism has been instantiated in personal acts of discrimination, but also in institutional discrimination against African-Americans by banks, public transit authorities, schools, churches, marriage laws, and the penal system. Social Darwinism and meritocracy are examples of other ideologies that imply that some people are not as “good” as others and therefore should be allocated less positive social value than others. (Pratto et al. 1994, p. 741)

It is fitting to cite the empirical research of Pratto et al. (1994) because their analysis further identifies what I previously termed “the hidden trend” of historical and modern society. Offering a sharp, if not penetrating, critique of social conservatism and the development of dominant ideologies, Social Dominance Orientation can be read almost as the social translation of the sort of theory of domination read in Adorno and Horkheimer’s historical account.

3.2.3 (iii) *Concluding Remarks*

From a critical existential sociological perspective, societies are generally purpose-driven, for better or for worse. It’s not always the case that a single purpose is present. But, for the most part, all pathological societies—that is, all negative societies—have been formed on the basis of some sort of absolute with its resultant unquestioned doctrines (De Graaff 2016). Rooted in the drive, as we previously discussed, on achieving a false sense of absolute security in the form, historical societal formations have almost always evidenced some sense of deification (De Graaff 2016). The example of the Idol of Fertility could be reasserted as an illustration. However, in view of this existential thesis:

it is not surprising that throughout the ages people have looked for that foundation and certainty in one place after the other. They have looked to the heavens, for the many gods, the personifications of nature and the rulers of history. They have looked to the divine kings and emperors, the

representatives of the gods and the divine powers. They have looked within themselves, to the power of their minds, their control, their possessions. In our day it is particularly the economic dimension of life that has been absolutized or deified [...]. They have failed us all, the gods in whom we trusted. (De Graaff 2016)

Similar, in a sense, to the phenomenon of ethnocentrism, pathological society necessarily produces, much like what we read in social dominance theory, a closed, hardened and repressed sociohistorical-cultural system. One's view of the world becomes framed, not critically, but in and through the lens of that particular totalized worldview (Smith 2015d). In this sense, we can see a similarity with the viewpoint of cultural relativism in that, as a long-standing key concept in anthropology, it is asserted each culture has its own values and practices. However, contrary to cultural relativism, we must make critical value judgements about cultural differences and also about what is universally common between negative or pathological societies. In the same way that Fromm criticized both Soviet Communism and American Capitalism, we can criticize North Korea, Japanese, Australian or American societies on the basis of engagement with regard to key issues of a CT of health and well-being. Some already perform a similar role through particularly progressive and critical discourses on human rights. In fact, in many ways, a critical study or theory of social pathology works at the many intersections of a critical study of violation, rights and the critical sociology of health.

In short, what motivates today's blind pattern of domination is irrational fear (Zuidervaart 2007). "The gods cannot takeaway fear from human beings, the petrified cries of whom they bear as their names. Humans believe themselves free of fear when there is no longer anything unknown. [...] Enlightenment is mythical fear radicalized. [...] Nothing is allowed to remain outside, since the mere idea of the 'outside' is the real source of fear" (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002, p. 11).

According to Horkheimer and Adorno, the source of today's disaster is a pattern of blind domination, domination in a triple sense: the domination of nature by human beings, the domination of nature within human beings, and, in both of these forms of domination, the domination of some human beings by others. What motivates such triple domination is an irrational fear of the unknown. [...] In an unfree society whose culture pursues so-called progress no matter what the cost, that which is "other," whether human or nonhuman, gets shoved aside, exploited, or destroyed. The means of

destruction may be more sophisticated in the modern West, and the exploitation may be less direct than outright slavery, but blind, fear-driven domination continues, with ever greater global consequences. (Zuidervaat 2015)

Admittedly, Adorno and Horkheimer do not disentangle reason and power once and for all. But they do leave us with a fundamental sense of direction. They leave us, in other words, with a critical examination which renders reason self-aware of its entanglement with power (Allen 2016, p. 172). This entanglement is not inevitable; it is a trend or tendency (Zuidervaat 2007; Smith 2015a), and, in this sense, their “domination of nature” thesis should be understood as preparing the way for potentially radical reflection on the subject (Smith 2015d). This radical course of reflection will be a centre of focus in Chap. 4.

3.3 NORMS AND NEEDS: A CRITICAL NORMATIVE HUMANISM

The most pertinent and fundamental question thus becomes directed to what types of social conditions generally foster what sort of human behaviour. A transformative social theory will be offered in the concluding chapters of this book. Meanwhile, if contemporary capitalist society is pathological, we can determine that it is so according to very clear and discernible characteristics (Fromm 2002). In *The Sane Society*, Fromm does a fantastic job at highlighting the negative effects capitalist society has on the individual and more deeply on the development of the individual subject. Putting aside his abstract humanism and his problematic assertions regarding essential human nature, was Fromm right to introduce a thesis concerning the horizon of human needs? The answer, in short, is yes.

In considering various anthropological studies, as well as a wide survey of historical accounts, it is quite possible that a more concrete philosophical, empirical and scientific account of universal human needs represents the cornerstone of a more up-to-date theory of social pathology. In other words, if the pressing question in advancing a notion of social pathology concerns how we might differentiate between more or less conspicuous societies, the humanistic thesis concerning individual needs is extremely important. Even or especially when it comes to debates concerning visions for progressive societal transformation, so many people, so many movements and political establishments attempt to and account for the concept of social change. There are so many theoretical interpretations as to what

“social change” might mean or look like. But often, these interpretations get bound up in an ever rigidifying political framework and become abstract from the “everyday” struggle, suffering and needs of people. In this sense, it is possible to employ Adorno’s notion that the critical concept of “social progress” (Smith and De Graaff 2016), as we have touched on, must remain at all times grounded in the problem of needless social suffering.

In other words, what is “social progress” if it does not remain engaged with the problem of needless social suffering and its potential alleviation? In truth, such a grounding of the idea of social progress is represented by the original Enlightenment ideal (Bronner 2004). What we need to accomplish is a normative framework which can discern whether a certain form of change is truthful to the critical notion of social progress, wherein, as we will discuss later, societal transformation is seen as an open, critically self-reflective, ongoing multidirectional and many-sided human transformation process. In transitioning out of pathological cycle, in breaking the vicious circle of pathological development, we need to identify ways in which we can inform progressive social movements of how to navigate very basic issues of praxis.

This will be a subject of discussion in the closing sections of this book. At the present juncture, however, the issue is as identified at the beginning: if there is a problem with capitalism it has to do, at the deepest level of critique, how it manufactures needless suffering. From economic inequality and environmental degradation to the division of labour and the deep psychological afflictions of the mind numbing workweek. And yet, if in the concluding chapter it will be asked more explicitly, “what would a better society look like?”, in preparing for this discussion, we need to come to grips with the foundations of a deeper transformative social theory. This has to do, I suggest, with the development of a critical normative humanism. Such a critical normative humanism is anchored in a form of recognition concerning particular *and* universal human needs. A significant part of the framework for such a foundational humanistic perspective is not only an open-ended, dynamic and unfolding methodological approach similar to what Amy Allen has described as “metanormative contextualism” which “is an example of a point of view that is beyond [...] relativism and absolutism” (Allen 2016, p. 216). It intersects, as well, with what Gunn and Wilding (2013) have termed a shift to “mutual recognition”, which they’ve not only theoretically developed but also applied in various case studies concerning Occupy-style politics and contemporary social movements.

At the core of such an approach, what a critical normative humanism seeks to identify are ways in which there can be an “embracing” of “a view about moral epistemology or metanormative justification” that is “perfectly consistent with endorsing first-order substantive normative principles such as mutual respect, egalitarian reciprocity, openness to the other, inclusiveness, and so forth”, without also at the same time violating the particular (Allen 2016, p. 216).

In coming extremely close to the sort of *phenomenological ethics* Arnold De Graaff and I introduced in a previous paper, the main point, Allen suggests when writing on Adorno (which is largely anticipative of our discussion in Chap. 4), is that “Adorno’s appeal” is “to the reality of suffering” which “cannot be indicative of a naïve or straightforward realism or objectivism about moral truths or values” (Allen 2016, p. 217). Moreover, what Adorno is appealing to is the “reality of suffering” in the sense of the “moral impulse of solidarity with suffering” (p. 217). Thus, concisely put, “the appeal to suffering or concrete inhumanity as a ground for our negatively framed moral judgements is an appeal not to a set of objective moral facts but rather to the suppressed moment within our own historically conditioned way of experiencing the normative world” (p. 217).

On this reading, Allen comes very close to Fabian Freyenhagen’s work, where he reconstructs and defends Adorno’s philosophy—arguing that it contains “a negativist ethics (an ethics based solely on a conception of the bad), which can be vindicated, once we have gained a proper understanding of what it is to account for normativity” (2013, 2015a).

In attempting to advance these ideas, I propose the notion of a critical normative humanism, grounding both in the recognition of needless suffering and also in a radical view of societal change that is seen as both a many-sided social and an individual human transformation process. This process is rooted, I suggest, in taking from the general spirit of Fromm and Marcuse’s respective theses, in an emancipatory politics that necessarily finds anchor in an alternative philosophy of psychology. Grounded in a phenomenological ethics and in an alternative anthropology, epistemology and cosmology (Smith and De Graaff 2016), this *normative critical humanism* represents more comprehensively a third alternative to positivism and relativism, whilst, also, in taking substantial insight from humanistic psychology, offers a radical integrative “third force” in psychology—one that moves beyond purely psychoanalytical and behavioural approaches.

In more technically theoretical terms, a normative critical humanism represents a retrieval of Fromm, in the sense that it proposes a sort of “dialectical materialism” with an existential and humanistic foundation. Thus, not only is it “thoroughly historical because it stresses that our experience, views of the world, and concepts change in relation to historical development, and that therefore both our theories and perceptual apparatuses, as well as the objects of knowledge, are historical” (Kellner 2014). The idea here is that, unlike idealism, which we may recall was a point of criticism when it came to Adorno and Marcuse’s reading of Fromm, the alternative framework I propose seeks to understand not only “the souls of men” but also the actual progressive transforming of “the concrete conditions under which humans suffer and in which, of course, their souls must become stunted” (Kellner 2014). Douglas Kellner, in quoting Horkheimer, writes:

This concern may be comprehended historically and psychologically; it cannot be grounded in general principles. Horkheimer believes that it is primarily materialist theories which are currently concerned with human suffering, and with transforming the material conditions which produce human suffering to produce a more rational society and a more humane form of existence. This analysis assumes that “the wretchedness of our own time is connected with the structure of society; social theory therefore forms the main content of contemporary materialism” (ibid., p. 24). In particular, “the fundamental historical role of economic relations is characteristic of the materialist position ... Understanding of the present becomes more idealist, the more it avoids the economic causes of material need and looks to a psychologically naive elaboration of so-called ‘basic elements of human existence’” (ibid., pp. 25–26). (Kellner 2014)

Having argued in the past that Frankfurt School’s critical theory lacks a more explicit critical humanist and existential dimension (Smith 2015b), by inserting insight offered by these approaches into a broader critical social theory, I believe we can strengthen the original aims of a critical materialist social theory. This is particularly or especially the case if we consider such a materialist social theory as focused: “on human needs and suffering, the ways that economic conditions produce suffering, and the changes necessary to eliminate human suffering and to increase human well-being” (Kellner 2014). If the existence of needless social suffering provides the truth context for a critical theory of society—supporting, indeed, what Adorno has termed the need for a “new categorical imperative” (Bernstein 1992, pp. 384–396). Part

of the essential criteria on which we can judge whether humanity has seen moral progress in this respect not only entails the critical sharpening of basic emancipatory values—such as human dignity, equality and compassion—but also includes a broader societal comprehension of the missing elements of the social parameters within which we can provide for individual and collective needs and foster societal well-being.

3.3.1 (i) *Norms and Needs*

If, after a critical retrieval of the mainstream notion of social pathology, we understand that society is comparable to an organism, social problems are no longer conceived solely as a deviation from some sort of normal or healthy social condition, but as a symptom of the ailing organism in itself. As one example, consider the issue of racism in American society. Movements in response to recent events in the USA have rightly put demands for police reform at the top of the agenda.³ But there is something of a myth around such a belief in reform (Coates 2015). To paraphrase Ta-Nehisi Coates, when tackling the problem of the institution of police and the issue of “police authority” (not to mention “power”), the real problem is one of restoring democratic authority. To put it another way: “a reform that begins with the officer on the beat is not reform at all. It’s avoidance. It’s a continuance of the American preference for considering the actions of bad individuals, as opposed to the function and intention of systems.” The US society, much like American capitalism, has an incredibly deep tie to racism, not to mention slavery and what Henry Giroux (2012) has termed “disposability”.

Thus, in relation to an earlier discussion in Chap. 2, if in order to discern critical emancipatory norms as opposed to established norms which function as an instrument of regulating human behaviour, of supporting *adaptation* to a morally corrupt status quo, a significant part of a normative critical humanist project is to ground a framework for the recognition of human needs.

From a social and cultural anthropological point of view as well as a dialectical materialist one, there are certain existential—indeed, universal—norms we can identify as to why human beings form societies (De Graaff 2016; Llobera 2003). To state this should not be equated to taking a Eurocentric view. It would be Eurocentric, moreover, to assert that “terms like ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’, ‘national sentiments’, ‘national consciousness’ and other related ones, which in their modern form origi-

nated and developed in Western Europe, can function as universal concepts” (Llobera 2003, p. 195). To put it another way: “The problem”, once again, “with many people [...] is that they believe Western civilization is a universal civilization” (Llobera 2003, p. 195). Key values or traits of western civilization—such as individualism—are largely western constructs (Llobera 2003, p. 255). But the need for food, for example, is a basic physical as well as existential reality.

What is required here is that we systematically work through Bradshaw’s (1972) “taxonomy of needs” and Maslow’s (1943, 1954) “hierarchy of needs”. In doing so, we must recall Adorno’s intervention when it comes to recognizing the *mediation of facts*—and the manner in which any detailed systematic analysis of human needs will have been subject to some input when it comes to the sociohistorical-cultural context which defines the individual’s experience. At the same time, this does not get away from contemporary research (Tay and Diener 2011) which has tested Maslow’s theory, for example, analysing the data of 60,865 participants from 123 countries, confirming the view that universal human needs appear to exist regardless of cultural differences (McLeod 2007b). Additionally, extensive research in the area of “human scale development” has significantly impacted updated contemporary views regarding universal human needs (Max-Neef 1991). When critically retrieved and applied within a broader transformative critical social philosophy, this research confirms and expands an anthropology of human needs as part of an emancipatory vision forward (Smith and De Graaff 2016). Finally, some interesting research by Richard Ryan and Edward Deci (2000), who have proposed a neo-humanistic theory of psychological motivation, is also worth consideration. This is a sample of an overwhelming body literature which empirically confirms the centrality of needs when it comes to emancipatory philosophy.

Why needs once again come front and centre has to do with how, in weighing critical criteria of human needs in relation to demands for emancipatory societal transformation, we ultimately are confronted with the question: “what would societal transformation look like in the short and long term?” “How do we measure it not just quantitatively but particularly—qualitatively?” A detailed answer will be reserved until later. In keeping on course, we can at least say here that, from the basis of the normative foundations of the Enlightenment, which represents the primary historical grounding for a critical normative humanism, a more healthy society would entail all people being able to live healthy and fulfilling lives, free

from political or economic coercion. It would entail, as Beth M. Titchiner (2017) once commented within the context informal discussion:

A world in which teachers would be able to respond to the needs and interests of students without the pressure to meet set targets and to do so within a rigid timetable and structure of petty regulations. Or a world in which a sick person is able to receive all the support that they need in order to get better and to lead a dignified and healthy life (or death)—not just medication that is controlled by a strict bureaucratic process—but an holistic and integrated support system which is able to respond genuinely to their needs whether these be for therapeutic activities such as arts and gardening, person-centred psychotherapy and counselling, a healthy and appropriate diet, good company, a nice environment to get well in, access to information and cultural activities, or financial support. It would be a world in which teenagers didn't develop anxiety disorders and neuroses about their bodies because the pressure to be a false image of 'perfect' that doesn't exist. I think these kinds of things would be measures of whether change is happening on a qualitative, ground-level scale.⁴

What this also suggests, in return to a brief discussion on Honneth, is the emancipatory value of self-realization. Or, as we learn in humanistic psychology, the unimpeded process of self-actualization, which, in the next chapter, we will discuss in relation to the notion of the “free-flourishing subject”. In any case, these considerations return us once again to this book's main thesis: there are more or less healthy social environments. A large part of discerning the difference between more or less pathological social conditions pertains directly to the status of the subject.

Moreover, if we can discern, universally, the difference between generally healthy and unhealthy social dynamics, this happens not on the basis of a theory of universal values—even though universal values are eventually asserted—but in relation to humanistic values and realities pertaining to the cross-disciplinary study of healthy subject development. This is what Honneth (1996) seems to also be indicating, albeit in not so many words, as Freyenhagen notes in his consideration of Honneth's view of human self-realization (Freyenhagen 2015b, p. 132). This notion of “self-realization” relates to Honneth's theory of ethical criteria and is linked to the notion “of a fulfilled, successful, and good life”. That is to say that if, “phenomena like Honneth's proposed case of organized self-realization strike [...] as calling out for” a different conceptualization of social pathology (pp. 150–151), the main goal of such an alternative theory should be, as we noted in Chap. 2, to account for “radical social critique” and to

conceptualize pathologies “in terms of detriments to individual well-being that is socially caused” (p. 151).

To expand on this call for a new concept of pathology, it has been suggested in our current line of discussion that such a project must start with understanding the baseline differentiations between societies on the scale of pathology through a study of whether society damages its own members via its cultural rules (Edgerton 2010). Then, from there, we can push forward, having already begun to establish a transformative philosophy of psychology, with a study of the social environment’s direct impact and effects on the subject. As we will learn in Chaps. 4 and 5 is how, in formulating an alternative philosophy of psychology and, impliedly, of the subject, what this entails is a much more holistic view when it comes to the breaking the cycles of hardened pathologies and to the potential elimination of needless suffering. On the level of policy, it will be argued, for instance, that the goal of radical reformism in the immediate should be centred on the relief of needless suffering at the level of ordinary people. But, more broadly, the measure of such transformative politics has to be holistic.

We can draw an analogy here with holistic psychology, which refers both to approaches in social psychology and to qualitative methods of the humanistic approach (McLeod 2008). This approach “that there are different levels of explanation and that at each level there are ‘emergent properties’ that cannot be reduced to the one below”. As Saul McLeod (2008) writes, contrary to “[r]eductionist explanations”, reductionism is “considered inappropriate to the study of human subjectivity because here the emergent property that we have to take account of is that of the ‘whole person’”. In this sense, what such an approach entails is proactive awareness within immanent critique of the fundamental root causes of the key universally shared traits of pathological society. Inequality, social injustice and domination are but a few regularities in this regard. At the same time, we must also, as previously emphasized, take into account the whole picture—the psychological, sociological, economic, structural, epistemological and so on dimensions of pathological reproductive cycles. In understanding the systemic connections of injustice within the context of global capitalism, the alternative must represent, as De Graaff argues (2016), a holistic and integrative view of health, well-being and social life.

What I mean by this last point refers to a future argument. I think that when we consider a deeper cross-disciplinary and detailed study of the subject, it is revealed, quite conclusively, that the individual is mediated socially. One of the results of this mediation concerns how, to whatever

degree, the individual's identity formation, self-development, is entwined with or marked by significant internalization of his or her sociohistorical-cultural structures (Sherman 2007). Additionally, as has been suggested throughout the whole of this work: a radical philosophy of psychology grounded in and informed by CT discloses the interrelation of social pathology with early emotional pathology, core personal trauma and neurosis, social trauma, and internalization in relation to the (de)formation of the subject and development of the self, and how each of these levels or dimensions *reinforce each other in a closed feedback loop*. This notion of the “closed feedback loop” is borrowed from systems theory and systems thinking (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 2005; Bertalanffy 1968/1976, 1975, 1981; Whitchurch and Constantine 1993), which seeks to account for the reality of patterns or channels of interaction, behaviour and communication that maintains stagnation, normalcy, conformity or constancy while minimizing change.⁵ And yet, in spite of this closed feedback loop, which is essentially equated to a deformation of the very idea of *self*—that is, the types of identities engendered and the systems of belief and existential investments people develop and practise within the constructs of capitalism—the subject can also still imagine alternative possibilities beyond those systems, institutions and structures that define the very idea of “contemporary life”.

When we approach social critique from the point of view of a critique of social pathology, well-being and health go beyond the conventional indicators of lack of disease, economic stability and ability to participate in education and community life. Instead, such an analysis travels to the core of social psychological and emotional health—the entire social ecology.

All of this is to say that from a multidimensional, transdisciplinary perspective, we can “recognize that people seek to satisfy the whole range of human needs, whether biological needs, needs for security, belonging, cognitive needs, aesthetic, relational, or spiritual needs” (De Graaff 2016). In turn, “these motivations do not necessarily follow Maslow's hierarchical order with biological and physical needs at the bottom and self-actualization at the top. Concerns about food, water, shelter, safety and belonging may vary with the level of prosperity” (De Graaff 2016). Likewise, existentially, when it comes to one's natural expression of labour, as opposed to the exploitative concept of labour today, needs also pertain to self-developmental processes and various dynamics of self-realization, such as in the instance of human creativity, exploration and genuine innovation as an extension of one's deeper interests and passions in life.

But if we consider the view that there are core basic needs universally shared by human beings as being accurate, and if we consider that, throughout the history of human society, there are basic universal societal principles, how do we ensure that we are not being ethnocentric? There are already fundamental examples of a framework which transcends cultural relativism and avoids ethnocentrism, such as that which can be found in De Graaff (2016). In relation to the subject, we can discern, for example, a common universality of the developmental process. Childhood may have been “seen and experienced differently five hundred or two thousand years ago”, and the developmental stages of subject development may have become “more differentiated over time”, but it is generally accepted that each individual goes through different developmental stages during their life-time, from babyhood to old-age (De Graaff 2016). In the example of infant development, including the baby’s sense of identity and agency (Stern 1971, 1974, 1977, 1985), “these integral functions differentiate and develop as they are practiced and guided by parents” (De Graaff 2016). Crucially, “At each stage a new sense of self-awareness develops and takes on a particular cultural form.” And while “Childhood and parenting differs not only from one historical period to another but also from culture to culture as the many cultural anthropological studies show”, the common universality of the process of subject formation is generally clear. The same can be said, analogously, of the core principles of societal developmental processes. In *The Gods in Whom They Trusted*, De Graaff (2016) writes:

we have indicated how we recognize whether some economic activity was happening at a particular period of history. From the ‘records’ we gather how people were providing for their needs. There are abiding, core guidelines (like justice, equality, solidarity, ecological sustainability, physical well-being, sensitive openness, communal living space, and so on) that seem to govern each dimension of life and that enable us to recognize the records of past activities. These core guidelines allow us to recognize all other human activities in the past besides economic ones.

3.3.2 (ii) *Normativity and Emancipatory Societal Principles*

Each society may express or uphold basic societal principles differently, for better or for worse. As Edgerton (2010) shows, each society may be more or less conspicuous, violating or dominant. Within capitalist society, for example, solidarity may be rooted primarily in the form of exploitative

economic relations (Zuidervaat 2007). The economic dominates the whole of life under neoliberal capitalism (De Graaff 2016), and solidarity is generally conceived within a coercive, dominant and authoritarian context as being subservient to the economic absolute of the capitalist social universe.

Understanding this has clear implications with regard to the distortion of societal norms. Consider, for example, solidarity and resourcefulness as two such irreducible universal societal principles (Zuidervaat 2007, pp. 125–131). However, as such principles may be expressed within their specific sociohistorical-cultural context (De Graaff 2016; Llobera 2003), they can often be seen as either more or less pathological. How we come to grips with discerning the more pathological formation with the less pathological formation refers, as Lambert Zuidervaat (2007, pp. 125–131) notes, to conditions of *normative critique*. He writes that: “To envision a dismantling of exploitation, a transformative social theory needs to include a normative critique of capitalism as an economic system” (p. 125). Zuidervaat continues that such a critique “would need to come to grips with the totalizing character of the ‘logic’ of capitalism” (p. 125) and also indicate a post-capitalist economy that is “neither totalizing nor exploitative” (p. 126). He concludes by noting as well that such a transformative vision is based on a substantive critique of “repression” and “destructive control”, as he goes on to introduce the notion of a “differential transformation of Western society” (p. 126). This notion also appears alive and well in Arnold De Graaff’s (2016) comprehensive book which analyses the “capitalist disintegration of life” and a foundational perspective on how to progress in the immediate with a many-sided transformation of capitalism.

To add to Zuidervaat’s thesis with regard to normative critique, what needs expanding is how, in preserving his study of societal principles, what keeps these principles from once again being entangled with “blind domination” is a critical normative humanism. Moreover, what such a humanistic perspective provides is recognition that each society or culture may express or uphold societal principles differently, whilst grounding a critique of the variations according to emancipatory normative values (Smith and De Graaff 2016).

On that note, I would like to now turn to the more pressing matter at the heart of an analysis of the genesis of the modern subject in relation to the development of a critical conception of social pathology. The aim of my engagement in this upcoming discussion can be broken down even further: in outlining some key parts of my research over the last several

years, the following study, comprised of several separate arguments, each contributing towards a larger thesis, attempts to understand the individual in capitalist society. In considering the development of a progressive philosophy of the subject, by analysing capitalist conceptions of the human being, we can further expand on how we might break pathological reproductive cycles on the level of the subject.

NOTES

1. See, for instance: <http://www.project2061.org/publications/sfaa/online/chap7.htm>.
2. What is precisely mythical about today's thinking is how, instead of identifying sociohistorical forces of systemic domination, one displaces the crisis of capitalism, a critique of the fundamental regularities found within the historic genesis of "coercive society" and in turn employs a positivist ideology that blames (abstract notions of) unalterable laws. This what Adorno and Horkheimer (2002) are alluding to when they write: what is "mythical in both myth and enlightenment is the thought that fundamental change is impossible [...]. Such resistance to change characterizes both ancient myths of fate and modern devotion to the facts."
3. See, for instance, this (2015) article published by Reuters on recent protests demanding police reform: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-police-baltimore-idUSKBN0NI1N720150429>.
4. Extracted from a contribution by Titchiner during a collective discussion on social suffering and societal change.
5. An introduction to such a notion of "closed loop feedback" can be found in this digital encyclopaedia on family systems theory: <http://family.jrank.org/pages/597/Family-Systems-Theory-Basic-Concepts-Propositions.html>.

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The Individual in Capitalistic Society

4.1 ADORNO'S PHILOSOPHY OF THE SUBJECT: SOCIAL INTERACTION, DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY, EGO COLONIZATION

Over recent decades, a lot of criticism has been directed towards Adorno's project from several angles. As I noted in my ongoing series on the key Frankfurt School thinker, some of the criticism is legitimate, some is not (Smith 2015a, d). A perfect example can be found in the work of Jürgen Habermas (Sherman 2007; Zuidervaat 2007). In many or all cases, however, what is clear when it comes to a project of critical retrieval is that a great deal of nuance is required when engaging with Adorno's analysis (Zuidervaat 2007). His gravest error, as with many other philosophers, is the totalization of theory and, in Adorno's case, especially of transformation (Zuidervaat 2007; Smith 2015b). But when one works through Adorno's project as a whole and considers his key concepts and the importance of his many critical interventions, one quickly realizes the fundamental significance of many certain aspects of his CT when it comes to formulating a broad critical social philosophy. This is especially so when it comes to conceptualizing the relation between the individual human subject and society.

Aside from the many legitimate and illegitimate criticisms, most of which can be worked through in a fairly clear and concise manner (Allen 2016; Cook 2011; Foster 2008; Sherman 2007; Smith 2015a, c; Smith and De

Graaff 2016; Zuidervaat 2007), one of the biggest issues I perceive today with regard to a retrieval of Adorno's thought and the advancement of CT in general, has to do with how many poststructuralist readings have more often than not contributed to tremendous error in understanding some of his key theses. The same can also be said of poststructuralist readings of the early Frankfurt School in general. Further, I see many poststructuralist readings as a general contributor to a situation of "great confusion" (to borrow from Habermas). This state of confusion is especially evident in the younger generations of students who have learned of and have been introduced to CT—and to Adorno in particular—not in line first with the Frankfurt School view, but through the lens of poststructuralist interpretation of the Frankfurt School view. This has resulted in a significant absence of methodological innovation—which CT, at its core, aims to practice (Kellner 2014). In the many students who wish to break from and move beyond poststructuralism, it is amazing to witness their rediscovery of CT, as though an entire world of progressive critical social philosophy has suddenly been revealed. In many ways, this experience can be shared with the discovery of many important philosophers, from Jean-Paul Sartre to Pierre Bourdieu to Ludwig Wittgenstein, all of which have been subject to a process of poststructuralist appropriation (to varying degrees).

The reason these concerns are important to note is because my analysis in this work builds from what I perceive as a position advanced beyond the poststructuralist project—as well as beyond the relativist and positivist positions—as it works towards a more progressive epistemology and methodology. Seen as an extension of the development and *practice* of CT's advancement, my hope is that this chapter in particular and this book in general serves as one example of a progressive response to the crisis of social theory (Kellner 2014).

4.1.1 (i) *Poststructuralist Appropriation*

Regarding the poststructuralist appropriation of Adorno, several comments are worth making at the outset as we prepare the way for a deeper engagement with some of his main theses in relation to the individual and society. When it comes to *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, for example, whose focus on a critique of the modern (bourgeois) subject has already been noted and can also be reviewed in a number of past papers (Smith 2015a; Smith and De Graaff 2016), poststructuralist readings tend to focus on criticism "of the western philosophical tradition" in

Adorno and Horkheimer's seminal study, as well as "Adorno's critique of the enlightenment project—with its emphasis on universal history, the autonomy of the subject, and the unity of reason and rationality through the transparency of language and communications" (Hohendahl 1995, p. 7).

David Sherman summarizes, before offering the same quote above, that:

Dialectic of Enlightenment considers the subject from the historical or "third person" standpoint. From this standpoint, notions such as freedom and responsibility, which constitutes "the subject" as such, become quite problematic—indeed, with the ineluctable march of history as a backdrop, they tend to all but disappear from view (even if they are implicitly presupposed, as is the case with Adorno). It is for this reason that a variety of poststructuralists see *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as a prototypical poststructuralist work. (Sherman 2007, p. 181)

However, inasmuch that poststructuralist are quick to adopt *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, a primary trend can be identified: poststructuralists essentially read the seminal study by Adorno and Horkheimer as an analysis that abandons hope in the liberating force of the enlightenment (Sherman 2007, p. 183). As Sherman points out, and as I wrote elsewhere, "this depiction [...] is just plain wrong" (Sherman 2007, p. 183). In fact, such a poststructuralist reading of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* has no ground to stand on. To borrow the words of Nikolas Kompridis:

The distinctive feature of the critical theoretical tradition [is] its insistence on the possibility of another kind of reason, another way of living in practice, which is not merely an abstraction or something impossibly utopian but an actual possibility that we can locate in existing, if marginalized, practices of reason. For if we are to overcome the negative effects of the dominant forms of reason we need to weaken our attachment to them to make room for neglected, devalued or suppressed forms of reason. (Kompridis 2006, p. 237)

Without repeating past arguments, what's interesting is that many poststructuralist thinkers seem to want to emphasize in Adorno a critique of subjectivity while rejecting the conceptual apparatus of Marxist theory among others (Sherman 2007, p. 182) central to his social philosophy, refraining in the process from any notion of universal history on behalf of

fragmented perspectives which, in all honesty, as the basis for theory, loses all emancipatory or revolutionary potential.

In its suspicion of coherence, enlightenment universalism and the notions of truth (Smith and De Graaff 2016)—not to mention fundamentally important issues of structure and systems, or, indeed, *structural critique*—poststructuralism has contributed much to the crisis of social theory (Kellner 2014). This has culminated in a state of theoretical disorientation, ineffectual critique and views of praxis, as well as hypertheoretical and esoteric discourses, and closed feedback loops of debate. As a failed attempt to transcend issues of modernity without ever actually dealing with or working through said issues, poststructuralism—as well as other postmodern theories—have largely led us towards philosophical and practical forms of nihilism. Some have even argued that these intellectual movements have resulted in a strengthening of the status quo, insofar that they result in a generally ineffectual politics. And when it comes to Adorno in particular, it is interesting to reflect on this fact in relation to how: “the motivation that impels poststructuralists to appropriate Adorno’s thought is their own repudiation of Marxism” (Sherman 2007, p. 182). To quote a passage by Peter Uwe Hohendahl that Sherman (2007) also cites:

What characterizes the poststructuralist approach to Adorno is its deliberate attempt to distinguish his work from the body of Marxist theory and to underscore the difference between his thought and the conceptual apparatus of Marxist theory [...]. In other words, the question of reason and rationality becomes the touchstone for the poststructuralist reading [...]. This reading wants to subvert what Marxist theory had, by and large, taken for granted and therefore ascribed to the writings of Adorno: namely, a stable concept of subjectivity and agency (as opposed to the state of fragmentation and passivity found in advanced capitalism, for instance). The poststructuralist reading would emphasize Adorno’s critique of subjectivity, a critique that does not merely focus (as does Lukács) on fragmentation under monopoly capitalism but rather calls the entire Western tradition—the very constitution and identity in Greek culture—into question. (Hohendahl 1995, pp. 7–8)

Though the same can very much be said of the poststructuralist treatment of Walter Benjamin, especially when it comes to the central most part of Benjamin’s project and the poststructural jettisoning of dialectical thinking and its methodology of “determinate negation”, it is similarly

true that poststructuralist interpretations of Adorno tend to abandon his notion of dialectic reason (Hullot-Kentor 2006).

With that in mind, it is worth pointing out that, while Adorno and poststructuralists share some things in common, this commonality is widely misinterpreted as *sameness* or, perhaps ironically, as consistency in identity. In truth, I would say that in spite of Adorno pointing to and analysing similar problems as certain key poststructuralist thinkers, how he actually interprets and formulates a response to these issues in the context of his broader social philosophy is often very different from the prototypical poststructuralist thesis. Consider, for example, Adorno's (1992) emphasis on the particular—his thesis concerning how we must give ourselves up to the object, how we must give priority to the object—this can be interpreted as strikingly similar to the poststructuralist emphasis of a constant encircling of the particular, as in the case of recent poststructural writings on trauma (Schick 2014).

The differences between poststructural approaches and Adorno's is further emphasized when it comes to philosophy of the subject. This comes out, in a certain sense, when Hohendahl suggests one possible solution to the conflict between CT and poststructuralism would be an appropriation *through* poststructuralist theory, especially via the work of Derrida and Lacan. This of course assumes the poststructural response to modernism is in fact the correct one and that it is actually compatible with Adorno's project. Moreover, according to Hohendahl, Adorno would be seen as a forerunner or German version of poststructuralist theory (Hohendahl 1995, p. 187). But this leaves me to ask how much Hohendahl is actually familiar with a deep and considerate reading of Adorno, who, in my opinion, would actually be very critical of poststructuralism as a theoretical and philosophical movement. Moreover, I would argue that the general direction of Adorno's thought is one that anticipates and provides a natural challenge to poststructuralism (Sherman 2007; Kellner 2014) as well as other postmodern theories, offering direction in how to advance beyond poststructuralist thinking without slipping back into positivism and relativism.

To state it even more sharply: if today the need of the hour is to move beyond poststructuralism without regressing to positivism or falling into the trap of relativism, it is Adorno and the rest of the first-generation Frankfurt School who ultimately provide some of the most important theoretical and practical contributions when it comes to laying the necessary foundation for the advancement of transformative social philosophy.

4.1.2 (ii) *Critical Theory and Needless Social Suffering*

In the process of developing my thesis, one of the side arguments I have laid out is that, although in need of retrieval and advancement, CT offers important tools and concepts as well as an appropriate theoretical foundation for a broader social philosophical view of pathology. The spirit of Adorno's entire social philosophy, for example, is driven towards doing justice to the individual, and the motivation, deeper yet, is to give voice to undeniable human suffering. His aim, in more ways than one, is to reveal through comprehensive critique the contemporary mode of cognition which seeks to repress suffering and to ensure its image remains hidden. Thus, he writes in *Negative Dialectics*:

The smallest trace of senseless suffering in the empirical world belies all the identitarian philosophy that talk us out of that suffering: "while there is a beggar, there is a myth," as Benjamin put it. This is why the philosophy of identity is the mythological form of thought. The physical moment tells our knowledge that suffering ought not to be, that things should be different [...]. Hence the convergence of specific materialism with criticism, with social change in practice. It is not up to the individual sufferer to abolish suffering or mitigate it to a degree which theory cannot anticipate [...]. This job is up solely to the species, to which the individual belongs. (Adorno 1992a, p. 203)

In this passage alone, we see that the motivation for Adorno's negative dialectics is not simply conceptual, as some seem to reduce it as (Zuidervaat 2015).

His epistemology is "materialist" in both regards. It is motivated, he says, by undeniable human suffering—a fact of unreason, if you will, to counter Kant's "fact of reason." Suffering is the corporeal imprint of society and the object upon human consciousness: "The need to let suffering speak is a condition of all truth. For suffering is objectivity that weighs upon the subject" (ND 17–18). The resources available to philosophy in this regard include the "expressive" or "mimetic" dimensions of language, which conflict with "ordinary" (i.e., societally sanctioned) syntax and semantics. (Zuidervaat 2015)

A really nice illustration of this can be found in an essay, where Adorno asks "Why philosophy?" In a world overwhelmed with needless social suffering, where the dominant form of politics continues to drive our society

towards a state of deep rot and social decay; in a world where the command of the whip is as powerful as ever but the voice of strife from the individual and community is no more than a low, irritating drone—in this world, where we are left to hope in the midst of overwhelming hopelessness (Zuidervaat 2007), what possible meaning is there in philosophy?

Adorno would answer that it is just such a question that makes philosophy necessary (Brunkhorst 2008). If we follow the conclusions of Adorno's important critical interventions, the question of suffering is understood as the index for truth and for philosophy (Adorno 1998). Moreover, it is, as Hauke Brunkhorst (2008) exclaims, in the moments when the world we thought we knew collapses around us; when in the face of brute suffering our metaphysical reach erodes; when in a moment of experience, we awaken to an understanding of the ideological barbarity of which we are a part, to the absurdity of our vision of life and existential faith—it is on this plane of experience that the flame of philosophy ignites (Adorno 1998).

To provide a short and passing introduction, Adorno's essay "Wozu noch Philosophie", translated as "Why Still Philosophy",¹ provides a historically important entry into a complex and detailed intervention on the meaning of philosophy from the perspective of "damaged life". Read in the context of Adorno's overall social philosophical project, this essay stands out as one of the most brilliant. Though the entire premise may sound "dilettantish", Adorno is quick to assuage such fear and provides a discussion that is born of some of the deepest conflicts of contemporary life. Moreover, in asking "why still philosophy?", his primary concern is with what philosophy might contribute when it comes to transforming society as a whole (Zuidervaat 2007, p. 5). As Lambert Zuidervaat summarizes, Adorno's essay: "comes from the time when [Adorno] was writing *Negative Dialectics*. The essay objects to the formalism of much of professional philosophy, and it criticizes other schools of thought for ignoring societal mediation" (Zuidervaat 2007, p. 4).

Adorno (and the same can be said of the Frankfurt School in general), opposed to ignoring the extremely important line of critique concerning the *mediation of facts*, employing the alternative of *imminent critique*. In discussing the notion of imminent critique, Adorno explains why imminent criticism serves several important purposes, not only when it comes to critiquing other philosophies but also when it comes to a critically analysing positivist science, certain strands of psychoanalysis, and even underlying views of the bourgeois subject (such as the false universalizing of human

nature frequent in much of popular discourse today). But aside from these very particular critical interventions, the main spirit of Adorno's examination of the state of philosophy is one which, as Zuidervaart summarizes, aims "to expose the 'unfreedom and oppression' at work in contemporary society. It also aims to 'catch a glimpse' of a world where they would end" (Zuidervaart 2007, p. 4.). The way Adorno sees it is simple enough when broken down: it is the existence of needless suffering that makes philosophy necessary. He uses, as Zuidervaart notes, very powerful words like "suffering", "salvation" and "hope", and offers such impactful and energizing passages as:

If philosophy is still necessary, it is so only in the way it has been from time immemorial: as critique, as resistance to the expanding heteronomy, even if only as thought's powerless attempt to remain its own master and to convict of untruth, by their own criteria, both a fabricated mythology and a conniving, resigned acquiescence on the other of untruth. It is incumbent upon philosophy, as long as it is not prohibited as it was in the christianized Athens of late antiquity, to provide a refuge for freedom. Not that there is any hope that it could break the political tendencies that are throttling freedom throughout the world both from within and without and whose violence permeates the very fabric of philosophical argumentation. Whatever takes place within the interior of the concept always reflects something of the movement of reality. But if the two heteronomies are the untruth and if this can be convincingly demonstrated, then this not only adds a new link to the dreary chain of philosophical movements but also registers a trace of the hope that unfreedom and oppression—the evil whose malevolence requires as little philosophical proof as does its existence—nonetheless may not have the last word. Such a critique would need to define the two prevailing philosophies as isolated aspects of a truth that historically was forced to diverge. (Adorno 1998, p. 10)

It is worth pointing out that along with the above passage, Adorno posits another stimulating thought: that to answer the question "why philosophy" is to stake a claim of philosophy's emancipatory purpose in the moment of the collapse of metaphysics, not in the idea of abandoning metaphysics but on the grounds of showing solidarity with it as it breaks down. As has been stated, the meaning of philosophy is rooted in the existence of suffering. In other words, it is the existence of needless suffering, of unfreedom and oppression, and also the persisting hope for salvation, which gives philosophy meaning. Just as Adorno reflects in the

quote above: if philosophy remains necessary, it is only as critique. This is because philosophy—critical social philosophy—rooted in history, serves the purpose of helping illuminate a fundamental reading of, and formulating a comprehensive and what I term foundational response to, current (bad) social, economic and political conditions. In this sense, philosophy, as Adorno lays out, should demand and also help develop better critical readings of our present social reality. Along these lines, the presence of needless social suffering serves as the index of truth for such a reconciled or critically retrieved notion of philosophy, insofar that it is the presence of suffering, oppression and unfreedom that reveals something is not right, that society has gone astray.

4.1.3 (iii) *Researching Social Pathology: The Critical Study of Suffering and Trauma*

The study of social suffering and trauma is, we will learn, an incredibly complex and difficult endeavour. One of the reasons for this has to do with how social suffering is of many forms and dimensions, and an analysis of it requires that we stretch beyond the limitations of established academic disciplines (Renault 2010)—limitations, it should be said, that are a result of the traditional academic division of labour. CT, to its credit, is based on the transgression of established disciplinary boundaries (Kellner 2013) and, as it stands, already possesses the necessary tools to intervene in a foundational way, even if CT also requires today a project of retrieval and advancement (Smith 2015a). Given that the entire research and study programme of CT is principled on a unique cross-disciplinary or, better yet, supra-disciplinary project, it is important that we continue to strengthen this position. This is because, in contrast to postmodern and poststructuralist approaches, the total social philosophical basis of critical theoretical research is one which directly: “advances the conception of a critical and normative theory which is committed to emancipation from all forms of oppression, as well as to freedom, happiness, and a rational ordering of society” (Kellner 2013).

Providing a more useful, thorough, comprehensive and politically relevant alternative than poststructuralist and postmodernist theory, CT, and certainly Adorno in particular, provides us with vital insight and direction as to how we might mark trauma, analyse particular suffering, while incorporating it into a broader narrative which can illuminate the structures and ways of thinking that create it (Schick 2014). The challenge, however, is

that social suffering, like domination and exploitation, has become even more socially naturalized, pervasive and even indirect than it was in the day of the first-generation Frankfurt School.

CT thus requires a “more specific and perhaps more demanding” approach: “it is not only an interpretation of society from the point of view of the negative social experiences of suffering but a *knowledge* of its social and psychic components” (Renault 2010, p. 223). What is required is an even more thorough account which spans all sectors and spheres of society, all different aspects and existences of suffering, including especially a comprehensive response regarding the social, political, psychological, epistemological and even existential demand to overcome suffering (Renault 2010, p. 223). The need to also provide accessible public expression of such an analysis should not go unstated (Renault 2010, p. 223).

In other words, and as touched on above, CT is a radical alternative to hypertheoretical and apolitical discourses of postmodern theory (Kellner 2013). It seeks to undertake broad surveys and analyses, as well as draw “a connection with empirical analysis of the contemporary world and social movements which are attempting to transform society in progressive ways” (Kellner 2013). From this perspective, it is conclusive that, in considering the long-standing issues and struggles within contemporary social theory to formulate a detailed analysis and theory of social suffering (Renault 2010), CT is the most effective approach to understanding suffering and trauma in all its dimensions and forms.

In making such an intervention not only must we undertake a methodologically innovative approach² but it is also necessary that we offer clear “epistemological reflection on the limits of the disciplinary boundaries” (Renault 2010, p. 222) in the process of laying out a supra-disciplinary (Kellner 2013) course of study grounded in an engaged social philosophy “capable of providing a general framework for the combination of the psychic, social and cultural dimensions of social experience” (Renault 2010, p. 222).

In passing, if one of the key questions of this book concerns how we might understand social pathology within a broader integrative framework, my immediate reply is that CT and its politics of suffering offers an incredibly important part of the foundation.

Indeed, if in the development of CT, from Marx and Lukács to the Frankfurt School, a particular line of thought can be traced concerning the study and development of praxis (Feenberg 2014), a similarly important line can also be traced concerning CT’s social vision around the

elimination of needless suffering. I would say that aside from the many other important interventions that have been achieved in the history of CT, its legacy remains, at its deepest point, the manner in which the Frankfurt School provided several particularly important texts that, in no uncertain terms, offer a full attention to suffering. This attention to social suffering, as a standard, as an essential focus of philosophy, should be considered, I will argue, the deepest most guiding principle of a politics in response to pathological society.

Adorno, similar to Marcuse and Fromm, employed a range of techniques and conceptual approaches to reveal the depths of pain and suffering which exist both internally and externally. And for this reason, their respective works remain incredibly important. As Emmanuel Renault writes:

The issue of social suffering provides a good way to show that the very idea of critical theory does not belong solely to past history. This topic also provides an interesting way for an appraisal of some contemporary orientations of critical theory as a social philosophy. Indeed, the critical approach to social suffering does belong to the common principles of the Frankfurt tradition of critical theory where suffering is generally considered as a symptom of social pathology and a practical incentive to overcome it. (Renault 2010, p. 223)

In other words, the goal of CT, of philosophy, in any or all aspects of its analysis should be grounded to whatever extent in the awareness of the needlessness of suffering, of unending trauma experienced by the individuals, and thus to work towards understanding how: “our societies should be organized in such a way that the suffering of their members could be reduced as far as possible” (Adorno 1992a, p. 202). Perhaps this is why one of my favourite passages in recent years comes from Lambert Zuidervart, who, writing on Adorno, captures the fundamental project of CT today and the enduring emancipatory character of Frankfurt School politics. He reflects: “What a critical social theory really needs to address is why hunger, poverty, and other forms of human suffering persist despite the technological and scientific potential to mitigate them or to eliminate them altogether” (Zuidervart 2015).

For Adorno in particular, who “aimed to define a model whereby social theory could be informed, or influenced, by social sciences, but could also try to help the social science supersede their theoretical and political limitations” (Renault 2010, p. 229), theory was defined “as a self-reflec-

tion of the social sciences (about their concepts and methods) and the construction of ideal-types, or ‘models’, that could be useful in particular inquiries, or ‘micrologies’” (Renault 2010, p. 229).

Working from the basis of this perspective, “the problems raised by the issue of social suffering invite us also to an original conception of political philosophy” (Renault 2010, p. 229). Though any number of mainstream political theories could or might strive to provide a positive answer to the question of social suffering (Renault 2010, p. 229), a deeper reflection on the issue invites us to practice a radical alternative social philosophy, one which echoes an Adornian conception (Renault 2010, p. 229) and, strikingly, also that of Marcuse and Fromm.

Renault explains this in the form of two distinct shifts. The “first shift” that he introduces is defined as the “clinical approach”, which is “understood as the attention to the individual dimensions of social experience, as well as to social experience as a negative experience and as a complex interplay of psychic and social conditions” (Renault 2010, p. 230). The “second shift”, writes Renault, then has to do with the connection of political philosophy with a deeper, wider and foundational CT of society (Renault 2010, p. 230).

In the first shift, social suffering is understood as a “complex interplay of psychic and social conditions, and of practical and cognitive reactions to them” (Renault 2010, p. 230), meaning the only accurate approach is a systematically clinical one. According to Renault, if we really want to take social suffering into account, and if we want to be able to criticize given social contexts from this point of view—“that is from the point of view of their effects on individual lives”—we must adopt a clinical approach of the present (Renault 2010, p. 230). This clinical approach would, in my own words, not only combine phenomenology, ethnomethodology, structuralism, Marxism, humanism, existentialism, feminism, interactionism and systems theory, among many others. It practices a progressive methodology and connects broad and foundational social philosophy—CT—with systematic empirical research. In analysing patterns of suffering and trauma, in constantly encircling particular instances of suffering, it would also seek to engage with the universal, to contribute to a broader narrative of systemic global trends (Schick 2014). Interestingly, Renault likens this approach within political philosophy Adorno’s *Minima Moralia*: namely, a social critique grounded in a phenomenology of negative social experiences (Renault 2010, p. 230).

Regarding the “second shift”, Renault is absolutely correct in his assessment that: “if political philosophy wants to take phenomena such as social suffering into account, and wants to establish a historical diagnosis, it has to connect its stance as philosophy, which is general and normative, with the particular and descriptive stance of the psychology, sociology and anthropology of suffering” (Renault 2010, p. 230). In other words, it needs connection with a deeper, wider social philosophical foundation, which, whether we’re studying issues in education or the complex phenomena associated with social suffering—this is, in my opinion, the continuing relevance of CT. It provides, or can provide, just such a foundation, which, in very direct ways, provides for “a conception of social experience that enables” connection between “a specific account of the social” and “those of the human sciences” (Renault 2010, p. 230). In sum:

For Adorno, the interpretation of negative social experiences is incapable of achieving its goals if it is not guided by a theory of the social and of the psychological structures of experience. And no historical diagnosis is possible without a social theory of the general trends of our capitalist societies. What is required for this theory and these diagnoses is a self-reflected mediation between philosophy and social sciences (Renault 2010, p. 230).

To be sure, Marxism, Feminism, Cultural Studies, and so on have important contributions to make. So, too, do specific disciplines and fields of study, whose methodological approaches grow increasingly diverse: anthropology, epistemology, geography, cognitive science, neuroscience, physiology (psychophysiology) and the natural sciences, to name a few.

4.1.4 (iv) *Surveying the Root Causes of Suffering*

This brings me back to Adorno. In the previous chapter and throughout this present chapter, we will consider the root causes of suffering. For Adorno, it has already been suggested, that the root cause is the exchange principle (Adorno 1992a; Zuidervaart 2007, 2015). The principle of exchange is, in no uncertain terms, the life-denying principle which defines the *modus operandi* of capitalist society, economically and also even cognitively. In other words, capitalist relations of productions have come to dominate *the whole of society* (Zuidervaart 2015)—all differential levels and spheres (Zuidervaart 2007), including also, we will learn, the internal life of the subject. The deeply coercive legacy of capitalism, as observed by Adorno, Marcuse and Fromm has resulted in a certain form of ego colonization and subject (de)formation, which, to be sure, means

on a psychological level that efforts to move towards post-capitalism will be nothing short of a profound transition characterized by an internal and social, cultural process of healing. This will be a point of particular interest in Chap. 5. Meanwhile, Renault, again, does a fairly nice job explaining the depth of suffering and trauma in a practical yet theoretically substantive way. He writes:

contemporary forms of the social question raise issues that cannot be convincingly addressed without combining sociological and psychological approaches. The current phase of capitalism, a phase that can be labelled neoliberalism, is characterized, among other features, by the emergence of new conditions of work as well as structural trend toward social exclusion. These new conditions of work are producing new subjective difficulties that can be labelled “suffering at work”. Such suffering at work has a double implication for social critique: on the one hand, suffering at work is part of what seems pathological in these new working conditions; on the other hand, it is also producing individualization and guilt complexes that are obstacles to any practical dynamic of social transformation. Neoliberalism is also characterized by a general process of social exclusion where the social and psychological dimensions are again intertwined. For those who are victims of long-term unemployment for example, feelings of shame and depressive affects are consequences of a social situation as well as factors that make their situation worse. (Renault 2010, p. 224)

One of the issues that Renault is highlighting is a political one. “Social suffering”, its intensification and deepening psychologically, “is an obstacle to social critique and social transformation since self-attribution of responsibility or depression are not compatible with social critique and political action” (Renault 2010, p. 224). In some respects, what he is hitting upon here is a similar dilemma that we read in Marcuse’s study *Eros and Civilization* (1969).

For Marcuse, on the one hand, repression is found in some of the highest values of modern society, values which, in their current form, presuppose and perpetuate unfreedom and suffering, drawing out what he sees as the rough coordinates of a non-repressive society as he pieces together a project of liberation that runs against alienation and other life-denying principles (Kellner 1984). Structural and systemic roots of suffering are a key focus of Marcuse—thus domination more broadly and capitalist exploitation in particular are subject of intense study and scrutiny. Deeper yet, Marcuse, like Adorno, also understands the important place an analysis of the subject has when it comes to developing a CT of society.

Marcuse's text, *Eros and Civilization*, is in essence a critique of how the western ego has subordinated itself to capitalism as a certain specific socioeconomic system (Parton 2015a). It achieves this, namely, "by resisting the demands of the id and superid in the interest of individual self-preservation" (Parton 2015a). "Surplus repression" is, of course, a key concept for Marcuse, as is the "reality principle" and the "performance principle", in which "Repression disappears in the grand objective order of things which rewards more or less adequately complying individuals and, in doing so, reproduces more or less adequately society as a whole" (Marcuse 1969a, p. 51). Glenn Parton summarizes, moreover, how it is the ego which "represents the performance principle (survival through competition and exploitation) as the reality principle, and it forgets that the pleasure principle is the deeper reality, the ultimate purpose of human existence, that the ego is supposed to protect and serve" (Parton 2015a).

Analysing surplus repression in relation to the institutions and social relations that constitute the social "body" of the reality principle (Marcuse 1969a, p. 50), Marcuse convincingly elucidates "the scope and the limits of the prevalent repressiveness" in modern society, explaining it "in terms of the specific reality principle that has governed the origins and the growth" of this society (Marcuse 1969a, p. 50). His study suggests—and herein I return to Renault's concern—that the designation of the performance principle emphasizes "that under its rule society is stratified according to the competitive economic performances of its members" (Marcuse 1969a, p. 50). That is to say that the performance principle "presupposes a long development during which domination has been increasingly rationalized: control over social labor now reproduces society on an enlarged scale and under improving conditions", to the extent that "the interests of domination and the interests of the whole coincide". In other words, Marcuse writes:

the profitable utilization of the productive apparatus fulfils the needs and faculties of the individuals. For the vast majority of the population, the scope and mode of satisfaction are determined by their own labor; but their labor is work for an apparatus which they do not control, which operates as an independent power to which individuals must submit. And it becomes the more alien the more specialized the division of labor becomes [...]. Labor time, which is the largest part of the individual's life time, is painful time, for alienated labor is absence of gratification, negation of the pleasure principle. (Marcuse 1969a, p. 50–51)

The deeper suffering that Marcuse is indicating is psychological. The more universal restriction becomes on the individual, which has a deep impact on one's development as a subject, including one's own process of identity formation, repression becomes expressive, in my own words, of the very mode of being, the very vision of life, which frames one's entire view of the world. What I am suggesting here is the complex relationship between structure and system and the subject. The subject is mediated socially and, though the subject generally always possesses the capacity—the efficacious agency—to reflect on and impact—and thus change—those institutions and structures which constitute the “facticity” (Sartre) of their sociohistorical-cultural conditions, the darker reality of surplus repression is that it actively runs against the mediating moment of the subject (Sherman 2007; Smith 2013, 2015c). As Marcuse reflects, the restrictions imposed upon the individual “operate” as “external objective laws and as an internalized force: the societal authority is absorbed into the ‘conscience’ and into the unconscious of the individual and works as his own desire, morality and fulfilment” (Marcuse 1969a, p. 51).

Returning to Adorno, insofar that “Society has come to be organized around the production of exchange values for the sake of producing exchange values, which, of course, always already requires a silent appropriation of surplus value”, the drive behind this development is more than a traditional Marxist view of class exploitation. Though exploitation persists, and a class analysis still has value, it is not the complete picture. Domination, we will discuss, has been increasingly rationalized. Thus the situation we face today extends beyond class struggle insofar that, if class were abolished tomorrow, it would not necessarily represent the end to domination.

This is not to say that class struggle—or exploitation—does not remain an important point of focus when it comes to an analysis of social suffering, even though, on my understanding, Marx's labour theory of value on which his theory of exploitation depends has been considered inaccurate for many years. The main issue concerns what I would describe as the rejection of the reducing of the contemporary problematic to class struggle alone, as was or is common in much of Marxism. To put it simply, such a perspective does not reach down enough. One of the important conclusions of the early Frankfurt School—and of the research offered in this book—is that there has been a shift, historically, from the need for a critique of exploitation to a critique of domination as a whole. Adorno believed, in shifting focus solely from exploitation to a more complete

theory of domination, “that society and culture form a historical totality, such that the pursuit of freedom in society is inseparable from the pursuit of enlightenment in culture” (Zuidervaat 2015).

However, to state it again, in no way does this mean that exploitation ceases as a useful designation when it comes to a CT of society in general, or an analysis of social suffering in particular. If for Adorno, as we read in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (2002), for example, systemic domination of internal and external nature has coincided with the genesis of capitalism’s institutional structures (Smith 2015b), the actual “source of today’s disaster is a pattern of blind domination [...] in a triple sense: the domination of nature by human beings, the domination of nature within human beings, and, in both of these forms of domination, the domination of some human beings by others” (Zuidervaat 2007, p. 121). Lambert Zuidervaat is correct to further breakdown this triple domination as three modes: “control”, “repression” and “exploitation”, respectively (Zuidervaat 2007, p. 121). The implications of such an analysis, to state it in Adornian terms, is that society as a whole has to be transformed, which goes to say not only the political and economic dimensions of society. It includes the psychological, emotional, existential, relational, epistemological, and so on. Revolutionary societal transformation involves, in other words, a process that we examine later as *going all the way down to the internal life of the subject*.

If these reflections on an analysis of social suffering reveal anything, it is precisely the manner in which must undertake a far more complex and cross-disciplinary analysis, which also asks such questions as: why do people buy into the capitalist vision of life? Why do people ground their faith in the principle of exchange? Even when it comes to anti-capitalist movements: what is it about their general inclination to produce a new ideology? Not only is there a psychological and psychoanalytical thesis but there is also a humanistic and existential one.

Even when it comes to capitalist ideology, where individuals actively buy into the system of capital as a vision of life, an analysis of the existential dimension (Smith 2015) in relation to self-preservation drives is just as important as an analysis of class exploitation. The deeper existential and critical humanistic theses discloses, as we read in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, is that if “what motivates such triple domination is an irrational fear of the unknown” (Zuidervaat 2015), then “In an unfree society whose culture pursues so-called progress no matter what the cost, that which is ‘other,’ whether human or nonhuman, gets shoved aside, exploited, or destroyed”

because the system of capital, produced and reproduced by those that are also exploited, serves a deeper existential ideological purpose (Smith 2015). The result is the “all-consuming engine driving this process”—namely, “an ever-expanding capitalist economy fed by scientific research and the latest technologies” (Zuidervaart 2015). This leads me directly to one of the main points in this section: the need for a critical normative humanistic grounding.

4.1.5 (v) *Adorno the Critical Humanist?*

In terms of recent attempts to appropriate Adorno through the post-structuralist theories of Lacan, I argue that Adorno’s radical philosophy of the subject is actually less compatible with Lacan as some seem to assert or want to suggest, emphasizing instead what I see as more of a fundamental commonality with other strands of psychology (Smith 2013a). Having studied and considered Adorno’s key concepts and points of analysis, I ultimately agree with Sherman (2007, p. 178) that Adorno should be seen “as a humanist of sorts”. More concisely, I think Adorno is best read as a humanist. However, I do not mean to suggest that Adorno was an advocate of crude, or what I informally call, old-school humanism. As alluded in Chap. 2, he was ultimately right to repudiate the notion (Sherman 2007, p. 178). His critique of traditional humanism’s emphasis on human essences and all the rest is incredibly sharp. “Yet”, writes Sherman, “as the following passages show, he is just as quick to repudiate antihumanism” (p. 178). The passages that Sherman references are from *Negative Dialectics* (1992), and clearly contribute to the case that what Adorno was critical of actually anticipated a much more retrieved notion of humanistic thinking (Sherman 2007, p. 179). Moreover, as Sherman writes, when Adorno notes in his critique of Heidegger that, “The current talk of humanism is awful enough” (Adorno 1992a, p. 89), this is “because it implies the repression of both internal and external nature, and a static, ahistorical concept of human nature that justifies social repression”, even if not always directly, “against those who do not conform to it” (Sherman 2007, p. 179).

To add to this, Sherman goes on to reference Alfred Schmidt who asserts that actually, on deeper inspection, Adorno is a real humanist (p. 179). Sherman then follows this by referencing an extremely important passage from the Preface of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Sherman writes, “Adorno

and Horkheimer go on to state that ‘critical thought demands support for the residues of freedom, and for tendencies toward *true humanism*, even if these seem powerless in regard to the main course of history’ (Sherman 2007, p. 179). In the translation by Edmund Jephcott that I have of the very same 1969 version of the Preface to *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the wording slightly differs, but the essential point is nonetheless preserved. Adorno and Horkheimer write:

In a period of political division into immense blocs driven by an objective tendency to collide, horror has been prolonged. The conflicts in the third world and the renewed growth of totalitarianism are not mere historical interludes any more than, according to the *Dialectic*, fascism was at that time. Critical thought, which does not call a halt before progress itself, requires us to take up the cause of the remnants of freedom, of tendencies toward real humanity, even though they seem powerless in face of the great historical trend’. (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002, p. xi)

In truth, it is not surprising that Adorno would convey such a sentiment. He always sought to preserve the positive aspects of the enlightenment project, which certainly also includes its humanistic sensitivities (Smith and De Graaff 2016). Additionally, when one reads Adorno’s ethical writings, one is struck by their underlining humanistic sensibility. It is only that this humanistic element is what I would call a radical critical normative humanism.

In a similar way as Lambert Zuidervaat, who states the need to “go after Adorno” (Zuidervaat 2007), I agree with the sentiment that Adorno’s CT can be recovered and even further developed as an integral guide to an overall emancipatory philosophy of social, political practice—to a broader critical social philosophical perspective. In the last several years, Zuidervaat (2007) has already offered a valuable contribution in this regard. Sherman (2007) also deserves mention here. As does Kellner and Stephen E. Bronner, whose writings and interventions over the past few decades cannot be understated in terms of significance. The contributions of these individuals and many others (Smith 2015b) allows us to understand how, if Adorno made several wrong turns in the development of his overall critical social philosophy, we can essentially trace these turns, dissect them, while also preserving the core realities he was encircling and attempting to conceptualize. This includes, in my opinion, the notion of real humanism—that is, a critical humanism, informed by a much more expansive notion of social pathology.

In sum, after years of dedicated study, I think the deeper implication of Adorno's analysis, especially when applied within massive cross-disciplinary research programme, has to do with the psychological coercion, manipulation and, finally, trauma, that exists within capitalism. To put it more aptly, we will learn moving forward how the manipulation of the subject is necessary for the actualization of political domination (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002). I would say, too, that Adorno's analysis here can and should be expanded. It's not just the psychological or even cognitive dimensions of the subject that gets manipulated, coerced, dominated or violated. It has to do, in a humanistic sense, with the *whole human being*: physically, biochemically, emotionally, relationally, and so on. And this is where, I think, in part, a critically retrieved humanistic psychology as well as an existential perspective is absolutely vital in terms of the possibility for advancing CT and an emancipatory social analysis, especially when applied to the development of a radical philosophy of psychology which intersects numerous strands of other academic fields and discourses, from psychophysiology to cognitive science.

For these reasons and others, I argue that it is not so much Lacan that is closest to Adorno's radical theory of the subject. Rather, it is an altogether more radical interdisciplinary approach which does the most justice to the "mediating subject" (Sherman 2007) and the real humanism that Adorno works towards.

4.1.6 (vi) *Adorno's Philosophy of the Subject: Developmental Psychology and Ego Colonization*

A very good example of the need to "go after Adorno" concerns his "totally administered society" thesis. This totalizing theoretical argument, as Sherman rightly reflects, essentially renders Adorno's negative dialectics obsolete (Sherman 2007, p. 239). Bracketing further definition of Adorno's negative dialectics until later, one of the reasons for his stepping into this trap, as alluded in Chap. 2, is a result of his indebtedness to György Lukács. Lukács theory of reification undoubtedly had a tremendous influence on Adorno and others associated with the early Frankfurt School (Feenberg 2014). And I think there is good reason to suggest that it is Adorno's totalizing propensity—in theory and in terms of his view of transformation—which reaches back to Lukács theoretical base and the notion of *totally reified society* (Lukács 1967). In some respects, I would say that Adorno takes Lukács to his extreme.

On the other hand, the general thrust of Adorno's "totally administered society" thesis offers several valuable insights, especially when it comes to his study of the genesis of the modern subject in relation to the historical unfolding of capitalism's institutions and structures (Sherman 2007). One of the main features of Adorno's analysis in this regard is how, in a play on Freud's Oedipal Complex, Adorno sees internalization of authority not simply through the father but how "totally administered society" goes over the head of the father to directly exercise control of the child (Adorno 1968, 1991, 1992, 2002; Sherman 2007, pp. 227–228). One can read a similar thesis in a number of critical assessments within psychology (Kelman 1958; Wood et al. 1994; Gilbert et al. 1998; Freedheim and Weiner 2003; McLeod 2007a; Aronson et al. 2010; Doise and Palmonari 2011), development psychology and early childhood development studies (Piaget 1929, 1977; Bronfenbrenner 1979, 2005; Seifert 2004; Maschinot 2008; Montgomery 2008; Krishnan 2010) and even also education (Holt 1991, 1995; Kohn 1990, 1999, 2005; Spodek and Saracho 2004; Illich 2004; Amsler 2015; Titchiner 2017).

Why this line of critique is important is because it helps us understand one dimension of the power behind the sort of social production and reproduction we observe in contemporary capitalist societies.

To further the point, one of the issues for Adorno has to do with what can be described as the *colonization of the ego*, similar to what we read in Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* (1969). Arresting "all differentiation", he writes, this "brutal, total, standardizing society [...] exploits the primitive core of the unconscious" (Adorno 1968, p. 95). Such a society, whose "Social power-structure hardly needs the mediating agencies of ego and individuality any longer", essentially conspires "to annihilate the mediating ego" and, thus, "triumphant archaic impulses, the victory of id over ego, harmonize with the triumph of the society over the individual" (Adorno 1968, p. 95).

To put it simply, one of the main focuses of Adorno's dialectic of subjectivity, which, again, can be in many ways affirmed and substantiated by a broad cross-disciplinary analysis, concerns the *(de)formation of the subject* and how the extreme lengths of social psychological coercion and manipulation result in a certain course of *ego colonization*. One's sociohistorical-cultural conditions are, in a sense, entwined in the process of subject formation. Debates about freedom have just as much to do about structures, institutions and systems—that is, freedom allowed externally in the social world—as they have to do with

the internal life of the subject—that is, whether social conditions foster what will be termed in light of Sherman (2007) as the free-flourishing subject.

One step further, even existentially, if my past thesis is considered correct (Smith 2015a): one of the directly coercive powers of capitalism is how it focuses, almost naturally for the purpose of its own reproduction, on exploiting the “fear”, “threatenedness” and “angst” which underlines, to a certain extent, the existential and humanistic dimensions of human experience. This existential level of exploitation characterizes not only the deeper unfolding of the dialectic of enlightenment but also the advent of “instrumental reason”—a particular coercive, dominant cognitive paradigm that, again, should not be conflated with all “reason” or a critique of “reason” as a whole. I argue that this exploitation helps perpetuate the system of capital and its ever-expanding economic vision of life (Smith 2015a)—even naturalizing it in many ways (i.e., Adorno’s critique of “second nature”). How so?

For Adorno, it would seem that on a structural and systems level, capitalism intentionally, directly, produces a condition of artificial scarcity and threat that keeps the individual in a constant state of *sensing precarity*. The psychological implications of this condition run deep, resulting in a highly traumatized psyche and repressed subjectivity, as a number of systematic studies show (Westen 1985; James 2007; Fromm 2010; Harris 2010, 2014). This is one reason which led me to ask some time ago:

what is the power of capitalism if not in how as a total system it gives one a sense of ultimate security, of knowing where one stands in the world by way of its absolute relation to all things? Does such a view not help explain why, in the midst of deep crises, a large part of the general populous fervently defend the existing social-economic system? (Smith 2015a)

The existential dimension of the subject and of the social reproduction of capitalism is incredibly important to understand when attempting to grasp some of the deeper implications of social pathology. This is because the existential dimension, it has been alluded, represents the level of human fear and threatenedness as well as anxiety. Irrational fear, such as fear of the unknown, threatenedness towards diversity, and anxiety in response to the human condition—these are some of the most basic, core aspects of human experience (Burton 2011; Davis 2008; Fox 1987; Smith 2015c). Arthur J. Westermayer wrote all the way back in 1915 how:

Fear is the great force that prompts to acts of self-preservation and operates as effectively in the brute as in the human animal. Even in plant life we can trace evidences that indicate the presence of a natural law operating very much as fear does upon brute instinct and the human mind. When we analyze the fundamentals of the world's religions, we find they make their first and final appeal to man's inborn sense of fear. Religion provides a place of punishment and another of reward. The first appeals to man's fear, the second to his venality. The fear of hell and the pictured horrors of a place of eternal damnation, are intended to coerce man into righteous living; and a reward for such righteousness is offered in the form of a place of eternal bliss. On the one hand the fear of evil is calculated to deter, and fear of losing the delights of heaven is intended to lure man from his natural tendency to evil. (Westermayr 1915)

If it is, moreover, widely agreed as a basic truth that fear is one of the most primitive of human emotions and, additionally, that it shapes much of human behaviour (Davis 2008; Kahoe and Dunn 1976; Öhman 2000), the thesis from a social psychological perspective is that capitalism manufactures scarcity and this is how it maintains its gripe over the subject. In other words, it exploits the existential aspect of human reality: fear, anxiety and threatenedness. It manipulates and exploits the fear of a threat to our identities, our own sense of self-worth and our social memberships. It does in the sense that such fear is learned by way of capitalism's totalizing of life, by which I mean it obtains evermore control of human capacities for freedom, autonomy, love and livelihood.

Thus while existential fear and anxiety may commonly be perceived as individual, there is also a social learning and sharing of fear (Olsson and Phelps 2007) and anxiety (Hofmann et al. 2010; Hofmann and Hinton 2014). It has been shown, for example, that social experiences can play a role in the development and intensification of fear and anxiety (Jacofsky et al. 2013). Social learning theory (Bandura 1977) highlights how, contrary to traditional and problematic behaviourist perspectives, such as those theorized by Skinner, not only "people learn a behavior" "because of direct experience" but also people "learn how to behave vicariously" (Jacofsky et al. 2013).

What I shall suggest is that capitalism operates according to double exploitation of deeper existential levels of fear. And the outcome of this double exploitation is the subject's ongoing drive towards totality, towards satisfying a frightened threatened psyche, in relation to a constant sense of potential scarcity.

As we began to sense at the outset of this book, when reviewing various empirical studies and reports, capitalism represents quite a precarious social world. This essentially lends to the growing argument on the need to understand “how to break down the neoliberal control mechanisms of precarity, anxiety and futility” (Roos 2014). Within the current economic setting, the individual is essentially dependent on their labour-oriented abilities to ensure the avoidance of starvation. This is what gives definition to the phrase, “to earn a living”.

Historically and empirically speaking, pre-capitalist society—such as feudalist or even agrarian society—evidenced a system where necessary labour (i.e., labour required to reproduce human beings) largely defined the time of people’s lives. People laboured in the fields or as skilled workers in the face highly precarious (existentially speaking) circumstances, especially in the sense where one’s labour was prerequisite to direct forms of physical survival.

In capitalist society, on the other hand, one of the most commonly celebrated aspects of modern life is the supposed emancipation from these precarious circumstances, where one’s labour is no longer directly linked to one’s immediate survival. Ultimately, in most debates with people who position themselves in defence of capitalism, this point is eventually raised. It might not even be too much to suggest that, in the very belief in “social progress” within capitalist societies, it is this idea of a certain freedom from basic existential survival that is celebrated, and is what forms part of the prejudice against indigenous societies.

However, while this freedom from precarious conditions is certainly a historical principle of emancipation, rooted all the way back to basic enlightenment ideals, one of the problems of capitalism is that it actually acts as a counterfeit. It feigns a notion of freedom—of emancipation from the existential precarity of raw dependence on nature—while manufacturing a different sort of socially induced precariousness on behalf of an indifferent economy. Rather than working for one’s direct and immediate survival in terms of the production of food in order to live, capitalism is a coercive system which forces people to work for one’s direct and immediate survival. Noam Chomsky and others are terrific here, particularly when it comes to drawing parallels between slave labour and capitalist labour.

In the case of capitalist and feudal society, both foster a concept of time that is very much coloured by the existential threat of non-survival. Freedom, the enlightenment notion of emancipation, is defined as freedom from labour and from this precarious existential circumstance, as

opposed to a deeper structural emancipation. In both cases, the individual is constantly working towards a notion of free time—that is, time spent directly against or completely free from the practice of necessary labour—which is usually a luxury for only a minority of people, as the majority toiled in the fields, or now work in corporate factories and offices, producing their own direct means of survival.

On a psychological level, could it be that such precarious conditions strengthen or reinforce the drive for a sense of ultimate security in the world? This is more or less what Sherman means when, writing in the final pages of his book, he reflects: there is a fear that if the individual does not make himself into a thing, if he does not *adapt*, “he will die under the weight of an indifferent economic system” (Sherman 2007, p. 281). Alternatively, he concludes: “Under the right state of affairs, there would be no such fear, and the individual would feel free to open himself up to the world. And, by opening himself up to the world, which would mean that self-identity would become more fluid, the individual would be in a position, as Nietzsche state, to become who he is” (p. 281).

Beliefs and desires, religious faith and existential security—in *The Gods in Whom They Trusted*, Arnold De Graaff (2016) illustrates in a very detailed way just to what extent a principle of faith exists in capitalism as a sort of existential orientation to the world. In some ways, his wide-ranging study touches on a similar point as Walter Benjamin’s analysis of capitalism as religion (Racy 2016). The ideology of the “free market”, the almost spiritual belief in the “principle of exchange” (Adorno 1992a; Adorno and Horkheimer 2002), from a critical humanistic perspective, capitalism can be understood not only as a complex system which requires certain structurally necessary components in order to reproduce itself. It also exists as a totalized worldview and thus serves a very distinct purpose in relation to psychic life, wherein we can also determine that reproduction also exists on the everyday level of the subject. Along similar lines, this is more or less the general point that Simon Clarke (2013) presented at the end of his paper on the ideological foundations of neoliberalism, in which Clarke describes how the model of neoliberalism is essentially forced onto the world.

It is of course true that not everyone who participates in capitalist society has such a deep sense of existential security invested in the system of capital, or even in the “principle of exchange” or in the idea of the free market more generally. But in terms of wider belief and wider faith in practice, actual lived faith and (false) ultimate security—the security of

knowing where one stands in the world by way of capital's absolute relation to all things—is a direct expression of the exploitation religious power of capitalism as a totalized worldview.

Within this notion of capitalism as religion (to borrow from Benjamin) resides a very distinct pathological reality. It is this pathological reality that gives expression to the doctrine of capital, to the trusted acceptance of capitalism—of the will, or, indeed, the “invisible hand of the free market”—as a sort of theological virtue (De Graaff 2016). What makes it pathological, in many respects, is the confident or unquestioning belief in the truth, value, direction of the system of capital as a standard of merit and as a teaching of practice, resulting in a pathology of the individual in the form of excessive repression necessary for the purpose of domination in the attempt to control everything on behalf of that religious faith (Smith 2015a, c).

To state it once more, it is not accurate to suggest that every individual operates on the basis of such belief. There are also people who openly advocate transformation and transition to post-capitalism. But this is beside the point, for what I am speaking of here is the faith in capital which originally constituted capitalism as a system, and finally in the lived faith now expressed by a significant majority. Additionally, what is being implied here is not completely disconnected from social movements, even anti-capitalist movements, and the fear—often a deeply existential fear—towards the unknown which exists as the post-capitalist horizon of possibility. Yotam Marom's (2016) profoundly insightful article on life within Occupy Wall Street certainly attests to this point, indicating what I argue is now a very real pathological aspect of human reality within western capitalist society.

With that said, what a concept of social pathology offers is a framework for understanding how the subject might evidence pathological imprints or internalizations.

Consider, for example, how research in trauma-focused psychotherapy has even shown how capitalism exploits the body's response to traumatic stress (Kerr 2014). For Adorno—and, pointedly, for Marcuse (1969)—when it comes to a critique of capitalism's methods of psychological and economic coercion, we read how capitalism artificially manufactures scarcity, stress and trauma and then exploits this condition of scarcity, stress and trauma. As illustrated in some of the empirical evidence considered in the earlier pages of this book, Adorno's hypothesis would appear generally correct. But if capitalism produces, actively and intentionally, a systemic-

social context in which, for many if not most people, the threat of *constant impending economic scarcity* defines the basis for one's life, one's activity through life, what is the actual intention? Simply put, it is a matter of control. The deeper existential threat of precarity drives the subject's commitment to "work" through the exploitative cycle of capitalist labour, and thus supplements the historical pathological reproduction of such a highly exploitative system.

In a humanistic sense, such artificial manufacturing and then also exploitation of fear is deeply traumatizing (Fromm 2002; Rowan 2001; Brick 2006; Biel 2012). And it is in this context of this cycle of trauma and its psychologically disintegrative effects where, in Adorno, we come to understand the extent of psychological and emotional manipulation that exists today.

While a separate book must be written on this issue, one of the main points I would like to strike in this chapter is how capitalism has sealed, through deep psychological and emotional manipulation, its own particularly serious authoritarian grip over many individuals. It has, moreover, established a coercive hold over one's internal existential sense of security in the world and with regard to being open to the unknown possibilities of transformation. In its social-systemic patterns of domination in a triple sense (Zuidervaat 2007)—which can be broken down as control, repression and exploitation—the vicious circle (to borrow from Marcuse) is that capitalism deepens the already present existentially fear-driven impulse towards domination (Zuidervaat 2007; Smith 2015a) with ever greater consequences. A result of this—what I describe as "systemic cycles of domination" over history—is an increasingly closed and hardened subject (Smith 2015a, 2015c) driven all the more by the socially deepened intensification of threatenedness and fear.

To argue that capitalism manufactures and exploits existential fear, that social pathology affects and deforms the development of the self—that the strengthening of repression has resulted in the increasing corporealization of the psyche (Marcuse 1969a)—this is to describe a social, psychological, emotional and even existential reality in which, as Glenn Parton put it, there exists an active force that denies the increasing historical possibilities for freedom and happiness.

What I mean by this, in one sense, is that domination (Smith 2015a)—that is, domination understood in a triple sense as "the domination of nature by human beings, the domination of nature within human beings, and, in both of these forms of domination, the domination of some

human beings by others” (Zuidervaat 2007, p. 186)—is driven both by the all-consuming capitalist economy (Zuidervaat 2007, p. 187) and by the modern pathologies of the subject, who, as we learn in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, is energized by unreconciled fear, anxiety and terror. It is, in addition to Adorno’s analysis, also accurate to suggest when considering the breadth of research and data behind this work, that this existential fear as well as core or primal anxiety and emotional pathology have established a sort of circuit of reproduction. There are so many significant passages by Adorno which capture this issue in very precise terms, and in my analysis of the dialectic of enlightenment (Smith 2015a) I try to capture the main thrust of Adorno’s thesis. But perhaps it is Marcuse who, in surveying the cycles and patterns of behaviour in everyday life, captures best the *rationalization of domination as pathology*:

The performance principle, which is that of an acquisitive and antagonistic society in the process of constant expansion, presupposes a long development during which domination has been increasingly rationalized: control over social labor now reproduces society on an enlarged scale and under improving conditions. [...] their labor is work for an apparatus which they do not control, which operates as an independent power to which individuals must submit if they want to live [...]. Work has now become *general*, and so have the restrictions placed upon the libido: labor time, which is the largest part of the individual’s life time, is painful time, for alienated labor is absence of gratification, negation of the pleasure principle. (Marcuse 1969a, p. 50–51)

Marcuse was more optimistic in *Eros and Civilization* (1969) when it came to envisioning the prospect of liberation, internal and external transformation, and ultimately the transition to a non-repressive civilization. He did, however, become more pessimistic as years went by. One of his most pessimistic works, for example, was *One-Dimensional Man* in which the grip of totally administered society is seen as too great, even if Marcuse never completely gave up hope (Moore 2016). Moving forward, I see this work as positioned between *Eros and Civilization* and *One-Dimensional Man*. Why this is so will become clear in time. Meanwhile, if it is true that Marcuse’s diagnosis is one which ultimately leads him to want to advance beyond the ego (Parton 2015a), the ego he actually has in mind is:

not the original ego of early childhood that feels itself to be to part of, and one with the entire universe. Rather, it is the defensive ego, the product of

Capitalist socialization [...] that denies the vital need to recapture the libidinal unity of self, society, and nature. This defensive ego-structure locks us into the vicious circle, and for breaking out of it the late Marcuse endorsed Bahro's concept of the "journey inwards" (Marcuse 1980, p. 45), which means, basically, self-exploration, self-knowledge, and self-development. (Parton 2015a)

In closing, Adorno's broad social analysis also reveals in a rather unique way the social production of a hardened ego structure (Adorno 1968, 1991, 1992, 2002; Sherman 2007)—what I describe as a closed, hardened, cold or desensitized instrumental subjectivity. Thus, to put it simply, such a "brutal, total, standardizing society" goes against the thrust of Adorno's negative dialectics and important interventions in other fields: namely, the notion of the *mediating subject* (Adorno 1992a; Sherman 2007; Smith 2013, 2015c).

4.1.7 (vii) *The Mediating Subject*

Now, in a critical dissection of Adorno's thought, it is around this point where we begin to encroach on one of the biggest problems of his analysis. His totalizing thesis, while suggestive of a real truth, is too overwhelming and doesn't, in the end, allow for recognition of the "cracks" (Holloway 2010) and, indeed, the existence of the mediating subject. His widely criticized total and relentless negativity essentially drives him, theoretically and practically, to betray the very possibility of his negative dialectics (Sherman 2007, p. 239). But like Sherman, it is because I reject as extreme Adorno's totalizing thesis that I can accept not only the continuing viability of negative dialectics (Sherman 2007, p. 239) but also the general thrust of his theses on the subject in relation to the historic unfolding of capitalism's institutions. In other words, the idea here is that contemporary capitalist culture, not to mention its many institutions and systems, "manipulates consciousness for the very purpose of undermining the prospect of what I call a mediating subject, which, for Adorno, shares nothing in common with the overinflated, but critically impotent, subjectivism that the Culture Industry fosters" (Sherman 2007, pp. 8–9).

Though "Adorno refuses to consider the subject in abstraction from its concrete sociohistorical situation," comments Sherman, "he unremittingly attacks those who would conceive of the free self-determining subject as merely a deceptive notion emanating from the metaphysical

tradition” (Sherman 2007, p. 8). This is because, at its heart, Adorno’s philosophy of the subject is dialectical. On this point, I am in agreement and wholeheartedly share with poststructuralists the idea of the flourishing, vibrant individual subject, although I remain critical of strands of theory which resort to liberal-capitalist libertarianism. Rather, the point is that the flourishing, vibrant individual subject is, as Sherman (2007) states, a mediating subject which, as I have argued in the past, runs against the colonization of the ego, hardened identity structures, and also the socially engendered closed, repressed subject that Freud once described (an analysis still applicable today).

It is no coincidence, moreover, that contemporary social movements often put an emphasis on radical collective space and, even if only implicitly, a reclaiming of the self, of one’s subjectivity in the midst of that alternative social space (Smith 2014). For this reason—and certainly in line with my own theoretical and empirical analysis of movements—I share Sherman’s (2007) position that it is a terrible mistake to “reduce the standpoint of embodied, intentional consciousness, which obliges us to recognize ourselves as free, efficacious agents in the world, to the sociohistorical standpoint” (p. 6). On a greater theoretical and philosophical plane of analysis, we must, as Adorno wants to do, although eventually betrays with his concept of “totally administered society”, remain dialectical in our theory of the subject. Thus, we might say: “Although subjectivity is plainly mediated by the existing sociohistorical structures, it also has the capacity to affect these very structures in turn, and therefore the self-identities that they engender” (Sherman 2007, p. 6). Just as I argued in my critique of the Slavoj Žižek’s Lacanian theory of the subject (2013a), with emphasis on an interdisciplinary analysis of subject formation which includes several significant contemporary bodies of research: “subjectivity is active and mediating. And, ethically speaking, the notion that we are mediating subjects is basic to our self-constitution, both collectively and individually” (Sherman 2007, p. 6). Thus, in no mistaken terms, in addition to Žižek by way of Lacan, a number of other philosophers have sought to revivify the subject (Sherman 2007, p. 3)—the issue, however, is that their project cannot bear the weight of their endeavours (Sherman 2007; Smith 2013a). They more often than not “confuse genesis and validity” (Sherman 2007, p. 6) and even, along political lines, end up reproducing the very bad social conditions they seek to overcome (Sherman 2007, p. 6; Smith 2013a).

4.2 THE RIGIDIFIED EGO AND SOCIAL PATHOLOGY

Having covered several important opening points, I would like to now turn to an even deeper discussion concerning the development of a radical philosophy of the subject, particularly by first expressing my agreement with those who pick up on the valuable insight Adorno's negative dialectics offers when it comes to a critique of epistemology (Fink 2008; Foster 2008; Miller 2009; O'Connor 1998; Smith 2015c; Titchiner 2017).

One of the strengths of Adorno's analysis is in how it reveals, similar to Hegel, certain fundamental epistemological issues as entwined with the question of subject formation (Sherman 2007). The basic premise underlying Adorno's critique is summarized nicely by David Sherman: "To the extent that we misconceive our relation to the objects of our experience, we deform of our experiences, and, therefore, ultimately our *selves*, given that subjectivity is the result of our experience" (Sherman 2007, p. 273; *emphasis added*).

Adorno's critique of Heidegger and Husserl is particularly notable along these lines (Adorno 1992a; Foster 2008; Sherman 2007), especially when we consider his rejection of "constitutive subjectivity" which Adorno sees in a number of traditions of thought, from positivism and classical idealism to dogmatic rationalism (Sherman 2007, p. 60).

Furthermore, if the "Philosophy of origins took shape scientifically as epistemology", Adorno dissects in rather brilliant fashion how, "[t]he latter wished to raise the absolutely first to the absolutely certain by reflecting on the subject" (Adorno 1992b, p. 22). As Sherman reflects: what Adorno calls *prima philosophia* is a critique aimed at the "fundamentally misguided" inclination of thought found throughout the history of philosophy, namely, how the "absolute foundation" which is "necessarily held to be immediate", "is itself, as a concept, *mediated*, and thus not the absolute, irreducible first as all attempts to justify knowledge by way of this privilege category" claim (Sherman 2007, pp. 60–61; *emphasis added*). This mediation, for purpose of clarity, is *social*. And the fact that concepts, like the subject, are *mediated socially* is one of Adorno's most important lessons—a lesson which remains as relevant today as when first formulated.

For the same reason as Sherman in his book *Sartre and Adorno: The Dialectics of Subjectivity* (Sherman 2007), I recently dissected the significance of this insight concerning social mediation in my own (2015c) study, wherein the point was emphasized, as we have already touched on in this book, that the coercive legacy of capitalism's institutions and

structures is entwined with the issue of subject formation. What this is to say, for purposes of clarity, is that within the “bad social totality”, the process of subject development, of *self*-development, which is illuminated in the research emanating from self-psychology, for example (Rogers 1959, 1983; Stern 1985; Shane et al. 1997; Buirski and Kottler 2007; Lichtenberg and Kaplan 2014), is entwined to whatever degree in the sociohistorical-cultural structures that contextualizes one’s general situation in the world.

Society, social institutions, structures and systems impact the subject’s development, as we previously concluded. One step forward, whether subject formation is generally healthy or unhealthy depends, significantly, on the extent in which one internalizes all of the antagonistic aspects of one’s sociohistorical-culture reality, which, it has to be said, is more often than not the case, as one simply cannot escape society today.

To put it differently: in an authoritarian, coercive and dominant society, the subject is scarred—one might even say deformed—as it is unavoidable that we internalize whatever aspects of that negative reality that we are subjected too. On that point, does this analysis not support the thrust of Javier Sethness Castro’s argument when he writes: “childhood in late capitalism is little more than a preparatory stage for getting along: conformity, adjustment, and alienated labor. The system progressively negates the radical potential of the unintegrated child” (Castro 2015).

Moreover, what is being indicated here is that as a result of our *social mediation*, our identities, our self-development, not to mention our general orientations with the world (Smith 2015c) are partly or in some cases largely a product of our internalization of our sociohistorical-cultural structures (Piaget 1929, 1977; Kelman 1958; Bronfenbrenner 1979, 2005; Wood et al. 1994; Gilbert et al. 1998; Freedheim and Weiner 2003; Seifert 2004; McLeod 2007a, 2014; Maschinot 2008; Montgomery 2008; Aronson et al. 2010; Krishnan 2010; Doise and Palmonari 2011; Titchiner 2017). Thus, in many cases, personality disorders are developed (Rogers 1959, 1983; Stern 1985; Shane et al. 1997; Rowan 2001; Buirski and Kottler 2007; Lichtenberg and Kaplan 2014). Neurosis as a result of bad or negative family upbringing is or may also be re-enforced (see above references).

In short, it is this reality of how sociohistorical structures are entwined with subject formation that emphasizes the importance of not only a critique of political economy or broader social-systemic forces and trends of organization but even or especially such institutions as education, which

can have such a dramatic impact on early childhood and overall individual development, for bad or for good (Fromm 1960, 2002; Shostak 1986; Kohn 1993, 1999; Rowan 2001; Illeris 2007). Think, for example, of the damaging effects authoritarian education has on children and, more pointedly, on their developmental process as individual subjects. There is a reason why authoritarian, coercive and dominant social circumstances tend to foster or support the development of hardened, repressed subjectivities. It is along these lines, and in understanding the connections between authoritarian forms of education and social pathology, that inspired Fromm to write in the Foreword to A.S. Neill's (Fromm 1960) book on Summerhill and its radical approach to education:

To discuss this matter clearly we must first understand the nature of freedom; and to do this we must differentiate between overt authority and anonymous authority. [...] Overt authority is exercised directly and explicitly. The person in authority frankly tells the one who is subject to him, "You must do this. If you do not, certain sanctions will be applied against you." Anonymous authority tends to hide that force is being used. Anonymous authority pretends that there is no authority, that all is done with the consent of the individual. While the teacher of the past said to Johnny, "You must do this. If you don't, I'll punish you"; today's teacher says, "I'm sure you'll like to do this." Here, the sanction for disobedience is not corporal punishment, but the suffering face of the parent, or what is worse, conveying the feeling of not being "adjusted," of not acting as the crowd acts. Overt authority used physical force; anonymous authority employs psychic manipulation. (Fromm 1960)

Fromm continues his case, tracing the historical developments of mainstream western education in relation to phases of capitalist development:

The change from the overt authority of the nineteenth century to the anonymous authority of the twentieth was determined by the organizational needs of our modern industrial society. The concentration of capital led to the formation of giant enterprises managed by hierarchically organized bureaucracies. Large conglomerations of workers and clerks work together, each individual a part of a vast organized production machine, which in order to run at all, must run smoothly and without interruption. The individual worker becomes merely a cog in this machine. [...] And in the sphere of consumption (in which the individual allegedly expresses his free choice) he is likewise managed and manipulated. Whether it be the consumption of food, clothing, liquor, cigarettes, movies or television programs, a power-

ful suggestion apparatus is at work with two purposes: first, to constantly increase the individual's appetite for new commodities; and secondly, to direct these appetites into the channels most profitable for industry. Man is transformed into the consumer, the eternal suckling, whose one wish is to consume more and "better" things. (Fromm 1960)

As we touched on in the last chapter regarding needs, it is not so much that capitalism meets human needs in the egalitarian fashion that it self-deceivingly promotes. Rather, writes Fromm (1960), "Our economic system must create men [and women] who fit its needs; men who cooperate smoothly; men who want to consume more and more. Our system must create men whose tastes are standardized, men who can be easily influenced, men whose needs can be anticipated." This process of development—of persuasive subject formation vis-à-vis Fromm's critique of authoritarian modes of "adaption"—is often very passive, naturalized as a normal part of reality. In other words, authorities who often impose such norms on behalf of falsified society are not those who are unaffected by society's overall authoritarian constellation. The very existence of an authoritarian structure (as a social phenomenon) is a projection of a fundamental social antagonism which, to speak very clearly, is not always principle to the command of fascist or overt authoritarian masters. It is more often than not the problem of pathology, which is precedent.

In this sense, the first two things we should prohibit when considering a critique of authoritarianism in the modern day—whether in the workplace, in an education environment or even in the greater whole of society—is that it is a symptom of pathological society. It is a social problem, one which is subject to historical change. On the one hand, as we have learned it often involves the attitudes and perceptions of terrified people. On the other hand, it often also involves a system that, while constructed on the distorted foundations of manufactured and exploited terror, equally pushes people to become all the more rigidified in character—which is equivalent to desensitized and hardened experience. Thus, again, Fromm's (2002) characterology of "man [and woman] in capitalistic society" comes front and centre. He writes in *The Sane Society* for instance:

Yet, on the other hand, the development of culture is a necessary condition for human development. [...] We have reached a state of individuation in which only the fully developed mature personality can make fruitful use of freedom; if the individual has not developed his reason and his capacity for love, he is incapable bearing the burden of freedom and individuality [...].

Any regression today from freedom into artificial rootedness in state or race is a sign of mental illness [...]. Regardless of whether we speak of “mental health” or of the “mature development” of the human race, the concept of mental health or of maturity is an objective one [...]. Whether or not the individual is healthy, is primarily not an individual matter, but depends on the structure of society. A healthy society furthers man’s capacity to love [...], to work creatively, to develop his reason and objectivity, to have a sense of self [...]. An unhealthy society is one which creates mutual hostility, distrust, which transforms man into an instrument of use and exploitation for others. (Fromm 2002, pp. 69–70)

These last points are certainly evident in modern neoliberal capitalist society. From out of this spiralling pathological dynamic, deepened in terms of mutual hostility and desensitization towards others, there is typically a permeating view of relations based, implicitly or explicitly, on a drive for power and domination. After time, such pathological phenomena—the idea in marriage or relations, for example, of obtaining “control”—become a matter of culture and convention. Relational paradigms of coercive power, much like the cultural use of violent language, become normalized and thus the source of narrative or joke within popular culture. Fromm is right to suggest, moreover, that within popular culture there is a form of self-reflection on culture, on pathology and negative adaptation, even if not explicit as though one is looking directly in a mirror. In part, this is because pathology, adaption, eventually becomes hidden:

In other words, in order to be adaptable, modern man is obliged to nourish the illusion that everything is done with his consent, even though such consent be extracted from him by subtle manipulation. His consent is obtained, as it were, behind his back, or behind his consciousness. The same artifices are employed in progressive education. The child is forced to swallow the pill, but the pill is given a sugar coating. Parents and teachers have confused true non-authoritarian education with education by means of persuasion and hidden coercion. Progressive education has been thus debased. It has failed to become what it was intended to be and has never developed as it was meant to. (Fromm 1960)

To state the issue differently, what is being indicated here is something that also underlines much of Adorno’s social philosophy: a critique of the dialectical relation between the individual and society, structure and agency. That said, one should not mistake the position as one which falls back into a hardened social determinism. As a matter of fact, Adorno’s

position (much like Fromm's) generally allows for a progressive theory of the subject that supports what I perceive as one of the most substantive critiques of determinism. Adorno states in *Negative Dialectics* for instance:

Reflections on freedom and determinism sound archaic, as though dating from the early times of the revolutionary bourgeoisie. But that freedom grows obsolete without having been realized—this is not a fatality to be accepted; it is a fatality which resistance must clarify. (Adorno 1992a, p. 215)

Sherman writes, moreover: “Although subjectivity is plainly mediated by the existing sociohistorical structures, it also has the capacity to affect these very structures in turn, and therefore the self-identities they engender” (Sherman 2007, p. 6). The point, once more, is that the relation between the subject and his or her sociohistorical-cultural conditions is a dialectical one. Thus, on the one hand, we can state conclusively that the subject is mediated socially and that sociohistorical-cultural structures have a significant part to play when it comes to shaping one's development.

On the other hand, and this point is worth repeating, social mediation like neurosis is never absolute, and thus we can also determine through a phenomenological study of consciousness (Smith 2015c) that the subject also always has the *potential to affect those structures* (Rogers 1959, 1983; Rowan 2001; Sartre 1972, 2004; Schmookler 1988; Sherman 2007; Shostak 1986; Smith 2015c). Hitherto the radical philosophy of the subject I am drawing on here is one which simultaneously allows for a critique of social structures and systems, as well as their impact and interaction when it comes to subject development, whilst leaving room for recognition of the efficaciousness of the individual subject (Sherman 2007) and the community that can build transformative power and create societal change (Parton 2015a).

Moving forward, what has also always felt significant to me when considering Adorno's analysis along these lines, is the manner in which he offers a unique insight into the entire cognitive dynamics of the bad social totality not only lived in and through the subject but also imprinted in the many institutions, systems and structures of what we now describe as the neoliberal phase of capitalist development.

Moreover, I think it can be concluded in very clear terms how within modern capitalist society, within the modern social totality—with its dominant and coercive institutions and structures, as well as its deeply ingrained instrumental rationale and mode of cognition (Parton 2015a), the subject is both produced and reproduced (Fromm 2002, 2010). Within this

process of reproduction—not only are social norms, traditions as well as patterns and structures of behaviour reproduced (Bourdieu 1980, 1984, 1986), but also a general mode of cognition (Adorno 1992a; Smith 2015c). Within this mode of cognition not only a questionable anthropology and epistemology are found operating underneath (Smith and De Graaff 2016) but also, more practically, a critique emerges concerning both how we misconceive the phenomena of our thinking by way of the impulse towards identity and mastery—“the false universalizing tendency of thought”—and how we relate with our *selves* and with one another (Adorno 1992a; Sherman 2007; Smith 2015c).

4.2.1 (i) *Negative Dialectics and Issues of Ego-Formation*

On that point, allow me to now turn to a more theoretical discussion. It has already been noted that Adorno’s negative dialectics offers important hypotheses when it comes to the speculative study of an alternative cognitive paradigm (Cook 2008). His *magnum opus* (Adorno 1992a) was dedicated to exploring the broad coordinates of such an alternative paradigm (Cook 2008), resulting in one of the most fascinating critiques of Kant and in the seminal formulation concerning the subject that is “spent and impoverished in its categorical performance” (Adorno 1992a, p. 139). Though I think we can break Adorno’s negative dialectics down to an exploration of an alternative epistemology, anthropology and cosmology (Smith 2015c), what is so meaningful about his text is the way it provides a comprehensive early first step towards a radical transformative philosophy of the subject, especially when we consider *Negative Dialectics* in the context of Adorno’s social philosophy as a whole.

If in Adorno and Horkheimer’s dialectic of enlightenment, it is the anxious impulse of enlightenment thought to obliterate the particularity of objects (Smith 2015a), then it was Adorno’s aim in *Negative Dialectics* and elsewhere to introduce the notion of an alternative cognitive paradigm that, to put it succinctly, is meant to run counter to the destructive paradigm of identity thinking. In his proposition of a new cognitive paradigm, Adorno developed the notion of non-identity thinking, which Cook (2008) summarizes in relatively practical terms:

Claiming that identity thinking merely “says what something falls under, what it exemplifies or represents, and what, accordingly, it is not itself”, Adorno contrasts it to non-identity thinking.../[which] identifies in “other ways” because it is not content merely to subsume objects under univer-

sal concepts with a view to manipulating and controlling them.../In non-identity thinking, then, the “direction of conceptuality” is turned back towards non-conceptuality because concepts are generated in our embodied contact with material things, and they continue to refer to things by virtue of their meaning in which their relation to the non-conceptual survives (ND: 12). Yet concepts have a dual relation to objects. On the one hand, they de-pend on the non-conceptual matter that provides their content and is the source of their power to name. To convey “full, unreduced experience in the medium of conceptual reflection”, then, non-identity thinking must immerse itself in things (ibid., p. 13). On the other hand, concepts transcend objects by heeding “a potential that waits in the object”, and intending in the object “even that of which the object was deprived by objectification” (ibid., p. 19). (Cook 2008, pp. 10–11)

It is important to note here that, while Adorno offers a clear emphasis on the object, he does so for the sake of the subject. In an especially emblematic passage, Adorno (1992a) writes:

What transmits the facts is not so much the subjective mechanism of their pre-formation and comprehension as it is the objectivity heteronomous to the subject, the objectivity behind that which the subject can experience. This objectivity is denied to the primary realm of subjective experience. It is preordained to that realm. Wherever, in the current manner of speaking, judgment is too subjective at the present historical stage, the subject, as a rule, will automatically parrot the *consensus omnium*. To give the object its due instead of being content with the false copy, the subject would have to resist the average value of such objectivity and to free itself as a subject. It is on this emancipation, not on the subject’s insatiable repression, that objectivity depends today. The superiority of objectification in the subjects not only keeps them from becoming subjects; it equally prevents a cognition of objectivity. This is what became of what used to be called “the subjective factor.” It is now subjectivity rather than objectivity that is indirect, and this sort of mediation is more in need of analysis than the traditional one. (Adorno 1992a, pp. 170–171)

As Sherman (2007) notes, “Adorno’s emphasis on the object, it should be clear, is largely for the sake of the subject”. If it is “now subjectivity rather than objectivity that is indirect”, it is because an “objectivity produced by identity thinking performs the subject’s world, and subjectivity becomes a mere function or it” (Sherman, p. 276). Because it is now subjectivity that is indirect, there is, in my own words, a sort of stunting or closing-

down that occurs between the subject and phenomena, which are reduced objects, wherein it is indicative of identity thought to no longer honour the particularity not to mention the multifariousness or multidimensionality of the object (Smith 2015c).

In simpler terms, rather than giving a phenomenon its due, “constitute subjectivity”, instrumental reason—what we might call identity thinking, or a particularly distorted form of human rationality—is more likely to hypostatize it and subsume it under an overwhelmingly (false) general category (Adorno 1992a). This type of experience tends to be extremely rigid, hardened, one way and hierarchical: it is tantamount to a closing-down of what I would term one’s *intersubjective relation with a phenomenon or another person*, that is, subject-subject, precisely insofar that identity thought manifests along the plane of the subject-object relation. It is, in even more simplistic terms, a dominant mode of experience (Smith 2015c). The subject is driven to dominate the object, but not always directly as this mode of domination can also play out conceptually (Smith 2015a; 2015e). The subject, no longer relinquishing itself to the object, no longer surrendering itself to the uniqueness of its experience, blocks the conceptual fluidity and healthy mediating experiential moments of experience (mediation, in terms of the phenomenology of consciousness, is used differently here). For this reason, we can say that, while subjectivity is always active and mediating, the amount in which a subject opens itself up to the object (as the object openness itself up to the subject) depends on the degree of conscious stunting that takes place (Adorno 1992a; Smith 2015c).

This analysis can be considered, I think, as particularly crucial when it comes to a critique of the neoliberal subject: “to mistakenly see human social constructs in ontological terms when it reflects on its experience of the world, and without the idea of an embodied consciousness that freely strives to make the world its own” (Sherman 2007, p. 6).

One can say that, although analysed via different conceptual language and ultimately theorized in another way, a similar phenomenon of hypostatization, of identity thought and of “constitutive subjectivity” can be found in several different fields of study and lines of critique. This especially so if we consider my framing that what Adorno was working towards is actually a notion of the mediating and free-flourishing subject (Sherman 2007) as opposed to what we might generally describe as a closed, repressed, cognitively hardened and consciously stunted subject (Smith 2015c). Add to that the existential dimension that I propose

underlines Adorno's dialectic of enlightenment—most notably an anxiety, fear or threatenedness which propels the subject to dominate internal and external nature—the cross-analogous research and hypotheses from a variety of disciplines is simply stunning.

Consider, for example, Carl Rogers' important and widely referenced study on a theory of personality, which reflects, in not so dissimilar terms, "the development of incongruence between self and experience" (Rogers 1959) and what we might describe, in Adornian language, as the problem of "hypostatization" (Adorno 2002). It can also be said that humanistic psychology plays with similar themes in relation to the *self* (Rowan 2001). Then there is Babette Rothschild et al.'s fascinating research in the area of psychophysiology, Jean Piaget's work concerning a study of cognitive development (Piaget 1977), Thomas J. Owens work in phenomenology and intersubjectivity (1970), Knud Illeris' (among many others) research in education (2007), Tara Lynn Gruenewald emerging work in and around the acute threat to the social self (2003), as well as the similarly fascinating phenomenological research emanating from out of the cognitive sciences (Gallagher and Zahavi 2007) and self-psychology (Shane et al. 1997; Buirski and Kottler 2007; Lichtenberg and Kaplan 2014).

All of these references do not even begin to scratch the surface, let alone do enough justice to my suggestion that there is significant cross-disciplinary connections to the sort of radical philosophy of the subject one might read in Adorno. One can also cite research in cognitive behavioural therapy (Titchiner 2017), cognitive science (Gallagher and Zahavi 2007; Brook 2008; Kriegel 2013), neurophenomenology (Gallagher 2009), neurology (Fullman 2015) and psychotherapy (Yalom 1980; Brammer and Shostrom 1982; Brandchaft 2010).

Preserving this last point for a little later, what's important to point out is how, for Adorno (1992), "if the 'subjective factor' was not overrun by objectivity's 'false copy'—a social lowest common denominator that constitutes the 'average value of objectivity'—it would not fail to identify in such a way that it would contribute this 'subjective factor, which is the result of 'self-reflection'" (Adorno 1992a, p. 149). That is why, as Adorno writes: "Non-identity is the secret telos of identification [...]. Dialectically, cognition of non-identity also lies in the fact that this very cognition identifies—that it identifies to a greater extent, and in other ways, than identity thinking" (Adorno, p. 149). Self-reflection—in other words, the "subjective factor" that is currently overwhelmed—is "the mediating moment in the subject, and this mediating moment, in turn, presupposes the subject-object dialectic" (Sherman 2007) and our working through it.

In passing, it is this problem of what I shall label in light of Sherman (2007) as the *repression of the mediating moment of experience*—of *experiential coherence* (Smith 2015c)—which really lies at the heart of the conflict when it comes to moral theory based on empathy (Fullman 2015).

To approach the issue differently: there is no wholly non-reflective human person. Self-reflection is in other words an organic mode of our experiential experience (Smith 2015c), a point which can be affirmed via a phenomenological study of consciousness (Wider 1997). Irrespective of how one's experiences might become distorted, stunted or overwhelmed by objectivity's "false copy", one cannot not be self-reflective in the same way that one cannot not experience (due to the intentional aspect of consciousness).

Every experience we have, moreover, ultimately depends on our interacting with a phenomenon, because, as we learn in phenomenology, especially that after Husserl (e.g., as read in Sartre), it is through conscious intentionality that we are constantly orientating ourselves towards the world. That is to say, we are always consciously focused on some *thing* (Brook 2008; Fink 1972; Gallagher 2009; Wider 1997; Smith 2015c). But it is how this mediating, this subject-subject interaction, this openness of the subject, gets blocked that *is* one of the fundamental problems we must address (Smith and De Graaff 2016), as the implications of this "repression of the mediating moment of experience" or what I call experiential coherence has serious implications with regard to the possibility of radical praxis.

In closing, what I would like to propose is that this "repression of the mediating moment of experience" is not always ideologically related. But it is almost always necessarily socially pathological, even if manifest at times in and through individual emotional pathology. As we learn in psychology and other fields of research, this "conscious stunting" (Smith 2015c) can also be the result of basic neurosis and anxiety, a sense of acute threat to one's self (Gruenewald 2003). However, in large, there is often always some relation to overwhelmingly negative social conditions, as evidenced in growing bodies of research which link emotionally overwhelmed individuals in relation to the pathological conditions of their present social reality. In other words, in the midst of such horribly and overwhelmingly negative social conditions, sometimes the individual simply needs to shut down in order to emotionally cope. A particularly illuminating example can be found in the emerging research on the contemporary phenomenon known as "compassion fatigue" (Babbel 2012).

What would be interesting in the future is to see these how negative social conditions and compassion fatigue might be linked more broadly on an empirical level. Likewise, how does the use of digital technologies and various popular cultural phenomena relate? Often we read descriptions, for example, of video games or mainstream movies as forms of escapism, usually in the negative sense. However, often such accounts lack nuance and complexity in their analysis. By no means is it accurate to say that these activities are always a form of escapism. At the same time, human beings have always had escapisms—such as religion or fictional stories—and this can be traced both socially and existentially. Outside of negative social realities, life can be terrifying, death haunts. Angst is a real human experience. And not all “escapism” is negative. In fact, we’re seeing more and more today that activities which detach from reality—such as video games or a good book—can often offer a healthy and positive release for the individual and be beneficial to mental health. These issues more have to do with how negative social conditions intensify *neurotic* and irrational forms of detachment or escapism, instead of supporting the opening of the subject and fostering healthier and more reconciled forms of social security, support and recognition. This is a fundamentally important question.

It is along these lines that, in the conclusion of his tremendously accomplished book, David Sherman writes: “Openness to a world to which the individual can actually afford to be open is therefore the very condition of the liberated subject, *not* his demise” (Sherman 2007, p. 281).

In turn, if a society built on three-tiered domination (Zuidervaat 2007; Smith 2015a) of internal and external nature encourages or indeed fosters, very generally speaking, a repressed, closed, traumatized subject—what we have here is a foundational critical social philosophical view of the phenomenon of *social pathology*. And it is this understanding of the deeper aspects of the existence of social pathology in relation to a broad critical social philosophical perspective that I would like to continue to examine.

4.3 ECONOMIC COERCION, SOCIETAL REPRODUCTION AND SUBJECT DEFORMATION

We have already discussed how, at its core, the essence of Frankfurt School CT is a comprehensive study of society which seeks to understand the existence of needless social suffering and how to mitigate it. Within this research programme, the related issue of the reproduction of pathological society comes into direct focus. Why does needless social suffering

persist despite the advancement of knowledge, the advent of reason, and the potential of scientific and technological advancement? Why do people continue to subscribe to or participate within a social, political and economic system that produces needless suffering (e.g., inequality)?

If the answer, in part, is that reason has regressed and irrationalism or unreason has largely prevailed, what does this say about the status of society and of the modern neoliberal subject? Already we have introduced the issue of the (de)formation of the subject and, relatedly, the problem of the colonization of the ego (Sherman 2007). But how do these tie-in, more profoundly, to the actual reproducing of negative social conditions?

One of the hallmarks of pathological society, notes Fromm (2002), is to hide that it is actually sick. This plays out, as Marcuse argues (1966), through the intensification of “surplus repression”. But it is also because pathology begins to live in and through the subject insofar that the individual subject is constituted by and actively constitutes their social reality. A direct link between pathological society, reproduction and the subject is domination—except today domination is largely indirect, as opposed for instance to feudal society.

In different sections of this book, we have already touched on different channels in which dominant, coercive and authoritarian society today exploits as well as exercises control and manipulation. The early example of education and the experience of art school students is one of thousands we can draw. Due to the limits of the current venue, I am going to focus on one particular example in this section: economic coercion. To begin, Adorno offers a particularly gripping passage in *Negative Dialectics*:

Indifference to freedom, to the concept and the thing itself, is caused by the integration of society [i.e., totally economically administered society], which happens to subjects as if it were irresistible. Their interest in being provided for has paralyzed the interest in freedom which they fear would leave them unprotected. (Adorno 1992a, p. 216)

Can it be that the contemporary social, political and economic system is coercive? Has this coercion almost become naturalized between us, to the extent that we don’t always openly acknowledge it? The research on the issue is deeply revealing. There is, after all, a massive difference between economic coercion and voluntary behaviour (Anderson 2015; Fried 2009). That said, “There are many forms of coercion, including physical, psychological, legal, religious, sexual, etc. In an economic

context, coercion occurs wherever individuals are subject to decisions which directly affect their utility, but over which they have no control” (Hintermann and Rutherford 2014, p. 1). In a study on economic coercion in relation to public finance, it was suggested that within contemporary political economy: “Unless consumers have homogenous preferences and identical endowments, every policy choice will lead to some coercion since policy variables apply to everybody. A certain level of coercion is therefore unavoidable, even if the government single-mindedly pursues a policy of minimizing coercion” (Hintermann and Rutherford 2014, p. 12). Even if there are those who argue that, in a healthier and more reconciled political economy, one cannot eliminate coercion altogether, in the same way that we may never absolutely eliminate all forms of domination, because some domination of internal nature is required for society to exist (Smith 2015a); we can nevertheless seek to reduce coercion to its utmost minimal.

This is taken as a starting point. Beyond issues of public finance however, this chapter concerns a deeper critical perspective when it comes to economic coercion (Anderson 2015) in relation to what some have termed the use of coercive power (Dugan 2003). This form of coercion is often associated with the use of threat (Dugan 2003). It can be found in the example of how, in order to “make a living”, the individual is coerced to participate in the contemporary global capitalist system, even if that system directly produces suffering, mental imbalance or other social ills.

Here the threat is discernible and real. In order to survive, to literally “make a living” as we have discussed, one must participate within the standard mode of economic relations. In CT, we come to understand this as a form of subordination. Within economic terms, it is argued that contemporary capitalism is subordinating precisely insofar that “economic coercion links individuals’ material standard of life to the degree to which they accede the system” (Rittenhouse 2013). This is not to suggest, as stressed previously, a negation of individual agency. Rather, the argument as Bruce Rittenhouse illustrates in his study *Shopping for Meaningful Lives: The Religious Motive of Consumerism* (2013) is that, while preserving recognition of the existence of the efficacious subject, subordination and coercion work by impressing the imperatives of the economic system on a level that is deeply threatening, not only existentially or individually but also socially. As Noam Chomsky observes through a typically strong empirical lens of analysis:

If capital is privately controlled, then people are going to have to rent themselves in order to survive. Now, you can say, “they rent themselves freely, it’s a free contract”—but that’s a joke. If your choice is, “do what I tell you or starve,” that’s not a choice—it’s in fact what was commonly referred to as wage slavery in more civilized times, like the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for example. (Chomsky 2013, p. 200)

These ideas aren’t entirely foreign to mainstream political discourses. Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR), the 32nd President of the USA, in contrast to that of Ronald Reagan and his launching of the neoliberal project (Hayward 2014), often spoke a subject free from coercion. FDR, writes Mark Hayward, viewed individual liberty far differently in the sense that he saw the role of government as existing to protect individual freedom “from historically shifting threats to it, threats which he saw emerging the project of corporate capitalism to subject all other arenas of life (politics, work, leisure) to its quest for profit” (Hayward 2014). Hayward goes so far to suggest that, while still operating within neo-classical economic theory, FDR was concerned about the role of economic coercion, where the “individual had little choice in life”. Reagan’s discourse “completely jettisoned” this threat (Hayward 2014), instead laying out a totalizing ideology of the neoliberal theory of society and, impliedly, of the neoliberal theory of the subject. This view operates on the basis of pseudo-scientific validation (Clarke 2013), and its theory or philosophy of the subject, inasmuch as it seeks to free the individual from the restrictions of the state (Hayward 2014), it is actually premised on the intensification of coercion (Aguirre et al. 2006; Howson and Smith 2008; Kaufman 2012).

In contemporary economic theory, moreover, the subject is reduced to the status of an economic object (De Graaff 2016) and is largely perceived as merely an “economic maximizer”. This is what has led some, in CT, to argue that “Modernity’s rational potential manifests itself wherever individuals confront and contest the limits to their freedom, in conditions that reduce them to mere cogs in the wheels of the economic machinery” (Cook 2011, p. 79). It is a view of the subject which Chomsky (2003), among others, thoroughly debunk. *Homo economicus*, we learn, which is the view of the self-interested actor driven by a very one-dimensional economic behaviourist framework, is actually a constituent part of pathological reproduction insofar that it is integral to an assembly line view of governance and, finally, the production of the ideal neoliberal economic subject (McMahon 2014).

This ideology is largely based today on behavioural economics. Capitalism has, as we will discuss in the next chapter, co-opted psychology for the benefit of its ideological programme of pathological adaptation and ideal subject development. Thus, inasmuch that neo-classical and mainstream economic theory had long perceived humans as purely rational beings who would always make the optimum calculation to maximize their payoff, in recent time it has finally been increasingly understood that this view in no way correlates with reality. However, instead of challenging such a one-dimensional view of human behaviour, and instead of challenging the social, political and economic system it served—the field of behavioural economics was born. This particular version of economic theory, which fuses classical micro-economics with behaviour psychology, is a cornerstone to the neoliberal theory of society.

Additionally, this theory of society based largely on behavioural economics “enacts three components of neoliberal governmentality: positioning the market as a site of truth and veridiction for the individual and the state; regulating what constitutes the objects of political economy and governmental intervention; and producing homo economicus (economic human) and diffusing this mode of economic subjectivity across the social terrain” (McMahon 2014).

4.3.1 (i) *Subordination and Coercion*

Dissecting economic coercion along these lines can easily lead to a theory or study of indoctrination. Although there is room to substantiate the idea that indoctrination is pervasive today, this is not my intention. Rather, the aim is to try and understand subordination and coercion in relation to the efficacious subject. This is not an easy balance, but there is enough research to suggest that, contra determinism, the efficacious subject still exists, as the daily image of social struggle and protest against oppression, racism and injustice attests to its very existence (Sherman 2007; Smith 2013a). The issue, then, appears more to be that while there is overwhelming evidence of coercion on an institutional, structural and systems level, reproduction also lives within the subject and, impliedly, must satisfy something very particular in a large portion of individuals.

One particularly beneficial way of approaching this issue is through a study of human choice. Sartre (1972) is right when he asserts his existential thesis that human beings always have a choice. In a past work (2015c), I described Sartre’s argument in line with notion of “phenomenological

freedom". And yet one's choice is also always set within a sociohistorical-cultural context, what Sartre termed "facticity" (Sherman 2007, p. 112). Economic coercion in the wider sense of the term exists between facticity and efficacy. An illuminating example of this can be found in the 2012 Greek Election.

One of the biggest concerns expressed by many progressives with regard to the Greek Vote, which centred on Pro-Bailout and Anti-Bailout discourses, was that it would become one reduced to fear. Many outside politicians and governing institutions spoke of the Greek election as though a very real Armageddon hinged on its outcome. In the papers, on the television—throughout most of mainstream media—external European and Global institutions propagated almost relentlessly a picture of chaos and "economic reckoning"—that if the Greek people voted for radical change, if they voted for another direction and against economic bailout, it would not result in progress but in their own ruin. In the midst of such slander, intimidation and threats, feelings of anxiety and terror were evoked, as it became obvious to what extent economic coercion played a part in the Western democratic process.

The individual always has the freedom to choose an ideology, so goes the popular mantra today, so long that it is a liberty to choose from what was always the same (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002, p. 135). With regard to the Greek Vote, it was clear that the human reality of choice was exercised in the form of a vote. But economic coercion also played a significant role. Like common incentive-based schemes, for example, economic coercion amounts to how one tries to manipulate and control another person's social behaviour by offering them the expectation of an award pending the outcome of a specific choice. In Greece, as numerous outside governing institutions applied relentless pressure on the Greek people in effort to swing the outcome of the elections, the democratic process was reduced to an urge for the power of conformity.

In another way, the democratic process was reduced to a scheme of incentives. The coercive intent of this incentive-based scheme was meant to act as an instrument of control. As outside governing EU institutions reduced the democratic process to one of fear (i.e., the fear that if you vote for change, as you're inclined to do, then your country will face "economic Armageddon"), the public body was therefore coerced, however subtly and conventionally, into perceiving their political reality as either (1) "you vote for the status quo and remain safe within our power structure" or (2) "you vote for change and risk facing your ultimate

demise". Coerced in this way, the persuasion and urge for conformity became clear: the democratic vote was strangled by the exercise of coercive power (Dugan 2003).

To add to the picture, Robert Hale offers a wonderful illustration of economic coercion on a more everyday level (Ayres 1999). In a critique of economic laws, including property rights and the phenomenon of rent, Hale shows "coercion occurs when there are "background constraints on the universe of socially available choices from which an individual might 'freely' choose'" (Fried 2009, p. 48). In a paper titled *Discrediting the Free Market* (1999), Ian Ayres summarizes elements of Hale's analysis:

For example, in discussing the poverty of the pure volitional definition of coercion, Karl Rodbertus observed that "although the contract of labourer and employer has taken the place of slavery, the contract is only formally and not actually free, and Hunger makes a good substitute for the "whip"". Hale, however, insisted that any pejorative use of the term rest on some independent notion of what constitutes an illegitimate threat. As Fried describes Hale's position: "[F]inding an offer coercive is always parasitic on a prior, implicit determination either that the coerced party had a baseline entitlement to be free of such pressure or that the coercer had a baseline duty not to impose it" (p. 59). The recognition of this "baseline" problem is probably Hale's most lasting acknowledged contribution to contemporary legal scholarship—at least judging by continuing citations." Of course, this broader conception of coercion raises an important question: What are appropriate morally acceptable baselines for threatening not to contract? Hale's response to the baseline problem is a form of egalitarianism constrained by utilitarian concerns about retaining sufficient incentives for productivity as well as Lockean notions of moral entitlement to property for which individuals have sacrificed. (Ayres 1999, pp. 277–278)

Due to lack of space, I cannot provide any further engagement with Hale's study of coercion. In short, the point I wish to draw, which seems the consensus among those who study social and economic coercion critically, is that it is generally the task of economic coercion to indeed limit the scope of one's choices because, in the end, the function of pathological society is typically one of control (Fromm 2002).

Thus we return to the standard pattern of daily behaviour: the individual must make the most of a bad situation, because when it comes down to it he or she has to survive. The factory worker tired and wanting a change in life; the unhappy student working minimum wage; the disabled person forced to work for a decent comfort of living, despite it going against the

betterment of their health. In a social reality that operates on the basis of coercion, it is easy to become passive and manipulable, geared towards whatever incentives that may be offered. Resigned to a life divided by a soulless job and the false remedy of endless hedonistic entertainments, it is common to witness today not autonomous action but choices which seem to suit the warding off of the realizing of extreme repression (Marcuse 1969a).

And yet millions of people seem to believe to some extent that modern global capitalist society is the result of humanity realizing itself. What is it about this belief? Adorno draws an intriguing hypothesis: “indifference to freedom, to the concept and the thing itself is caused by the integration of society, which happens to subjects as if it were irresistible” (Adorno 1992a, p. 216). Somewhere on the historical and experiential plane, our interest “in being provided for”—our desire for security found in the capitalist worldview—“paralyzed our interest in freedom which we fear will leave us unprotected” (Adorno 1992a, p. 216).

But if the question here is what kind of “choice”, based on what principles and made within what actual circumstances, could offer opposition or at least a resistance to this situation, then a study of social pathology, inasmuch as it also concerns the existence of coercion, brings into question the very concept of freedom in a society that limits the scale of autonomous action. This point of enquiry becomes all the more pressing if, according to a critique of behavioural economics, our actions are based on a series of responses to the pressures of the system.

How do these concerns relate to a much wider study of social pathology?

4.3.2 (ii) *The “Vicious Circle”*

A key part of my main thesis argues that, at the heart of pathological society, resides what I previously described as a cycle of trauma and hardening. This is, in essence, the Marcusean “vicious circle” (Smith 2015c): negative social conditions has been called a hardening effect. This closing and hardening of the subject, a process widely understood within psychology, not only plays into the reproduction of the negative social system but also actually strengthens it. Neoliberal capitalism, as we have touched on, requires a particularly isolated and one-dimensionally self-interested individual. It manufactures what has been called by a number of people a condition of social Darwinism. This, a perverted view of human nature, is what characterizes the social construction of societal conditions in which the rationale of “dog eats dog” becomes normalized.

4.3.3 (iii) *Competitive Individualism and the Hardening of the Psyche*

The concept of *competitive individualism* is, indeed, central to a neoliberal theory of society. The individual is responsible for themselves, and with greater pressure to succeed, the state is no longer seen as responsible to provide for any gap in needs that the individual was not able to secure for him/herself. The entire premise behind this theory of society is that, in order to survive, individuals must compete and ensure their own economic prosperity in order to secure the ability to provide vital services: that is, education, health care and retirement security.³

This process of subject development and of a hardening of the psyche begins, as I have pointed out, during early education. Starting with an essentially global scale programme of Corporate Education Reform (Au and Ferrare 2015), which can be traced back to the publication of the *Nation at Risk* report in 1983 under Ronald Reagan (Crean 2010), the goals of the reform movement can be summarized as follows: (1) “opening up education to private investment”, (2) “downsizing and restructuring what is left of education after this privatization drive”, (3) “turning education into a marketplace”, (4) “substantially diminishing the power of the teachers unions” (Crean 2010). In sum, “markets are touted as the driving force of everyday life, big government is disparaged as either incompetent or threatening to individual freedom, suggesting that power should reside in markets and corporations rather than in governments and citizens” (Giroux 2005, p. 2). As Chomsky dissects, the notion of the free market, especially as intensified in neoliberal terms, is deeply authoritarian (Chomsky 1996).

Situated firmly at the level of the psyche, the individual is hardwired from a young age to act and behave, to structure one’s life, according to the demands of the market. “The market rewards the efficient and productive, with competition overcoming mediocrity and promoting excellence” (Doherty 2007, 276). As Tim Jensen (2011) reflects, “our collective emotional and affective environment is being shaped—violently, systematically—to serve the interests of capital”. He continues:

dominant culture—referred to here as neoliberalism, though it goes by many names—reproduces itself by promoting marketplace rationalities as the most credible, if not the only valid means of logic for twenty-first century living. The logic of profit and exchange, in other words, has become the near equivalent of common sense. [...]The status quo is entrenched not

only through a common economic logic, but also a common sensorium, which we neglect to our detriment. Neoliberalism entrains us to experience certain emotions over others, suggests rules for their expression, and even tries to define what one is “allowed” to feel for. These everyday flows of feeling—from bodily intensities of relation (affect) to their narrativized accounts (emotion)—habituate us to the cadence of neoliberal subjectivity. (Jensen 2011)

Inasmuch that Jensen argues towards a conception of our contemporary social reality as a “neoliberal terrain of emotion and affect upon which discourse and rationality flow”, the effects of competitive individualism can be observed as deeply traumatic. The irony of neoliberal individualism is that, while deeply tied to consumerism and the marketing industry, “all advertising rhetoric” basically “lies a marketing machine that does not see a world of individuals. Rather, marketers see categories and segments of populations” (Eagleton-Pierce 2016).

Following Max Weber’s (1994) widely referenced research, this last point coincides with a much deeper trend: the “Iron Cage” of increasing social bureaucracy is conceived along the lines of the proceduralizing, technicizing and categorizing of human beings and the world (Smith 2015c). This reducing of the individual to abstract categories evidences a certain form of violence (Smith 2015c; Titchiner 2017), both personal and interpersonal. Additionally, so does the very notion of the neoliberal ego (Smith 2012b).

Neoliberal individualism, which coincides with the erosion of social bonds, gives reason to argue that this development is linked to “ego-driven crimes, including violent interpersonal crimes” (Smith 2012b). Whether interpersonal violence has increased is up for debate. What is clear, however, is that patterns of increasing detachment from peer groups seem to be the outcome of neoliberalization, as the individual is pressured to pursue personal benefits (Dill 2003). And this individualizing has been linked with the construction of social dynamics which foster interpersonal violence (Smith 2012b).

Consider, as one revealing case study, the issue of egocentric behaviour which has been noted to be prevalent within neoliberal capitalism. Although egocentrism can be found across the human lifespan, from infancy to adulthood, and is studied accordingly as part of basic developmental research, in adolescence through to young and mature adulthood it is also understood in association with general psychopathy.

Linked, furthermore, to an assortment of personality disorders, it has been argued that egocentric behaviour has become prevalent. A significant part of this prevalence has to do with the relation between self-development and actualizing processes, including basic processes of identity formation, in relation to capitalist values, institutions and structures. Not only are we speaking of the social-economic fostering of an egocentric *self* in relation, for instance, to the neoliberal value of maximizing individualistic notions of success and patterns of life-action (Parton 2015a). Another dimension of the prevalence of egocentric behaviour is also a direct result what we have elaborated as Social Darwinist project in relation to manufactured precarity.

A very good example of this can be found in a case study of a local youth project. This non-profit organization,⁴ which is an advice project targeted towards youth, is one of a number similar centres in the UK. This particular UK project, however, is unique in my experience. Offering advice, counselling and youth social work services, it very much operates from a more integrative psychological perspective, focusing very much on a person-centred approach as part of its foundation. A common trait shared by its social workers evidences not only their uniquely progressive approach but also their sensitivity to drawing connection between the attitudes and psychologies of youth in relation social, economic and political circumstances.

It is noted, moreover, that this particular organization deals, majority of the time, with youth in distress (broadly defined, from homelessness and abuse to drug addiction, bullying, self-harm, psychological and emotional imbalances, etc.). One of the shared and consensus observations is how most of the youth tend to exhibit egocentric characteristics. Causes have been linked to socioeconomic pressures—such that egocentrism is tied to the effects of socially manufactured stress and precarity, as in the case of the threat of homelessness and the trauma experienced as a result, manifesting in a particularly closed and self-centred psychology. Causes have also been notably linked to broader developmental patterns, not only tied to consumerism and competitive pressures to “get ahead” of others but also, again, in relation to trauma which originates in terms of both unstable and unhealthy family conditions and authoritarian parenting techniques (considered systemically).

Additionally, from a literal physiognomic perspective, youth are observed as downtrodden, hunched and worn out both in physical appearance and in terms of the clear suffering and trauma as expressed through

a number of bodily mannerisms. In terms of the spectrum of behaviour, aggressiveness and withdraw are both noted. When all of these observations are combined, we are left with quite a multidimensional view which, at its base, factors in the significant impact socioeconomic conditions (albeit not exclusively). And yet, the question remains: in spite of personal trauma and personal pathology, such as that which stems from family life, for example, can a link also be drawn between these youth, sociohistorical-cultural setting and the general (de)formation of the psyche?

In other words, if it is true that neoliberal capitalist society is dominant, coercive and authoritarian in its own intensifying way, can we draw clear and direct links between our contemporary social reality and mental health?

I think the answer is quite clear.

4.3.4 (iv) *A Return to the Global Prevalence of Mental Health Issues*

In researching the intersections of society, culture, politics and psychology, Bruce E. Levine (2001, 2007, 2011, 2013) answers this question definitively. He shows that, in relation to the same realities disclosed at the outset of Chap. 1, nearly one in four American adults take psychiatric drugs, while Ritalin production has increased 800% since 1990 (Levine 2001). Linked to the “psychopharmaceutical complex” (Breggin 2007), and the almost 400% increase in anti-depressant use in the USA between 1988–1994 and 2005–2008 (Centers for Disease Control/National Centre for Health Statistics 2011), Levine (2001) has shown how the impersonal and coercive “institutional society” has played a significant role in the contemporary prevalence of diseases, disorders and medical drug usage. He shows, in some detail, how institutionalized oppression, coercion and economic disparity—which has dramatically intensified under neoliberalism—has been driving people to depression, addiction and to contracting disabling anxiety disorders (Levine 2001).

However, concealed under the marketing of popular psychiatric labels, the roots causes of such dramatic increases in mental illness has been diverted (Levine 2001). Levine’s thesis here coincides with a more recent research by James Davies (2013) in his book *Cracked: Why Psychiatry is Doing More Harm Than Good*. If current trends continue, it has been estimated that two in five people will be taking anti-depressants in the UK by 2020 (Centers for Disease Control/National Centre for Health Statistics

2011). As Davies shows, in addition to the peak in anti-depressant sales which reached \$15 billion in 2003 (Kelland and Hirschler 2012), the pharmaceutical industry is on a quest to continue marketing and selling its next commodity. A key instrument of the pharmaceutical industry today is the engine of neoliberal psychiatry (Tietze 2014). This critique is affirmed by countless others, not least Levine (2001) and Davies (2013).

The questions raised through our study of the subject and neoliberal transformations has required that we investigate the ties between the social and the popular psyche. In neoliberal capitalism, the innermost life of the subject becomes a target for very direct forms of exploitation, and almost solely with the aim of increasing “productivity” (Dardot and Laval 2014; Read 2009; Walkerdine and Bansel 2010). This coercive social situation results in mental illness (Levine 2013). Levine writes:

Throughout history, societies have existed with far less coercion than ours. While these societies have had far fewer consumer goods and less of what modernity calls “efficiency,” they also have had far less mental illness. This reality has been buried, not surprisingly, by [...] mainstream psychiatry. Coercion—the use of physical, legal, chemical, psychological, financial, and other forces to gain compliance—is intrinsic to our society’s employment, schooling and parenting. However, coercion results in fear and resentment, which fuel miserable marriages, unhappy families, and what we call mental illness. (Levine 2013)

Within mainstream research, coercion is considered “a fundamental and unavoidable part of our social lives” (Martinez-Vazquez and Winer 2014). In many ways, it has been mystified as a law of nature (Cook 2011, p. 33). Adorno reaches towards the same point when he writes “the law of capitalist accumulation [...] has been mystified into a law of nature” (Adorno 1992a, p. 354). As Deborah Cook summarizes: “In fact, Adorno agrees with Marx: capitalism now appears in the guise of second nature”, a philosophical concept which seeks to explain how capitalism has come to be perceived as being “governed by natural, immutable laws” when, in truth, it is a social construct (Cook 2011, p. 8). The cognitive and epistemology architecture behind this false naturalizing process is entangled with the dialectic of enlightenment (Smith and De Graaff 2016).

This naturalization of coercion is similar, in fact, to the (false) naturalization and universalization of markets (Apple 2001). In addressing the impacts on education, for example, Michael Apple writes how the markets “are said to be natural and neutral, and governed by effort and merit. And

those opposed to them are by definition, hence, also opposed to effort and merit” (Apple 2001, p. 413). In many ways, these naturalizations processes are a result of subject (de)formation, as the individual grows up in an increasingly isolated and hostile social world, traumatized and afraid, hardened into the daily patterns of behaviour demanded in order to survive within the neoliberal context. This is a more up to date version of the Marcusean “vicious circle”.

Avi Assor (2012, p. 423) notes, moreover, how “Research anchored mainly in SDT [self-determination theory] has shown that when people are pressured and coerced (from outside or from within) to behave in specific ways, they experience frustration. This frustration has been shown to undermine engagement, well-being, and vitality.”

Within such a social reality, perhaps new light is shed on Fromm’s (2001) thesis that, without what I shall term healthy and reconciled psychological support, the individual is generally unable to “stand alone and live”. It would not be a surprise if, eventually, links were drawn between the prevalence of anxiety and melancholia in our contemporary age and the increase in Intimacy Anxiety Disorders. J.D. Taylor (2013) makes the general trend quite clear. In drawing very explicit connection between ordinary misery and capitalism, he: “marries together critical theory and medical research into rising allergies and anxiety disorders to investigate this contemporary condition of anxiety, and how it is engendered not by individuality and the pap of lifestyle magazines, but by a more fundamental insecurity in the average citizen’s political and working rights, compounded by the need to remain continuously connected, and hence continuously potentially at work”.

However, inasmuch as political economy, labour and the systemic economic pressures of neoliberal capitalism have a direct effect on the process of subject formation, the historical genesis of this developmental process is long-standing, as discussed in a previous section. Thus, we might once again return to the relevance of Frankfurt School CT.

4.3.5 (v) *A Return to the Frankfurt School: Defining Social Pathology*

The earliest thinkers of the Frankfurt School suspected that reproduction went beyond mere structure, beyond institutions or even the iron grip of capitalist governments in western society. Herbert Marcuse wrote pessimistically, for example, in *One-Dimensional Man* (1966) and in a later

essay on liberation (1969b) that the hopeful and positive trends analysed in *Eros and Civilization* (1969a) are being systematically counteracted by “counter-revolutionary” forces and trends. These forces and trends certainly involve ideological state apparatuses (Althusser 2014). A Marxist analysis of class and exploitation is also a dimension. But for Marcuse, it was “surplus repression” which was the real negative energy behind counter-revolutionary tendencies among the general populous, as well as when it comes to structural and systemic reproduction more generally.

From another angle, Fromm (2002, 2010) identified the “pathology of normalcy”, which, as already elaborated, argued that sickness stems from the blind alignment of an individual’s values with capitalist institutions and relations (Halliwell 2013). Additionally, for Adorno, a significant part of his project, like Marcuse and Fromm, concerned a critical analysis of the social psychological malaise of modern life (Smulewicz-Zucker 2014, p. 174; Smith 2016) and how this malaise supported negative reproduction cycles. When applying these perspective with more up-to-date empirical accounts, we begin to see that social pathology, as a very real aspect of human reality, underlines many aspects of what some seem to refer to as ideology.

In truth, we can encircle this problem in a number of ways. But ultimately, not only does capitalism represent the global system of absolute identity (i.e., Adorno’s critique of identity) on behalf of the concept of “universal exchange” (Adorno again). In sum, it also represents a particular mode of subjectivity that is inherently dominating and totalitarian (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002). As a totalized worldview, the system of capital seems to very much represent today the unity of fibres of the social structure which, spawned from the shutters of human anxiety, now determines thought as an appropriated system of (social, political and economic) organization and action according to the standards of its universe. Indeed, in the spirit of capturing everything unknown, even the concepts of sovereignty, democracy and freedom have over time become that of instrumentality, bureaucracy, technology (i.e., technicism) and commodification (De Graaff 2016). From the perspective of the dialectic of enlightenment, it would seem that, taken to its logical conclusion, capitalism, as a deeply pathological system, delivers exactly what it was supposed to: a deeply repressed, closed-circuited, instrumentally totalized administered world.

As Zuidervaart (2015) summarizes in light of Adorno: “Society and culture form a historical totality, such that the pursuit of freedom in soci-

ety is inseparable from the pursuit of enlightenment in culture. There is a flip side to this: a lack or loss of freedom in society—in the political, economic, and legal structures within which we live—signals a concomitant failure in cultural enlightenment—in philosophy, the arts, religion, and the like. The Nazi death camps are not an aberration, nor are mindless studio movies innocent entertainment. Both indicate that something fundamental has gone wrong in the modern West.” Could it be, once more from an existential point of view, that the *pathology of human destructiveness* is actually a many-sided negative human transformation process? If “Humans believe themselves free of fear when there is no longer anything unknown”, which “has determined the path of demythologization” insofar that the “Enlightenment is mythical fear radicalized” (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002, p. 11), then systemically and pathologically speaking, “in an unfree society whose culture pursues so-called progress no matter what the cost, that which is ‘other,’ whether human or nonhuman, gets shoved aside, exploited, or destroyed” (Zuidervart 2015).

To conclude, within modern capitalist society, within the modern social totality—with its dominant and coercive institutions and structures, as well as its deeply ingrained instrumental rationale and mode of cognition (Smith and De Graaff 2016), we not only misconceive the phenomena of our thinking by way of the impulse towards identity and mastery—“the false universalizing tendency of thought” (Smith 2015c)—but also our *selves* and how we relate with one another. The subject, which has endured so much personal and social trauma, so much needless suffering, exists, we might say, as the cycle of production and reproduction of the neoliberal capitalist vision of life. Exploitation, control and domination are not only a part of this process but also empowered by the popular movement of people. Capitalism, its institutions and structures, become naturalized not solely because the subject is coerced into naturalizing them (though this is one dimension); rather, reproduction also exists on the basis that the system of capital produces the *reproduction psyche* inasmuch as it eventually becomes an extension of the existential drive for ultimate security in a world which is not up to the task of the absolute (Smith 2015c). This is, I propose, one of the silent but long-standing historically driving forces behind contemporary patterns and trends in relation to the pathology of human destruction.

From yet another angle, Alexander Katsanis (2016) strikes a very important point when conceptualizing what I introduced earlier as the “closed feedback loop” of the reproduction psyche. What this particular

account describes is the impulse to become or make oneself in the image of capitalist life (Fromm 2002):

this way of understanding life and subjectivity has its material basis in contemporary modes of production, which serve as both a foundation and affirmation of this image of the subject. The production and reproduction of this subject and form of life is continually reaffirmed through a feedback loop that makes itself appear natural to those who embody its characteristics. Subjects are taught and told that the way things are is natural, and perhaps even morally good, and as such, the subject often becomes, or makes herself in the image of this total life. (Katsanis 2016)

The only issue here, as I see it, is that reproduction of the pathological system doesn't always require such *direct* forms of coercion, manipulation or indoctrination. These instruments of control appear overstated in Katsanis account, when, perhaps more naturally, it would seem the subject-level of reproduction is actually more of an expression of ongoing "vicious circle" of repression and trauma and hardening, which only continues to seal the fate of pathological society and humanity's eventual demise.

4.4 "STUPIDITY IS A SCAR": PROJECTION, INTERNALIZATION AND THREAT

In the context of all that has been discussed, I would like to now turn our attention to an issue which has bothered me for quite some time: namely, the phenomenon of stupidity and the dehumanizing of people as "stupid". There was a 2003 documentary entitled *Stupidity*, which was all the rage among progressives in Hollywood and elsewhere. In this documentary, directed by Albert Nerenberg, "the persistence of stupidity throughout human history" is examined. In the process, "the origins of the dunce cap and the word 'moron' are explained, while prominent figures from Noam Chomsky to John Cleese share their thoughts on the subject". Narrating the film, "Nerenberg argues that many people deliberately present themselves as stupid because society at large prefers them that way, focusing especially on President George W. Bush". I found the analysis in this film quite significant in more ways than one. However, if I have one complaint, it is a deeply important if not fundamental one: namely, the manner in which the *social reproduction of stupidity* as the result of the (de)formation of the subject (Adorno 1992a; Adorno and Horkheimer 2002; Sherman 2007) was ignored.

In a fragment towards the end of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (2002), we read a fascinating series of reflections on the problem of stupidity which I believe can be developed into an even more fundamental course of analysis.⁵ Horkheimer writes (to quote in full):

The emblem of intelligence is the feeler of the snail, the creature “with the fumbling face”, with which, if we can believe Mephistopheles, it also smells. Meeting an obstacle, the feeler is immediately withdrawn into the protection of the body, it becomes one with the whole until it timidly ventures forth again as an autonomous agent. If the danger is still present, it disappears once more, and the intervals between the attempts grow longer. Mental life in its earliest stages is infinitely delicate. The snail’s sense is dependent on a muscle, and muscles grow slack if their scope for movement is impaired. The body is crippled by physical injury, the mind by fear. In their origin both effects are inseparable. [...] Each time an animal looks out with curiosity a new form of the living dawns, a form which might emerge from the clearly formed species to which the individual creature belongs. But it is not only this specific form which holds it back in the security of the old state; the force which its look encounters is resistance, millions of years old, which has imprisoned it at its present stage from the first, and which, constantly renewed, inhibits every step which goes beyond that stage. That first, tentative look is always easily repelled; behind it stand goodwill, fragile hope, but no continuous energy. In the direction from which it has been definitely scared off the animal becomes shy and stupid.

Stupidity is a scar. It can relate to one faculty among many or to them all, practical and mental. Every partial stupidity in a human being marks a spot where the awakening play of muscles has been inhibited instead of fostered. With the inhibition, the vain repetition of unorganized, awkward attempts originally began. The child’s endless questions are already a sign of a secret pain, a serious question to which it has found no answer and which it cannot frame in its proper form. The repetition half resembles playful determination, as when a dog endlessly leaps against a door it has not learned how to open, finally giving up if the handle is too high, and half corresponds to hopeless compulsion, as when a lion paces endlessly up and down in its cage or a neurotic repeats the defense reaction which has already proved futile. If the child has wearied of its repetitions, or if the thwarting has been too brutal, its attention can turn in another direction; the child is richer in experience, as one says, but at the point where its impulse has been blocked a scar can easily be left behind, a slight callous where the surface is numb. Such scars lead to deformations. They can produce ‘characters’ hard and capable; they can produce stupidity, in the form of deficiency symptoms, blindness, or impotence, if they turn cancerous within. Goodwill is turned

to ill will by the violence it suffers. And not only the forbidden question but the suppressed imitation, the forbidden weeping or the forbidden reckless game, can give rise to such scars. Like the genera within the series of fauna, the intellectual gradations within the same species, indeed, the blind spots within the same individual, mark the points where hope has come to a halt and in their ossification bear witness to what holds all living things in thrall. (pp. 213–214)

In this terrific passage, Horkheimer is essentially laying out a theory regarding the genesis of stupidity as entwined in the process of subject (de)formation. Because we have already engaged with a rich and detailed account of the (de)formation of the subject, I will not venture to repeat this vitally important investigation. Rather, what I would like to elaborate is how, in line with the aim of this book, stupidity is largely a result of the hardened subject. Moreover, what concerns me here is the lack of openness (Smith 2015c) towards the “non-conceptual moreness of experience” (Adorno 1992a; Sherman 2007; Smith 2015c) as it relates to a CT of stupidity.

If what I claimed earlier is accurate, namely, that we can deduce, even if in oversimplistic terms, two poles representing the hardened, repressed subject and the open, mediating, free-flourishing subject—I want to argue, in advancing Horkheimer’s intriguing series of reflections, that stupidity is in essence the manifestation of damaged subjectivity.

Further, I think the insight offered by Adorno that the subject today is almost entirely exhausted of subjectivity, supports the notion of stupidity as more or less the absence (although not complete absence) of subjectivity in the subject. If Adorno wants “to use the strength of the subject to break through the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity” (Adorno 1992a, p. xx), expounding in turn “philosophical experience”, the analogies we can draw between Adorno’s critique of instrumental reason and the regress of the enlightenment to irrationality and the persistence of stupidity throughout human history are astounding. Consider, as one example, the section of *Negative Dialectics* entitled “Cogitative Self-Reflection”. Adorno (1992) writes:

The force of consciousness extends to the delusion of consciousness. It is rationally knowable where an unleashed, self-escaping rationality goes wrong, where it becomes true mythology. The ratio recoils into irrationality as soon as in its necessary course it fails to grasp that the disappearance

of its substrate—however diluted—is its own work, the product of its own abstraction. When thinking follows its law of motion unconsciously, it turns against its own sense, against what has been thought, against that which calls a halt to the flight of subjective intentions. The dictates of its autarky condemn our thinking to emptiness; in the end, subjectively, the emptiness becomes stupidity and primitivity. Regression of consciousness is a product of its lack of self-reflection. We can see through the identity principle, but we cannot think without identifying. Any definition is identification. (pp. 148–149)

It is clear that what Adorno is focused on is a critique of “identity thought”. However, I want to argue that the sort of stupidity I am seeking to assess here is also directly linked to identity thinking—the mode of subjectivity which, as a product of a highly distorted cognitive paradigm (Cook 2011), is so withdrawn in itself that the subject, “thinking to emptiness”, performs in the world as if turning “against its own sense”, regressing to a state of a “lack of self-reflection”. Here, once again, we might also invoke Honneth’s theory concerning the deficit of reason.

Moreover, the sort of regression I want to consider is different to what Robert Hullot-Kentor, a leading Adornian scholar, describes as “a person who” is “becoming immanent to the social structure [...] immanent, that is, to a progressive dynamic of primitivization” (Hullot-Kentor 2008). He continues, “[t]he emergence of this person” amounts “to the reduction of life at a highest level of technical achievement to the primordial struggle for survival in a fashion that demolishes the self. It is survival at the price of the very self that self-preservation wants to protect in the first place. It is self-assertion as self-renunciation; a structure in which the primitive effort at the manipulation of reality through external sacrifice becomes the no less primitive internal structure of the modern self in its effort at survival” (Hullot-Kentor 2008). In response, one may recall in the previous chapter a discussion on self-preservation in relation to a key thesis in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. We learned, for example, that a particular “self-preservation, which exemplifies enlightenment self-assertion”, is entwined in a drive for power and control (i.e., domination of internal nature), referring to the “preservation of a particular ego structure that separates a human being both from nature and other human beings” (Sherman 2007, p. 185). The result, “when taken to the extreme”, not only threatens to destroy “its bid for self-preservation [...] but ultimately threatens its self-preservation as well” (Sherman 2007, p. 185).

Rather than this more philosophical plane of analysis, the type of regression I want to propose is present in the contemporary “culture of stupidity” (Woliver 2010) is one which is simply a product of the subject’s withdrawal, enforced both by the pathological processes of deformation—that is, the issue of the damaged or scarred subject—and by the modern cognitive paradigm described earlier. I see both of these dimensions of the genesis of “stupidity” to be entwined, finally, in the sort of generally existentially threatened, fearful, anxious subject fostered in contemporary society (Furedi 2007; Smith 2015a, 2015c). To quote Sherman (2007):

Accordingly, for Adorno, the ego—in wrestling us from the absolute violence that was inherent in our undifferentiated oneness with nature—must be understood as offering a promissory note on a future reconciliation whose redemption is *endangered by subjects that continue to fetishize the threat that scarcity presents for self-preservation* [emphasis added] even after the objective conditions that gave rise to this threat have been largely overcome. As he states in “Sociology and Psychology”, “what society, for the sake of its own survival, justly demands of each individual is at the same time unjust for each individual and, ultimately, for society itself”, but at this historical stage it is now the case that “given objective possibilities, adjustment to society should no longer be a necessity”: Self-preservation succeeds only to the extent that, as a result of self-imposed regression, self-development fails. (p. 229)

What I am indicating here is if the hypothesis is correct that there is an existential dimension to the dialect of enlightenment (2015a), fear is seen to have played a significant role in the dawn of the subject through to the enlightenment and finally also in twenty-first-century consciousness (Furedi 2007). But fear, as I mentioned earlier, is not only purely existential—as in a pure reaction to one’s existential circumstance in the world—it is also *social-existential*. Could it be that, generally, in society which manufactures (artificially) economic scarcity as well as a general sense of social and political threatenedness, including a political economy that threatens the individual of impending economic shortage and the possible shortage of jobs necessary to secure one’s own “livelihood”—in such horrendously coercive and terrifying social conditions, is it not possible that the sense of fear induced, after so many years, entices one to withdraw in the same sense as the feeler of the snail?

Additionally, is there a link to be drawn between the following passage by Adorno and sociohistorical-cultural structures that produce the necessary preconditions for the emergence of the “culture of stupidity”?

Indeed isn't the simplest perception modelled on the fear of what is perceived, or the desire for such? It is true that the objective meaning of cognitions has, with the objectification of the world, separated itself ever further from the basis of the drives; it is true that cognition fails, where its objectified achievement remains under the baleful spell of the wishes. However if the drives are not at the same time sublated in the thought, which escapes such a baleful spell, then there can be no cognition anymore, and the thought which kills the wish, its father, will be overtaken by the revenge of *stupidity*. Memory is tabooed as uncalculable, unreliable, irrational. [...] The castration of perception, however, by a controlling authority, which refuses it any desiring anticipation, thereby compels it into the schema of the powerless repetition of what is already familiar. That nothing more is actually allowed to be seen, amounts to the sacrifice of the intellect. [...] Once the final emotional trace is effaced, what solely remains of thinking is absolute tautology. (Adorno 2005, pp. 122–123)

As Norbert Elias wrote in *The Civilising Process Vol 2: State Formation and Civilization* (1982): “the strength, kind and structures of the fears and anxieties that smoulder or flare in the individual never depend solely on his own ‘nature’”. Rather they are “always determined, finally by the history and the actual structure of his relations to other people” (Elias 1982, p. 19). Frank Furedi (2007) summarizes the author’s analysis, writing that:

Fear is one of the most important mechanisms through which ‘the structures of society are transmitted to individual psychological functions’. He argued that the ‘civilized character’ is partly constructed by people’s internalisation of fears. This is a striking and important insight into the history of fear and society (18). Unfortunately, Elias’ insights have not been developed in relation to the contemporary experience of fear. Indeed, today writers and thinkers tend to use the term ‘fear’ as a taken-for-granted concept that needs little explanation or elaboration.

We live in an “Age of Anxiety”. It may be true that this age of anxiety (Twenge 2000; Horwitz 2010) is particularly relevant to twenty-first-century society. That said, I want to ask in addition to this point:

could it be that in a social reality which is increasingly intensifying the manufacturing of fear (Furedi 2007), the internalization, repression and ultimately the “closedness” (Smith 2015c) of the subject is also intensifying?

In turn, is it not the case that as a result of this “closedness” there also results a closedness or shutting down of self-reflective experience, including, of course, critical self-reflective thought towards objects, phenomena and one’s social conditions, as such a course of experience necessarily requires openness and experiential coherence (Smith 2015c).

If, as Astrid Oesmann (2005) writes, “projection and internalization create the self and its understanding of all aspects of the outside material world” (p. 14), as the subject orientates themselves experientially via (consciousness) intentionality, the subject “develops an image of the world by processing and ordering unending sensory traces of perception” (p. 14) from within a negative social reality. In doing so, “subject formation enters the temporal realm” when the subject learns to establish what Adorno (1992) calls “synthetische Einheit” (synthetic unity) as *identity*” (Oesmann 2005, p. 201; citing Adorno 1992a, p. 201). Thus the “self imprisons itself” in a “social context of blindness” (Oesmann 2005, pp. 8, 12, 15).

Additionally, with fear—socially induced and deeply existential fear—the repression entailed in one’s general subscription “of the convention of received thought”, which, itself, has been increasingly emptied of substance in the mainstream, plays directly into the thoughtlessness of repeating patterns and traditions of behaviour which, finally, once long-standing enough to be the basic course of experience, manufactures stupidity (Erdle 2013). In a play on Adorno in *Minima Moralia*, where he writes on Flaubert, I am inclined to draw reference to the following passage:

But he underestimated stupidity: the society which he represented cannot name itself, and with its development into a totality, intelligence has developed absolutely along with stupidity. This eats away at the power-centers of intellectuals. (Adorno 2005, p. 100)

But if the “impact of fear is determined by the situation people find themselves in” and also, “to some extent, the product of social construction”, we can also say that “[f]ear is determined by the self, and the interaction of the self with others; it is also shaped by a cultural script that instructs people on how to respond to threats to their security” (Furedi 2007). In

another passage from *Minima Moralia*, Adorno (2005) exclaims this very point: “Even if it were, strictly speaking, stupidity, this remains historically determinable: stupidity is above all no natural quality, but something socially produced and socially amplified” (pp. 105–106).

Thus, in the constant ridicule concerning the stupidity of human beings, there may be a more natural foolishness when it comes to *being human*—a foolishness not always that far from *play*—but stupidity, as generally criticized, I want to say is more a product of social conditions than anything else. The closed, repressed subject is constantly looking to protect what he or she knows, to “guard the old particularity” (Adorno 1992a, p. 283; Sherman 2007, p. 281). They want, writes Horkheimer (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002), to maintain “the security of the old state” to the extent that, the internalized fear and trauma, “inhibits every step”. Thus, “[in] the direction from which it has been definitely scared off the animal becomes shy and stupid” (pp. 213–214).

If, in other words, “stupidity is a scar”, this is because it is a deep scar formed on the damaged subject, the flip side of the sort of fear and anguish and terror I’ve described in this book: “the status of human subjectivity” as “the inflation of the threat that external forces pose to the individual self” (Furedi 2007).

Considering a critique of the phenomenon of stupidity along these distinctly sociological and psychological lines, there is a reason Horkheimer and Adorno went on to extend the example of the “snail” to humanity (Livraghi 2011). It is possible that intelligence is scary, that new knowledge is disturbing (Livraghi 2011). This marks the territory of the battle of science against unreason. But we must also ask ourselves: do our current social conditions actually foster anything less than the snail seeking asylum in its protective shell?

4.5 SOCIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY: STANDARDIZATION, CONSUMERISM AND SENSATIONAL PATTERNS

The fact remains—or at least this is how I read Adorno—the systemic relation between humans’ practical existential relation to the world and the production and reproduction of social domination pervades the dialectic of enlightenment. Consider Adorno’s critique of popular music, for example. One of the key tenants of his fundamental critique of popular music concerns what Adorno identifies as “musical products” and how *popular music fosters passivity* in the listener, especially in the sense of how people

listen to mass-produced, popular cultural hits (i.e., top 40 hits) without “actually listening to them at all” (Smith 2013b).

Adorno’s point here is, as can be observed in a study on the phenomenology of popular music, that people already know through *habit of listening to the standardized and mechanical beats* what’s going to happen or transpire in the musical composition. In other words, the argument is that we already know when Lady Gaga starts playing on the radio what we’re going to hear, even before we hear it. In the world of mass-produced music, in the very experience itself, standardization acts as *a sort of regularization of sensational patterns*. As a result of the conformity of these patterns, there is a sort of lulling effect which, in a manner of speaking, is almost (inter)subjectively stunting. Thus, one may insert a broad critique of modern subjectivity. However, in keeping to the appropriate path, Adorno (1941) writes:

Standardization of song hits keeps the customers in line doing their thinking for them, as it were. Pseudo-individuation, for its part, keeps them in line by making them forget that what they listen to is wholly intended for them or pre-digested. Standardization, moreover, means the strengthening of the lasting domination of the listening public and of their conditioned reflexes. They are expected to want that to which they have become accustomed and to become enraged whenever their expectations are disappointed and fulfillment, which they regard as the customer’s inalienable right, is denied, and even if there were attempts to introduce anything really different into light music, they would be deceived from the start by virtue of economic concentration. (p. 25)

Standardization, as Adorno is describing here, is a product of instrumental reason as considered in a critique of a distorted form of rationality in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. But as I argued in the past (Smith 2013b), not only does the vast majority (albeit not all) of popular music serve to extend the instrumental consciousness of the repressive cycles of the everyday workweek in capitalist society, particularly by establishing passive listening and therefore self-reflective habits which mediates day to day existence, from labour to leisure and consumerism, of the subject; therefore resulting in “the lasting domination of the listening public and of their conditioned reflexes” (Adorno 1983, p. 124). This “lasting domination of the listening public” also serves another purpose outside of the cultural maintenance of capitalist control on the level of the subject: it serves, *existentially*, to subdue the subject on the basis of his/her active *want* to be subdued.

To escape the existential realities and trials of life as well as negative or antagonistic socially induced realities and trials (i.e., the intense workweek, the psychological trauma and repression of capitalist life), standardized music plays a dual role: one of control and one of self-subduing comfort.

It is precisely by also considering the existential level of critique, which highlights, to borrow the words of Adorno (1983), the nearly insurmountable character “of a phenomenon which is inherently contingent and arbitrarily reflects something of the arbitrary nature of present social controls” (p. 124).

The problem with Adorno is that he pits too much on the side of the culture industry as an explicit measure of direct control and coercion, as the subject becomes passive on behalf of the capitalist scheme to make him/her so. This issue with Adorno’s argument regarding the culture industry and passivity is well documented. But what if we twist Adorno’s words a bit and ask: why does the subject expect “to want only that to which they have become accustomed and to become enraged whenever their expectations are disappointed and fulfillment, which they regard as the customer’s inalienable right, is denied”? To say it is purely due to negative economic forces is too, well, economic. Is there not, to play on Marcuse, a neurotic element as well? Can surplus repression not be driven by the subject, which wants to forget their neurosis?

This is surely a central trait of consumer capitalism, in that it is driven to *help the subject forget*, to passively move from image to image, from spectacle to spectacle, without the need for self-reflective experience which, ultimately, as the best of humanistic psychology shows us, is tied to the intimate development of “self”, of one’s emotional experiences and therefore also a confrontation with one’s neurosis.

In terms of an existential-phenomenological analysis, I describe this phenomenon as “conscious evasion”, which, I argue, capitalism strengthens, therefore deepening surplus repression, not only due to the dominant and coercive historical, social and economic relations it produces, but also through its fostering of cultural conditions which are driven more towards maintaining a repressed subject as opposed to supporting and fostering a process of healthy subject (self-)development that encourages the individual to be open to the world, to divergence or otherwise, and therefore too themselves. This was, in many ways, the pulse of my thesis in *Consciousness and Revolt*. In the very least, this level of critique directs one’s attention to the degree of cultural production of *insensitivity*, which is a notable feature amongst the worst of consumer capitalism. In *Consciousness and Revolt*, for example, I argued

along similar lines to my engagement with Adorno's critique of popular music—that is, listening is *cultural* and pop music supports the development of the opposite of an intensive listening subject. The general thrust here is that domination and violence becomes a cultural imprint, a point once again not unfamiliar to Adorno. In other words, in a society where domination and violence is increasingly openly tolerated, in a society which fosters a hardened, repressed subject as opposed to an open, free-flourishing and sensitive subject (Sherman 2007), one has to ask the question of the structural and systemic construction of that society. In doing so, one must also ask the question of the status of the modern subject, if we consider early Marx's materialism in which we are challenged to see the constructed character of social objects and institutions, behind that *social* construction (Vogel 2011, p. 196).

From Freud to Marcuse, from the earliest developments of existential psychology to contemporary humanistic and self-psychology, we read variations around this same theme: capitalism undoubtedly controls, manipulates and coerces. It is a dominant social system which fosters, in Adornian language, “regressive” tendencies.

When it comes to social critique and, too, the consideration of the development of systemic alternatives, the general direction of research and study presented so far in this book is quite revealing if not thought-provokingly gripping. But my emphasis here on the subject and on the existential dimension needs further explanation. A brief reproduction of a line of discussion in my book *The Ticklish Subject?* will prove of great assistance, particularly as it also brings back into focus David Sherman's book *Sartre and Adorno: The Dialectics of Subjectivity*. For Sherman (2007)—and I quite agree with his reading—Adorno's engagement with Freud evokes one of the most seminal accounts of the oedipal complex, especially when one comes to understand Adorno's central thesis regarding “the deformation of the subject”.

Moreover, as Sherman systemically picks through Adorno's oeuvre, he quite rightly highlights in the process that for Adorno the psyche, long extracted from the social dialectic (see Adorno's critique of Freud's concept of the unconscious in “Sociology and Psychology”, 1968), must be dragged back into the social dialectic. In doing so, Adorno was right to suggest that “the more strictly the psychological realm is conceived as an autonomous, self-enclosed play of forces, the more completely the subject is drained of his subjectivity” (Adorno

1968, p. 81). To be sure, Adorno's goal was a theory of the liberation of the subject, and this is certainly consistent with his overwhelming anti-authoritarianism. The tension in Adorno's thought, however, which some author's seem to pick up on but never clearly articulate, is, as Sherman (2007) identifies, "the same tension" in Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*:

If the ego fails to differentiate itself by virtue of the fact that it has been colonized by the institutional structures of society (bourgeois or fascist), it not only effectively cancels itself out as an agent, but, in the process, it also immediately transmits to the unconscious those social aims that would otherwise be subject to the critical capacities of a well-functioning, mediating ego—aims that actually contradict the goals of the primary libido. In other words, if the primary libido is what Adorno intends by the "nature of the subject", which ideally serves as a reminder of the nondominating possibilities of genuinely enlightened thought (DOE, p. 40), the transposition of societal aims directly into the unconscious (due to a colonized ego structure's inability to filter out the irrational) would effectively negate the possibility of the "remembrance" [of nature] that would permit the libido to serve as this source of resistance. And, indeed, this is precisely the aim of fascist propaganda. (p. 226)

In critique of Freud's Oedipal Complex which I referenced earlier in this work, what Adorno is rightly challenging, too, is how: "the internalisation of external authority [is] the deeply problematic outcome of the dialectic of enlightenment" (Sherman 2007, p. 228)—that is, of the manifesting tendencies of coercive society to maintain control, and, indeed domination through top-down application inasmuch as also *through the subject*. As Adorno (1968) brilliantly describes in "Sociology and Psychology", a passage also quoted by Sherman:

The social power-structure hardly needs the mediating agencies of ego and individuality any longer. An out-ward sign of this is, precisely, the spread of so-called ego psychology, whereas in reality the individual psychological dynamic is replaced by the partly conscious and partly regressive adjustment of the individual to society.../A brutal, total, standardising society arrests all differentiation, and to this end it exploits the primitive core of the unconscious. Both conspire to annihilate the mediating ego; the triumphant archaic impulses, the victory of id over ego, harmonise with triumph of the society over the individual. (p. 95)

While Adorno hangs onto Freud's Oedipal Complex, the father's authority enters the developmental process, bringing with him a pre-distorted notion of authority already in practice in society, which is therefore internalized by the child. Sherman (2007) argues, "According to Adorno (who is certainly of the view that the Oedipal Complex is itself a manifestation of untoward authority), it is only by working through the Oedipal Complex that the critical reason needed for opposing authority is engendered" (p. 228). The problem for Adorno, however, is in how in "totally administered society"—a concept which is becoming increasingly evident in our contemporary times—authority "goes over the head of the father to exercise control over the child, and in this way precludes the critical reason that could one day undermine it" (Sherman 2007, p. 228). In other words, while Adorno "views the Oedipal Complex as a perpetrator of the enlightenment's regressive tendencies", crucially, "he laments its passing, as its internalisation processes held open the space for a mediating ego that could serve as a site of resistance" (Sherman 2007, p. 228). And it is this notion of the mediating ego, or meditating subject, and possible sites of resistance and transformation to which I shall now turn our attention.

NOTES

1. This essay was broadcast as a radio lecture on 2 January 1962. As Lambert Zuidervart notes in light of Stefan Müller-Doohm's *Adorno: A Biography* (2005), the piece actually dates back to an early talk Adorno gave in 1955 for a study group in the Frankfurt Student Union. See Zuidervart, L. (2007). *Social Philosophy after Adorno*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, p. 4.
2. See Heathwood's working document on "methodological innovation": <http://www.heathwoodpress.com/methodology/>.
3. For more, see the network for understanding neoliberalism and education developed by Western University: <http://neoliberalism-education.pbworks.com/w/page/50829895/Competitive%20Individualism>.
4. Due to reasons of confidentiality, I cannot disclose the name of this organization, its location or its particular case workers.
5. This was originally written as a note by Max Horkheimer in the early 1940s, and then included in the final section of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1964).

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Emancipatory Politics and Social Transformation

5.1 EMANCIPATORY POLITICS AS HEALING

To suffer is to experience pain or hardship. It can be mental or physical. Regardless of degree or severity, suffering can be considered as any form of loss, pain or difficulty that one has experienced or been made to endure.

On the scale of suffering, there are of course more and less extreme realities of social and existential experience. Some instances of suffering, such as the daily suffering and trauma surveyed in this book—we have learned that they can be more or less managed, in the form of repression, naturalization and self-perpetuating cycles. This type of standard or socially routine suffering and trauma can often be minute, characteristic of a passing moment in the course of daily experience, or it can be extreme and apparent. In many cases, I think it is fair to speculate that the routine instances of suffering present in much of contemporary life—from realities of ecological devastation to exploitation of labour—are some of the most impactful. Catastrophic or devastating events bring overwhelming turmoil to one's physical, emotional or spiritual well-being. But it's the routine daily suffering that, as we have seen, adds up gradually over time, often in the background. These daily instances of suffering and trauma are, I think, some of the most impactful, inasmuch that they are internalized and, through the course of development, have such power over one's entire existence.

5.1.1 (i) *The Interactive Nature of Suffering*

When people suffer, they always suffer as a whole human being. Agony, hardship, distress, misfortune, pain, anguish, abuse are all descriptions of suffering in a variety of forms. The emotional, cognitive and physical dimensions of suffering cannot be completely separated from all other kinds of suffering, such as from harmful natural, ecological, political, economic and social conditions (Diehl 2009). “In reality they interact with each other and influence each other. Human beings do not only suffer from somatic illnesses, physical pain, and the lack of decent opportunities to satisfy their basic vital, social and emotional needs” (Diehl 2009).

Additionally, social suffering is not only societal—that is suffering in relation to greater societal structures and systems. Coercive, dominant, authoritarian society obviously accounts for a great deal of suffering. In capitalist societies, issues of alienation, exploitation and repression are all serious issues which directly relate to the overall suffering that characterizes our modern social reality. But social suffering can also be of a more interpersonal sort: such as in relation to unhealthy family dynamics, basic and common neurosis, and even general conflict with friends. What’s more, suffering is also existential and spiritual, which, in itself, can relate, interact or influence any number of other dimensions of the whole human being.

In social philosophy, the types of suffering that are most commonly observed and tend to be focused on relate to hardship and struggle—loss, pain and psychic difficulty—with social, political and economic roots. But what we tend to forget, as I argued much earlier in this book, is that not all suffering has social, political and economic roots. It’s not always about political economy, even though capitalism has a massive part to play. The rubric of suffering is complex and multidimensional, and CT cannot lose sight of this fact. Focusing on social or societal suffering—hardship and difficulty in relation to the political and economic, for example—as a source for transformation makes sense, but such a project can also become blind if it eventually translates into a politics, a political philosophy, that externalizes all suffering. The common deduction that if we can only transform society, that if we could abolish capitalism, there would be no more social suffering, is fundamentally false (Fiumara 2015). No doubt that the transformation of society—the overcoming of capitalism—significantly benefits a lessening of needless social suffering. It would also potentially open up the greater possibility of a culture of healing. But we must look

at needless suffering as a whole, and not reduce it to one dimension or another. Additionally, in this book we have learned through a massive survey of an extensive body of research that pathology is just as much about neurosis as it is about trauma and socially induced suffering. Neurosis can be, as we touched on much earlier, both personal and social. What we often see is how social neurosis—or cultural neurosis—functions differently than personal neurosis, in that it is often deeply embedded in cultural practices, customs and views of the world. Prejudice is a perfect example. The prejudiced bigoted subject, on both a personal and a cultural level, is deeply neurotic and thus also frequently observed as irrational in a number of different ways, including behaviour and political orientation (Bronner 2014b). The core thesis however, is that it is impossible to eradicate cultural neurosis overnight. It is, as we are learning, a process. This includes irrational worldviews through to basic emotional and relational orientations. Thus pathology, again, is deeply rooted in the modern psyche. On an individual and sociocultural-historical level, we have to come to grips with understanding both how to study pathology and social neurosis and how to repair decades—if not centuries—of damage. The proof is there to be seen: one in four of us will experience a mental health problem in the next calendar year. Not only must person-centred support be available—informed by a much broader CT of society—we must also simultaneously work towards transcending the social-political and economic context in which mental health crises are prevalent.

To add to this, we must also remember that there is a deeper issue underlying capitalism, namely the issue of existential anxiety and seeking security and reassurance in a one-dimensional view of life: in economic growth, expansion, domination, violence and a materialistic way of life. It seems fairly clear that a post-capitalist society will need to overcome this existential level of investment in capitalist norms.

Additionally, if the dominant mode of being today is rooted in or deeply linked to certain consumerist norms (Fiumara 2015) and structural and systemic features of capitalist society, a politics of suffering and thus also transformative healing is not one principled on the belief that we just have to wait for capitalism to subside for unhindered reconciliation (Fiumara 2015). Transformations, desirable and necessary, also must be considered along prefigurative lines and, thus, based on an “inward journey” (Parton 2015a) as well as a collective project of healing. This process must, as we will discuss, be based on critical notions of justice, progress and mutual individual flourishing.

One of the most thought-provoking theses that, if I had more space, I would offer as a secondary expression to the above observations is how the biggest challenge we face in the present moment of human history is breaking from pathological regularities embedded in society, in culture. Cycles of domination, violence and suffering are an example of what I mean. A wonderful case study, in brief, can be found in the historic symbols of modern European and American societies. Past architecture serves as a reminder of the pathological nature of general human development to date: castles whose history is torture, oppression and death; historical declarations about democracy written by those who were slave owners; massive bank buildings, towering above like an old medieval castle—an object to be gazed upon in awe of its governing presence. The inherent logic, the rationale, runs through the old structures of power and money and status, the old towers and fortresses of domination and oppression, into the new. History in the sense of pathology is not so much broken, there is in fact significant connection between centuries of human society.

What an emancipatory politics requires, in light of this study, is a framework that can also account for the process of psychic transformations and psychic actions inasmuch as social transformation and genuine historical-cultural progress (Fiumara 2015). In terms of Fromm, the issue is that “not even stable, anti-capitalist structures necessarily usher in the prevalence of the being mode, as opposed to the having mode” (Fiumara 2015). If we seriously believe, as is clinically proven and certainly corroborated by a vast range of research, that we live in a pathological social order, we cannot just suspend psychic life and foster fundamental change. We must simultaneously align an emancipatory politics as a mode of working through psychic suffering, trauma and social-cultural neurosis (Smith 2015b).

5.1.2 (ii) *To Lend a Voice to Suffering: Trauma, Healing and the Transition to Post-capitalism*

Indicative of a broader trend and a more general truth, a 2015 study found that the American worker is overworked, underpaid and suffering from severe burnout (Saccaro 2015). Based on current trends, there is no question that the effects of neoliberalism in its intensifying capitalist values will result in the increase of needless suffering (Bourdieu 1998; Saltman 2007; Benson et al. 2008; Frost and Hoggett 2008; Smith 2008; Lawson 2012; Elliott 2013; Giroux 2014a, b; Kotz 2014; Veltmeyer 2014; Coulter and

Nagle 2015). The fact is that many individuals and families are already on the brink of immense economic suffering, if they have not already been plunged into such a state of struggle and despair. The result of the latest economic crisis was the imposition of austerity, in which an ocean of suffering has overwhelmed a large base of the general populous, whether as a result of direct cuts, the systematic erosion of the welfare state and vital social programmes, or the neoliberalization of the workplace. The poor, of course, are the ones to suffer most when it comes to the reality of social and economic precarity; but even the middle classes, those who remain “secure” with a job and a means for survival, now must contend in a social world based on ever-ruthless competition and individualisation (Bourdieu 1998). As Pierre Bourdieu writes, it is “the struggle of all against all [...] through everyone clinging to their job [...] under conditions of insecurity, suffering and stress” (Bourdieu 1998). Bourdieu describes contemporary neoliberal capitalist society as one of immense structural violence, based on the constant impending threat of insecurity in the form of unemployment (Bourdieu 1998).

In truth, it would take a book of a thousand or more pages to describe the total rubric of social suffering today, including environmentally. Limiting myself to a psychological perspective, one can speculate through the total wealth of research considered the amount of severe trauma being inflicted on the general populous. Trauma not only in terms of those who have experienced any kind of hardship and suffering as a direct result of recent social, political and economic developments, but also in terms of *vicarious trauma* (Rothschild 2006) within a civilizational context driven by domination in a triple sense.

We don’t often think of suffering and trauma as being vicarious, but in a society spiralling out of control and plunging into a state of unspeakable injustice; in a culture increasingly based on violence and domination, where the total number of cases of gun violence in the USA in 2015 reached a staggering 52,807, and where even identity formation and agency are being driven towards militarization (Giroux 2015); it would be safe to assume vicarious trauma is also having a profound affect.

What’s more (as noted much earlier) is the growing phenomenon known as “compassion fatigue” (Babbel 2012; Lambros 2014; Figley 2015) which affects not only the care workers and those who treat the traumatized but also the individual more generally who, in the course of daily experience, must endure a constant onslaught of negative news stories and social realities. Here we have another example of the deeper

impact our fundamentally bad social reality has on the subject. In such a deeply negative universe, even compassion and empathy grows fatigued. Empathy, as a result of subject deformation, becomes blocked. The study and understanding of trauma as vicarious and of the emotional fatigue experienced as a result of the constant overwhelming experience of negative realities offers incredibly important insights to what a critical theoretical, humanistic vision for a culture of healing might entail. In a very direct way, it also adds a “human” element even to the most deranged politics.

Whether directly or vicariously experienced, we are beginning to learn that suffering of whatever degree and in whatever form has a tremendous impact on the whole human being, often also resulting in lasting trauma (Brahm 2004). When we account for all the factors and constituent parts which comprise our modern social reality, is it really any wonder we live in an age of anxiety and post-traumatic stress? And though individuals can suffer trauma in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons (Brahm 2004), not always to do with the general issues and status of neoliberal capitalist society, it is one of the tasks of CT today to consider a meta-analysis to assess all of the independent studies of suffering and integrate them in to a CT of society and its alternative, as underpinned by vision of healing, well-being and collective harmony.

What I mean by this, to put it in concise terms, is that even though there is a breadth of important and systematic empirical research on the issue of suffering and trauma which spans the whole of the social sciences, psychology, health and medicine, this data lacks a broader foundational social philosophy. Thus, in many ways, it also lacks the proper interpretation and application in terms of political vision and generally integrity with regard to a politics of justice, solidarity and egalitarianism.

Consider, as one example of many, how in the sociology of health, social medicine and medical anthropology, social suffering (Delvecchio et al. 1992; Bendelow 2006) is increasingly seen in the context of a more total concept of health or well-being; but it is still isolated and considered outside the frame of a deeper analysis provided by a radical, progressive social philosophy. In some sense, what is required in the university—perhaps especially the alternative, co-operative university—is a project of solidarity for justice, emancipation and egalitarian democracy that breaks barriers of the academic of division of labour. For if what gives a study of social suffering in all its complexity *meaning* is the ultimate goal of bringing to public attention the cumulative miseries of everyday life in contem-

porary neoliberal capitalist society (Renault 2010), then it is the task of CT today—of a twenty-first-century emancipatory social philosophy—to critically intervene and provide the appropriate foundation for such an inclusive and practicing solidarity.

One step further, with regard to the coordinates of an emancipatory social analysis, the broad trends speak for themselves: from gender discrimination and violence against sexual orientation to racial oppression, inequality, corporate education, imperialism, authoritarian social structure and even parenting techniques—what I am speaking of here is a challenge against the whole of society and the whole of the capitalist vision of life, all the way down to its dominant and violent epistemology, anthropology and general mode of cognition.

Along the lines of political theory, the issue of trauma and suffering is significant precisely in the sense that it can have a range of different cognitive, emotional, physical and behavioural effects on individuals (Brahm 2004). Emotional responses include depression, withdrawal, excitability, flashbacks, intense fear, feelings of helplessness, loss of control, loss of connection and meaning, generalized anxiety and specific fears (Brahm 2004); while cognitive responses include memory difficulties, lack of concentration, poor judgement, inability to discriminate and inability to make choices (Brahm 2004). Then there are of course different physical and behavioural responses (Brahm 2004; Smith 2015).

Additionally, “Feelings of trauma can generate feelings of frustration and revenge that can produce a cycle of violence and also perpetuate feelings of victimhood on all sides of the conflict. Shared trauma generates a ‘we-feeling,’ but also creates an ‘us vs. them’ mentality” (Brahm 2004). “Unresolved trauma” can even be “transmitted across generations” (Brahm 2004), and also become culturally imprinted; while “trauma-induced social divisions”, such as racial oppression, “can come to be a central part of group identity” (Brahm 2004).

When it comes to understanding how we might begin to understand socially transformative and emancipatory politics, my argument as a result of this research is that we must see societal transformation as a transitional process with prefigurative, normative humanistic and critical roots. The basic idea here, as I have elaborated in a number of separate articles, is that emancipatory change must be seen as a many-sided sustainable transformative transition. This is something I will expand on in the next section. Meanwhile, it is fair to say here that in offering an assessment of contemporary social movements and numerous grassroots initiatives,

my focus will be on the importance of prefigurative efforts to experiment with radical alternative praxis, suggesting that what is vital to these efforts is a programme of education and awareness regarding the actual healing nature of their respective projects, which surpasses mere consideration of economics. A new culture of healing and therapy must in other words be an essential part of an emancipatory society. Consider more generally how, for example:

Those who have experienced hardship and suffering often experience lasting trauma from the experience. Traumatic events can fundamentally change not only victims' way of life, but also their psychological outlook. This is equally true for natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods as it is for man-made catastrophes of terrorism and war. Man-made trauma, however, is often more difficult to deal with, because frequently the perpetrators still live in close proximity to victims—thereby providing constant reminders of the past, as well as the threat of further incidents. Even if the immediate source of the trauma is removed, time does not necessarily heal all wounds. The survivor may, in fact, continue to suffer, to appear “frozen in time.” With conflict remaining an unfortunately common reality for many, techniques have emerged to help trauma victims interpret and heal from their experience. (Brahm 2004)

The general coordinates of this analysis gives further authority to Adorno's assessment that: “in this age of universal social repression, the picture of freedom against society lives in the crushed, abused individual's features alone. Where that freedom will hide out at any moment in history cannot be decreed once for all. Freedom turns concrete in the changing forms of repression, as resistance to repression” (Adorno 1992a, p. 265). And yet, in order to continue to attest to a concept of freedom—that is, *freedom as resistance to repression*—the task for critical academics, scholars, activists and movements in assisting the development of a culture of healing, is to give voice to suffering in all its forms—social, environmental or otherwise. But in giving a voice to each particular instance of suffering, it is not enough to leave one's particular account without relaying it back to the wider universal context (Schick 2014). It must, in other words, constantly refer back to a broader analysis of the pathological conditions of our modern global social reality.

When it comes to an analysis of social suffering, we must ask ourselves, what purpose might it serve to study and expose needless social suffering without politicizing those realities in effort to bring to pub-

lic attention the negative social, individual effects of neoliberal policy? Poor living conditions in areas mired with social deprivation; the humiliation and trauma of unemployment in a political-economic system which establishes dependency in relation to one's right to dignity of life; the psychological endurance of the painstaking labour cycle and menial work tasks; the experience of a world which creates pressures of status, with individuals constantly vying for power—the depths of struggle are severe (Bourdieu 1998; Renault 2010) and need to be re-engaged with a broader social philosophical view of damaged life and of positive transformation (Schick 2014).

“To let suffering speak” is what gives a critical culture of healing and therapy its theoretical substance. It is this idea of letting suffering speak in all its forms which should be preserved as the single most important guiding principle of a transformative politics moving forward, Philosophy and truth—the very index of truth, even—is rooted in the existence of needless suffering.

Walter Benjamin once said, “while there is a beggar, there is a myth”. This myth, or, at least, the collapse of this myth—the result of the “great transformation” (Polanyi), which places a total faith in the economy as the very heart of social life, subordinating everything from policy and ethics along the way—evokes something of the objective awareness of suffering. I once called this the feeling of absurdity (Smith 2015c). Consider, for example, the experience of a homeless man outside of an All-You-Can-Eat Buffet as one phenomenological moment in which the “something is not right” penetrates one's consciousness. But the truth is that when one walks down any main street of any western city, the presence and experience of suffering—the homeless person kneeled in the corner of a doorway, the man depressed to the point of suicide as a result of working 60 hours a week, the endless stream of pollution—all of these images and experiences represent phenomenological or experiential signals that indicate how any real concept of “progress” has been drilled hollow.

Instead of the good life, which capitalist society likes to pretend to represent, the reality of the contemporary social context is one defined by the endless contradictions of a bad life trying to be lived rightly. Philosophy rooted in the awareness of needless suffering can help guide an emancipatory politics—or “social praxis”. Hauke Brunkhorst, also quoting Zuidervart (2007, p. 61), states it wonderfully in a precise line of thought which describes how at the core of Adorno's negative dialectics:

[T]he only aim of this thinking was to do justice to the single individual, and to withstand its pitiless subsumption under the universalism of natural and moral laws. Hence truth and individual suffering appear to be internally connected:

Traditional metaphysics informed by Hebraic wisdom literature asked why good people suffer. Adorno asks why, in a society that has the means to eliminate poverty, hunger, and economic exploitation, suffering continues unabated, and even takes the forms of genocide and mass destruction. If this is a metaphysical question, then it is also a central question of social critique. To avoid it would be to give up philosophy's pursuit of truth and to seal its political irrelevance. (Brunkhorst 2008)

The question we face today—harking back to Marcuse's more pessimistic thesis—is how deep does social pathology go before completely sealing the individual from truth? I would answer that the “spell”, as Adorno once put it, is never absolutely sealed, even though it may be culturally imprinted and now deeply seeded socially. In theoretical and practical terms, we must preserve the notion of the efficacious subject and also do justice to all the moments and all the positive movements. For purposes of clarity, it is worth reiterating the point:

Although subjectivity is plainly mediated by the existing sociohistorical structures, it also has the capacity to affect these very structures in turn, and therefore the self-identities they engender. (Sherman 2007, p. 6)

The fact that resistance exists, that progressive movements continue to emerge, attest to the very existence of the “mediating subject” (Sherman 2007).

What this account of the subject—and of pathology and the experience of suffering reveals is the manner in which critical consciousness is open “everywhere and available to everyone”, and its potential impending moment of penetrating one's self-reflective awareness, which results in a challenge of the standard order of social life, is never too far away. It's how one responds to those moments and interprets them that is ultimately the difference. In many cases, it requires a lot of internal security, emotionally and existentially speaking, to face up to freedom as resistance to repression. But perhaps we have reached another description of one of the ultimate goals of an emancipatory politics as healing: to support the individual's open exploration. Rather than some left political and academic

movements which actively belittle the individual, transformation must be mutually supportive and intersubjectively rooted.

Moreover, the project I am working towards here is precisely one that seeks to challenge not only our general knowledge gaining processes—or the status quo theory of knowledge cemented in contemporary capitalist society—but also, more broadly, the “general view of the world” found on the level of standard and routine praxis, in which violence, domination and thus also suffering are perceived as natural, not only in our institutional lives but also in the most intimate moments of our experience with phenomena and each other (Smith 2015c).

For this reason, a culture of healing—an emancipatory politics—would aim to support and foster an open, mediating subject in its socially mutually recognized existence:

The world of experience emerges out of the mediation between what something has intersubjectively revealed itself to be over time, and what it could be as it unfolds further: ‘a theory of the “mediating subject” the alternative of keeping open to the world, to not absolutize the world of things (i.e., a critique of identity thought) to allow for and in fact affirm the unfolding of the many dimensions of life and experience in history, and to ceaselessly and normatively reflect on the continuity of knowledge and the constantly revealing nature of all experience (and therefore knowledge)’. (Russi 2015a)

By positing the possibility of constant mediation—stemming from openness to novelty and the particulars of experience—we can further draw our attention to the implicit ethical and political responsibility in our ‘everyday’ relating’, and inform social movements of the vital ethico-political implications of such an alternative mode of experience (Russi 2015b; Smith 2015). It just so happens, too, that we can draw direct parallels with this alternative cognitive and experiential paradigm with the positive practices of modern science. There is no coincidence, as I have explained in this book and elsewhere, that the natural sciences often promote open, non-absolutizing (i.e., non-identity thinking), explorative and critical thinking, tied directly to an epistemology that honours the particular whilst working (normatively) towards the universal. Inasmuch, again, that this study is about individual well-being and the development of a healthy society, it is equally about retrieving a progressive notion of reason and social rationality, which owes a great deal to the Enlightenment and to the many

progressive practices within the natural sciences. As a physics student, I can attest to these qualities first-hand.

5.1.3 (iii) *A Radical, Alternative Culture of Healing*

What would a culture of healing entail? The notion of a critical culture of healing and therapy serves as a broad and general designation that combines numerous elements and integrates a long list of philosophical, psychological and anthropological concepts. Rooted in CT, it would as I have noted numerous times combine existential and humanistic perspectives, and serve as a guiding social philosophy based on basic enlightenment values: emancipatory reason, justice, egalitarianism and participatory democracy. It would, in an overly simplistic and vaguely general sense, emerge from out of an awareness of the material, cultural and spiritual needs of people, in their particular sociocultural-historical setting. One step further, a culture of healing would be principled on a double-coded ethics: (1) a phenomenological (lived) ethics (something I am developing in my writing in *Philosophy of Science*), which serves as a crucial grounding for emancipatory politics' overall moral theory (Smith and De Graaff 2016); and (2) a negativist ethics. The latter, based on Adorno's formulations, is something that has been developed extensively in Fabian Freyenhagen's *Adorno's Practical Philosophy: Living Less Wrongly* (2015) and in his 2013 talk "The Good, the Bad, and the Normative" (2013).

In this respect, an emancipatory politics based on a culture of healing would understand the process of revolutionary transformation as a many-sided human transformation process which also includes structural and systemic transformations in line with the notion of "differential transformation" (Zuidervaat 2007), the latter necessarily being from the bottom-up. In considering any or all possible revolutionary developments across any or all differential spheres of society, from economics to education, normative consideration of psychic of individual-collective psychological and emotional restoration. To further the point, I will consider number of particular case studies later in this chapter, including social movements, alternative education environments, and what I will call an economics of healing.

Meanwhile, in previous works on an alternative philosophy of systemic change I have already begun to explain that the hope moving forward would be that, in the emergence of a culture of healing and through the process of *revolutionary transition* (see Sect. 5.2), better social conditions

will emerge and thus support the open, mediating, free-flourishing subject and its principle mode of experiential coherence. As a result, it is possible that an emancipatory form of recognition would normalize.

In closing, emancipatory politics as healing should be considered precisely in the sense that what makes a revolutionary politics actually *revolutionary* is its restorative characteristic. In other words, to insert the thesis of mutual healing which is constitutive of, and should be constituted by, an emancipatory transformative politics, is to say that this characteristic is the foundation for social emancipation in the Enlightenment sense of the term (Smith and De Graaff 2016). The actual foundation for an emancipatory and transformative politics, its principle goal, should be the elimination of needless social suffering to whatever extent such a course of elimination can be achieved. If revolutionary social change is a many-sided human and structural-systemic transformation process, the healing aspect of a revolutionary politics is integral to this process; it is one dimension of many other dimensions which, in essence, define what is and what is not an emancipatory politics.

The importance of seeing the healing aspect of emancipatory politics is in how it reminds us of the essential human transformation involved. It forces us to remember, in no uncertain terms, that capitalism's coercive legacy cannot just be rid of overnight. The emancipatory process of the many-sided, holistic, foundational revolutionary transition is something that must be seen as sociohistorically, culturally gradual. The colonization of the ego, the (de)formation of the subject, the deep psychological and emotional imprints as a result of an alienated, coercive and dominant social world—a substantive, critical theoretical analysis of this reality and the potential for radical praxis as a way out, should recognize the psychotherapeutic nature of the transformative process.

In terms of the alternative philosophy of psychology presented in this book, one can only conclude that it is unfortunate that since the 1960s and 1970s, psychology as a general rule has lost its way (Alexander 2014). At one point in time, it represented a much needed challenge to what Adorno once referred to as the “constant initiation rite” and what Fromm explains as the impulse to conform and, in a sense, nullify consciousness. Psychology was the site for much needed positive transformative tools to understand the hardening of the human shell and how we might break it (Alexander 2014).

If as Marcuse also suspected, psychology is the fundamental barrier in day-to-day life and the first, prerequisite component of an emancipatory

social analysis, the need for a new culture of healing and therapy can still take what is best from the movements in psychology in the 1960s and 1970s, and expand on their progressive transformative motivations.

Today, as a result of dominant trends beginning the 1980s and 1990s, the role of psychology has changed in the mainstream (Alexander 2014). Now it represents, as we touched on, the toolbox for conformity and adaptation.

Inasmuch that, in the remaining sections of this book, we might still continue to grasp some sense of hope, we must realize that one of the last lines of defence—*the field of psychology*—is being actively and systematically appropriated (Alexander 2014). Today, as emancipatory struggle continues and as progressive movements on the fringes of society attempt to introduce alternative narratives to the mainstream—and as scientists and others continue in struggle to promote a more rational society—it is also the task of critical social philosophy and those progressives left within the discipline of psychology to critically retrieve what psychology, health and well-being actually means.

5.2 CULTURAL SHIFTS: CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, PREFIGURATION AND THE “JOURNEY WITHIN”

While putting this book together, a new collective anthology was published titled *The Social Pathologies of Contemporary Civilization*. Edited by Kieran Keohane and Andres Petersen (2016), this multidisciplinary anthology offers several important contributions from varying authors, which expand our understanding of social pathology and contemporary malaise. My main complaint about this book however, concerns not only what I perceive as the lack of a more coherent social philosophical framework, which translates particularly when considering the eventual implications of a theory of social pathology. There is, perhaps more troublingly, a noticeable lack of substantive reflection on an alternative theory of more reconciled and wholesome societal conditions, including issues of radical praxis and how we might begin to move forward from the perspective of transformative social philosophy. Although there are distant allusions to this need, such as in the final chapter by Agnew Horvath, the book ultimately misses out when it comes to formulating a comprehensive alternative vision of life and society.

I think this is because of two reasons. On my reading, when the anthology is considered as a whole it is evidently absent of a foundational and comprehensive philosophy of the subject. Secondly, it is without a more explicitly multidimensional dynamic interactive perspective. For example, one of the things that this collective study achieves, concerns the case as to why “a reductive, biomedical and individualistic diagnosis of contemporary problems of health and well-being” must be rejected. On the other hand, it breaks from a dialectical understanding of the problem, and thus ultimately risks abandoning the subject. In turn, it is difficult to see, outside of a purely structural and institutional account, where transformation might originate from; and this is because—crucially—the respective authors are generally in need of a cross-disciplinary and broadly informed theory of the *mediating subject*.

Allow me to word it differentially. The book is a terrific accomplishment in terms of its push to draw attention to what I previously described as the *systemic interrelation of social pathologies*. This is because the book is, quite rightly I might add, not only concerned “with understanding more widespread social pathologies not only in terms of their being constructions is psychiatric discourse” but also in the sense of the need to “locate ‘mental’ illness [...] in terms of wider social transformations and civilizational crises” (Keohane and Petersen 2016). In other words, “the general approach of the many authors is one which sees health and well-being” as “not just located at the level of the individual body, the integral human person, or even collective social bodies, particular communities, entire societies, or even whole civilizations, but encompass the health of humanity as a whole and our relationship with Nature”.

In this sense, from a systemic point of view, the book correctly “treats pathologies as multiple and as being related to one another”, and views “the sources of these problems” as being “social”. But I fear that, in stressing the social dimension of pathology, when it comes to an emancipatory politics it loses sight of what I shall describe in a bit as a detailed account of the simultaneous individual transformation. In other words, one of the things we are to discuss in this chapter is how social transformation both societal—that is, structural and institutional—as well as individual. In fact, you cannot have one without the other, and this, again, is because they are dialectically dependent on each other.

Have human beings ever known a good society? There is no real definitive evidence. But, in reading ambitious studies like those offered in *The Social Pathologies of Contemporary Civilization*, it is easy to forget that

within the pathological whole—or, within the pathological parameters of civilization, as we read in the anthology—there are also countless examples, albeit on a smaller level, which shatters the ungrounded generalization that social injustice is somehow a law of nature or a law of civilization. Perhaps it is true that there will always be some repression, in the same way that individual life will never be completely free of neurosis, since there is no such thing as a pure childhood upbringing. The difference is, as we read in Marcuse, between social conditions that foster “surplus repression” and those which seek establish more wholesome conditions.

What the expansive and overwhelming considerations in the present research do, is they draw our attention to the reality that emancipatory politics are entangled in a deeper process of individual, social and environmental healing. Capitalism—its institutions, structures and systems—interrelate the social and the individual, and often this interrelation is representative of the pathologic cycles of daily life and experience. If nothing else, the research in this book has revealed just how deep pathology runs. The assault of “totally administered society” (to borrow the words of Adorno), is the culmination of numerous forces that centre around the deepening of social pathology that goes all the way down to the subject: the ideology of capitalist development; the systematic attack on remaining social infrastructure by neoliberal governments; the colonization of the social world and, impliedly, also that of the ego; as well as the deepening of ecological crises—if the neoliberal era represents the highest stage of capitalist development, it also represents a new era of pathology as society becomes more hardened, more alienated and more traumatized.

Additionally, basic Enlightenment values have been either betrayed, distorted or discarded altogether. Such values as reason, science, democracy, cosmopolitanism, egalitarianism and equality, individual and collective flourishing, are among the most celebrated (Smith and De Graaff 2016). Deeper yet, values of empiricism, scientific rigour, engaged social philosophy, with the objective of liberating life, society, culture and our common human values—the free flourishing of the human subject; human freedom, initiative, discovery, exploration; and the transformation of society (Bronner 2004; Smith and De Graaff 2016)—in our deeply pathological times, where have these historical significant guiding principles gone? If the Enlightenment represented a broad cultural and intellectual movement (Bronner 2004), coinciding with the vision to advance basic core humanistic values, today we need an honest revivification of a

critically retrieved and decolonized notion of Enlightenment. At its heart, ultimately and unavoidably, is a holistic notion of healing and flourishing.

Even science today, widely celebrated by both progressives and the staunchest of neoliberals, has entered a period which, in the field of philosophy of science, we would say is highly instrumentalized and perhaps unreflective of its own practice in relation to social, political and economic forces. That is, much of science is facing a deep internal conflict between its critical and transformative Enlightenment roots and its subservience to capital. The wealth of literature on this issue is truly immense, from both within the sciences and outside. The core element of critique is quite simple: present-day science has been co-opted by neoliberal capitalist ideology and is largely twisted to serve commercial and military interests, which has incredible influence direction of research. What is revealed is that, on a wider level, science is not value free. In more and more instances today, this influence determines what gets funded and what doesn't; which university departments are successful and which aren't; as well as what gets researched, how it gets researched and what does not. It would be difficult, if not nigh impossible, for anyone to argue that this economically and politically influenced reality correlates with liberated vision of science and reason, as originally conceived by the Enlightenment philosophes.

In large—albeit not totally—scientists seem largely unreflective of the status of scientific practice, and may also be growing increasingly unaware of the political co-option of science as set against its own radical historical culture of values. From medical science through to natural and behavioural science, scientific practice—the implications of science as a whole—cannot escape its cultural dimension. The splitting of the atom was an astonishing scientific achievement—much like the discovery of penicillin—and yet, the political and economic appropriation in the form of the atom bomb and the commodification of medicine, are serious issues that cannot be avoided within the sciences and within the social-academic universe as a whole.

The point is that pathological development runs through nearly everything and is set against whatever core humanistic values we might have thought to have historically achieved.

Drawing direct connections between the neoliberal phase of capitalist development—the aim, the faith, in complete and total dominance of capital via efforts to colonize whatever remaining social space that still exists (De Graaff 2016)—and the psychological life behind that faith, behind the religious ideal of the “free market”, discloses the wider motivation behind

the general social body, even if discontent, in reinforcing and maintaining the status quo. But aside from the willing and openly expressed faith in the pathological reproduction of sick society, such reproduction, with roots deep in the psyche and how we see life, can also find expression in progressive social movements which seek society's healthy transformation.

A really good example in relation to this thesis can be found in a case study of contemporary social movements.¹ Consider, for instance, Occupy-style events, which, in a similar spirit as contemporary movements more generally, emphasize such values as democratic participation, horizontality and inclusion. Based generally on principles of prefiguration and mutual recognition (Wilding et al. 2013), these movements seek to prefigure an alternative social world—one that is, in philosophical terms, based on a more emancipatory form of recognition, which is set against alienation, coercion or domination *writ large*. In general, it can be said that many contemporary movements on the progressive fringes of society seek to revivify or reimagine, even if they're not explicitly aware of it, radical Enlightenment values. Human freedom opposite to alienation and coercion—initiative, discovery, transformation as positive expressions of an egalitarian possibility—are commonly expressed. In other words, the Enlightenment's positive legacy lives (Bronner 2004; Pagden 2013; Smith and De Graaff 2016). Equality, cosmopolitanism and radical conceptions of democracy associated with alternative social and economic potentials are sought to be experimented with and developed. And yet, deeper core antagonisms and internal contradictions also exist or eventually reveal themselves (albeit not necessarily). In many ways, what transformative political movements evidence is similar societal contradictions—what we might call pathological reproductions.

What's interesting, moreover, when studying these movements from the perspective of broad and cross-disciplinary conception of social pathology, is the way in which, *internally*, counter-transformative or emancipatory behaviours often at times threaten to take over. We read in various studies of Occupy-style movements, for example, how common conflicts tend to appear (Anderson 2012; Welty et al. 2013) within these new-found alternative, prefigurative and participatory spaces (Anderson 2012; Wilding et al. 2013). From a psychological perspective, this would make a lot of sense. Pathologies do not simply exist within structures and institutions, they live, as we have learned, within the subject. That is why, putting aside core tensions due to the incredible amount of political pressure the movements face externally, including threat of police violence

and institutional repression (Reilly 2015), internally movements also have to contend against the lasting legacy of coercive and alienated society. We read, for example, that drives for coercive power, movements of exclusion, oppressive views, forms of violent communication—even aspects of what we would typically describe as characteristic of social pathological characterologies—were evidenced or never far from the surface (Anderson 2012). These contradictions, whether lasting or momentary depending on the particular event, are well documented in a range of ethnographic studies (Heath et al. 2013; Serafini 2013).

To state the matter clearly: that basic pathologies would re-surface within alternative transformative space is actually fairly predictable along historical, social psychological and anthropological lines. Another very good case study of deep empirical importance can be found in alternative education environments, such as Summerhill. The ethos established by A.S. Neill, who was friends with Erich Fromm (among others), is based on establishing democratic, non-dominant and mutually recognitive conditions in which the individual subject can develop openly, freely, fluidly, and therefore with a healthy centre to thus confidently face the world in an open and more emancipated way. The school is just as much based on a culture of transformative healing and therapy as it is on a progressive and emancipatory philosophy of development and therefore also educational practice and childhood learning.

With that said, it is often noted by the teachers at the school that many students when they first arrive go through a period of significant personal crisis. In some cases, we could perhaps speculate that the young child experiences borderline psychosis. We could in another way call this initial crisis phase one of transformative adjustment—as opposed to the authoritarian and dominant definition of the term—because it deals with reconciling significant socially normalized traumas so basic to contemporary daily life that, in general, we now rarely acknowledge them. The children, it is said, “freak out”. They break things. They may even act out and hit others. They have breakdowns and experience tremendous anxiety. The environment at the school is so different, so freeing (among other things), that the children find it difficult to manage at first, to orientate themselves towards this alternative reality. One can see how it is often terrifying—an experience rich in fear and threatenedness.

From an outsider’s perspective, and from the view of a theory of social pathology, it is fairly clear that because the alternative social conditions run so deeply against the status quo of pathological relations, the chil-

dren find the new found freedom and reciprocal participatory relations terrifying. They run counter to what they're used to: namely, a deeply repressed and often one-sided power-driven social world. But the school is also principled on the belief in healing—on health social environment and emotional development—and it practises this quite well overall. Thus it is also generally universally true that, once the child is able to move with the feeling and experience of such internal and externally reciprocal freedom, he or she begins to flourish, individually and also as part of the collective.

In turn, I think we can concretely draw an analogy between the child's experiences at Summerhill and also the internal and social conflicts and deeper psychic processes experienced by those at Occupy-style initiatives. Both seek, in their own way, to establish a form of participatory democratic relations. In their own way, they both also prefigure, whether aware of it or not, possible alternative social horizons. In truth, we can cite countless other examples, from worker co-operatives to alternative organizations and communities. The main point, in any case, is that underlying their prefigurative political, social and economic formations is a distinctly identifiable healing process that the individual and collective goes through, to whatever degree, after so many years in more or less alienated and repressed social environments.

In return to Summerhill, A.S. Neill understood that democratic participation, equality and reciprocal relations require healthy emotional functioning and free-flourishing subjectivity. This same argument is made, albeit in a very different way, when Honneth reflects on Franz Neumann's thesis in *Pathologies of Reason*:

A democratic constitutional state, Neumann claimed, can be threatened not only by processes in the external world –corruption, the concentration of power, or class justice—but also by the inner constitution of individuals themselves. [...] According to Neumann, “anxiety” is the greatest internal psychic obstacle for any form of democratic politics because it prevents citizens from realizing and exercising capacities that are indispensable for common will-formation. Neither the ability to place oneself in the life situations of other citizens nor the capacity to examine and sometimes set aside one's own interests can be developed under the domination of irrational anxieties. (Honneth 2009, p. 159)

What is being indicated here, to put it more concisely, is the blocking of empathy and also critical self-reflection. The basic issue, again, is the

blocking of mediating subjectivity. If the individual does not have healthy emotional foundations to move from, the very possibility of the practice of democratic politics is brought into question.

From another angle, this is what forms the basis of my main complaint when it comes to why I argue Habermas' communicative theory does not reach down enough. There can be no ideal speech community, if, preceding that very possibility, the problematic status of the subject is not recognized and remedied. Habermas' rejection of every "philosophy of the subject" (Sherman 2007, p. 207) is probably his biggest and most grave error. As we observe in Summerhill, for example, communication is but one aspect of a far more integrative picture. Thus, too, when at Occupy events there could be, at times, a struggle to communicate in a more participatory and horizontal manner. Perhaps there is even a return at times to violent forms of communication. And this has everything to do with the health and status of the subject coming *into* that situation. Neill understood this, and that's why I think he stressed healthy emotional functioning and development as integral to any theory of learning or, in this case, communication and transformative relations.

All of this is to say that when it comes to progressive social movements which seek to establish spaces that prefigure a more reconciled society, it should be expected that the participants will undergo a significant process of healing and of *transformative adjustment*, and within this process contradictions may arise from time to time. What's important is that there is enough of a cultural awareness that individuals and the collective can navigate through this process without resorting of authoritarian mechanisms of control and command and adaptation. What's more—here again we can return to Fromm and Sartre and the fear of freedom: there is often an existential impulse to sway towards control. What Summerhill and other alternative dynamics like it affirm is the broader point that alternative movements need a radical humanistic grounding in this regard: they need to integrate more tools to deal with the existential struggle between ultimate security and totality and openness and freedom. The inclination, time and again, as Marom (2016) has even reflected within Occupy, is to withdraw in fear and anxiety.

This leads me, in passing, to a deeper engagement with Marom's (2016) article which reflects on some of the internal conflicts and struggles of Occupy Wall Street. According to Marom, the "problem" with Occupy was "not the state, or the cold, or the media. The real problem underneath it all was a deep ambivalence about power." He further argues that

“our ego battles are a natural product of a movement that doesn’t have a clear answer for how leadership is to be appreciated and held accountable at the same time”. The “politics of powerlessness”, as Marom understands it, needs more discussion. Several important comments can be made in response to Marom’s analysis. Due to a lack of space, I will only focus on one or two. In sum, I would argue that there is an element of universality within Marom’s account, especially when it comes to his observations and analysis regarding the presence of fear—what we might consider as existential anxiety—and conflicts amongst those in the camps, which we could state more accurately as emanating out of their own repressed traumas. What is required, when considering a deeper view of radical praxis, is the integration of an alternative philosophy of psychology. Marom describes the need, for example, to “honour fear”. But along the lines of psychic transformation and action, we must also recognize that the impulse to close down, to sway towards the side of control (as opposed to freedom), to hypostatize and secure another political absolute—that threatenedness and fear to turn away from the unknown—is a deeply human experience. It is an experience further heightened or intensified by an individual that careers significant psychological and emotional trauma.

And this is really one of the challenges we face today. We can expand the core theses being presented here beyond that of Occupy-style movements or alternative schools. Many other examples will be offered throughout the remaining pages of this book that evidence a more longer-term view in which a sense of community can grow as well as a culture of healing. Meanwhile, the point is that in developing a prefigurative politics that is lived and shared between people—whether it is a community imitative, or a project-oriented organization, or whatever—the process of *revolutionary transition* towards post-capitalist potentialities is one which must necessarily work out of a deeply alienated, dominant, coercive and traumatizing social reality and history.

Further to this point, it should be noted once again that this process is also always subject to specific sociohistorical-cultural contexts. A commons-oriented community initiative or peer-to-peer-oriented project in Western Europe will face different challenges than that of many progressive groups in the Global South, where local community organizers and activists are murdered on a regular basis in defending their land, water or basic rights. In many ways, due to their specific social, political and economic contexts, they don’t have the luxury of personal transformation before venturing too far as a community: huts are burned, women

are raped, men are beaten and imprisoned. What helps them and gives them an advantage over people from the Global North is that many still have a strong sense of community and collective existential sense of purpose and meaning. A good example—although there are hundreds, if not thousands—can be found in the student protests in Brazil. Another example, this time in the Global North, can be found in North Dakota and the peaceful, non-violent protests by first nations people (Standing Rock Sioux tribe) against a pipeline on their land. At the time of writing, it was reported that they were facing increasingly violent forms of repression. And here we have two obvious illustrations of opposites: violent, oppressive, destructive pathological social forces versus peaceful, non-violent protests positioned against injustice, destructive development and environmental exploitation. To say that the protests by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe do not contribute to cultural enlightenment and a broader transformative cultural politics and healing, completely misses the historical place of these peaceful and non-violent protests.

To state it once more: If genuine transformation is to occur for the betterment of everyone—all individuals and species—it has to be cultural. If humanity is to repair the damage it has done to the environment, the movement has to have a cultural centre. If we are to develop more just systems, more healthy and reconciled and fair conceptions of economics, it has to be cultural and therefore also holistic in thinking. To stress the cultural dimension takes nothing away from progressive movements with radical humanistic sensibilities and more reconciled, egalitarian visions of life. What it does emphasize is that, just as the Enlightenment sought to introduce progressive and emancipatory values as well as intellectual transformation in effort to support culture progress (Smith and De Graaff 2016), so too must we seek to establish today a cultural mindfulness. Intellectuals, academics, scientists and experts from across disciplines and fields must seek to support progressive movements and engage with the struggle for genuine, critical notions of “progress” (Smith and De Graaff 2016). Even the most staunch, rigid and esoteric of rationalists must see that a defence of reason requires engagement with movements who seeks to create a more rational social world. Deflecting the lack of reason in contemporary society to the need for “better education” completely misses the core issue of the multidimensional pathology of irrationality (or deficit of reason).

This leads us into another issue, a discussion of which must remain limited (due to lack of space). In understanding the multidimensional

complexity and interrelated nature of pathology today, what is required moving forward is the advance of a methodologically innovative approach to understanding the roots of social, economic and environmental crises. In support of progressive movements and whatever remaining hope there is for a better world, and in the critical retrieval of the Enlightenment, such an approach must transcend rigid academic boundaries and support cross-disciplinary research that combines science, philosophy and empiricism. The call of the hour—in our present historical period which explicitly calls out for social, economic and political alternatives—is the advancement of a critical understanding social pathology and negative social reproduction. Why do we as humans historically relate to ourselves, the world and each other in the way that we do. Why do we organize our institutions, societies and belief systems in such unjust ways? How do we develop new, healthier ways of relating and acting in the world? These questions are just as much scientific as they are philosophical. To answer them in their multidimensional complexity and to support transformative cultural development, we need critical economists, sociologists, anthropologists, historians, educationalists, philosophers, psychologists, scientists, architects, engineers, farmers, builders and so on—all combined and engaged in an integrative and collaborative dialogue. A transformative and radical Enlightenment culture of healing, egalitarian development and actual democracy demands normativity, cross-disciplinarity and inclusive, open, diverse social engagement.

Normativity is absolutely vital (Allen 2016; Smith and De Graaff 2016). It is not impossible to discern and distinguish genuinely emancipatory, egalitarian political movements from their opposite, namely hardened, prejudiced, authoritarian and typically right-wing reactionary attitudes. As has been indicated at the heart of this work, the normative foundations of a critical cross-disciplinary and social philosophical approach to understanding pathology allows us to clearly recognize a movement, campaign, initiative or argument that perpetuates injustice, oppression and suffering. In promoting tolerance, one can be intolerant of ideas that exist on the spectrum of domination. To be intolerant of intolerance—that is, to disprove and dispel the myth of prejudiced and bigoted truth-claims is not a philosophical quandary: it is a moral and ethical stance against dominant attitudes and pathological political orientations, which want nothing to do with arriving closer to the truth of an issue judged by essential emancipatory criterion, but to press downward belief systems based to whatever degree (explicitly or implicitly) on control, coercion and authoritarianism.

The normative foundations of the Enlightenment hold critical notions of egalitarianism, justice, fairness, health and well-being as being universal, regardless of their particular cultural formation—they indicate, likewise, the non-universality of non-emancipatory movements and pathological political ideas. Pathology is thus a key if not vital concept, which provides essential criterion when it comes to *normative critique*. It helps us unlock a transformative social philosophical (cross-disciplinary) view of society. In discerning whether a movement, culture, political initiative or vision is more or less pathological, we can hold core humanistic and critical normative values up against the content of their claims, revealing a kernel of truth about their actual fundamental orientation, intention or inclination.

In closing, I should like to emphasize, for the purpose of reiteration, two important points: if, as a whole, societal transformation must be seen as *transitional*, this transformation process must also have at its centre a new culture of healing and therapy. But one does not necessarily predicate the other. What is needed is both or simultaneous social, individual and cultural transformation from the ground-up. A culture of healing and therapy, at the centre of a transformative politics, must identify the problems movements' face, such as the need to disarm repressive governments and institutions. In the above example, First Nations' protests are attempting a peaceful response for a just cause, and yet they are being met with violence. To reproduce violence would reproduce the pathological world, and so we eventually face a serious dilemma. I am not in the position to offer an authoritative answer, but what seems obvious is the need for popular resistance and solidarity for all progressive causes in effort to disarm the localized institutions of violence and oppression. For any healing, transformative movement, the mass is also required—and thus, while sustainable change is transitional and prefigurative, one must also understand the integral nature of events, academic practice, critical and normative social philosophical practice, and truly progressive cultural development.

5.2.1 (i) *An Alternative Philosophy of Systemic Change*

The very idea of a possible transition to an actual egalitarian (participatory, horizontal) democracy demands a grassroots, participatory and collaborative politics. As Richard Gunn explains:

general elections are top-down affairs [...], now it's time for social movements to come into their own. Participatory social movements are, or should be, the centre of gravity of an emancipatory politics—because emancipation exists in and through human interaction [...], [this] interaction is unlikely to result from hierarchy—in my view, an emancipatory movement must start as it intends to go on. That is, it must start (and continue) in a prefigurative way. (Gunn 2015)

The big question we face is how to start developing non-pathological social conglomerations. It is not possible here to repeat past arguments. What can be said is that an emancipatory social philosophy—what I have called an alternative philosophy of systemic change—should reject the idea of a *Grand Soir*. Social change is not a “big bang” event, although events can certainly play a part in energizing the transformative process. In other words, what the idea of transition does is it offers a framework for understanding that change, for it to be sustainable, also has to be prefigured. It runs against grand ideas of revolutionary uprisings, or, indeed, a sense of passivity that there is nothing we can do until the “big event”. At the same time, the impression such not be of too much caution or that *any* transformation will take a long time. Given the enormity of the task, transformation and progressive change in a large sense will likely take a very long time as it is a historical process. But humanity also faces dramatic challenges today which require an immediate response—as yet unforeseen events and developments that are showing on the horizon, such as more catastrophic climate changes and violent weather (flooding of coastal cities, millions of climate migrants, etc.) as well as the contemporary emergence of Trump-like dictatorships and fascism, especially as the crisis of capitalism deepens. The question is how much more time until there is no longer a choice to engage in more radical action and learn together as we go? The hope, then, is that at least progressive movements are equipped with a radical overarching multidimensional perspective for both individual and social engagement.

In many areas, this is already being evidence. The research programme and international collaborative project developed by the Centre for Environmental Change and Human Resilience, which focuses explicitly on transformations in practice across all areas of society and life, already begins to evidence just such a prefigurative developmental process, both immediate and long term. In light of this example and many others, it

is important to stress that we can have both or simultaneous immediate change—immediate reform—and transition.

With that said, in taking a many-sided, integral view of the process of grassroots-driven transformation, the position I propose is one that goes against the belief in parties and or a radical takeover of the system by a political camp—especially as the driving force of societal transformation, which more often than not proves authoritarian, disempowering and reproductive of dominant social structures and paradigms. If a study of social pathology teaches us anything, it is that an emancipatory politics must instead be multifaceted, holistic, participatory, inclusive, prefigurative and, most importantly, based on the notion of transition (Russi 2015b).

A clear first step would be a form of *recognition* of the indescribable suffering caused by capitalism, wherein human flourishing—or, at least, production and development of society—arise at the expense of all other creatures. This is an area a number of author's formulate in some detail in *Critical Ecologies*, and it is certainly an area of real specificity when it comes to critical theoretic engagements with the current global ecological crisis. What this discussion calls out for, however, is a more focused discussion on *actual alternatives*—that is, a systematic and detailed analysis of possible alternative forms available in the here and now, with a mind toward the emancipatory “not yet” (to play on Bloch) symbolic of the greater transitory process moving forward into the future. Such a discussion extends beyond the scope of this series of essays, but it is one I have begun exploring in a series on *transitioning to alternative agricultural systems*. (Smith 2015a)

In terms of the transitioning to alternative agricultural systems as one example, I have argued that we cannot just look at outputs, sustainability and environmental health, even though these are extremely important. We also have to take into account the need to emancipate human labour (Smith 2015d). The problem with many discourses on agricultural alternatives and their role in the facilitation of systemic change, seem to overlook the structural conditions in which human labour may also be freed. “What of the idea that we have the means to create the appropriate conditions to abolish work as a necessity for human beings? If gains toward a more inclusive, egalitarian society bear a great deal on the relationship between freedom and precarity, do these gains not also bear a great deal on the relationship between freedom and labour? [...] Can a vision of sustainable agriculture not accommodate freedom from necessary labour?” (Smith 2015d). Thus, again, we must take a holistic, many-sided and integrative

approach—and this goes for needed transformations across the whole of society.

Such a transformational social philosophical programme of post-capitalist development would take into account not only the philosophical, political and economic facets of fundamental systemic change but also the psychological, emotional, relational, existential, anthropological, developmental and even epistemological dimensions of change and of the particular needs of people. Based on a theory of how systems actually work, and how change actually unfolds, an emancipatory social philosophy would see social transformation as transitional, and as a transformative political and economic process inasmuch as a many-sided transformative healing process.

5.2.2 (ii) *Prefigurative, Participatory Politics*

The deeper insights offered as a result of the present analysis, I believe, have profound implications in terms of not only how we perceive neoliberal capitalist society; how we conceptualize a critique of contemporary social conditions; but also when it comes to how we envision an emancipatory way forward. When we consider social pathology from all angles, it becomes clear, I argue, that a case develops in support of prefigurative politics, such as that evidenced by progressive social movements today. That is to say that, when viewed from the perspective of a systematic theory of social pathology, we are ultimately able to deepen a more coherent vision of positive social regeneration in the form of a post-capitalist politics. And this, in the end, should be the ultimate goal: to help inform a transformative social and philosophical vision. If the most vital dimension of an emancipatory politics is *healing*, in many ways what we witness is how a CT of health and well-being comes full circle. Society is pathological—that is to say, it is deeply ailing and it produces suffering and internal trauma—hitherto substantiating, in turn, how transformative praxis must not only be focused on transforming systems, structures and institutions. Praxis has to be seen as necessarily grounded in an emancipatory culture of healing. It has to be informed by an alternative and transformative philosophy of psychology.

In return to Adorno, whose philosophy of the subject and critique of “constitutive subjectivity” was introduced in the earliest moments of my analysis, we understand that human beings can never be absolutely free of internalization. I often use the example from my own studies in psychol-

ogy and, especially, self-psychology, that there can be no pure childhood upbringing. Some children certainly have healthier upbringings and the degree of internalization is much less impactful and traumatizing than other children. Neurosis, emotional pathology to whatever degree, is a basic constituent of human experience. At the same time, this is not to say that the individual subject, through a process of intense therapy and healing, cannot come to terms with their own emotional histories and, to borrow from Carl Rogers, upon their “self-realization” develop an awareness which, in some respects, can assist in beginning to manage negative internalizations, both historical and new.

A particularly illuminating programme of research concerns a study of how poverty negatively impacts childhood brain development (Luby et al. 2014). The conclusion, which is quite definitive, reveals “that exposure to poverty in early childhood materially impacts brain development at school age further underscores the importance of attention to the well established deleterious effects of poverty on child development. Findings that these effects on the hippocampus are mediated by caregiving and stressful life events suggest that attempts to enhance early caregiving should be a focused public health target for prevention and early intervention.” Evidence also suggests that, while it is much easier, through therapy and a process of healing, to rectify this process of deformation in young children, it becomes increasingly difficult the more the individual ages. But it is no way true that the older a person is the more they are hardwired, indefinitely. In other words, healing and reconciliation are possible. Thus, within neurosciences, the term “neuroplasticity” is employed (Ojiaku 2015). And yet, too, from a neuroscience perspective, this process of transformation can be seen as a transition.

From a social psychological and philosophical point of view, even though we come to understand issues of negative internalization in relation to social pathology as part of the individual’s development and subject’s genesis, a theory of pathology is not without evidenced based policies of hope. If one of the most distinct social pathologies today—the pathology of domination with regard to both internal and external nature based, in part, on self-preservation drives gone wild—this body of research “must be understood as offering a promissory note on a future reconciliation whose redemption is endangered by subjects that continue to fetishize the threat that scarcity presents for self-preservation even after the objective conditions that gave rise to this threat have been largely overcome” (Sherman 2007, p. 229). It hinges, in other words, on overcoming capi-

talism and the continued pathological fetishism of the capitalist view of human nature. Like Adorno, similar to Marcuse, the social philosophical insight employed here is one which seeks to work beyond the ego—that is, the hardened, closed and defensive ego (Parton 2015a) driven by blind fear—towards a notion of “ego coherence” (Sherman 2007, p. 228). That is to say that, if Adorno seeks to “use the strength of the subject to break through the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity” (Adorno 1992, p. xx), which, Sherman summarizes, “manifests as a rigidified ego structure cowering before its Other”, and which is instrumental to the capitalist mode of social and environmental relations, one such aspect of reconciliation would, in part, represent a “moving beyond” the rigidified ego structure. Instead, the course forward is, in the same way neuroscientific study implies, an active programme of explicit social-cultural recovery and convalescence. This is, as a general guiding principle, characterized in terms of the philosophical and practically applied value of the open, mediating subject (Sherman 2007, p. 226).

Without running the risk of repeating myself, it is worth pointing out in the context of this work that the significance of the thesis on offer not only concerns what we may term psychological transformation and action. It concerns the whole human being, including also the recovery of human cognition and of a non-violent epistemology (Titchiner 2017). Additionally, in Marcusean terms, this mediating subject—this possibility of the free-flourishing subject—is one free, to whatever degree, of “surplus repression” (Marcuse 1969a). Here, too, we encounter another guiding principle.

If the *prefigurative politics* of emerging social movements coincides with the development of mutually recognizing spaces (Gunn and Wilding 2013) where people can experiment with and practice an alternative vision of life, it is extremely important to note that at the heart of these spaces is the site of profound struggle: the very human struggle against the coercive legacy of dominant, authoritarian, coercive, alienated and exploitative society. There is a reason, moreover, why many communes fail. They often end up producing social and emotional pathologies, even if having already established an alternative community. To suggest, as Richard Gunn and Adrian Wilding do, that mutual recognition is the fundamental—perhaps even irreducible—dimension of an emancipatory politics, slightly overlooks the deeper issues of the many-sided process of individual and social transformation.

No doubt the broader philosophical notion of mutual recognition can offer a beacon, a guiding light, which can help movements navigate the future on a concrete, phenomenological level. But I fear that it is not enough, in itself, as a concept and as a practical phenomenological guiding principle. Mutual recognition, which is outward, also often presupposes a degree of self-realization and transformation. To what extent such self-knowledge, self-development and self-exploration is already present in individuals, who participate in and formally acknowledge “mutually recognitive” dynamics, would require systematic, highly nuanced study. The truth is that today most people are simply not ready or not able to sustain a politics of mutual recognition without, first, a significant degree of radical personal transformation.

In return to considering contemporary social movements, I think it is safe to say that from an advanced position which takes into account the issue of social pathology, a politics of mutual recognition predicates already a radical new sensibility (Marcuse 1969a). With that said, what hope and positive affirmation we can gain today resides precisely in the fact that Occupy-style initiatives and many prefigurative political movements associated with the many new social movements seek to reclaim the *self* and one’s subjectivity as a subject (Parton 2015b).

In this sense it is no wonder that radical contemporary social movements have discovered, in their emergence, the importance of reclaiming *space* in the process of reclaiming what it means to relate, interact and communicate—that is, in the process of revolutionary healing and individual-social transformation. In other words: the truth is that it is not just space that movements like Occupy-style initiatives seek to reclaim. Deeper down—even if such movements don’t explicitly formulate awareness of such—what unfolds in these spaces is the actual reclaiming of one’s self, of one’s subjectivity, from commodification, hierarchy, domination and alienation. (Smith 2015c)

It would seem that Parton agrees with the political implications I am drawing out in my analysis. He writes that, though Marcuse despaired at “the totalitarian tendencies of this society render the traditional ways and means of protest ineffective” (Marcuse 1964; p. 256; cited also in Parton 2015a), “It seems clear [...] that Marcuse would have strongly endorsed and supported Occupy Wall Street, even though it could be argued that this Movement lacked the subjective readiness or inner ripeness for real-

izing its radical potential to overturn capitalism, due to a great deal of shallow individualism, not to mention the brutality of the police under corporate America's determination to terminate it" (Parton 2015a). Parton furthers his analysis:

The General Assembly, within Occupy, and as an institution of a free democratic society, is more than an opinion-expressing or vote-counting process. Its proper functioning presupposes an already existing high level of informal consensus among the participating members. In other words, reaching formal consensus requires a close togetherness and solidarity within the acting political body; otherwise, we only get (after too much time and effort) the will of all or the will of the majority, instead of the General Will.

Genuine community, the foundation of decisive political action, requires an association of individuals who have expanded the established ego to include the social self and the biological self. Toward this goal, it seems to me, that the dawn and dusk of consciousness, just before falling asleep and right after waking up, are examples of personal experience (*Erlebnis*) when the ego suspends or loosens its dominating role, and allows communication between the id and the ego. Not free association in which the ego is looking for resistances to the truth, and not meditation in which the ego waiting for a truth that dissolves or excludes itself, but rather a free dialogue among the inner structures of the human mind—ego, id and superid—is required for the liberation of subjectivity. (Parton 2015a)

The point that Parton makes is clear enough, but the categories he employs are really outdated and no longer widely accepted. They perpetuate, as we discussed much earlier in this book, the idea of instinctual forces that need to be held in check or sublimated. A more up-to-date understanding can be found in images or categories, such as the inner self with its traumas that need resolving and healing. The "journey within" in this sense is much more about establishing a conscious dialogue with one's inner *self*—with all its hurts, traumas, fears, anger and hopes. Most psychotherapists will understand this process of developing such a dialogue very well: it's about engaging with one's *self*, listening to deeper core feelings and traumas, embracing them, working through them, and ultimately allowing ourselves to be free inside of ourselves.

More updated imagery puts the arguments in a different, more progressive frame of reference. In this respect, although Adorno's often faces a similar problem, we might return to his main thesis when he draws a

broad social philosophical hypothesis concerning human transformation (Adorno 1992, pp. 27–278). Adorno writes:

We cannot anticipate the concept of the right human being, but it would be nothing like the person, that consecrated duplicate of its own self-preservation. From the viewpoint of a philosophy of history, this concept, which on the one hand assuredly presupposes a subject objectified into a character, presupposes on the other hand the subject's disintegration. Complete weakness of the ego, the subject's transition to a passive, atomistic, reflex-type conduct, is at the same time the well-earned judgment passed upon a "person" in which the economic principle of appropriation has become anthropological. (Adorno 1992, p. 277)

We may respond to Adorno's accurate concern that we cannot absolutely anticipate the concept of the reconciled, healthy human being, but we can nevertheless anticipate, within our current historical situation, the significant first steps towards a more reconciled social reality. We can deepen this call by also deepening the argument towards the development of a radical philosophy of psychology and a new culture of healing and therapy. To return to Parton: in a recent paper, he calls for a "journey within" which is simultaneously self-transformative and self-realizing as it is self-empowering and revolutionary (Parton 2015a). Parton, the last of Marcuse's students, summarizes his position as follows:

"Radical sensibility", argued Marcuse, was the source of the ascending values of peace, justice, equality. Opening our houses to visitors at all hours of the day and night, hanging out, appreciating music and art, discussing politics and philosophy, enjoying nature, were expressions of biopsychological needs, instinctual needs. Unfortunately, this spontaneous self-sublimation of eroticism was disrupted and blocked, not only by violent state repression, but also by the pathological narcissism of those seeking change. Too much of the old ego-structure survived within us, and it helped to destroy a genuine Movement for radical change. One lesson to be learned is that Eros is liberating only if directed by an emancipated ego-consciousness.

Marcuse cites Franz Alexander's idea of the "corporealization of the psyche" (Marcuse 1955, p. 32) with reference to the ego's tendency to lose mobile energy over time and react to things and people on the basis of unconscious automatic reactions, rather than in terms of what the actual situation requires, permits or promises. The remedy is inner knowledge and total questioning: we must subject all established thoughts and behavioral patterns to conscious scrutiny and judgment, as part of transforming

ourselves. Future political organizations and Movements will fail if they involve us as we are, the same old Adam, rather than as we could be and should be.

Translated practically along the lines of a phenomenological ethics (Smith and De Graaff 2016), if we reject Adorno's "totally administered society" thesis, we are able to reserve space for the social practice of transformation and liberation. We can align a broader critical social philosophy in such a way that it can help us identify and inform the many daily instances in which the mediating subject might emerge, however tentatively. Along political lines, Sherman (2007) is entirely correct in his assessment that, in spite of the overwhelming magnitude and pervasiveness of pathological forces today—forces which deeply affect the psyche and are reproduced in daily patterns of action and behaviour—the very existence of new social movements which seek to prefigureatively create and practice new modes of horizontal, less violent, dominant intersubjective (subject-subject) social relations, attest to the existence of the mediating subject (Sherman 2007, p. 282).

Although examples of progressive grassroots movements may vary, in a popular or mainstream sense—consider Occupy-style initiatives, 15m, the movement of the squares, the Indignados, and so on—it is not that a progressive grassroots politics need to necessarily be explicitly political. Grassroots politics can also take less obvious and less directly political forms. Alternative education, engineering and architecture, basic community projects such as community-based agriculture or energy initiatives, transformative constructs regarding the re-organization of media and communication, the digital commons and open-source movements, alternative business models and worker co-operatives, community mental health initiatives, campaigns against hate and prejudice—all of these and countless others from across society, as particular responses to particular problems, may have an emancipatory grassroots logic. The main thing is that, in order for them to realize their positive transformative potential for the betterment of society, all of the countless movements and initiatives must take the position of a broader emancipatory social philosophy and vision of life. Otherwise, as we also regularly observe, they can easily become co-opted by the capitalist status quo.

In closing, against the bleak and hopeless narrative of dominant neo-liberal capitalist media, the truth is that a lot is happening on a grassroots level in a diversity of forms and across many different sites of resistance.

Examples of alternative possibilities and non-pathological social conglomerations, and how they relate to the notion of the mediating, free-flourishing subject, exist all around us today.

As we will discuss in the final section of this book, transformative, emancipatory potentials are everywhere. Counter-examples to the neoliberal capitalist vision of life, even if they are small exceptions, act like little islands in the vast sea of human history, offering us something to anchor on and orientate towards. In our everyday lives, there are instances, however fleeting or fragile, of relations which escape the reproduction of social domination and coercion. These moments or experiences are, no doubt, the exception. But even a small exception means we need nuance; it acts as promissory note of a better world (Smith 2014). From sustainable farming techniques and organic, low-input agricultural alternatives to renewable energy and the emancipatory potentials of automation. Additionally, in recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in commons-based initiatives—think of solidarity kitchens, democratic participatory community initiatives, social clinics, self-managed workplaces, transition towns, mutual aid networks, alternative currencies, non-profit social assistance projects, and so on (Roos 2015). Many other examples and case studies will also be offered in the remaining sections of this book.

5.3 EMANCIPATORY TRANSITION: THE EARLY DESIGNS OF AN ECONOMICS OF HEALING

In the embrace of the grassroots as the source of transformative power—to embrace the plurality of struggle—this requires a transformation of the way we view politics and revolution. The idea of revolutionary transition and emancipatory prefigurative politics suggests a shift from centralized control and political tribalism towards inclusivity, towards mutual recognition and acknowledgement of the particular insights and qualities of different forms of politics, as we push towards creating a better, healthier, more reconciled global society.

If in other words participatory, horizontal, prefigurative politics is a key part of transformative praxis, what progressive governments must do is prioritize policies which first offer immediate relief from precarious social and economic conditions and, second, enable resources, time and space for progressive movements to develop and experiment with alternatives. It is also necessary for the course of economic transformation, that progressive

government make its focused task to support grassroots development and experimentation in whatever way possible, in effort to develop a more systemic restorative alternative to capitalism from the bottom-up.

A good example of this can be found when applying a study of social pathology to the need for an alternative economic system. But before moving into this subject of study, it is important to preface my comments by emphasizing that I have extreme reservations concerning what stands in the way of possible progressive post-capitalist developments in the immediate. In the example where I introduce Universal Basic Income as a potential immediate policy, I am also aware that, while this would be a perfect solution or starting point, there has been and will continue to be massive corporate and political protest to the idea. Within neoliberalism, basic income is seen as too close to a return to the welfare state and the fear of the elite, it seems, is a loss of control over people. As things currently stand, people must be filtered into the economy because their livelihood depends on it. If one eliminates the precariousness of social life today, one takes away the coercive tools the capitalist economy utilizes to maintain its existence. For this reason, we can see how in Canada and the USA, two countries I've studied basic income proposals, the idea does not have much of a chance unless there are some other radical changes that create its opening. That is why, such proposals must also be seen as part of a much more integral, many-sided transformative project.

Additionally, it should be noted that what follows are really only possible guidelines for a gradual transition to post-capitalism.

5.3.1 (i) *The Diminution of Work*

One of the most understated yet significant ironies today is found in how subscribers to the principle of the “free market” often employ terms like “choice”, “freedom”, “autonomy” and “egalitarianism”. But what they fail to see is that they are actually subordinate to the market and to the new historical Idol of its so-called invisible hand. If these individuals genuinely believed in the values they tend to claim as their own, they would reject the idea of the free market and of capitalism writ large, instead arguing for genuinely progressive social-political and economic development. Such development would, to be sure, aim to free all individuals from any sort of economic coercion. Rather than having to work in order to earn a living, an emancipated society would ensure that everyone is free from precarious life—that all basic needs are met—emancipating the individual to pursue

one's interests in life: whether that interest is in design or building or teaching or whatever.

Emancipating people from having to work meaningless jobs just to survive, more often than not in highly destructive and highly exploitative industries—such as fast-food work—is a primary principle of a restorative politics. One of the most commonly expressed feelings I have observed among a wider range of people is that they work the job that they do in order to gain financial security and to fund the activities and projects they actually want to pursue. As a first step, one might, again, refer to Universal Basic Income. Those who already enjoy whatever work or labour-oriented interests they may have, may very well continue with the same focus, albeit without the pressure to work every day of their lives and to have the autonomy and freedom of their projects. One could imagine others might take basic income to help finance a degree or support a career change. If someone wanted to spend a few years exploring art-making, or wanted to take a few years off because they feel they need the rest emotionally or physically—or if someone has an interest they want to pursue in science, or in horticulture, or astrology, or dedicate time to social enterprises or to protesting or whatever—the opportunity would be more readily available. Most importantly, in transcending the incredibly naïve belief in capitalism as actually egalitarian, we have to transcend the ideology of “jobs”.

One of the basic rebuttals to basic income among other arguments in line with post-capitalist policies is that, if a person has no need to work, no one will work. This, again, is a belief that is rooted in the capitalist (false) universalization of the subject. In truth, many people already work not because they have to but because they want to contribute to society and their local communities. Many people volunteer their time already, and that's within a political economy that generally goes against such views of labour. Alternatively, we can see how, in a participatory economic system, all this is doing at first is alleviating the suffering and trauma of precarity, freeing human passion, creativity and genuine collaborative innovation. Many models—from work self-directed enterprises to peer-to-peer already substantiate these claims empirically.

In short, to ensure an actual vision of social progress emerges in the future as a historical aim, we must overcome the fetishism of labour and of “surplus”. Countless ethnographic studies support the idea that past societies worked less and had everything they needed, plus more. Think of how we could improve these ideals with all of the knowledge, technology and infrastructure available to us today? On the other hand, how many

millions of people in the USA live below the poverty line and don't have access to health care? How many millions of youth in the EU don't have equal opportunity or are not allowed the right to a healthy, happy future and to pursue their interests and passions? To be "free from jobs" doesn't necessarily mean to be free from work, from creating and contributing towards society and historical social progress in a critical Enlightenment sense of the term. To further the point, let us consider the following:

György Lukács once commented, as noted in Freyenhagen (2015, p. 135): "Mechanized practical work and commodity exchange demand a form of perception in which all other humans appear as thing-like beings lacking sensation, so that social interaction is robbed of any attention to properties valuable in themselves." The idea we can take from this, which includes a critique of basic metaphysical views in relation to the capitalist vision of life—views concerning time, space and being—is that in a transition out of capitalism will require incredible readjustment to reality, especially as they are tied to pathologies of labour. Consider, for example, instrumental conceptions of time:

The contemplative stance adopted towards a process mechanically conforming to fixed laws and enacted independently of man's consciousness and impervious to human intervention, i.e. a perfectly closed system must likewise transform the basic categories of man's immediate attitude to the world: it reduces space and time to a common denominator and degrades time to the dimension of space. (Lukács 1923)

One of the great critical assessments of the view of time within advanced capitalist societies comes from Adorno (2000) in his short essay on the recent historical development of the concept of "free time". Adorno is concerned here with how "unfreedom is gradually annexing 'free time,' and the majority of unfree people are as unaware of this process as they are of the unfreedom itself" (Adorno 2000, p. 163). He writes, moreover, that "free time is shackled to its opposite" (Adorno 2000, p. 162). Part of this shackling consists of the popular view and experience of time, "in accordance with the predominant work ethic, time free of work should be utilized for the recreation of expended labor power, then work-less time, precisely because it is a mere appendage of work, is severed from the latter with puritanical zeal" (Adorno 2000, p. 164). We can perhaps further ground Adorno's analysis in an assessment of the pathological bases of the popular view and experience of time. A practical example which conveys

the point quite well concerns contemporary debates about Universal Basic Income and the implementation of a three-day workweek, wherein one popular conservative response suggests a dilemma with how “people will fill their days?” The practical insight one is offered even or especially when it comes to a phenomenological survey of daily life, is the ideology of work and the extent in which “surplus repression” characterizes the belief in “working hard”, “paying one’s debt to society” and fetishize the hardened life of labour. In terms of recent critique, anthropologist David Graeber is particularly good in his assessment of what he criticizes “the virtue of labour” (Graeber 2013b, 2014a). He writes:

The socialists were essentially buying into the notion that work is a virtue, and consumerism is good, but it should all be managed democratically, while the anarchists were saying, no, the whole deal—that we work more and more for more and more stuff—is rotten from the get-go.

The idea that work is a virtue continues as strong as ever, if not by neo-liberal policy and its attack on the welfare state, championing such slogans as “we reward those who work hard”, or market socialists that continue in the belief that labor is a virtue in itself “and the purpose of labor [is] to create a consumer utopia”. (Graeber 2014a)

Further to the point, Graeber (2013b) strikes the heart of the matter:

While corporations may engage in ruthless downsizing, the layoffs and speed-ups invariably fall on that class of people who are actually making, moving, fixing and maintaining things; through some strange alchemy no one can quite explain, the number of salaried paper-pushers ultimately seems to expand, and more and more employees find themselves, not unlike Soviet workers actually, working 40 or even 50 hour weeks on paper, but effectively working 15 hours just as Keynes predicted, since the rest of their time is spent organising or attending motivational seminars, updating their facebook profiles or downloading TV box-sets.

The answer clearly isn’t economic: it’s moral and political. The ruling class has figured out that a happy and productive population with free time on their hands is a mortal danger (think of what started to happen when this even began to be approximated in the ’60s). And, on the other hand, the feeling that work is a moral value in itself, and that anyone not willing to submit themselves to some kind of intense work discipline for most of their waking hours deserves nothing, is extraordinarily convenient for them.

This belief in labour as some ultimate moral thing and also the existential fear by the elite about a populous with free time is an example of another kind of pathology. That is to say that, even in the need today to redefine labour, there is also a requirement—perhaps a prerequisite requirement—of a sort of personal, political and moral transformation (Graeber 2013b, 2014a) as well as a level of psychological and emotional transformation (Fiumara 2015). Adorno and Horkheimer pick up on a similar theme in *Toward a New Manifesto* (2011) particularly in terms of the fetishization of labour, of “elevating” labour “to godlike status”. The point they build off in seeking to advance beyond Marx is how “labour is what mediates between human beings” but “the ‘process of civilization’ has been fetishized” (Adorno and Horkheimer 2011). If labour, or work, “is the key to making sure that ‘all will be well’”, the problem is that by “elevating it to godlike status”, work then becomes “emptied of meaning”. For Adorno, the thrust of his argument is that capitalist structures and institutions—its entire way of life—disfigures human beings. If the concern for Adorno is how capitalist society turns people into truncated appendages of capital. There are countless examples of how and why this last statement is a clear and direct reflection of reality, not least the everyday adage which discloses the worker’s need, whether fully able or not, to “earn a living”. As Adorno reflects, moreover:

How does it come about that work is regarded as an absolute? Work exists to control the hardships of life, to ensure the reproduction of mankind. The success of labour stands in a problematic relationship to the effort required. It does not necessarily or certainly reproduce the lives of those who work but only of those who induce others to work for them. In order to persuade human beings to work you have to fob them off with the waffle about work as the thing in itself. (Adorno and Horkheimer 2011)

It is no coincidence in this respect that Graeber’s analysis of “bullshit jobs” also hits the mark. However, when deepening his anthropological approach, what is required, again, is a concept of social pathology.

As Bertrand Russell wrote in his essay *In Praise of Idleness*, “A great deal of harm is being done in the modern world by belief in the virtuousness of work.” Russell’s point here reminds me of an essay by Albert Camus, wherein Camus observes the spirit crushing absurdity of the 9–5, Monday to Friday work routine. In late-capitalist society especially, all one does is go to work, eat their lunch at work, maybe even stay late at work,

and then go home and either catch up on more work or spend whatever little time doing what they want, before going to bed and repeating the process over again. Despite the technological and scientific potential to reduce the need of work, to reduce the working week to four hours a day or to provide people with the appropriate conditions to control their own productivity, today we witness the complete reverse. The value and virtue of “hard work”, even in certain leftist theories and politics (astonishingly enough), comes at the cost of the denigration of leisure. This can be seen every day, where business and productivity are the markers of a valuable citizen. When people don’t live up to these values, they’re seen as lazy or as invalids.

On the contrary, as Russell says, “the road to happiness and prosperity lies in an organized diminution of work”. Today, with all the technological breakthroughs and all of the advancements in science, “the morality of work is the morality of slaves, and the modern world has no need of slavery”. The argument that an emancipatory political theory principled in part on the belief in the “freedom from jobs” is limited to the “prerogative of small privileged classes” (Russell, again), is now baseless or unfounded. And yet, if “modern technique has made it possible to diminish enormously the amount of labour required to secure the necessities of life for everyone”, how might we explain the ongoing belief in “jobs” and “work” as some ultimate moral duty? Aside from the obvious dominating rationale of capitalism, which is based on “growth” and “productivity” and, too, control and exploitation of the populous under the designation of “worker” and “consumer”, there is still a common belief in its overall vision of life (De Graaff 2016).

If by the 1960s, “most people thought that robot factories, and ultimately, the elimination of all manual labor, was probably just a generation or two away” and that, “[e]veryone from the Situationists to the Hippies were saying ‘let the machines do all the work!’ and objecting to the very principle of 9-to-5 labor”, the question of what happened to the soul of this emancipatory politics becomes critical. Perhaps, in the end, Graeber already suggests an answer:

This sort of thing threw a lot of people in positions of power into a kind of moral panic. There were think-tanks set up to examine what to do—basically, how to maintain social control—in a society where more and more traditional forms of labor would soon be obsolete. A lot of the complaints you see in Alvin Toffler and similar figures in the early ’70s—that rapid tech-

nological advance was throwing the social order into chaos—had to do with those anxieties: too much leisure had created the counter-culture and youth movements, what was going to happen when things got even more relaxed? It's probably no coincidence that it was around that time that things began to turn around, both in the direction of technological research, away from automation and into information, medical, and military technologies (basically, technologies of social control), and also in the direction of market reforms that would send us back towards less secure employment, longer hours, greater work discipline.

If nothing else, perhaps this book has convinced that if ever there was a time for imagination, inspired creativity and radical transformative invention, it is now. For the benefit of everyone, to create conditions which would see an elimination in needless social suffering and environmental degradation, this is our task. With all the issues we face in the twenty-first century, from climate change and deepening inequality to creating actual democracy, imagination cannot be at a lack. *The very notion of emancipation for the benefit of all demands it.* And when it comes to challenging the fetishizing of labour as a moral duty, this is done in honour of the actual spirit of human ingenuity, creativity and development—to free the individual to be able to pursue his or her interests in life, and contribute to the betterment of all in line with the pursuit of his or her own passions, interests and needs. The retail worker who longs to be a physicist; the construction worker who dreams of being a “maker” or having his or her own shop; the young person, born into poverty, who dreams of being a biologist. A critique of labour here is also, ultimately, a critique of a lack of opportunity and a critique of the suppression of human creativity, exploration and mutuality in social development. This is, as we have discussed, the real spirit of the Enlightenment and its democratic-egalitarian values.

When it comes to a discussion on labour in Russel and Camus, Marcuse explains something similar in his analysis of “surplus repression” introduced earlier in this work. For Marcuse (1964), one may recall, advanced industrial society suppresses dissent and appropriates divergent movements, channelling basic dreams and hopes and aspirations of emancipation and progress into consumerism. A popular description by Marcuse concerns how capitalism creates false needs and promises to “delivers the goods” to a social populous reduced as consumer with “false needs”. Considered almost as an extension of the rationale of Western neo-imperialism (Moore 2016), “The effects of ever-increasing capitalist exploitation of people and

nature” results in “the ‘global destruction of resources’ and to tightening controls of the majority of the world’s population through ‘the goods and services it delivers and through a political, military, and police apparatus of terrifying efficiency” (Moore 2016). In working through and moving beyond Freud, Marcuse (1966) employs the terms “surplus repression” and the “performance principle” to, as Ryan Moore summarizes, “describe how a social formation shapes the character of domination. Invoking but never naming Marx, he analyzed surplus repression as a form of exploitation, linking it to the concept of surplus-value in describing a total experience of domination and alienation” (Moore 2016). Moore writes:

Repression in society at large is reproduced in the psyche of individuals. For the sake of productivity, people learn to forget the joys of pleasure and play, and they repress their desires for satisfaction. The reality principle does not merely suppress the pleasure principle, it channels the desire for pleasure toward activities that are useful for the dominant social order.

Perhaps more profoundly, “under capitalism, the performance principle takes the form of moral compulsion—the ‘work ethic’. The obligation to compete and perform—not only at work, but even in leisure activities and personal life—becomes inescapable in the social relations of capitalism” (Moore 2016). As Moore summarizes, Marcuse (1966) establishes a link between the notion of surplus repression—repression above and beyond what is necessary for civilization (if one follows Freud’s theory of instincts) and the performance principle, applying Marx’s critique of alienation:

Surplus-repression and the performance principle compel people to internalize the constant drive to work, compete, and produce. They are also evident in the vehement hostility directed against individuals who refuse to work, appear to be lazy or unproductive, or seem generally free of social constraint. Surplus-repression and the performance principle are most apparent in conservative attacks on the welfare state, and they are well known to protesters who have been yelled at by passersby to “GET A JOB!” Social anxieties about pleasure and freedom proliferate, demanding submission to authoritarian forces of repression: “As the reality principle takes root, even in its most primitive and most brutally enforced form, the pleasure principle becomes something frightful and terrifying; the impulses for free gratification meet with anxiety, and this anxiety calls for protection against them.” (Moore 2016; citing Marcuse 1966)

With regard to greater economic transformation—that is, transformation of the economy and all economic interconnections—I offer several comments which may be of assistance as to how we may perceive a transition out of capitalism.

5.3.2 (ii) *Economic Democracy*

There are, generally speaking, two broad levels of focus with regard to the development of alternatives to capitalism. “The first is an alternative to how capitalism organizes enterprises in terms of their internal workings and relationships” (Wolff 2015). The second is an alternative “to how capitalism organizes the economy as a whole” (Wolff 2015). Concerning both levels, we can celebrate the fact there are alternative models available in the here and now. From Participatory Economics to Economic Democracy, Peer to Peer, Collaborative Economics, the Sharing Economy, worker co-operatives, social enterprises, non-profit organization (to name just a few)—alternative economic possibilities, varying from market to non-market models, are emerging all around us. The problem is none are perfect. A lot more development has to take place. A lot more experimenting on a grassroots level has to happen. That is to say that there is still much to do with regard to the process of undertaking further study and critique and redevelopment.

To the best of my knowledge, most of the more “concrete” alternatives—by which I mean theories and models that have been considered extensively on a micro and macro level, and could be considered as immediate substitutes for neoliberal capitalism through a process of deep, radical reform—are market-based alternatives. Of course, market-based economics come with a whole list of problems and questions—including structural problems that are in many ways in conflict with actual egalitarian democratic social relations. But if the notion of transition is key to conceptualizing a course that begins to move beyond capitalist coordinates in the present, we can at least start to navigate the structural antagonisms of market-based alternatives as we move into a progressive market system which, in turn, would open more space for the experimentation of other future progressive systems—perhaps even a non-market alternative, which should be the ultimate goal. In other words, the position I am drawing on here is one that sees economic transition in phases. From within one progressive market-based system might another more emancipatory system emerge. From there, perhaps more space develops and more ideas are

conceived with regard to non-market possibilities on a micro and macro level. Revolutionary transition is therefore participatory inasmuch as it is a democratic, grassroots and unfolding process.

If one had to propose a single alternative model which seems to stand out today as being the most developed and the most prepared, it is *Economic Democracy*. Richard Wolff among many others have been working at an intense pace in recent years, further defining and redefining a workable concept of Economic Democracy along with a concept of economic transition. As Wolff writes:

Today we benefit from having a consciousness of transitions between economic systems. We can grasp how capitalism too, like feudalism, might provoke a transition beyond itself. We can ask whether contemporary movements for social change focused on politics (democracy, equality, freedom, etc.) may be masking or obscuring impulses to transition from capitalist to socialist or communist economic systems. We can consider whether and how the disparate developments undermining, questioning, and challenging capitalism over recent decades—and especially in this new millennium—might be unified into a social movement strong enough to push through a transition. (Wolff 2010)

This consciousness of transitions between economic systems returns us to that remarkable straw in the wind, the USW-Mondragon agreement. It represents a groping towards the coordination, combination and thus unification of two recently rather disconnected social movements. On the one hand, the traditional labour movement struggles over the size of wages and benefits, over aspects of the labour process, over the terms of capital's exploitation of labour. Unions can challenge the quantity of surpluses available for capital to appropriate and distribute to secure its reproduction. On the other hand, Mondragon's existence and history include non-capitalist organizations of production where workers function on both sides of the wage-bargain and non-workers are excluded in principle from occupying a capitalist/employer position. That reality challenges capitalism by presenting workers and consumers with an alternative organization of production that has succeeded and grown over the last half century (Wolff 2010).

Indeed, as I have argued with regard to developing alternative agricultural systems and post-capitalist forms of organization, it is clear that now more than ever, a broad critical labour movement and a new progres-

sive surge of unions is required to serve not only as a counter-hegemonic force to neoliberal policy but also as a key support for the development of a range of alternatives on both levels of economic transformation. Is this possible in the current Greek context? To be sure, there are already calls for such renewed union-based and radical labour movements in other European countries and in North America. My proposal to support the Greek people in particular, especially its progressive and autonomous movements, is to focus demands on Economic Democracy in the first instance. These demands could be aligned not only with new labour movements and radical union networks or assemblies but also with the transformation of existing business practice.

On this point, Wolff is particularly good. Being at the centre of recent developments in theoretical and practical models of Economic Democracy, his manifesto for a democratic alternative based on workers directing their own workplaces is timely (Wolff 2012). One can see how an emphasis on Worker Self-Directed Enterprises could be a good first step on a grassroots and community level. The principle of worker co-operatives offers an immediate resource for an emancipatory social philosophy and grassroots politics with regard to how a platform might be built to begin moving forward. Crucially, if demands for and development of Economic Democracy is to be the focus in the first instance, this course of action also provides a framework, as I alluded, for internal pressurizing of existing business practice and organization: to pressure and challenge existing business architecture and existing business practice to transform. Businesses are or should be part of the community and, as such, can play a role in creating the earliest moments of a revolutionary culture (not to mention a counter-*proto* political economy).

Having already written about Economic Democracy in the past, particularly along the lines of the general trajectory of this book, I'll limit a discussion here to its basic application as a concept in the context of grassroots politics. In general, if we take the premise that we must work within the current system in order to eventually get out of it, Economic Democracy is an ideal starting point on both an internal and an economic-systems level. As it is a market-based system, it is a good first step in the *transition* out of capitalism because it can exploit existing market architecture and systems. The sense I have, however, is that Economic Democracy would necessarily need to be strengthened by certain supporting aspects of a peer-to-peer Collaborative Economy and commons-based economic initiatives, as well as a strong labour movement and network of unions

and democratic (participatory) assemblies, supplemented further by community education programmes regarding the practice of worker co-ops, horizontal business and organization (to name a few necessary support programmes). While the hope is that Economic Democracy would open up more space for experimentation in terms of the commons, it would need to coincide with different policies like Universal Basic Income, the (re)democratization of food, the abolishment of police (and so on), as each of these would go some way to strengthen autonomous movements and community participation.

Universal Basic Income in particular would be one vital policy to Economic Democracy (in the greater transitional development towards a non-market style economy), as it would not only assist in freeing people from their dependency on highly exploitative capitalist labour cycles, particularly in industries that depend on low-wage labour—philosophically speaking it would also provide necessary economic space for the individual to rediscover the meaning of a “free” society.

While I am aware, in turn, that the basic income law is economic in nature and is subject to criticism as “it presupposes a dependence on the state as a redistributive mechanism”—the state of course not being neutral but a mechanism of domination—my argument towards basic income here should be seen in the context of a greater project that works towards the notion of the “non-state-like state” or the “non-state state” (Smith and De Graaff 2016). The entire motivation is, again, to enable resources, time and space for progressive movements and their experimentation with alternative organizational forms across all spheres of society, from medicine to education, from agriculture to technology, from science to psychology, and so on.

With a systemically rooted emphasis on democracy in the workplace, on the universal practice of Worker Self-Directed Enterprises, one benefit of Economic Democracy being the first step out of capitalism is that it directly aims to support the reconceptualization of labour. One can imagine it having a very real grassroots and prefigurative feel and impact, especially if employed along the lines of a critical awareness of the disfigurement of labour, of workers and organization and what needs to be structurally transformed. On the same token, contrary to other potential alternatives which still see people as producers and consumers, Economic Democracy stresses in its formulations the importance of seeing people as citizens in the first instance. It provides theoretical and practical space for the implementation of things like the three-day workweek and, most importantly,

for the strengthening of actual democratic practice. To borrow the words of Wolff, it relieves people of the burden of capitalism (Wolff 2012).

Though further particulars remain outside the scope of this chapter, it is important to emphasize that, in stressing the notion of *transition*, we cannot lose sight of the bigger picture. Is Economic Democracy *the* post-capitalist alternative? Ideally, humanity would one day work towards a non-market economic system, which would mean transcending Economic Democracy in the same way we must now transcend capitalism. Transitioning between economic systems, especially if it is an emancipatory transition, is a lot of work. To state it once more, the grass-roots would need to be the driving force, the centre of gravity, not just in the development and practice of Economic Democracy but also in terms of never losing sight of the greater struggle to constantly work towards deeper emancipatory social horizons.

Finally, and to conclude, it is possible that one may present a critique of our discussion on Economic Democracy as being too idealistic, lacking sufficient grounds. In the following section, many more concrete examples from all areas of life in many different countries and situations will be offered. But the biggest problem, again, remains what Marcuse calls “counter-revolutionary forces”. In other words, it should also be noted that there are countless forces that at present actively block or make it impossible to realize this directive of Economic Democracy. One barrier is the present state of labour unions, especially in North America. They are mostly concerned about job security and wages and are generally very afraid of any change. For the last 40 years, they have also been consistently disempowered. Additionally, they often struggle to reconnect with a radical vision. Even some more radical unions and work groups in Spain and in the UK, who spend a lot of time educating themselves about the political-economic issues, still struggle against established governments and institutions. This, again, highlights the heart of the matter when it comes to the demands for an alternative vision moving forward.

We have come to understand not only how much social and personal pathology have to be overcome but also how much the status quo actively resists attempts to develop progressive policies and alternative forms of practice, even if for the common good (such as any idea of an economics for everyone).

But none of this negates what has been said. It remains that labour union, alternative work places, communities and individuals—in each case, there is a need to continue to raise awareness. This comes in the form of

personal and group growing and also education, especially in the Global North. In this sense, the guidelines offered above could be tremendously helpful.

5.3.3 (iii) *Closing Thoughts*

To close, if we allowed ourselves to be open to transformative possibilities for just a moment, one could argue that an alternative society beginning firstly with a concept of economic democracy would support the transition to an increasingly creative, more openly imaginative social-oriented enterprise of collaboration and co-operation. Socially meaningful work as an extension of one's interests and existential pursuits—all within a non-coercive, non-dominant social context which actively works towards lessening suffering and pathology.

There are lots of examples, even today in the midst of a highly alienated social world, of people carving out alternative spaces that evidence the basics for an alternative political economy that's creative, inspiring and humane. Whether one's passion is for book, or for rock climbing, or for general construction, or for video games—a vision of emancipated labour need not be seen as a “luxury”, available only to the elites of the modern capitalist work. I think this is again another common misconception. To move beyond capitalism doesn't mean to move back to the Stone Age or to simply live for basic necessities—again this would defeat the critical notion of *social-historical progress* and transformation as restoration. One's current interest in life does not depend on capitalist political economy. In fact, one could argue the opposite. Just as my own interest in painting, which I would love to do more of, is not dependent on capitalism providing me the opportunity to be able to paint—it's actually quite the contrary.

Thus we come to the utmost fundamental and pressing question when considering any sort of alternative society or political economy: namely that if capitalism, as a system that functions on behalf of indirect domination, emerged in history as an alternative to systems of direct domination, how do we formulate a truly progressive and emancipatory alternative that is non-dominating, actually healing and emancipating, without reproducing direct systems of domination?

If any potential alternative cannot answer this question from a holistic, many-sided and integrative perspective, it means that said alternative is void. The most core idea a transformative social philosophy and emanci-

patory politics can have is that, if people are not forced or coerced to work then they will be able to collaborate and contribute at their own volition. The contrary perception that coercion is necessary to “get people to work” is conditioned on the basis of capitalist economics and henceforth social relations. It’s a false universalization of human nature—that is, that people are lazy and need coercing. To eliminate all doubt, recent Universal Basic Income trials in the EU have actually shown an increase in production, dispelling the ideological myth. At the same time, the first steps in the transition to an alternative political economy requires not just concepts of economic democracy and basic income but it must also be based on social support networks, such as universal therapy (i.e., state-funded therapy), different social programmes like mentorships or community learning facilities (etc.), in order to help support people in the transition from a highly coercive capitalist system. As I’ve said elsewhere, change is multidimensional. If people are suddenly freed from the oppressive daily cycle of capitalist labour and have the opportunity to pursue their own interests, this can actually be a difficult thing to accept, work through and process emotionally. As Fromm (2001) once said, freedom is scary.

5.4 PATHOLOGICAL OSSIFICATION AND TRAUMA: CONSUMERISM, THE FRAGILE SELF AND ROADS TO SANITY

During the financial crisis of 2007 and 2008, the consensus among many was that the beginning of the end of capitalism was near. The global system suffered a massive shock. The financial system had essentially collapsed and the feeling among many on the left was that the opportunity for change was on the horizon. A significant amount of people were left out in the cold, in debt, feeling angry and dejected. Forced into accepting unjust neoliberal austerity policies, while The Big Bank Bailout ensued, public frustration started to prevail. New social movements began to emerge throughout the world, capturing the imaginations of many on the progressive fringes of North American, European and Global society. Around the same time, the serious issue of climate change and the realities of severe environmental degradation started to pervade mainstream discourses, with traditionally centre-liberal spheres now opening to post-capitalist ideas and arguments, spreading the popular slogan: “System change, not climate change!”

One could say that, as a result of the financial crisis, the bleakness of the reality of the social world started to break through what some have called the façade of global capitalist utopian delusion (Gray 2009). Diversity of contemporary social movements highlighted issues ranging from inequality to corporate tax avoidance, climate justice and racism. In the years that followed, a movement of people continued to grow, with signs stating “We’re now finally awake!”

Fast forward several years, and the struggle continues. As some movements collapse, new ones attempt to surface. However, regarding the early consensus that we might finally be witnessing the end of capitalism, it seems that such belief was not entirely accurate. So what happened?

On the one hand, recent empirical research out of the UK affirms that we have entered a prolonged period of dissent characterized by an escalation in the magnitude and diversity of public protest (Bailey 2016). It has even been contended that, on the basis of UK data, the upsurge in social unrest is rooted in the 2008 financial crisis (Makwana 2016). It can easily be argued that similar trends remain evident in the USA, with the emergence of Black Lives Matter, the Fast Food workers movement as well as various environmental movements, to name a few.

On the other hand, in spite of the energy, creativity, imagination and the building of critical awareness on the progressive fringes of society moving closer towards the traditional political centre, it is undeniable that capitalism is also proving more than capable of managing its own deep crises (Feenberg 2014).

Following the financial crisis of 2007 and 2008, neoliberalization intensified (Onis and Guven 2010; Santarcangelo et al. 2016; Schindler 2016; Westra et al. 2015; Woodley 2015, p. 151). Austerity was forced on the social populous, in spite of protests, with the amplification of social harm (Burton 2013). On the streets, violent state repression was employed to ensure maintenance of the status quo, forcefully quelling attempts by a portion of the social body to mobilize against a far-reaching sense of injustice. On the spectrum of protests from anti-fracking initiatives to anti-racism movements and even anti-capitalist campaigns, effort to mobilize have met fierce counter-resistance. In addition to what has been taking place on the streets, various International Trade Agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership as well as North American Free Trade Agreement, which ensure greater corporate power—power which, in some cases, extends beyond the state—continue to be implemented in the background, threatening to wipe out what-

ever remnants of democracy that remain in western society.² Additionally, issues of mass surveillance, police militarization and the neoliberal implementation of a web of new legal constructs, the roots of which could take decades to undue, are intensifying (Woodley 2015).

To add to this picture, it is also fairly clear that, apart from the movements on the progressive fringes of society, and the significant body of active campaigners in or around the political centre moving further left, at the level of daily life status quo patterns of behaviour and action have resumed for a significant majority of people. If today, the need and the clear substantiated requirement for change is apparent like never before—with climate change surely representative of one of the biggest challenges humanity has ever faced—it is equally true that resistance to change, active or passive, remains prevalent.

In time when, rational, open, critical research and study from across disciplines clearly indicates the need for change as an obvious and indisputable reality, how then do we account for the persisting refusal to change, structurally, institutionally and individually? Why are people unable to change? Why is there a persistent and feverous need to defend the status quo and the ossified identities, institutions and structures owed to contemporary capitalism? In the face of a diversity of studies and reports, from undeniable climate and environmental science (De Graaff 2016), deepening inequality (Atkinson 2015; Berube and Holmes 2016; Piketty 2014), or even news on systemic urban pollution and the links to serious health problems (Tinker and Levitt 2016)—what *is* the daily mode of denial that resists change? Just as in, when walking down the street of a typical western city, one sees a homeless person sprawled on the sidewalk, suffering, in need, what is that tendency to habitually and often unresponsively walk past? Should such daily images and experiences not represent, rationally, a constant challenge in one's mind against the utopian branding of the capitalist vision of life?

In order to answer these questions, what's required is not only a concept of social pathology as already laid out. It also involves a series of particularly core intersecting critical humanistic and social psychological points of enquiry. Points of enquiry that draw natural connections between the reproduction of capitalism and the pathology of ossification, hypostasis and inertia. Inasmuch that a critique of the foundations of reproduction and hypostatization has already been introduced, not least in relation to contemporary modes of cognition, I would like to further add to the pic-

ture of the psychological dynamics within capitalism by focusing on addiction in relation to trauma.

If we concede, at this late stage of my analysis, that capitalism is deeply traumatizing—and that, when it is not directly traumatizing, it actively exploits the personal level of pathology as well—one of the primary mechanisms of control concerns the manipulation of this trauma. It is this particular form of psychological and emotional exploitation that represents, I have argued, a key part of the cycle of reproduction. Two diverse and widely ranging examples can be found in a study of consumerism and also in a study of the psychological effects of the perpetual “national security threat”.

5.4.1 (i) *Consumerism*

Regarding the former, we have already touched the roots of various social-cultural and individual personality disorders. Among the most destructive, which I have yet to comment on in any detail, are the widespread narcissistic personality disorders most commonly linked to consumerism. In a 2004 article, “When Drives are Dangerous: Drive Theory and Resource Overconsumption”, Frances Bigda-Peyton offered an especially revealing line of analysis. Overconsumption, we learn, “is both a repetition of damaged early attachments”—that is, early childhood experience—“and a defence against longings”—that is, “to seek security in material things” (Bigda-Peyton 2004, p. 267; cited also in Dodds 2012, p. 62). Taking inspiration from self-psychology and object relations studies, Joseph Dodds adds to Bigda-Peyton’s analysis, when he writes:

The self-psychological work of Kohut (1985) and the independent object relations approach of Winnicott (1987) both suggest that narcissistic disorders are related to a fragile sense of sense. The objects of consumer society may therefore function as ‘selfobjects’ in Kohut’s (1985) sense, which temporarily stave off the crisis, resulting in a cultural addiction to consumerism which becomes an obstacle to developing more fulfilling object relations and authentic psychology health, as well as being a major contributor to the ecological crisis. (Dodds 2012, p. 62)

This very same direction of argument is also found in Bruce K. Alexander’s (2001) influential paper “The Roots of Addiction in Free Market Society”. Here Alexander examines the origins of addiction in modern free market

society, expanding a critical concept of addiction from the view limited to the alcoholic or drug abuser to addiction as a pathological phenomenon. He not only links the prevalence and spread of addiction to the impulses and patterns of behaviour within “free market” capitalism but also captures how addiction is psychological reality behind things like the compulsion for money, the drive for power and the overconsumption of material goods. His conclusion is no less explicit than the one drawn in this book, significant “psychological devastation” is caused by the hands of free market capitalist society (p. 20). Alexander reflects for instance, anticipating his thesis in his most recent book *The Globalization of Addiction: A Study in Poverty of the Spirit* (Alexander 2010):

A realistic discussion must recognize that addiction is mass-produced in free market society, and that, therefore, society as well as individuals must change. To define addiction as either a “drug problem” or a “disease” of aberrant individuals, is to prolong a wild goose chase. Addiction is a harmful lifestyle, which may or may not involve drugs, which more and more people in free market society are adopting as a desperate measure to prevent themselves from being crushed by severe, prolonged dislocation. (Alexander 2001, p. 19)

In short, the psychological forces behind prevailing forms of addiction are driven by trauma—directly or even vicariously. In this context, as Dodds points out, there are many dimensions or roots which comprise the total psychological picture. If trauma—that is, social pathology—is at the heart, we must also look at the particular disintegrative processes within ailing society.

The alienation and absence of community in the modern world, the fragmentation of friendship networks and job security, among other things, all lead to a vacuum into which corporations step, with major ecological and psychological consequences. [...] From an ecopsychological perspective, Gomes and Kanner (1995b) link overconsumption to Winnicott’s false-self, forming what they call the ‘all-consuming self’. (Dodds 2012, p. 63)

In other words, and to affirm the main argument presented much earlier in this book, the dominant and exploitative conditions of capitalism are linked to subject deformation, such that, in manufacturing a false-self, this hollowed out concept of self finds anchorage—meaning, identity, and so forth—in consumer products. The addiction that is consumerism—that

is, actions and behaviours associated with overconsumption—is not only explicitly promoted or fostered within capitalist society, channelled via the advertising industry (King 2014), but also ultimately driven by the prevalence of serious psychological-developmental deficiencies. Fromm (2002, pp. 127–128) calls these deficiencies “mental imbalances” and links them, in different ways, to what he identifies as “five types of control” associated with overconsumption and “the process of production”. Extending a more holistic account, not only of pathology but also of consumerism in relation to contemporary ecological crises, Dodds (2012) builds from a similar picture and draws several similar links. He traces connection between ecosystem collapse, political economy, anxiety and psychological defence mechanisms and the fragile self, prevailing paranoid-schizoid tendencies as well as such contemporary phenomena as the establishing of the “techno-god” and widespread manufacturing of depression. All of this is to say that the systemically interlinked crises are clear and available for us to study and analyse. The trends and tendencies are for all to see.

Just as we “live in a society of constant consumption”, writes Chace King (2014), it is no coincidence “we are bombarded with advertisements and brand logos everywhere we go—during our Saturday morning cartoons, on our cereal boxes and even on our shoes”. As the message is constantly drilled into people’s minds, old and young, the popular psyche begins to express the consequences of such toxic social conditions.

In doing this, not only to do we create a situation in which consumers are programmed to spend more than they earn, various corporations also display an unrealistic lifestyle in regards to spending and overconsumption, much to the detriment of children. According to Statistics Canada, “In 2013, 18.9 per cent (5.5 million) of Canadians aged 12 and over reported alcohol consumption that classified them as heavy drinkers. The highest rates of heavy drinking for both sexes were among those aged 18 to 34”. This again comes as no shock with the glorification of young drinking illustrated through various movies and advertisements promoting that it is the cool lifestyle to live all the while not acknowledging the rate of accidents among young people due to alcohol consumption or the occurrence of rape among high-school-aged girls at parties. (King 2014)

Arnold De Graaff (2016) expands on the issue. Balancing a framing of the issue so that the argument doesn’t become one of victim blaming, we learn of pathological evil behind active corporate instilling and exploiting of often deeply rooted childhood traumas which become an easy target for

manipulation and exploitation, channelling these psychological points of focus into neurotic urges for consumer satisfaction. But, with that said, it's not only consumerist messages that have become a dominant part of the contemporary pathology of consumer culture.

5.4.2 (ii) *The Perpetual “National Security Threat” and the Psychological Effects of the Mass Surveillance State*

To the extent that Dodds (2012), among an extensive list of others, draws the same connections between what we might call pathological reproduction and the exploitation of deep levels of human fear, another very obvious psychological mechanism of control concerns the perpetual “national security threat”. Moreover, we have already examined how fear and anxiety play into narcissistic personality disorders associated with cultural addiction and consumerism. Manufactured fear and threat strengthens the pathology of ossification, hypostasis and inertia. It ensures that the capitalist vision of life maintains a strong grip not only on the psyche, driven to overconsume, but also when it comes to the social engendering of national pride in relation to the pathology of satisfying the false-self.

As Noam Chomsky (Chomsky 2014, 2016b) among others have argued, national security rarely has anything to do with security. In fact, what is key to the message in most cases is a tense of threat, the very same sense of threat right-wing movements are known to exploit and energize. As Ahmed (2010, pp. 138–142) shows, international terrorism is a systemic crisis, linked very directly to the escalation of ecological, energy and economic crises within global capitalism. In this sense, if we understand the perpetual “national security threat” as largely socially manufactured, there is a reason why the message of international threat—like consumerism—is constantly propagated throughout the whole of society. The issue is dual: (1) As the crisis of pathological society intensifies, so too does the anxious, paranoid and threatened psyche. The fragile self, caught in a world of pathological development, expresses fear and frustration in defence of the life orientation he or she has established. This is, to put it concisely, the psychological space in which right-wing movements often emerge. (2) As a result of western imperialism (Chomsky 2016a, b) and also the demands of contemporary political economy (Ahmed 2010), including also the vicious psychic circle of consumerism, perpetual war (Richards 2016) and geopolitical conflict (Ahmed 2014a, c, d) create increasingly precarious civilizational contexts. Thus, empirically, as documented in the

political record, it is revealed how the Pentagon is preparing for mass civil breakdown (Ahmed 2014c) and that the UK government is preparing for potential civilization collapse, and thus the possibility of escalating violence (Ahmed 2015). These are not phantasies, but such precarious realities—not to mention the issue of climate change—certainly play into cycles of mass projection and psychological phantasy (Dodds 2012). Thus we get an endless wave Hollywood movies exploring apocalyptic realities.

The underlying trend refers back to what we discussed as the cycle of domination and power. Manufactured threat helps foster cultural aggression and hypermasculinity, which, we can conclude, fuels the self-destructive tendencies of pathological society whilst deepening the cause. The military-industrial complex, linked to power and profit, exists at the deepest intersections of pathological society and the intertwined personal, emotional and institutional dimensions of the social psyche. Some have even suggested that such a complex stands as “a good recipe for corporate success” in our time of economic crisis (Turse 2008), drawing even deeper links than what we have so far managed in this book.

Within this systemic context, we have officially entered the earliest moments of the first generation of the mass surveillance. Much like with discourses around social media—that we are currently in the first generation and the effects are still not entirely known—we cannot entirely be sure of the effects of the emergence of the mass surveillance state as a social development. We can, however, begin to sketch a concrete hypothesis based on what we know in relation to social pathology, authoritarianism and their effects on the subject in a wide range of ongoing scenarios. We can also compare this hypothesis with recent empirical research—one of the first systematic studies—on the “chilling effect” of mass surveillance and its likely deepening of repression (Stoycheff 2016). The issue for researchers moving forward is to understand the complexity of psychological effects of mass surveillance, “and its use in tandem with private industry [...] to understand how surveillance is altering the way people interact online, with content, and with one another” (Ahmed 2016).

5.4.3 (iii) *Early Roads to Sanity*

To conclude that society today, as a general rule, is entangled in what we may call the pathology of human destructiveness—or self-destructiveness—would not be wrong. But how do we begin to remedy the problem? How do we begin to heal ailing society, support the restorative healing process

of the individual, and work towards the transformation of society as a whole? Already throughout the course of this book several suggestions, if not more, have been offered. The earliest path to restoring sanity and to developing emancipatory social conditions, begins with very basic values and the reclaiming of those values.

Western society likes to promote itself as a representative of such Enlightenment values as human rights, freedom and democracy. However, what is generally true is the complete opposite. What is required today, when viewed through the lens of a theory of pathology, is that these values and others like them be reclaimed. By reclaimed I mean to say that they require critical retrieval (Smith and De Graaff 2016), and in and through their critical retrieval—values as equality, democracy, human rights, solidarity—need to be held against their contemporary distortions. I am speaking here, too, of human dignity, liberty, individual health and social well-being, as well as broad Enlightenment civic values such as civic practice and participatory democratic engagement. In sum, basic core and common human values need to be “re-articulated and liberated from the constraints, interpretations and distortions of” capitalism and domination *writ large*. Such a project has already begun, launched alongside the efforts of numerous others, and hope can be found that significant ground is starting to be made, conceptually and practically (Smith and De Graaff 2016).

But in order to convince the vast majority of those who exist within pathological society that, in fact, society is deeply troubled, and in order to foster solidarity as well as inspire energy and motivation among progressives, one must hold reclaimed emancipatory values and their possible immediate conditions up against their opposite. Here, again, an integrative approach in addition to the notion of “differential transformation” (Zuidervaat 2007) is absolutely key.

Instead of mass surveillance and corporate media, there is participatory and democratic models of media and communication (Fuchs et al. 2011; Sandoval 2014). Instead of instrumental and corporatized health care systems, whether private or still state funded, there are alternative humanistic, person-centred and non-profit models, which can include advanced information management systems with post-capitalist principles of organization (Drucker 2013; Stepansky 2016). Instead of privatization and alienation, we have developed and practised models of Collaborative Commons as one alternative example (Dew 2015). Even in the sciences or in the case of a recent article, neuroscience, there is a radical alterna-

tive approach beginning for recognition (Doidge 2016). There are also numerous examples of a more healthy vision in the areas of design, engineering and urban planning, such as in the developments around biophilic design and self-sustainable cities. In social work, too, we find examples of an alternative critical approach; as well as in law and policing, public housing, digital technologies (i.e., sustainable practices in production of computer technologies), and even when it comes to manufacturing, basic infrastructure, human mobility (i.e., automotive vehicles, sustainable public transit), and general consumer products. In spite of the pathological conditions in which we currently exist, human creativity and progressive or transformative innovation has not ceased.

Additionally, at a much wider political-economic level, there are enormous potentials when it comes to emancipating human labour, automation and numerous social policies around these transformations, such as Universal Basic Income, that solidify a post-capitalist vision of life (Mason 2015). A wonderful study by Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams (2015) furthers the point, offering a detailed manifesto regarding automation in relation to the development of post-capitalist economy capable of advancing transformative and restoring potentials for humanity. Right across the entire spectrum of civilizational crisis, from energy to economy, alternative models exist as first steps to sanity, restoration and social-individual healing (De Graaff 2016).

One could write a volume of books on all of the alternatives available to us in the here and now. Many of the examples or references already offered show traces of a critical normative humanism, in addition to explicit immediate post-capitalist potential. Then there are small and seemingly insignificant movements, such as Guerrilla Gardening, which seek to re-commonize public space, almost like mini agricultural occupations. Here mutual recognition is practised in and through one another as well as in and through the idea of common produce, of common vegetable gardens. The same can also be said of the Public Orchards in Scotland, and the many different alternative agricultural initiatives in Spain and throughout the world. In Spain, in particular, one can find an amazing example of community-run renewable energy projects (Haigh 2015). Additionally, small city-wide initiatives emerging in Europe and North America, such as car sharing or free-cycle networks, are all, however small, examples of transformative movement.

As Marcuse once alluded, emancipation and healing begins with people once again opening their doors, in engagement, and thus through *prefigu-*

ration. This notion of prefiguration is at the heart of a normative critical humanism and an emancipatory politics as healing, in that it means, as we will discuss, that transformation is lived in and through interaction with one another.

The main point here, however, is that we can take examples from *everywhere*. All those little cracks (Holloway 2010), those little spaces, however fleeting or seemingly small, where alternatives may exist and take flight. The problem, again, is one of integration. They need to be integrated within a broader critical social philosophical vision and movement, otherwise they will forever remain isolated and ineffective.

We can call this, as I have already alluded, an alternative philosophy of systemic change that is integrative, holistic, transitional, dialectical and inclusive in approach. This approach, informed by the critical foundations laid out in this book, aims to draw connection between new alternative ideas and new critical alternative horizons and normative humanism. It seeks, at the same time, to take the best from what already exists and from what we already know across all disciplines. In this respect, Max Horkheimer's observation regarding the meaning and aim of CT takes on a whole new insight: "Critical theory is based on the idea that one cannot determine what is good, what a good, a free society would look like from within the society which we now live in. We lack the means. But in our work we can bring up the negative aspects of this society, which we want to change." The way forward is thus not to be found in any "ism" or "ist"—that is, in any totalizing or dominant ideology—but through considering all of the good examples available to us that offer us direction in the social, developmental, economic, medical/biological, psychological, relational, emotional, educational, cultural, existential (etc.) dimensions of life, as informed by a new conception of pathology and an engaged transformative social philosophy.

In terms of practical policy approaches and even immediate alternative economic possibilities, these will be discussed a little later. Meanwhile, there is one last issue worth broaching before we move forward. That issue has to do with the question of solidarity among particular movements and causes. I wrote about this in a recent article³ and it is worth reproducing those arguments in a way connected to the themes of present discussion.

If representative democracy is, in truth, a horrible reified state of affairs, what is required is a participatory, inclusive and diverse democratic movement. We find examples of this within such contemporary social move-

ments as Occupy and the Indignados. In the instrumental science of modern (mainstream) democratic politics, in which administration and control is the most basic scheme, one has only to lose one's soul. Healing and transformation become lost in bureaucracy, corruption and power. It is increasingly evident today that emancipatory grassroots movements—that is, participatory democratic movements—must find a way to work from out of this context. They are the centre of gravity for an emancipatory politics (Wilding et al. 2013). One of the challenges in doing so is maintaining solidarity among movements—almost as a systemic, guiding principle for the “unity of purpose”—as well as organizing temporary forms of “participatory representation”, without pure regression to hardened hierarchy, a reliance on leaders and party politics.

Indeed, over recent years, an emerging discourse by way of the graduates of Occupy (Woodruff 2015) has brought into focus the question of the need for some sort of universal solidarity seems entwined with the perceived need for representation. The former has been, more commonly than not, answered along the lines of the latter, primarily in the form of a return to principles of party-based organization. A retreat to such organization is, to this observer, a betrayal of the emancipatory spirit which characterizes truly transformative courses of action.

Instead, I have called for a more dialectical or interactive approach. But we should proceed with caution. Because what social movements require is a basis for normativity (Smith and De Graaff 2016). And there is a noticeable struggle when it comes to attempting to grasp a more fundamental analysis of precisely how horizontal, participatory movements might engage within the representative system while also preserving their integrity. Also, with regard to the notion of solidarity, there is a risk that in driving towards a universal common ground, at the cost of the particularity of struggle and of movements. Questions, too, regarding what defines and grounds solidarity remain largely unexplored.

One of the big questions here, I think, has to do with how we organize social movements (nationally and internationally) and build popular transformative power, without ultimately stunting or nullifying the *agency* of that power. Some have called for an institutionalization of the grassroots. But one of the biggest follies with this is, as we have learned time and again in history, that once the rise of the grassroots becomes so great that the government begins to respond, to shift, as we saw in Greece, and therefore the transformative power of mass mobilization begins to engage with the institutional—and, perhaps also, the representative—the

efficaciousness, the transformative capacity, the cogent wave the grassroots once possessed, *fades*.

In the Greek context in particular, we saw this receding of mass-grassroots mobilization after the referendum, in which the hashtag “#OXI” emerged as a national and even international slogan, followed by the dispirited hashtag “#ThisIsACoup”. But this is why I argued in a previous chapter that the fundamental question for the left is how it can devolve the representative system, the state, the hierarchical and institutional impediment, from within if not from outside.

Although some—most recently Srečko Horvat, whose analysis I appreciate very much—have called for a dialectic between the party and the grassroots, between horizontality and verticality, as a way to confront this dilemma and maintain the energy of the grassroots, it nevertheless remains that the relation is only dialectical up to a certain point. What I mean by this is that eventually the dialectic needs to be broken off, and this break must be on the side of the grassroots. This is why I think that to see the earliest phases of the transition along dialectical lines is beneficial; but ultimately what needs to happen is a *radical deconstruction* or internal transformation—a transcendence, even—of the very system on which the existence of hierarchy or verticality depends, which, in the end, eventually renders the dialect obsolete insofar that *revolutionary transition* is tantamount to transforming the representative, institutional system for the benefit of a participatory, horizontal system (and for Plan C to really come into fruition).

To put it more simply, power has to be shifted towards the grassroots, not the other way around. Costas Douzinas said something similar in the previously mentioned roundtable discussion: the grassroots has to be the one to push through. But if we take a little bit more of a theoretical perspective, what this shift represents, also, is a systemic transition or reposition of power: that is, a shift from coercive power—the power represented by the state—towards “non-coercive power”—the power represented by horizontal, mutually recognitive politics. The very idea of an emancipatory politics, the very possibility of the eventual development of an actual egalitarian democracy presupposes this dismantling of the representative system, this dismantling of “coercive power”, and therefore also hierarchy and, indeed, instrumental institutionalization and administration so blatantly typified by the modern neoliberal capitalist system.

If the movement of society should unfold along these lines—one could even say along the lines of the original Enlightenment ideal—solidarity

must reside somewhere. The issue today, of course, is that if the party or a leader is no longer the source of *cohesion*, if it is true that we must resist and transcend authoritarian notions of “unity of purpose”, then from where might solidarity emerge and what sort of *normativity* is required to ground it? The challenge that revolutionary differential transformation poses, fundamentally, is, as I have said, to identify some sort of common ground or “unity of purpose” so as to avoid the possibility of a dispersed, fragmented outcome of diverse movements not pulling in the same direction (by “same direction” I mean in terms of the need for broad systemic change throughout the whole of society). This, to state it once more, is the task we face: to theorize and support the development of an immediate universal “unity of purpose” across diverse sites of struggle.

To date, I’ve offered some indication on how we might proceed. My suggestion has been threefold, beginning in the form of Adorno’s notion of “conscious solidarity”, which I have employed as being more or less indicative of a very general philosophical direction. On the back of this concept, I have also proposed a few possible *immediate* or concrete objects of solidarity; such is in my last chapter on the situation in Greece, where anti-capitalism was offered as one such object. On the basis of these recommendations, I think we already have some direction to press forward.

For starters, it is possible—as we have already seen in practice—to root solidarity explicitly in social, political, economic struggle *writ large*. Struggle itself is often systemically connected anyway, so whether one is in anti-racist struggle or in struggle for a liveable wage or in struggle against fracking, the *universal* is the same: capitalism, or, anti-capitalist struggle. With the working class swinging further right in a number of European countries, this line of argumentation feels important (to make the connections between a lack of jobs and the precarious conditions of capitalism, or fracking and capitalist exploitation, or whatever). Changing geographies: I was recently reading about the situation in Canada, with the Unions fighting back and there being calls for a new radical labour movement, coupled with some historic anti-climate marches—the universality of struggle seems to be growing in awareness among the left over there, but the issue is still in reaching an explicit consensus on what solidarity actually means or represents.

The situation in Canada is of course different from the one in Europe or in Greece in particular. In either case, I think it is superficial to merely define solidarity in relation to anti-capitalism. Why? In practical terms, solidarity can be claimed by less-than-emancipatory and even by right-

wing and oppressive or dominant political movements. I remember during the uprisings in Ukraine, for example, where people were arguing that there needs to be more international solidarity with the protests; but these calls became—or were from the beginning—convoluted, as there was always a very real far-right presence to the uprisings at the time. From the perspective of CT, one was left to ask in response to the calls: solidarity with *what*, exactly? The problem, in other words, is that no matter which objects we introduce, their critical comportment has to be explicit—that is, an emancipatory foundation must be normatively present. Otherwise, we run into the dilemma of people expressing solidarity with the struggle against suffering or oppression or capitalism, but in convoluted ways: that is, from within the ideological horizon of capitalism or of hierarchy and domination more generally. The fact that the concept of solidarity can be co-opted or employed by right-wing or any other form of dominant politics, suggests that we need to formulate its *critical import*—that solidarity can become reified or distorted (like any other concept), but it isn't actually *solidarity* unless aligned with an emancipatory politics (i.e., non-alienating, non-dominant politics). This approach helps us provide a revolutionary notion of solidarity: solidarity that is as much participatory and democratic as it is non-dominant.

Thus, although a useful concept or category on the level of practical action, solidarity is not in and of itself foundational enough. It doesn't really get to the heart of the matter. To put it in another way, solidarity is not necessarily an exclusive emancipatory concept. It is at best a secondary political category or concept, which needs to be grounded.

This is not to say that the “unity of purpose” among grassroots movements shouldn't be, in a political sense, *anti-capitalist*. Rather, the argument I am making is that to leave a concept of solidarity at this point is not enough. There needs to be something more foundational which provides a broader philosophical vision, so that inasmuch diverse movements might debate on what actually defines anti-capitalism or the revolutionary process towards post-capitalism, there remains a universal guiding principle. In other words, as I have said in the past, one of the tasks of CT—of engaged social philosophy—is to provide grassroots movements with direction or guidance on the level of practice.

What sort of “guiding principle” might be proposed? As far as broad emancipatory horizons are concerned, it is the principle of the free-flourishing subject in the context of mutual recognition. This principle, this emancipatory concept, has enough substance and critical sharpness to

ground a radical and progressive notion of solidarity; especially if we consider mutual recognition, which lives in and through the mediating subject, represents on the plane of a phenomenological ethics (Smith 2015a; Smith and De Graaff 2016) a direct challenge to the overarching reality of hierarchy, oppression and exploitation—or domination *writ large*. Mutual recognition has very real radical and practical political implications, as evidenced in the emergence of participatory grassroots movements (Gunn and Wilding 2014). This framework is both theoretical and experiential in conception, and it helps ground critical social philosophy, as it also provides us with a crucial source of normativity: it gives a progressive, revolutionary concept of solidarity its *critical import*.

However, in saying that, we reach another dilemma. It is not always the case that mutual recognition, lived in and through the open, mediating subject—as a mode of relations and as a transformation process—is always immediately and easily discernible on the level of practical action. It doesn't quite communicate to the same effectiveness as the object of anti-capitalism, particularly when it comes to bridging theory and practice. There still needs to be some sort of immediate or concrete object(s) of solidarity, which has more obvious material that people can share and feel connected with.

In some sense, what I think we're dealing with is a strange sort of problem concerning immanence and transcendence. If anti-capitalism is the immediate object of solidarity—the immediate point of recognition amongst movements with regard to a “unity of purpose” (the metaphorical lapel or whatever)—then perhaps the transformative social philosophical vision on offer in this book is the transcendental, guiding first principle.

Anti-capitalism can take on any number of forms, many of which are not always necessarily emancipatory. Thus if anti-capitalism is the object of solidarity—the systemic common ground amongst movements—it is only emancipatory in struggle if it is grounded in a critical normative humanism and in a comprehensive conception of social pathology, including what Arnold De Graaff and Smith (2016) have elaborated as a *phenomenological ethics*. From here it is possible, I think, to ground the underlining thesis in this book concerning philosophy of history: the anti-capitalist struggle is rooted, too, in *suffering from (and revolt against) domination writ large*. At the same time, and to reiterate the arguments presented in Sects. 5.1 and 5.2, solidarity as framed here is not only solidarity in struggle. The kind of solidarity and practical actions I am alluding to here is the kind that we often witness open up spaces for mutual support, community and personal

healing. Perhaps, in this sense, we have another phenomenological guiding point: that solidarity is also solidarity in recognition of each other, in one another's struggle and, too, in connecting with one another's efforts that healing from social and personal pathology. This includes solidarity in support of collective and personal healing, solidarity as understanding and empathy insofar that it is solidarity in support and progressive action. In this sense, solidarity doesn't have to be anti-capitalism *per se*, but today it is necessarily anti-capitalist insofar that capitalism is the pathological system which defines our contemporary social reality.

In closing, one might ask is it not possible that we abandon the notion of solidarity altogether, and still achieve the same theoretical and philosophical ambition? My response is that "solidarity" remains an extremely important political category, especially when it comes to the relation between theory and practice. It is what I like to call a "bridging" concept. My sense, moreover, is that we need some sort of immediate object of solidarity to act as a sort of social cohesion or glue, to provide an almost *universal* "unity of purpose" across diverse sites of *particular* resistance. We already see examples of such a solidarity—albeit not entirely realized—in certain moments of anti-climate change movements. Consider, for instance, recent protests in Toronto supported by a diversity of movements and unions, not only centred on climate change but also focused on the need for economic transformation. We see movements working together all the time, nationally and internationally—albeit not always in terms of pushing towards the same emancipatory horizon. First and foremost, that horizon should be based on a philosophically, empirically and scientifically informed research programme centred on the investigation of pathological and non-pathological social aggregations. Again, to reiterate the point, this much be rooted in an alternative philosophy of psychology and, indeed, on the awareness of the existence of need-less suffering as the "truth context" for any or all potential transformations, and whether they are valid or not on the level of an emancipatory politics.

What stands in the way of mutual recognition, or, better yet, what is a systemic source of contradictory recognition, is not only hierarchy, one-way power relations, and so on. Capitalism, in every sense, is directly set against mutual recognition, in the same way that it is set against a CT of health and of social rationality, which explains why prefigurative,

participatory movements, who evince basic characteristics of such an emancipatory mode of relations, are inclined to create space in the midst of an intensely alienated world. It doesn't matter whether we're dealing with alternative community spaces or regional occupations, the idea firstly is one of emancipated social space and thus also of *self*. It is within this image where a genuine, emancipatory concept of solidarity resides. And it is here where we may begin—as many are already attempting—to re-establish a progressive, critical, rational and progressive vision of society and of social development.

In closing, the early roads to reason and to sanity are discernible. From practical politics concerning renewable energy and alternative agriculture to particular mental health interventions, the continued growth of science and rationality, national campaigns for a more reconciled education system, and the many progressive alternatives evidenced across movements, academic disciplines and differential spheres of society are immense in scope (De Graaff 2016). When framed in the right way, and when informed by a comprehensive theory of social pathology, it is possible that all of these alternative openings and progressive pursuits might be integrated into wider restorative and transformative social philosophical vision.

Indeed, even in a deeply pathological society such as the one in which we currently find ourselves, the future still beckons. It's up to us to reclaim it.

NOTES

1. For more, see Heathwood Institute and Press' research series on contemporary social movements: <http://www.heathwoodpress.com/category/key-series-occupy-emancipatory-politics-radical-democracy/>.
2. Global Policy Forum offers a wide selection of research and articles explaining the detrimental effects of various International Trade Agreements. See, for instance: <https://www.globalpolicy.org/economic-expansion/international-trade-agreements-8-22.html>.
3. The article I am referring to can be found on Heathwood: <http://www.heathwoodpress.com/paths-forward-grassroots-participatory-movements-hierarchy-vs-horizontality-and-issues-of-solidarity-and-representation-r-c-smith/>.

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