The Place of Resistance in Phenomenology and Critical Theory: Thinking opposition after Kant

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Abstract

This thesis explores the philosophical ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance through an investigation of its *place*. The place of resistance becomes relevant as the intersection of diverse manifestations of resistance and the conceptual reflection through which they come to be explained. Place here denotes a moment of orientation in which reflection and determination coincide and which produces the opposition between resistance and that to which it resists. For my investigation into the structure of this place and its ambiguous entanglement within that to which it resists, I draw on the confrontation between Heideggerian phenomenology and Frankfurt School critical theory and their respective readings of Kant. I ground my argument in an analysis of Kant's critique of amphiboly in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In Kant's argumentative strategy to counter the amphibolous use of the understanding, I identify two conflicting directions that find expression in the entwinement of reflection and determination in 'transcendental place'. I contend that Kant's argument relies on an experience of incongruity that remains external to the philosophical argument, and that this pattern is instructive for understanding the place of resistance. I flesh out the nexus of philosophy and politics thus opened up by tracing the persistence and transformation of amphiboly in Heidegger's philosophy and Reiner Schürmann's reading of it. While Heidegger politicises place by turning it into the concrete standpoint from which to oppose modernity, Schürmann reflexively historicises place as the conflictual temporal site of philosophy and politics characterised by a discordant double bind. To further contrast Heidegger's determination of place as concrete, I then turn to the status of abstraction in the constitution of the place of resistance. With reference to Alfred Sohn-Rethel and Moishe Postone, I argue that any opposition conceived on the basis of a concrete standpoint risks obliterating the abstractions that underpin even what presents itself as most concrete. While Sohn-Rethel's affirmation of production remains in thrall to the capitalist metaphysics of labour, Postone's notion of a dynamic concrete-abstract antinomy contributes an important dimension to the conceptual framework for the analysis of the place of resistance. I put Postone's critique of simple opposition to work by analysing antisemitism as a form of opposition that fails to construct a resistant standpoint, arguing that the paranoid mode of thinking driving antisemitism can be understood in terms of amphiboly and that it plays a crucial role in the reproduction of modern capitalist society. In conclusion, and to contrast antisemitism, I bring together Schürmann's and Postone's emphases on the temporal character of modern capitalist domination to briefly sketch an emancipatory orientation of resistance that challenges amphiboly based on a twofold provisional judgement *in* and *on* time.

Keywords

resistance, place, time, space, amphiboly, opposition, abstraction, antisemitism, judgement

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A note on abbreviations and translations

Kant's works are cited according to the Academy edition pagination, except for references to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, for which I follow the pagination of the 1781 first edition (A) and/or the 1787 second edition (B). The volume numbers of the Academy edition are given with the corresponding references in the bibliography.

Heidegger's works are cited according to the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1975–) and referred to by the abbreviation *GA* plus volume number (except for *Being and Time*, which is referred to by the abbreviation *SuZ*), together with the page number of the corresponding English translation. The abbreviations are given with the corresponding references in the bibliography.

All other frequently cited works are referred to by a footnote on the first mention and thereafter referred to by an in-text abbreviation.

Where literature in a language other than English is cited, the translation is my own unless otherwise noted. Where I give references to English translations, those are indicative, and I tacitly modify the translations where necessary.

But, if constructing the future and settling everything for all times are not our affair, it is all the more clear what we have to accomplish at present: I am referring to *ruthless criticism of all that exists,* ruthless both in the sense of not being afraid of the results it arrives at and in the sense of being just as little afraid of conflict with the powers that be.

Karl Marx, *Letter to Ruge*, September 1843

Introduction

I. Placing resistance to 'all that exists'

If the criticism of 'all that exists [*alles Bestehenden*]'[1] has to be, still according to Marx, formulated 'in the melee',[2] this holds *a fortiori* for resistance. How could resistance (literally, standing against) take its stand without first of all having established what 'the powers that be' are, what 'all that exists' is and what, accordingly, the standpoint of resistance would have to be? As intrinsic is the idea of opposition to resistance that the question of what actually orientates this antagonism remains, more often than not, unanswered. As a result, resistance seems to always already know what it is resistance to. That the underlying orientation often remains oblique makes sense if we consider that resistance regularly denotes a reaction under pressure, that is, an act that occurs in a situation in which the opposition imposes itself and in which actors, in self-defence, have no choice but to resist.

While this is certainly true for those acts of resistance that today are maybe most readily associated with this form of political action, such as the European resistance to Nazi occupation or, more extreme still, the Jewish resistance to the liquidation of ghettos across Poland in spring and summer 1943, this can hardly be claimed by resistance movements that operate in contexts of more indirect threats. What is this self that resists? I argue that the metaphoric and pre-conceptual quality of resistance, which allows leaving the constitution both of those who resist and of the opponent in the dark (of which Marx's phrase 'all that exists' is a striking example), has engendered the ambiguous reception of the concept in modern European thinking, from Hobbes and Kant to the revolutionaries of the nineteenth and twentieth century and more recent struggles against domination and injustice. This ambiguity finds expression in the appropriation of the notion by various right-wing movements over the past one hundred years, up to present day conspiracy theorists and reactionaries of all stripes. In this thesis, I examine resistance as a phenomenon of opposition that

[1] Karl Marx, [Briefe aus den "Deutsch-Französischen Jahrbüchern"], in *Marx-Engels-Werke*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Dietz, 1981), 344/*Marx/Engels Collected Works*, vol. 3 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), 142. References to the collected works in German and English are henceforth cited as *MEW* and *MECW* plus volume number.

[2] Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie*. *Einleitung*, *MEW1*, 381/*MECW3*, 178.

eludes exhaustive conceptualisation, but that can be productively approached through an analysis of the ways in which this opposition is construed philosophically.

Already the oxymoron of a resistance movement indicates that what is at stake in resistance is the struggle over a standpoint or a place, which implies an idea of what 'all that exists' is. The resistance of the *Jewish Fighting Organisation* in the Warsaw ghetto in spring 1943 consisted not only in refusing to accept the place they had been allocated and in fighting back against an infinitely superior enemy but also, crucially, in displacing the spatiotemporal distribution of agency and passivity, of life and death, that the ghetto was meant to impose on them. In this, the fighters put into question the very structure that was to determine their fate. The claim guiding the present thesis is that resistance, if etymologically limited to reaction, involves a moment of activity in which this displacement is carried out. I call this moment the orientation of resistance. I analyse how this orientation is constituted in the philosophical work of Heideggerian phenomenology and Frankfurt School critical theory in order to shed light on the ambiguity of resistance. In the course of this analysis, I also highlight ways in which to distinguish between different orientations of resistance, with particular focus on antisemitism.

My claim is that resistance, conceived in terms of orientation and strategy, is intrinsically ambiguous and reflexive. The ambiguity of resistance implies that it cannot be easily identified as either emancipatory or reactionary. As attempts to theorise recent political opposition in terms of 'non-movements'[3] demonstrate, even within situations of resistance it is not always clear where it is going, or indeed whether it is going anywhere—and this is all the more true under the impression of the erosion of Left and Right, itself a consequence of the post-war political order and the integration of 'left' demands within the professional politics of the liberal-democratic state. Its reflexivity, on the other hand, suggests that it interacts with that to which it resists, and that the mode of this interaction determines or influences the direction that resistance takes. Ambiguity results from the openness of reflexivity.

[3] Endnotes, *Onward Barbarians*, 2020, https://endnotes.org.uk/other_texts/en/endnotes-onward-barbarians, accessed 28 June 2021. For the concept of non-movement, see Asef Bayat, *Life as Politics. How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010).

II. Philosophical background: Resistance after Heidegger and Adorno

The connection between the philosophical and political stakes of resistance finds reflection in the complex relation between the thinking of Martin Heidegger and Theodor W. Adorno.[4] While neither Heidegger nor Adorno (or Frankfurt School critical theory more broadly) offer philosophies of resistance in the narrow sense of the term, their conflicting views indicate resistance on several levels. First, in as far as they share the view that their present is pervaded by 'a deep crisis of modernity whose roots must be traced to the very constitution of reason itself',[5] they can be seen to articulate a philosophical resistance to forms of thinking they see as linked to those crisis tendencies of modernity. Second, in as far as their respective modes of critique bring them into conflict, they can be said to resist one another in different ways. Third, the very use they make of the term resistance sheds some light on its pre-conceptual and metaphorical character. Accordingly, the conflict between those traditions elicits a struggle over the political *use* of philosophical precepts.

I consider the tension between both intellectual traditions as a 'conflict' in the specific sense that philosophical and political stakes converge and contrast in it. It is not a conflict in the sense of a debate since, while members of the Frankfurt School, in particular Adorno, repeatedly positioned themselves with regard to Heidegger, the latter never publicly responded to their charges.[6] If, for the present purposes, the lack of Heidegger's engagement does not pose a methodological problem, this is because my interest lies not primarily in the content of the exchange, but in the complex philosophical and political place in which it is situated and to which it responds. From this perspective, the conflict points to a struggle of philosophical standpoints that have their roots in similar conceptual issues but that result in diverging philosophical and political orientations.

[4] For a recent overview of some of the by now vast literature on this theme, see Mikko Immanen, *Toward a Concrete Philosophy. Heidegger and the Emergence of the Frankfurt School* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020), 1–21, 113–201.

[5] Espen Hammer, 'Adorno's Critique of Heidegger', in Peter E. Gordon, Espen Hammer, Max Pensky (eds.), *A Companion to Adorno* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2020), 473.

[6] In 1969, Heidegger briefly discussed Adorno with Richard Wisser in private, after an interview for the German television (in which he had refused to discuss Adorno's critique). See Wisser's account in Günter Neske (ed.), *Erinnerung an Martin Heidegger* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1977), 283–285.

Heidegger's refusal to engage in this conflict is telling in that it chimes well with his general tactic of selective silence. Not only did he arrange for his 1966 interview with DER SPIEGEL to be published only after his death in 1976, and tried to convince his son and later executor, Hermann Heidegger, to lock away his manuscripts for a hundred years after his death.[7] He also pronounced himself selectively, as on the occasion when, at a talk in Bremen in 1949, he mentioned Nazi extermination camps in passing as an example of the question concerning technology (*GA79*, 27/53), only then to suppress this phrase in the reworked version of the talk published as *The Question Concerning Technology* in 1954 (*GA7*, 5–36/307–341).[8] Aside from this 'revisionist' practice, Heidegger's reference to the death camps shows his attempt to subsume the most singular-seeming events to the trajectory of Western metaphysics. Not unlike Heidegger's preoccupation with the 'question concerning technology', Adorno, too, had an urgent sense that today's events cannot be explained by looking only at today, or yesterday. When, in early May 1969, the *SPIEGEL* opened an interview on the student movement with the phrase, 'Professor Adorno, two weeks ago, the world still seemed in order...', he interjected laconically: 'Not to me'.[9] Similar to Heidegger, for Adorno the roots of 'disorder' have to be sought elsewhere than in the direct environs of the events.

That this proximity coincides with an extreme distance is what Alexander García Düttmann indicates when he identifies the two names of *Germania* and *Auschwitz* as an incongruous 'blind spot' connecting Heidegger's and Adorno's work. This blind spot stands 'in a relation of tension to the concept, and […] can never be entirely dominated by the latter or brought into a symmetrical state of domesticated

[7] Hermann Heidegger, '"Er war ein lieber Vater"', *DIE ZEIT*, 6 March 2014, https://www.zeit.de/2014/11/hermann-heidegger-schwarze-hefte/komplettansicht, accessed 28 June 2021.

[8] The original passage was published in German only in 1994 in volume 79 of the *Gesamtausgabe*, and the standard English translation from 1977 does not include the phrase either. See Peter E. Gordon, 'Heidegger & the Gas Chambers', in *The New York Review*, 4 December 2014, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/12/04/heidegger-and-gas-chambers, accessed 28 June 2021. For Heidegger's editorial practice, see also Sidonie Kellerer, 'Rewording the Past: The Postwar Publication of a 1938 Lecture by Martin Heidegger', *Modern Intellectual History*, 11(3), 2014, 575–602, and Julia A. Ireland, 'Naming Φύσις and the "Inner Truth of National Socialism": A New Archival Discovery', *Research in Phenomenology*, 44, 2014, 315–346.

[9] Theodor W. Adorno, 'Who's Afraid of the Ivory Tower? A Conversation with Theodor W. Adorno', trans. Gerhard Richter, *Monatshefte*, 94(1), 2002, 14.

equilibrium with it — for it appears to conceptual knowledge as a case of blindness'.[10] If Heidegger associates the name *Germania*, the title of a poem by Hölderlin, with an origin or a new beginning, for Adorno the name *Auschwitz* marks a culmination and an end, after which both culture and its criticism, both speaking and silence have become impossible. While Heidegger threw in his lot with Nazism as a force of the recovery of metaphysics, the research of Adorno and his colleagues at the Institute for Social Research was devoted to the study of fascism both on a sociological (e.g., *The Authoritarian Personality*, 1950) and on a philosophical (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1947) level.[11]

On Düttmann's interpretation, this divergence opens up an opposition based on the shared conceptual implications of this blind spot. Both Heidegger and Adorno think from the asymmetry between the sphere of domination of the concept and the irreducibility of the name that indexes the distance between what appears and what is grasped conceptually. There is a shared indeterminacy about this blind spot that allows Düttmann to juxtapose Heidegger's and Adorno's thinking. What distinguishes the two approaches is their inverse *orientation*: 'As a thinking after Auschwitz Adorno's philosophy is the thinking *of guilty debt;* but at the same time the name *inaugurates* thought. As a thinking of Germania Heidegger's philosophy is a thinking of *inauguration;* but at the same time the name which is to be repeated only increases the *guilty debt*'.[12] Adorno and Heidegger employ essentially different *strategies*, the names of which are phenomenology, fundamental-ontology, and the history of Being, on the one hand, and historical materialism, critique of political economy and negative dialectics, on the other.

For the argument I pursue in this thesis, I take resistance to be a conceptual blind spot that can be elucidated through an investigation into the incongruity that gives it direction. Put differently, I claim that the specific mode of resistance depends on the structure of asymmetry or incongruity that underlies it and that orientates it. This

[10] Alexander García Düttmann, *The Memory of a Thought. An Essay on Heidegger and Adorno*, trans. Nicholas Walker (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 2.
[11] For a standard account of the Institute's early history, see Martin Jay, *Dialectical Imagination. A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923–1950* (London: Heinemann, 1973).
[12] Düttmann, *Memory*, 10.

claim implies that resistance is here not presupposed as an unambiguous category but concerns the perplexing constellation of concepts and appearances in philosophical and political conflict. Rather more complicated than its subsumption to either reaction or progress suggests, I contend that resistance has to be addressed as a problem of conceptualisation in order to understand its political implications, and that, conversely, social and political determinations affect the way it is used on the conceptual level.

While neither Heidegger nor Adorno formulate a philosophy of resistance, both are no strangers to the *use* of resistance in different circumstances, generally without further problematising it as a concept. Consider these two short passages from Heidegger, the first from a speech at the twenty-fifth anniversary of his graduating class in 1934, the other from his application for reappointment as a professor in late 1945:

> This is the *question to the peoples*, concerning the originarity of their ethnic order, the rank of the authenticity of its will to mastery as expressed in the state, the closeness of its spiritual world, the health of its *völkisch* will to life, the force of resistance to the historical decline. (*GA16*, 281)[13]
>
> Having resigned from the rectorship it was obvious that the continuation of my teaching activities would necessarily lead me into increasing resistance to the foundations of the National Socialist worldview. […] the fact that I continued to act in my capacity of philosopher was resistance enough. […] The spiritual resistance coming from my Nietzsche lectures [running from 1936 to 1943], was noticed by the relevant party officials […]. (*GA16*, 401–402)

Resistance here becomes a cipher for two apparently opposed stances. It calls forth both Heidegger's antisemitic resistance to the historical decline that still in late 1939 he associates with 'the age of machination' brought about by the '*emphatically calculative giftedness* [of] the Jews' (*GA96*, 56/44)[14] and his self-publicity as a philosopher in 'spiritual resistance' to Nazism. As I argue in the thesis, this apparently off-hand use of resistance can be elucidated by the more conceptually determinate use Heidegger makes of it in his philosophical work.

[13] I translate *Ursprünglichkeit* as 'originarity' to mark that, in Heidegger's use, the originary is not, as the word original would suggest, historically first but ontologically primordial—a meaning that is, of course, contrasted by the hierarchy implied in the idea of 'ethnic order'.

[14] For the dating of these 'ponderings', see the editor's afterword, *GA96*, 280/223.

Adorno, on the other hand, in an open letter to Max Horkheimer's seventieth birthday, locates resistance in the private, personal sphere of their friendship:

> Having fallen behind the overpowering train of history, [the private sphere] embodies, in its very impotence, the resistance to that train, to the total violence of that which exists. […] You were a match even to enemies: in some situations, you became like them, acted like them; that is how you managed to outmanoeuvre them. This requires an at the same time very soft and very strong I, resistant and acquiescent at once.[15]

Resistance is here presented as a both fragile and cunning capacity, able to adapt to specific situations in order to undermine or circumvent the enemies' defences. More generally, in Adorno resistance is associated with the opposition of the particular to subsumption by the universal and therefore plays a role both in his critique of epistemology and in his ethical considerations.[16] In *Negative Dialectics*, it is the resistance of the non-identical, the place in which the speculative survives, and is thus associated with freedom.[17] Indeed, for Adorno, and he explicitly accuses Heidegger of failing this double vocation, critique and resistance are the core of philosophy:

> 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.[18]

Both Heidegger and Adorno outline forms of philosophical resistance to 'that which exists', with stark differences but also, if we apply what Adorno says about Horkheimer to Heidegger and his manoeuvres to cover up his philosophical antisemitism and political complicity with Nazism, uncanny parallels. Their dissonant yet resonating uses of resistance underline the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance in its dependence on specific philosophical standpoints and orientations.

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[15] Theodor W. Adorno, 'Offener Brief an Max Horkheimer', *DIE ZEIT*, 12 February 1965, https://www.zeit.de/1965/07/offener-brief-an-max-horkheimer/komplettansicht, accessed 28 June 2021.

[16] Adorno's notion of resistance has been addressed in several recent works, see, for instance, Oshrat C. Silberbusch, *Adorno's Philosophy of the Nonidentical. Thinking as Resistance* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Fabian Freyenhagen, *Adorno's Practical Philosophy. Living Less Wrongly* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), chapter 6.

[17] Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (London and New York: Routledge, 1973), 126, 29, 262.

[18] Theodor W. Adorno, 'Why Still Philosophy?', in *Critical Models. Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 10.

For both, the critique of modernity involves a 'decentring of the subject', which corresponds to the ambivalence of the subject between domination and abandon (Adorno) and between authenticity and falling (Heidegger).[19] While Heidegger's shift from *Dasein* to a topology of being seeks to overcome the subject, Adorno hesitates to surrender it entirely.[20] As we saw above, Heidegger moves from casting resistance in terms of the collective movement of the people to casting himself as the bearer of spiritual resistance. Adorno, on the other hand, moves from the disappointment with the workers' movement in the early 1930s to affirming resistance on the level of the individual. If it is true that, as Fabian Freyenhagen contends, Adorno's ethics of resistance grows out of the conviction that revolutionary action has become historically impossible after the failure of the Russian Revolution and the rise of fascism,[21] this is problematic in at least two ways. On one hand, by cordoning off those historical moments in which revolution is deemed possible from those in which this possibility is absent or lacking, such an ethics of resistance can be seen as incapacitating.[22] On the other hand, mere withdrawal into individual resistance risks giving up the field to the conservative revolutionary tendencies channelled by Heidegger's resistance to modernity. It is here that the relevance of the conflict between ontology and dialectics, between Heidegger and Adorno, for contemporary social and political theory lies.

The present thesis is not conceived as another contribution to the literature on the relation between Heidegger's and Adorno's philosophies. Rather, its task is to rework the philosophical and political fault lines surfacing in this conflict into an account of resistance that can contribute to an understanding of our present. The gap between the historical opposition of Heidegger and Adorno, on the one hand, and the present investigation into resistance, on the other, is marked by the displacement of the conflict to thinkers who, while working in Heidegger's and Adorno's wake, develop

[19] Dieter Thomä, 'Verhältnis zur Ontologie. Adornos Denken des Unbegrifflichen', in Axel Honneth and Christoph Menke (eds.), *Theodor W. Adorno. Negative Dialektik* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), 45.
[20] See Peter E. Gordon, *Adorno and Existence* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2016), 171.
[21] Fabian Freyenhagen, 'Adorno's Politics: Theory and Praxis in Germany's 1960s', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 40(9), 2014, 868–869.
[22] Freyenhagen, 'Adorno's Politics', 870, 873, 874, 876.

their own perspectives in critical discussion with their traditions and in response to the different historical situation in which they find themselves. While Heidegger's and, to a lesser extent, Adorno's thinking are addressed, the main analysis focuses on Reiner Schürmann and Hannah Arendt in the Heideggerian tradition, and on Alfred Sohn-Rethel and Moishe Postone in the Frankfurt School tradition. This 'downstream' displacement complements a first, 'upstream' displacement, which explores the common philosophical ground of Heidegger's and Adorno's thinking in Kant. Together, these two vectors open up the trajectory of the argument laid out in this thesis.

In proposing this programme, I face a double methodological challenge that has to do with the specific quality of resistance. First, since its conceptualisation is as fraught with metaphorical and intuitive determinacy (which both over- and under-determines it), there will remain a sense of continuity between the everyday use of the term and its conceptual use. To construct a concept of resistance in the way I try to do it here implies rendering this floating nature visible and accounting for the overlapping between those different uses rather than to separate them entirely. The second, related challenge consists in justifying the reference to resistance in those instances in which it is not explicitly mentioned, which is the case with the majority of the thinkers engaged in this thesis. Neither of them spells out a philosophy of resistance in the proper sense of the term, most do not conceptualise it in any significant way at all. However, I think that this can be a strength in that it allows taking a distance from common uses of resistance. In this sense, my reconstruction takes a step back from existing concepts of resistance and attempts to reassemble divergent conceptual facets into a notion of resistance that can properly account for its ambiguity and reflexivity.

III. Thinking opposition: The ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance

As the reference to the use Heidegger and Adorno make of the notion shows, resistance is difficult to grasp unambiguously. One problem one immediately encounters when trying to think resistance in relation to philosophy and politics is whether it can be conceptualised or whether it is a mere actuality that eludes or even defies subsumption to concepts. More precisely, the problem might be cast as the

question of how 'resistance as concept' and 'resistance as appearance' interact: how does its conceptualisation in terms of a political, legal, or moral action affect, and how is it affected by, the multiplicity of acts and occurrences that one might designate as resistance? Consider, for instance, the distinction between contradiction and opposition, both of which refer to a bifurcation in which resistance can situate itself. However, the former appeals to a linguistic opposition, while the latter is a topological category, referring to spatiotemporal positions. This becomes clearer if we look at the German translation of opposition, which can be rendered both as *Widerspruch* (contradiction) or *Widerstand* (resistance), but also as *Gegner* (opponent).[23] Those different semantic nuances convey the irreducibility of resistance as a phenomenon of opposition to one single concept. Kant, seizing on this terminological divergence, conceptually distinguishes between *Widerspruch* (contradiction) and *Widerstreit* (opposition) to register the incongruity between conceptual opposition and the non-conceptual opposition that obtains between spatiotemporal appearances. Already here, in its capacity to reveal as much about that which resists as about that to which 'it' resists, the ambiguous reflexivity of resistance shines through.

The conceptual ambiguity of resistance results from the fact that, as opposition, it implies both unity and bifurcation. To resist means to both constitute a unity that resists and a unity that can be resisted. But what are the criteria of this bifurcation? It could be objected that resistance emerges out of sheer necessity, as self-defence in the face of oppression, and that one does not choose one's opponent. And this is certainly true. Nonetheless, it seems important for the direction that resistance will take to think about where oppression comes from. This is where reflexivity comes in, that is, the reflection that is intrinsic to resistance but that oftentimes remains implicit. It is through reflection that the conflicting unities are constituted, opposed to one another, delineated. This reflexivity can take different shapes, to which correspond different forms of resistance, for instance, those that retain a static antagonism and those in which the lines of conflict evolve, break down, and

[23] *Widerstand* also invokes the word *Gegenstand* (object), which in turn is cognate to *Gegenwart* (presence). This proximity indicates, on an etymological level, the fuzziness of the distinction between the temporal and the spatial aspect of opposition.

reconstitute themselves. However, what is crucial is that reflection is an *activity*, the act of separating that which resists from that which is resisted. In other words, to conceptualise resistance—before we can answer the question: who resists, and to whom?—we have to enquire into the act that brings about the opposed unities. As an activity, reflection is not only situating but also situated.

What I explore in this thesis is the question of what orientates this reflection. The answer I try to outline and substantiate through my analyses of Kant, Heidegger, Schürmann, Sohn-Rethel, Postone, Adorno and Horkheimer, and Arendt is that orientation is grounded in an asymmetry or incongruity. It is the specific character and status of this incongruity that differs among the approaches I examine in this research, and I argue that this is what informs the reflection that produces the opposites on which they necessarily operate—even if they do not explicitly conceptualise resistance. The asymmetry can, for instance, be spatial, such as between left and right, or temporal, such as between yesterday and tomorrow. The ambiguity of resistance is then connected to the reflexivity that constitutes resistance in opposition to something else, for instance, 'that which exists'. This is ambiguous since the incongruity that underpins the reflexive separation of the opposed parties is not immediately visible but requires an analysis of the way in which resistance orientates itself. Here we also have the reason for why resistance is often used in metaphorical or under-conceptualised terms.

This has led Giorgio Agamben to consider resistance—in analogy with the state of exception, civil war, and insurrection—as part of an 'ambiguous zone […] between the political and the juridical, and between law and the living being'.[24] But Agamben does not explore the link between the ambiguity of resistance and its reflexivity. If at one point he describes his task as that of an uncovering or a lifting of a 'veil',[25] that is, of unmasking a hitherto hidden ambiguity, this gesture remains faithful to a philosophical stance that recovers a truth from underneath or behind its occlusion rather than reflexively questioning this separation between truth and false publicity itself. Agamben's presentation of the opposition—between State and politics,

[24] Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 2.
[25] Agamben, *Exception*, 2.

between law and form-of-life—already decides the ambiguity and thereby blocks further exploration of the link between ambiguity and reflexivity suggested by the precarious situation of resistance with regard to concept and appearance. If, in Agamben, the issue is to establish the 'proper place'[26] of concepts such as civil war, this thesis investigates the ambiguity and reflexivity that pertains to this *place* itself. This in a way inverts Agamben approach: rather than searching for the proper place of resistance, I investigate how the concept of place can be used to elucidate resistance.

Accordingly, in this thesis, I argue that resistance is best approached through an analysis of its place in the nexus of philosophy and politics. My aim is to reconstruct the production of resistance as a philosophical and political problem at the intersection of concept and appearance. To this end, I situate my discussion around two approaches that offer promising elements for responding to this problem: Postone's revision of Frankfurt School critical theory and Schürmann's reading of Heidegger against the grain. Postone and Schürmann outline heterodox positions within their respective traditions, while both retain a focus on the fault lines that had already defined the conflict between Heidegger and the first generation of the Frankfurt School. In this sense, my argument on resistance also provides a new perspective on one of the most influential political-philosophical conflicts of twentieth century German-language philosophy.

Aside from intellectual history, what interests me in this confrontation is the concern both authors share for the nature of the historically specific form of domination that has emerged since the French Revolution, and of which post-Kantian philosophy, the industrial revolution and the restoration and consolidation of the European state system are three important aspects, culminating in the destruction wrought in the twentieth century. While neither Postone nor Schürmann devote much attention to the problem of resistance, much less offer anything like a philosophy of resistance in the proper sense of the term, I will show that, as in Heidegger and Adorno, the problem of resistance can be seen as a core issue in both. It is precisely as a 'blind

[26] Agamben locates this proper place as 'a zone of indifference between the unpolitical space of the family and the political space of the city'. Giorgio Agamben, *Stasis*, trans. Nicholas Heron (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 16.

spot', as that which remains un-conceptualised, that resistance makes their work productive for the present purposes. What this thesis shows is that resistance—as a fleeting, experiential, both pre-philosophical and pre-political moment at the basis of any articulation of critique or opposition—is a crucial if largely implicit aspect of both Heideggerian phenomenology and Frankfurt School critical theory, and that drawing out the fault lines that separate and link both intellectual traditions can help us orientate ourselves in the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance.

Let me try to elucidate this through a brief conceptual genealogy of the thesis: researching the concepts of temporality subtending different standpoints in contemporary debates on revolutionary practice, I was drawn to the opposition between those advocating suspension, sabotage, revolt, on one hand, and those who recommended to develop hegemony, to appropriate and divert power, and so on, on the other. Circuit-breakers versus accelerators, as it were, an opposition that resonates with that between a Heidegger-inspired critique of technology and a more traditionally Marxist notion of progress. Confronted with the seemingly irreducible difference of the notions of temporality that inform the two approaches, I decided to think of them not in terms of revolution, a concept fraught with temporal presuppositions, but as resistance. I quickly discovered that while resistance had the advantage that it was not as temporally overdetermined as revolution, it was dissatisfying in many other ways, in particular when it comes to the imbalance between its conceptual obscurity and its popularity as a label for all sorts of social and political practices. What is striking is that resistance is oftentimes used as a polemical term rather than as a concept claiming neutrality, maybe due to its implied heroic stance and the fact that its aims and commitments, beyond a taking-stance-against, are never entirely clear. In this sense, its status as a word, a term, or a concept is ever shifting and difficult to pin down. This is what makes it necessary to consider it in terms of its relation to the nexus of politics and philosophy.

Aside from the blind spot of resistance, Schürmann's and Postone's works have another aspect in common, which is directly related to this genealogy of the thesis. Both take a critical stance towards temporal dualisms—between abstract and concrete time, in Postone, and between presence and absence, in Schürmann—and

both place the problem of temporality at the centre of their approaches. At the same time, a spatial imaginary is significant in both, expressed in Postone's concern with the 'standpoint' of the critique of political economy and in Schürmann's interest in Heidegger's use of topology. I take this to suggest that in both approaches, although both have a strong focus on temporality that leaves space largely unexamined, a spatiotemporal continuity asserts itself. It is in this continuity and discontinuity between space and time that the connection between the place of resistance and the temporality of revolutionary practice comes in.

Enquiring into resistance by way of an analysis of its place is promising in that the concept of place can account for both the ambiguity and the reflexivity of resistance. I here understand place not as a purely spatial category but as a concept that, similar to situation, is related to both space and time. But place is also useful in a second way. In Heidegger, place appears in the notion of dwelling place, *topos* or *ethos*, of being. In this rendering, it indicates the standpoint of a thinking that has dismantled the abstractions proper to modern science and philosophy and their preoccupation with position. What follows from this is the contention that place is somehow more proper to being than spatiotemporal position. I will argue that this chimes with approaches that would think resistance in terms of the more concrete and less abstract—an opposition in which the place of resistance becomes a sanctuary removed from the alienation imposed by science and technology. I will discuss and critique this distribution of concrete and abstract and enquire into the role of abstraction in the constitution of place to draw out the reflexivity of resistance, its dependence on and simultaneous excess over that against which it turns. In this sense, the concept of resistance at stake here allows reflexively to critique its own conceptualisation.

IV. Overview

The main part of the thesis (chapters 2–5) constructs a concept of resistance based on an analysis of Kant's use of the notion of place in the Amphiboly chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (*CPR*). In the argument Kant develops there, place, as 'transcendental place', is conceptually—or, in any case, proto-conceptually—prior to the pure forms of intuition, space and time, and as such indexes the kind-distinction

between understanding and sensibility, between determination and reflection, and between contradiction and opposition. My claim is that this analysis of place may shed light on the ambiguous and reflexive quality of resistance.

The argument, which I prepare through a discussion of the dead ends we encounter when thinking resistance in terms of a right or an ethics in Chapter 1, bases itself on the aporetic status of some of Kant's crucial conceptual oppositions, such as the distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal, the a priori and the empirical, determination and reflection. I take the contamination between those philosophical binaries as indicative of the contamination of political binaries in resistance, such as transformation and conservation, revolution and restoration, regime-change and revolt, ethics and right. This analogy between place and resistance provides a vantage point from which to critically assemble elements of a concept of resistance based on a philosophical investigation. In doing this, I develop an approach that is sufficiently complex to critically reflect on the binaries that usually underpin conceptualisations of resistance. Rather than assimilating resistance to either of these binaries, I argue that its conceptual as well as its political history is as ambiguous as the notion of place.

Chapter 1 lays out the specific approach to the problem of resistance as I understand it in this thesis. Based on the conceptual puzzles I presented in the introduction, I argue that many existing attempts to conceptualise resistance remain philosophically dissatisfying. I illustrate this with reference to the debate on a—be it natural or positive—right to resistance (1.1). Rather than producing another contribution to an ethics of resistance, I suggest taking a significant detour through the notion of place, a concept that I contend poses problems—such as its implicit reference to what seems to be more concrete—that can help elucidate the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance (1.2).

Chapter 2 provides the philosophical ground for this consideration, focusing on the incongruity that I argue is intrinsic to the place of resistance (2.1). I analyse the Amphiboly chapter of the *CPR* as a powerful example of an argumentative strategy that uses place to provide orientation (2.2) and offer a reading of Heidegger's use of place as a radicalisation of this Kantian strategy (2.3). While in Kant the incongruity

of transcendental place is derived from a spatial incongruity experienced on an individual level, in Heidegger incongruity becomes politicised. What both have in common is that a non-conceptual experience provides an incongruity that allows orientation, and that in both the ambiguous status of this experience remains implicit. The crucial difference between Kant and Heidegger consists in the latter's politicisation of this experience.

In Chapter 3, I analyse Reiner Schürmann's reading of Heidegger as a decisive shift in this regard. Contrary to Kant and Heidegger, Schürmann's approach renders the entanglement of pre-conceptual experience and philosophical work thematic and the ambiguity of place its subject-matter (3.1). The principle of anarchy and the double bind are the two main headings under which Schürmann explores this problematic status of place (3.3 and 3.4). It is under this historical condition that Schürmann tries to think the possibility of political action with reference to Meister Eckhart and Marx (3.2). I argue that this attempt produces a notion of a subject that retains a capacity for reorientation, and that a corresponding conceptualisation of resistance would have to be thought in terms of this capacity for incongruity (3.5). What Schürmann's approach does not adequately take on, however, is the moment of abstraction that ineluctably plays into the orientation of resistance.

To address the relation between the place of resistance and abstraction, Chapter 4 discusses the status of abstraction in Kant and Marx (4.1), before introducing Alfred Sohn-Rethel's notion of real abstraction (4.2) and Moishe Postone's analysis of modern capitalist society as propelled by a dynamic antinomy of abstract and concrete times (4.3). I argue that while Sohn-Rethel's account provides a critical perspective on what seem to be invariable features of human interaction by interpreting them based on a specific social relation characterised by abstraction, Postone's approach is more reflexive in that it attempts to include what appears as concrete within that dynamic structure of social relations. While neither Sohn-Rethel nor Postone explicitly address place, spatial and temporal considerations are key to their theories. This allows thinking the place of resistance as ambiguous in the sense that in it both concrete and abstract determinations coincide.

Chapter 5 examines, against the backdrop of Postone's critical concept of resistance (5.1), the implications of neglecting this ambiguity of the place of resistance through an analysis of antisemitism as an influential form of resistance that falls prey to its own lack of orientation (5.2). With reference to Horkheimer and Adorno as well as Hannah Arendt, I explore the distinction between antisemitic paranoid prejudice and the possibility of a judgement adequate to the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance (5.3). To indicate some elements of this judgement, the final section of the thesis draws a parallel between Schürmann's principle of anarchy and Postone's emphasis on self-abolition (5.4).

What this investigation aims to achieve is a philosophical account of the ambiguity and reflexivity of the place of resistance and of the elements necessary for the constitution of resistance that, rather than objectifying opposition, renders it present and, in so doing, destitutes it.

Chapter 1. From right and ethics to place: Orientating resistance

In this chapter, I revisit attempts to think resistance in terms of a right or an ethics, arguing why this seriously limits the analysis of resistance. Based on this critique, I derive the perspective on the place of resistance that I want to explore in the remainder of this thesis.

1.1 *Ius resistendi* and ethics of resistance

As indicated above, for Agamben, resistance is a limit concept akin to the state of exception and hence ambiguous, in the precise sense that it indicates both the mode of operation of the biopolitical machine that thrives on the dialectic of norm and anomie, law and lawlessness, power and resistance, and the place of a potential breaking free from this dialectic.[27] Analogously to the distinction he takes from Benjamin between the state of exception that is the rule and 'the real state of exception',[28] one might say that what is at stake in Agamben's thinking is the difference between the right to resistance, the *ius resistendi*, and real resistance. To begin to construct the problem and the argument advanced in this thesis more systematically, it is helpful to look more closely at the idea of a right to resistance and, related to this, to briefly take stock of recent attempts to delineate an ethics of resistance. The debates in this legal-ethical field shed light on the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance and, at the same time, illustrate the limitations of thinking resistance in terms of rights or ethics.

The ambiguity of resistance is clearly present in the idea of a right to resistance. In the Federal Republic of Germany, for instance, a right to resistance was introduced into the Basic Law together with the emergency acts that provided the legal basis for the restriction of a number of fundamental rights in reaction to the student movement of 1968 (*Grundgesetz*, Art. 20[4]).[29] What this testifies to is the reflexivity of a legal order that, in its formal character, has become entirely independent of a person-sovereign that could be affected by such resistance. If, in this case, resistance

[27] See Agamben, *Exception*, 85–88.
[28] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Concept of History', VIII, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (Schocken: New York, 2007), 257.
[29] 'Siebzehntes Gesetz zur Ergänzung des Grundgesetzes', 24 June 1968, https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav#__bgbl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl168s0709.pdf%27%5D__1611318122848, accessed 28 June 2021.

is conceived as resistance to the abolition of the constitutional order, this implies, contrary to the natural rights claim of the right to resistance formulated in the 1789 *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, the legal positivist claim that this order embodies perfection. This is why Agamben can argue that it renders the constitutional order an 'absolutely untouchable and all-encompassing value'.[30] In a formidable inversion, the Basic Law's right to resistance realises Kant's rejection of a natural right to resistance by dissolving the latter into the legal permission to act in defence of positive law. Accordingly, it has been argued that the 'dual power of capital and law' produces an 'innocent power' that 'cannot be overturned because it is not power directly vested in a structure of authority which is inherited as a privilege and sustained as a tradition'.[31] At the same time, however, the emergence of the rule of law and of the constitutional state is closely intertwined with the discourse of a right to resistance or revolution. The reflexivity brought about by the combination of parliamentary democracy and constitutional state or, following Agamben's interpretation of Benjamin's 1921 *Critique of Violence*, the 'dialectic between constituent power and constituted power',[32] requires close scrutiny because it determines the situation in which resistance occurs.

The idea of a right to resistance has a long and complex history, not least because, through its false synonym right of revolution,[33] it raises the question of the relation between social and political action and existing state institutions. Locke is commonly viewed as the originator of the modern right to resistance as a right of propertied individuals to resist the encroachment of the state on their property.[34] Similarly, Burke, an ardent critic of the French Revolution, welcomed the English Glorious Revolution as an act that restored an original contract.[35] For Hobbes, on the other hand, any organised resistance to the sovereign must be prohibited since deposing the sovereign would amount to the collapse of the Commonwealth and the return to

[30] Agamben, *Exception*, 11.
[31] G.M. Tamás, *Innocent Power/Unschuldige Macht*, dOCUMENTA (13), *100 Notes—100 Thoughts. No. 13* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2011), 10–11.
[32] Agamben, *Exception*, 56.
[33] A Wikipedia search for 'right to resistance' redirects to the entry 'Right of Revolution'.
[34] John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003).
[35] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003).

the state of nature.[36] In Kant, as we will see below, resistance has an ambiguous status between, on the one hand, revolution, which, though never legal, is one of the ways in which historical progress can manifest and, on the other, mere revolt and insurrection, which remains factional and destructive. This ambiguity becomes fully visible in Marxist revolutionary theory, in which resistance can refer both to moments of proletarian political action that give rise to revolution and to counter-revolutionary reaction by the dominant class or its agents. Depending on context, resistance is seen either as part of a progressive movement or a reactionary countermovement.[37]

In 2014, Costas Douzinas published three important articles devoted to the philosophy, analytics, and phenomenology of resistance, all of which respond to aspects of the question of whether there can be something like a legal or moral *right* to resistance in the context of the then ongoing Greek anti-austerity movement.[38] While the tone and content of the articles differ, their concerns overlap: while 'Notes Towards an Analytics of Resistance' presents a number of theses on resistance intended to help the left out of its melancholy (which in Douzinas is synonymous with pessimism), 'The "Right to the Event"' combines an historical overview of legal-theoretical as well as juridical interpretations of the right to resistance with a claim on the ontological status of resistance; 'Philosophy and the Right to Resistance' offers a genealogy of the philosophical idea of a right to resistance (and revolution) along with a theory of the will as the conduit for the realisation of that right.[39] They have in common the attempt to bring together disparate (if as a rule what would generally be understood to be progressive or emancipatory) instances of resistance and ontological principles confirming a right to resistance, claiming the compatibility of resistance with a broadly humanist understanding of justice and critiquing those (liberal) legal positivists who would outlaw resistance in light of its logical

[36] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[37] See, for instance, Vladimir I. Lenin, '"Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder' [1920], *Collected Works. Volume 31: April to December 1920*, 17–104 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974).
[38] This series complements a book-length study of resistance (2013) that anticipates some of these thoughts. I will turn to this in 1.2.
[39] Costas Douzinas, 'Notes Towards an Analytics of Resistance', *New Formations*, 83, 2014, 79–98 ('Analytics'); 'The "Right to the Event". The Legality and Morality of Revolution and Resistance', *Metodo. International Studies in Phenomenology and Philosophy*, 2(1), 2014, 151–167 ('Event'); 'Philosophy and the Right to Resistance', in Costas Douzinas and Conor Gearty (eds.), *The Meaning of Rights. The Philosophy and Social Theory of Human Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 85–105 ('Right').

inconsistency with the principles of sovereignty and representative democracy. Due to their conceptual and empirical richness, Douzinas' texts provide an apt point of departure for developing the problem of resistance as it will be addressed in this thesis. I argue that Douzinas' militant concept of resistance hits on a limit if we consider resistance as a phenomenon that is not easily attributable to either the transformation or conservation/restoration of a status quo.

In 'Philosophy and the Right to Resistance', written under the impression of social movements in the early 2010s in Greece and elsewhere, Douzinas probes the modern debate on the right to resistance in Locke, Kant and Hegel, in close relation to questions of historical progress, individual and property rights, and the formulation of a twofold 'metaphysics of will'.[40] From this metaphysics flows, Douzinas argues, both the domination of 'neo-liberal capitalism'[41] and the 'collective emancipatory will'[42] that is expressed in popular action in places such as Tahrir, Taksim, or Syntagma. Douzinas develops his position based on a reading of Kant and Hegel, arguing that the difference between their theories of resistance and those developed by Locke and Burke is that for the latter two, political opposition is only justified when it protects an established order, while the sanctity of stability is, in Kant and in Hegel, complicated by the idea of historical progress. This explains why temporality is key to Douzinas' account of the 'normative force of the real': 'The rebel's time is therefore the future perfect; […] The contingent beginnings will have turned into historical inevitability'.[43] While resistance might be a crime at the moment it is committed, its historical success retroactively renders it a legal entitlement already at the moment when it was still illegal. Accordingly, once it has become historically inevitable, it will *never* have been a crime—it is as if its becoming inevitable erases all previous reality. The right to resistance thus becomes grounded in what Douzinas refers to as a 'spectral logic, a law beyond state law'.[44] In other words, what is necessary to conceive a right to resistance is to transcend the letter of the law and the logical

[40] Douzinas, 'Right', 101–105.
[41] Douzinas, 'Right', 95.
[42] Douzinas, 'Right', 105.
[43] Douzinas, 'Right', 99–100.
[44] Douzinas, 'Right', 93.

inconsistency of a legal provision for resistance by aligning resistance with a revolution that pits positive law against natural law.

One obvious problem with this retroactive legitimation is that the same holds for the opposite development, namely for the unravelling of whatever revolutionary success there might be. If the Tahrir square revolution temporarily voided the illegality of its own coming-into-being, the annulment has since been taken back and the crime been re-established. But Douzinas does not follow this possibility of reversal, instead focusing on the 'combination of historical necessity and voluntarism'.[45] Since historical necessity is only established retroactively, will must take on the present legal constraints on its own. Yet, to employ a phrase he uses with respect to Kant, Douzinas 'is partially rescued by his philosophy of history'[46] since, he says, 'History dictates the necessity of the revolution that explodes illegally and becomes legitimate *post factum*'.[47] Aside from the self-legitimising dictate of history, which he takes from Domenico Losurdo's reading of Hegel, Douzinas cites the right to crime that Hegel grants the one who is in extreme need, so that the starving man may steal and the debased class rise from oppression. This image of a benevolent, if dialectical, humanism is opposed to Kant's paradoxical formalism, which seems to present Douzinas with a greater challenge. If Kant both categorically ruled out the right to resistance and welcomed the French Revolution, this must appear as a paradoxical position to Douzinas, whose conceptual structure does not operate on an emphatic distinction between resistance and revolution. His definition of resistance is a function of its success, that is, of 'radical socio-political change': depending on the balance of forces, oppositional acts can be categorised as either individual disobedience, collective resistance, or revolution, which together form an 'uneven continuum'.[48] But for Kant these phenomena are not necessarily continuous. On the contrary, the distinction between a successful uprising and installation of a new

[45] Douzinas, 'Right', 94–95.
[46] Douzinas, 'Right', 92.
[47] Douzinas, 'Right', 94.
[48] Douzinas, 'Right', 86.

constitution, on one hand, and mere resistance (as rebellion, revolt, insurrection) to an established constitution, on the other, is crucial.[49]

Rather than addressing those conceptual distinctions, Douzinas refers to Kant's teleological philosophy of history to argue that a right to resistance might be permissible even on Kant's approach. In particular, Kant, in *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*, had argued that the very resistance resulting from the human being's 'unsocial sociability' propels a progressive historical development and that, therefore, the multiple antagonisms and conflicts haunting human society could be seen as contributing to human emancipation (8:20–22). But commissioning these metaphysical speculations for the construction of a right to resistance assimilates Kant to Hegel in a way that obliterates important differences. As Stathis Kouvelakis puts it, 'what Kant contests is not the historically progressive character of "resistance", but the claim that such resistance has the character of *right*. Kant's rigour allows him to state clearly that the revolution is irreducible to any *legal* foundation'.[50] If Douzinas asserts a humanist ethics against Kant's formal-legal rejection of a right to resistance, this fails to account for the complexity of Kant's view of the relation between reason, ethics and law.

We can begin to grasp this with reference to an argument made by Peter Nicholson, who contends that Kant's political philosophy is consistent in that it prohibits resistance not only legally but also morally. Contrary to what Douzinas implies, Nicholson notes that Kant has 'no conception of revolution as totally reshaping the social structure, nor as passing political power to "the multitude of the downtrodden"'.[51] Nicholson claims that both the legal (whether 'there is *no right* to resist') and the moral question (whether 'resistance is *not right*'), while distinct, have to be answered in the negative.[52] The legal rejection follows from the logical contradiction that a right to resistance would imply the possibility of a sovereign who

[49] While Kant does not systematically distinguish between the terms resistance, rebellion and revolution, it is nonetheless clear that only the successful replacement of one constitution with another, better one can serve progress. For the distinction between disobedience and resistance, see Reidar Maliks, *Kant's Politics in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 137–138.
[50] Stathis Kouvelakis, *Philosophy and Revolution. From Kant to Marx*, trans. G.M. Goshgarian (London and New York: Verso Books, 2018), 21.
[51] Peter Nicholson, 'Kant on the Duty Never to Resist the Sovereign', *Ethics*, 86(3), 1976, 216.
[52] Nicholson, 'Duty', 220.

is not truly sovereign (6:320). On the moral side, the rejection follows from the basic principle of the categorical imperative: '*No* maxim permitting resistance can pass the universalizability test, and hence the duty not to resist the sovereign can have no exceptions'.[53] Correspondingly, the right to resistance is rejected on the basis of the principle of publicity since, if the people were to publicly proclaim 'the maxim of their intentions to rebel on certain occasions, it would involve claiming rightful authority over the sovereign, and so on'.[54] From this, Nicholson concludes that if Kant welcomes the French Revolution, he does so exclusively as a 'spectator, addressing other spectators'.[55] A priori, resistance as well as revolution are always wrong in that both violate law. Factually, revolutions can bring about moral progress—but other changes, such as 'slow reform from above can achieve what revolution cannot, the general enlightenment of the people'.[56] On this view, Kant does not welcome revolution, but merely its possible product—which can, however, be attained by other, more desirable paths.

The moral prohibition goes as far as to include a duty not to act even if the only legitimate political action—free speech and publicity—is outlawed: 'If you perform your duty not to resist, you are not responsible, whatever happens, however unjust the sovereign is'.[57] Maybe due to this dire conclusion, some repercussions of which have been analysed by Hannah Arendt in her book on the Eichmann trial,[58] Nicholson's argument was quickly rejected. Thus, Wolfgang Schwarz argues that resistance might be permissible for Kant provided that it is not coercive.[59] But this merely shifts the ambiguity to the definition of coercion. Another common attempt to qualify Kant's rejection of a right to resistance claims that it only applies to a rational constitutional state and not to a situation in which a despot wields unchecked power.[60] As we will see in Chapter 2, the conflict over this issue implies

[53] Nicholson, 'Duty', 222.
[54] Nicholson, 'Duty', 224.
[55] Nicholson, 'Duty', 226.
[56] Nicholson, 'Duty', 227.
[57] Nicholson, 'Duty', 229.
[58] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 135–137.
[59] Wolfgang Schwarz, 'The Ambiguities of "Resistance". A Reply to Peter Nicholson', *Ethics*, 87(3), 1977, 255–259.
[60] For an account of the context of this debate, see Maliks, *Kant's Politics*, chapter 4. Maliks notes that Kant entertained the possibility of a 'lawful resistance' in his writings between 1785 and 1789,

the decision or judgement on whether a ruler is a sovereign or a despot, and with this the question of *who* judges, and *how*.[61]

My interest here is not so much in determining Kant's 'actual' position on those questions. Rather, I cite Nicholson's article because his insistence on the consistency of the duty not to resist the sovereign comes with an interesting observation. In a passage from *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant, permitting a deposed sovereign to attempt to regain the throne, apparently contradicts his own tenet that a revolutionary constitution becomes legitimate and binding once established, no matter how illegal its roots (6:322–323). Opposing Hans Reiss' argument that Kant here grants the former sovereign an exception, Nicholson insists that the latter is *not subject to the law* as long as he has not, in Kant's words, 'retired to the status of a citizen' (6:323). Thus, against Reiss' exceptionalist reading, Nicholson contends that Kant grants the deposed sovereign a 'peculiar status' outside the state and its law.[62] Such a peculiar status puts into question the binary distribution into ruler and ruled and points to a legal order that persists alongside the specific state structure and the roles it assigns. In the passage in question, Kant defuses the problem by attributing its resolution to a different sphere of right, the right of nations. Nonetheless, at this point, while Kant's political philosophy might or might not be consistent on the duty never to resist, it appears that the systematic consistency of his theoretical philosophy could be affected.

If there is an outside to the law that is said to be the a priori condition of justice, the legalistic notion of justice that drives Kant's political philosophy cannot be upheld.

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and moved to reject any state in which two powers would 'simultaneously claim coercive rights' only in the 1793 essay *On the Common Saying: 'This May be True in Theory, but it does not Apply in Practice'* (*Kant's Politics*, 121; 8:273–314). Further on in his overview, Maliks (137) quotes Kant's reply to a 1797 review of the *Doctrine of Right* by Friedrich Bouterwek, which was appended to the *Doctrine of Right* section in the 1798 edition of *The Metaphysics of Morals* (6:356–372). There, Kant asserts that the duty to obey authority is limited to 'whatever does not conflict with inner morality' (6:371), thereby qualifying any duty not to resist by potentially permitting a refusal to obey if the command *dem inneren Moralischen widerstreitet*.

[61] This is the point at which Carl Schmitt inserts his polemic against neo-Kantian legal theory, which he claims obliterates the question of competence and erodes the seriousness of historical reality. See his *Political Theology*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 13–15, as well as *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 29–30.

[62] Nicholson, 'Duty', 225. See Hans S. Reiss, 'Kant and the Right of Rebellion', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 17, 1956, 179–192.

Kouvelakis examines this gap in terms of the excess of the revolutionary event over moral prescriptions, arguing that, 'As soon as morality consents to confront real situations, it splits in two, reflecting the contradictions of those situations within itself and revealing, in the process, its political overdetermination'.[63] In the hands of Kant, this political event becomes subsumed to the juridical-moral principle of publicity and, once transformed into the *res publica*, 'effectively offers, at the phenomenal level, a concrete manifestation of the noumenal order'.[64] This epistemological implication is confirmed by Otfried Höffe's observation that Kant, in rejecting the right to resistance, conflates the a priori and the empirical: 'Kant's uncompromising rejection of the right to resistance is nourished by the erroneous identification of a critical *a priori* idea of reason (the original contract) with an empirical element (the given legal system and governmental power)'.[65] Höffe refers to the fact that, for Kant, the state is a second-order legal institution serving first-order institutions (property, contracts, marriage and family[66]) and depends on its ability to guarantee inalienable human rights. Once the state violates these rights, it fails its purpose according to the a priori laws of reason. In other words, to be consistent with his critique of pure reason, Kant would have to accommodate a right to resistance against the state once the conditions are met. But his rejection is principled. Höffe concludes that 'The irrevocability valid for the original contract, as the critical principle of all government, can never maintain for a product of history'.[67] The opposition of a priori and empirical, of the original and the historical can only be overcome at the cost of a systematic inconsistency,[68] which points to the contamination undermining the organising dichotomies ordering Kant's critical philosophy. Before I address this in

[63] Kouvelakis, *Philosophy and Revolution*, 18.
[64] Kouvelakis, *Philosophy and Revolution*, 19.
[65] Otfried Höffe, *Immanuel Kant*, trans. Marshall Farrier (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 186.
[66] Höffe, *Kant*, 180.
[67] Höffe, *Kant*, 187.
[68] It has been argued that Kant's ethics, if it is not to remain a 'phantasm', presupposes a divine 'status civilis' that exerts a 'iustitita distributiva'—and that this status civilis is realised not in the divine but in the profane state. See Reinhard Brandt, 'Gerechtigkeit bei Kant', in B. Sharon Byrd, Joachim Hruschka, Jan C. Joerden (eds.), *Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik/Annual Review of Law and Ethics*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1993), 33, 37. As we have seen (fn. 60), Kant also gives indications to the contrary, evoking an inner morality or, as Kouvelakis notes, a '*salto mortale*' (8:306) that might justify resistance.

more detail in Chapter 2, however, it is important to establish a conceptual path from the discussion of a right to resistance to that of the place of resistance.

Douzinas' collapsing of the ambiguity of resistance into a revolutionary continuum replaces the a priori with the idea of a collective emancipatory will as the conduit realising the right to resistance. This move begs the question raised by Tamás' objection, according to which the impersonality and abstraction of power under the rule of law and capital makes it 'innocent' in the sense that it is transformed into a cognitive and conceptual order that cannot simply be overturned. As if responding to Douzinas, Tamás writes that 'Servitude and humiliation or deliberate imposition of misery may be consequences of innocent power, but they cannot be willed intentions of power as conceptual systems have no will. Philosophical critique of power must take into account its innocence'.[69] On this view, casting resistance (or revolution, for that matter), in terms of a stand-off between wills must remain inadequate to the task. This is why I suggest addressing the relation between the a priori and history.

As the overview over the philosophical debate has shown so far, resistance cannot be easily grasped through conceptual distinctions such as that between transformation and restoration. To overcome this ambiguity, Douzinas turns to an ethics of will: 'When will no longer recognises itself in existing social relations and their legal codification, disobedience becomes a collective emancipatory will'.[70] Underlying this articulation of will is what Douzinas elsewhere refers to as a 'phatic expression': 'enough is enough'.[71] But what happens if the erosion of self-recognition remains entangled within the conceptual structures of existing social relations? If 'the process of production of new subjectivities' does not automatically raise 'people from takers of orders and commands into self-legislating citizens'?[72] It seems to me that Douzinas cannot answer this question, and probably it is also not what he is interested in. Instead, he identifies critique with melancholy and hopelessness, and melancholy with pessimism.[73] For Douzinas, the fact of resistance is the assertion of individual autonomy over the heteronomy of law, a process in which the former

[69] Tamás, *Innocent Power*, 12.
[70] Douzinas, 'Right', 105.
[71] Douzinas, 'Analytics', 91.
[72] Douzinas, 'Event', 164.
[73] Douzinas, 'Analytics', 80.

'judges the legality of law and its relationship to justice'.[74] At the same time, resistance is said to be 'a law of being', and hence always already inscribed in whatever legal order there might be.[75] From this it appears that there are two different sorts of law, one—autonomous—that implies justice and one—heteronomous—that implies injustice. In the next section, I look at how this opposition links up to the difficulties faced by any attempt to conceive resistance in terms of an ethics.

1.2 From ethics to *ethos* and *topos*: the place of resistance

Douzinas' ethics of resistance[76] has two important elements. One is the idea of 'situated universality', which helps Douzinas adapt Kant's categorical imperative to specific historical, social and political conditions.[77] Contrary to the law, which is universal and applies norms to facts, the 'situational morality' of resistance 'emanates from a unique instance or event that requires a response engaging potentially everyone'.[78] It judges the adequacy of existing norms to specific facts instead of subsuming facts to universalised norms. This situatedness has two moments, the first being disobedience, which negates the adequacy of a norm, the second being resistance proper, which creates new subjectivities. Douzinas does not want to fully abandon the requirements of the categorical imperative in this process: the question 'Can it be universalized?' remains the 'moral litmus test of disobedience'.[79] So while the situation of resistance may be concrete and local, it remains subject to the matrix of particularity and universality, in which achieving the latter remains the goal—it remains 'formally equivalent' to the law.[80] If resistance

[74] Douzinas, 'Event', 163.
[75] Douzinas, 'Event', 162.
[76] A number of recent publications on resistance frame the problem in terms of ethical considerations. See, for instance, Adam Burgos, *Political Philosophy and Political Action. Imperatives of Resistance* (London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), Drew M. Dalton, *The Ethics of Resistance. Tyranny of the Absolute* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), Candice Delmas, *A Duty to Resist. When Disobedience Should be Uncivil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), Chris Henry, *The Ethics of Political Resistance. Althusser, Badiou, Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).
[77] Douzinas, 'Event', 163.
[78] Douzinas, 'Event', 163.
[79] Douzinas, 'Event', 164.
[80] Douzinas, 'Analytics', 95.

first reacts to a shifting balance of forces by restoring the previous balance, it can also exceed this restoration and actively invent new rules and institutions.

A second constitutive element of Douzinas' ethics of resistance can help understand on what basis resistance creates new subjectivities. This is the notion of a 'social ethos'.[81] If modernisation brings with it the threat of what Durkheim calls 'anomie'—the erosion of group life, of social regulation and integration—social ethos is Douzinas' term for the set of 'unspoken conventions and customs supporting integration', 'the informal values, understandings and habits, which regulate communal life and everyday interactions, smoothing the operation of social relations'.[82] Noting the difficult definition of the term, Douzinas grasps social ethos as combining ethical and moral, normative as well as factual elements. This mix of injunctions, customs and mores circumscribes the position of the individual in its community and, 'always situated in place, activity or nation',[83] lies at the origin of situated universality. Douzinas treats this social ethos as prior and external to modernisation and austerity, which he affirms 'have distorted social ethos'.[84] This is where the right to resistance comes in as a safeguard for social ethos: quoting Paolo Virno, Douzinas notes that resistance is 'conservative violence in the good and noble sense of the word'.[85] Contrary to what we might intuitively think, conservation is not necessarily opposed to emancipation. Inversely, as he makes clear in his critique of Ernesto Laclau's theory of populism, Douzinas is acutely aware of the precarious relation between progressive and reactionary forms of resistance. Against the idea of the neutrality of populism, his references to situated universality and to social ethos formulate 'axiological criteria to distinguish between progressive and reactionary "universals" or between radical and fascist rejection of austerity'.[86] While politically it is essential to distinguish between these universals, in order to properly understand the bifurcation between what Douzinas calls the radical and the fascist rejection of

[81] Costas Douzinas, *Philosophy and Resistance in the Crisis. Greece and the Future of Europe* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2013), 49–63.
[82] Douzinas, *Crisis*, 51.
[83] Douzinas, *Crisis*, 53.
[84] Douzinas, *Crisis*, 55.
[85] Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of Multitude*, trans. Isabella Bertoletti, James Cascaito and Andrea Casson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), 42–43. Quoted in Douzinas, *Crisis*, 55.
[86] Douzinas, *Crisis*, 117.

austerity, I think that we have to explore the conceptual and historical ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance more fundamentally.

The distinction between progressive and reactionary forms of resistance might not always be as easy to make as in the case of street fights in Athens, where the threat of direct physical violence enables a quasi-Schmittian discerning of friend and enemy. And even where it seems easy, such as in the increasingly widespread belief in conspiracy theory and its alliance with racism and antisemitism, the question that emerges is what forms of thinking bring people who might otherwise develop more critical standpoints to adopt those 'fascist' views. Douzinas' account, for all the different aspects of resistance he covers, fails to adequately address this ambiguity: resistance is not removed from representation, and its actuality is constantly captured and recaptured by a political spectacle that produces both class struggle and nationalism, both anti-elite struggles and antisemitism. It is the reflexivity of resistance—its being bound up with 'that which exists'—that creates this ambiguity.

If Kant's legalistic notion of justice does not allow for a consideration of what might be just beyond the two poles of logical consistency and conformity with the categorical imperative, it cannot account for the reflexivity of law that is indicated by the fact that some of today's liberal-democratic constitutions (such as the German Basic Law post-1968) incorporate a right to resistance. In Douzinas' phenomenologically enriched account, this formalism is displaced: partially resolved through the emphasis on collective emancipation and the struggle against specific forms of social relation, partially perpetuated by his insistence on the formal equivalence between situated and categorical universality. This equivalence obscures a proper investigation into the place of resistance, which is ambiguous precisely because of the reflexivity of resistance as a both legal and extra-legal phenomenon.

If we accept Tamás' claim that power today is innocent, this does not mean that it is not violent. Rather, analytically it is a matter of detaching violence from its reduction to direct physical violence, such as in clashes with the police. The central role of police, as the institution in which 'the separation of lawmaking and law-preserving violence is suspended', has been pointed out by Walter Benjamin in an essay already

cited above.[87] What is instructive for the present thesis is that Benjamin analyses this suspension as the point in which the metaphysical ends of a legal order communicate with the empirical ends of a given state. This recalls Höffe's observation regarding the separation between the a priori and the empirical in Kant's rejection of the right to resistance. Benjamin examines the possibility of a revolutionary general strike, which is not the same as a revolution measured by its success, by moving it out of the purview of determining and into that of reflective judgement, subjecting Kant's ethics to a critique based on his aesthetics.[88] Benjamin rejects the requirement of the categorical imperative that action, in order to be just, be 'universalizable', instead requiring it to be 'generally valid'.[89] The difference is that the latter pertains to situational justice rather than to a universal right. This is a philosophically more intriguing claim than Douzinas' situated universality in that it challenges the categorical framework of Kantian ethics.

Leaving aside a universalised ethics of resistance, the notion of ethos can be helpful. Douzinas observes that 'Ethics retains a semantic link with the original Greek *ethos*',[90] which means custom, usage, or character. More speculatively, a recent dictionary of ancient Greek notes that the basis of the word 'may derive from the root *d^heh_1- "to put, situate"'.[91] Aside from usage, ethos would thus also refer to a situation or a place (here lies the connection between situated universality and social ethos). Usage, place and situation specify resistance in terms of its historical, geographical, social and political situatedness. But, to adopt Benjamin's analysis for the present purposes, resistance also places *itself* in relation to that which it resists, and actively shapes this relation. Combining the two opposite meanings, ethos provides not only the content of resistance, as in Douzinas' notion of social ethos, but also its form: resistance is both situated and situating. I should spell that out more carefully.

[87] Walter Benjamin, *Critique of Violence*, in *Selected Writings. Volume 1, 1913–1926*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1996), 243.
[88] See Werner Hamacher's development of this in his 'Afformative, Strike', trans. Dana Hollander, *Cardozo Law Review*, 13, 1991, 1133–1157.
[89] Benjamin, *Violence*, 243. In translating 'verallgemeinerbar' as universalizable and 'allgemeingültig' as generally valid, I follow Hamacher's translation in 'Afformative, Strike', 1144–1145.
[90] Douzinas, *Crisis*, 51.
[91] See Robert Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, vol. 1 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 378. This is the same as the root of *thesis*.

Charles Scott reconstructs the notion of ethos based on the word *éthea*, which he traces to the Homeric epics. In both the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, *éthea* denotes the dwelling place of animals, the place to which they are habituated. Herodotus associates these dwelling places with the barbarians, places which, in turn, are associated with resistance to civilisation: 'These places resist Greek civilization. The theme of belonging to a place that is not fully human and that resists civilized transformation also runs through Hesiod's and Theognis's uses of the word'.[92] Comparing ethos to *nomós* (pasture), which is associated with the nomad, Scott observes that in both terms 'habitual practice […] struggles with nomadic, uncivilized separation. This is a fateful struggle. In it the limiting principles of order and random movement without limiting principles unsettle each other'.[93] The common root (*némo*[94]) of *nomós*, pasture, and *nómos*, law, illustrates this struggle between nomadic roaming and legal order. Scott supplements his etymological investigation with a reflection on the modern decline of claims to 'transtemporal authority and being',[95] to which corresponds Heidegger's refusal to engage in an ethics in the universalising sense of the term. Rather, Scott ponders, Heidegger might have had in mind a turning of desire that 'releases people in a direction outside the limits of inspired imagination and spiritual conquest', a direction that is 'both tenuously marked and largely erased in our heritage'.[96] I will return to this notion of direction in my reading of Heidegger in Chapter 2.3. For now, a brief reference to Heidegger's use of ethos suffices.

Heidegger articulates his rejection to provide an ethics through an investigation into the notion of ethos, dwelling place. In his *Letter on Humanism*, he rejects ethics as a discipline that is implicated in delivering 'technological man' over to 'mass society' (*GA9*, 353/255). Ethics being complicit with the waning of thinking that occurs when philosophy turns into a scientific discipline, Heidegger finds a 'more primordial' point of departure in the 'saying of *ēthos*' in Sophocles: '*Ēthos* means abode, dwelling

[92] Charles E. Scott, *The Question of Ethics. Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 143.
[93] Scott, *Ethics*, 143–144.
[94] Beekes, *Dictionary*, 1006.
[95] Scott, *Ethics*, 145.
[96] Scott, *Ethics*, 146.

place. The word names the open region in which man dwells' (*GA9*, 354/256). In Heidegger scholarship, this emphasis on ethos as dwelling place opens up to fundamental-ontological considerations about the specific place of humans in the world, in which the individual human being is marked, for instance, as 'an exceptional site of disclosure and self-concealing, as having an *ethos* that is truly haunting, altogether uncanny, *unheimlich*'.[97] Linking these ontological implications to Foucault's work on ethos and concrete self-formation, William McNeill argues that ethos, in Heidegger, is the realm of an '"originary" *praxis*':[98] the both temporalised and temporalising place of the singular human being in which 'I' finds itself able to choose its action in a sphere prior to the separation of theory and practice.[99] Dwelling place is then radically singular, and it coincides with an individual's life as it occurs in the ecstatic temporality of finitude. Radical singularity means that, in its 'metaphysical neutrality', *Da-sein* is 'not an empty *abstractum* from the ontic, a neither-nor, but what is properly concrete in the origin, the "not yet" of factical dispersion'.[100]

From the Heideggerian emphasis on its singularity, we can therefore retain two traits of ethos relevant for resistance: its unruliness and its concreteness. As we saw in Scott's account, the association with unruliness derives from the attribution, by Greeks—Herodotus, Hesiod and Theognis—of a term used to describe the habitat of animals to a non-Greek, barbarian people. This set-up, in which non-Greeks are associated with animals and opposed to Greek civilisation, positions barbaric ethos as both a lawless, nomadic antagonist and an image of authentic, primitive life suitable for romanticisation by civilisation. To this pre-scientific determination of ethos corresponds that, in Heidegger, dwelling place and region are not strictly spatial categories but integrate spatiality and temporality in a way that aims to resist scientific notions of space and time. Thus, in the *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger grasps *Da-sein* in terms of its 'site for the moment [*Augenblicks-stätte*]', a site that is neither temporal nor spatial but constitutes a primordial 'time-space'

[97] William McNeill, *The Time of Life. Heidegger and Ethos* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), xii.
[98] McNeill, *Life*, 65.
[99] Heidegger writes that 'such thinking is neither theoretical nor practical. It comes to pass before this distinction' (GA9, 358/259).
[100] McNeill, *Life*, 64. McNeill quotes *GA26*, 173/137.

(*GA65*, 374/261). In this, Heidegger's discussion of ethos parallels his use of *topos* or place (*Ort*) in his later work, which I examine in more detail in Chapter 2. Following the etymological considerations just cited, Heidegger uses the notions of ethos and topos to access what he positions as a proper, that is, more concrete and more originary, place.

While I do not intend to adopt this double image of ethos and topos at face value, I want to note here that it captures rather well some of the common associations of resistance with a heroic struggle against the domination of civilisation.[101] Therefore, the opposition of the concrete and the abstract constitutes an important aspect of the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance. In this sense the reference to ethos/topos as usage and place is helpful in understanding the philosophical and political implications of resistance as I address it here. The present thesis works against this identification of place with the concrete by positioning place slightly differently. In the topo-ethical interpretation intimated by Heidegger, the unruliness of ethos is opposed to rule, and its concreteness to abstraction. It is conceived on the basis of that which it is not, leaving it with little specificity of its own. In withdrawing from normative ethics, it assumes the ethereal quality of an obscure negativity. A similar ambiguity characterises the notion of topos, which is more straightforwardly associated with space in a geo- or topographical sense and which has garnered interest both in Heidegger scholarship and in critical human geography and anthropology. Place, by virtue of its capacity to be associated with the body and with specific localities, is here held to offer a critical or ontological distance to abstract space and time, which are conceived as oppressive and totalising. This view has, however, been subject to a critique that points out the mutual implication of place and abstract space-time. This critique marks the limitations of a phenomenological account of place and introduces historically specific social structures into the analysis.

[101] For a Heideggerian affirmation of the resistant potential of place, see, for instance, Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place. Explorations in the Topology of Being* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2012): 'Place is an opaque and evanescent concept, resistant to standard forms of philosophical analysis' (43; similarly, 3–4).

The genealogies of the notion of place supplied by Edward Casey provide an important point of reference for any understanding of place.[102] On Casey's analysis, which is a sustained effort to think place independently from both space and time, place originates in the ancient Greek notion of topos, which plays a significant role in the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle before being superseded by a space-time pattern that is primarily interested in identifying discrete points or moments on a homogeneous line or grid. This homogenisation comes into full blow in early modernity with the collapsing of place into site and position.[103] In this trajectory, which Casey reconstructs in the philosophies of Leibniz and Locke, Newton and Descartes, a 'spatialisation' of place occurs, which reduces place to a relative position in a measurable matrix. Since the late eighteenth century, this trajectory has in turn been superseded by 'temporocentrism', which prioritises linear time (evolutionism, historicism).[104] Both spatialisation and temporocentrism operate in a register that superimposes the specific quality of place—that is, its heterogenous structure and kinship to the event—with homogeneous and linear space-time. Place proper returns in Heidegger, whose later work revolves around a 'topology of Being' that reinstates place in the face of Heidegger's own temporocentrism.[105] Place, on Casey's interpretation, resists the totalisation of abstract space and time: thanks to its 'eventmental power […], place is to be recognized as an undelimited, detotalized expansiveness, resonating regionally throughout the unknown as well as the known universe'.[106] Its conceptual origins are in cosmogony, of which place is the scene or medium, rather than in the totalised whole of the universe, which unilaterally assigns sites and positions. In light of this, place would appear as a privileged category to explore resistance to universalisation and to assert the specificity of particular places against homogenised and linearised space-time.

[102] Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place. A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); *Getting Back into Place. Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).
[103] Edward Casey, 'Smooth Spaces and Rough-Edged Places: The Hidden History of Place', *The Review of Metaphysics*, 51, 1997, 267–297.
[104] Casey, *Fate*, x.
[105] Casey, *Fate*, 284.
[106] Casey, *Fate*, 336.

This sense of place is echoed by many human geographers and anthropologists, who affirm place as a concept capable of spelling out a more originary meaning of the way human beings relate to the world and consider it as proper to the human being as such, [107] formally independent of its social or historical situation and therefore a privileged locus of resistance. In Marc Augé, for instance, this specificity of place is affirmed through the negation of its qualities in its opposite, non-place: 'If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place […] supermodernity produces non-places […], spaces which are not themselves anthropological places'.[108] Similarly delineating the anthropological priority of place over specific epochal integrative principles, Jeff Malpas notes that place is 'that within and with respect to which subjectivity is itself established—place is not founded *on* subjectivity, but is rather that *on which* subjectivity is founded'.[109] When it comes to the critical potential of this notion of place for the analysis of social and political questions, however, substantial objections have been raised. With regard to Augé's non-place, for instance, Peter Osborne observes that, by failing to consider 'the dialectical interiority of non-place to place', the notion remains 'theoretically ambiguous and critically ambivalent'.[110] This sensitivity for the dialectical relation between place and non-place is sceptical of the 'detotalized' exteriority of place to the spatiotemporal totality realised in historically specific social relations. Rather than relying on a purportedly exterior or prior notion of place originating in cosmology, critical theory affirms the need to construct concepts that can overcome the totality from within. On this view, immanent critique rather than retreat to cosmology are required to subvert capitalist subjectivity. In this vein, David Harvey underlines that place is just as socially mediated as other concepts: 'Place, in whatever guise, is like space and time, a social construct. […] The only interesting

[107] Tim Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Ben Anderson and Paul Harrison, eds., *Taking-Place. Non-Representational Theories and Geography* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).
[108] Marc Augé, *Non-Places. An Introduction to Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London and New York: Verso, 2008), 63.
[109] Jeff Malpas, *Place and Experience. A Philosophical Topography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 35.
[110] Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All. Philosophy of Contemporary Art* (London and New York: Verso, 2013), 137–138.

question that can then be asked is: by what social process(es) is place constructed?'.[111] Harvey's question is pertinent in that it implies that social processes affect the formation of concepts, yet it seems to discount whatever autonomy in individual experience of place might remain. It is this relation between experience, concept formation and social relations that interests me in this research.

As the debates on the right to resistance have showed, resistance is bound up with the situation in which it occurs, and its conceptualisation cannot be thought in separation from the social, political, historical, and philosophical context in which it is carried out. While, in the phenomenological tradition following Heidegger, place is associated with an ontological difference that can give more direct access to the orientation of the human being within the world, critical theory cautions that place is no less conceptually implicated in historically specific social relations than are space and time. If the analysis I present in what follows is orientated by the question of the place of resistance, this has to hold in a delicate balance the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance expressed in these debates, and to offer elements for a concept of resistance that reflects the aporias resulting from the attempt to bring any notion of resistance to coincide with the event it tries to grasp. Place, in the way I understand it here, expresses the tension between autonomy and heteronomy, between the concrete and the abstract, between space-time as form and as content of political action. Thus conceived, place opens up a conceptual perspective on the perplexing sense that resistance is always at the same time too little and too much.

[111] David Harvey, 'From Space to Place and Back Again: Reflections on the Condition of Postmodernity', in *Mapping the Futures. Local Cultures, Global Change*, ed. Jon Bird et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 4. For a critique of Harvey's 'economism', see Doreen Massey's 'Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place' in the same volume, 61–62.

Chapter 2. Resistance and amphiboly: Transcendental place and exposition-location

Chapter 1 argued that investigating the ambiguous and reflexive *place of resistance* offers a more promising line of enquiry than yet another attempt to locate it in an ethics or a right. In the present chapter, I lay the ground for this investigation through, first, an analysis of Kant's strategy, in the Amphiboly chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, to contain the contamination between his conceptual binaries and, second, an analysis of Heidegger's appropriation and reworking of this strategy. To prepare this discussion, I link the issues presented in Chapter 1 to the subsequent analyses with reference to the distinction between determining and reflective judgement and its implications for resistance.

2.1 Silent judgement and amphiboly

In Kant's ambiguous stance on resistance, what is ultimately at stake is the problem of judgement on whether a rightful constitution exists or whether the ruler is a tyrant.[112] In *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant is clear that even a highly deficient constitution can approximate and therefore satisfy the idea of a 'perfectly rightful constitution' (6:371–372). The difficulty is that any existing constitution is at most a *respublica phaenomenon* that, by definition, can realise a *respublica noumenon* only in appearance. Kant's Platonist position on this issue is countenanced by his insistence on the responsibility of individuals to judge 'whether the polity is truly a state or not'.[113] The puzzle that this leaves us with is that Kant seems to presume that a right to resist can only exist where authority rules without law, in which case the whole question of a *right* to resistance, at least in as far as it is a legal right, becomes obsolete.[114] It is through judgement that the adequacy of a *respublica phaenomenon* to the requirement of the *respublica noumenon* is determined.

As I noted with reference to Benjamin's argument in *Critique of Violence*, in Kant there are different types of judgement, those which determine and those which are merely reflective, a distinction to which corresponds that between universalisable

[112] See Maliks, *Kant's Politics*, 140.

[113] Maliks, *Kant's Politics*, 142. For Kant's reference to Plato, see A316–319/B372–375, as well as a passage in *The Conflict of the Faculties* (7:91).

[114] Maliks notes that in as far as all law and politics is in the final analysis a means to an end, namely freedom, it is metaphysically, rather than merely positively, predetermined: 'A metaphysically grounded human right to freedom underlies all other rights established under positive law' (*Kant's Politics*, 124).

and generally valid judgements. From this point of view, Kantian ethics are not entirely separable from his aesthetic and theoretical considerations. And indeed, the problem of resistance occurs explicitly in the second book of the *Critique of Judgement*, 'The Analytic of the Sublime', where Kant suggests a relation between aesthetic judgement and resistance.[115] Sublime objects of judgement include, aside from God (5:260) and natural phenomena such as hurricanes, volcanoes, or waterfalls (5:261), also political phenomena such as war. The latter can, Kant says, if conducted orderly and with respect to civil rights, produce 'more sublime' ways of thinking in a people (5:263). All of these sublime objects render 'our capacity to resist […] an insignificant trifle' (5:261) because their overwhelming power induces fear. However, once we have accepted our incapacity to resist and concluded that we should not try to resist the sublime, contemplation of the sublime from a safe distance will 'elevate the strength of our soul above its usual level, and allow us to discover within ourselves a capacity for resistance of quite another kind, which gives us the courage to measure ourselves against the apparent [*scheinbaren*] all-powerfulness of nature' (5:261). In changing our position vis-à-vis the sublime, we can put nature's all-powerfulness into perspective. Our very failure to determine or subsume the sublime is what gives rise to reflective judgement.

As in Kant's reflections on the French Revolution in *The Conflict of the Faculties* (7:85), it is the safe distance of the spectator that enables us to unfold our ability to judge and, by virtue of this, transform our incapacity into an increased capacity to resist. Anticipating the objection that this proviso of a safe distance makes the 'spiritual capacity' for resistance thus established rather useless, Kant specifies that what he is concerned with is the 'vocation [*Bestimmung*] of our capacity […], while the development and exercise of it is left to us and remains our responsibility. And there is truth here, however much the person, if he takes his reflection this far, may be conscious of his present actual powerlessness' (5:262). Now, *Bestimmung* denotes not only a vocation but also a determination, which brings to the surface a symmetry

[115] Joshua D. Lambier, 'A Capacity to Resist: Kant's Aesthetics and the Right of Revolution', *European Romantic Review*, 27(3), 393–403. While Lambier explores the capacity to resist as Kant discusses it in the context of the sublime, others have focused on judgement of taste to rethink political action. The *locus classicus* of this fusion of aesthetics and politics is of course Hannah Arendt, which I will address in more detail in Chapter 5.

between the two sentences, lost in the English translation, between the determination of and the reflection on our capacity to resist. While the general thrust of Kant's argument here is that only by surrendering our ability to determine can we develop reflective judgement, there remains nonetheless a determination that underlies this reflection, and, to the extent that it presupposes at least a determinate concept of 'capacity', it is difficult to conceive it as *merely* reflective. It is this preliminary 'silent judgment',[116] which orientates the development and exercise of reflective judgement, that undermines the distinctions between noumenal and phenomenal, a priori and empirical observed by Kouvelakis and Höffe.

I will not follow Kant's considerations in the third *Critique* further here, but instead focus on the contamination of determination and reflection in the notion of transcendental place introduced in the Amphiboly chapter of the *CPR*.[117] What makes analysis of this chapter better suited for my purposes than Kant's argument in the third *Critique* or another direct attempt to tackle Kant's political philosophy is that, in the Amphiboly chapter, Kant does not easily manage to establish a safe distance between himself and the object of judgement. Without this distance, however, the separation between determination and reflection remains precarious and, in turn, makes the argumentative strategy deployed against amphiboly instructive for understanding the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance. By virtue of its topological framework, the Amphiboly chapter constitutes a privileged site for the investigation into the place—as topos and ethos—of resistance. Before I turn to the analysis of amphiboly, let me briefly elucidate the link between this and what has been said above about the specific challenges of conceptualising resistance.

In their published lectures on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, held in winter 1927/28 in Marburg (Heidegger), and in summer 1959 in Frankfurt (Adorno), both Heidegger and Adorno draw attention to the Amphiboly chapter. Right in his opening lecture,

[116] Béatrice Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, trans. Charles T. Wolfe (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press), 122.

[117] As far as I can see, there exists no recent English-language monograph on the Amphiboly chapter and its conceptual issues. The most recent detailed commentary on the chapter accompanies a separate French translation of the Amphiboly chapter. See the introduction and commentary by Matthieu Haumesser, in Emmanuel Kant, *Critique de la raison pure. De l'amphibologie des concepts de la réflexion. Introduit, traduit et annoté par M. Haumesser* (Paris: Vrin, 2010), 7–21, 67–263.

Adorno explicitly points out the significance of the Amphiboly chapter for the philosophical resistance to Heidegger:

> Let me say right away that the so-called question of "Being" does not represent an innovation when compared to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, or a happy rediscovery. We could rather say that Kant has some very definite and unambiguous comments to make about the question of "Being" in a very central chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, namely the chapter on the Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection. And I may perhaps add that if you do not wish to capitulate to the current talk about "Being" and to succumb helplessly to the suggestive power of this so-called philosophy of "Being", it would be a very good thing for you to familiarize yourselves with these matters.[118]

As Adorno is going to suggest throughout this lecture course, his reading of the Amphiboly chapter is crucial for the understanding of his own 'philosophical position' (*KCPR*, 158). He variously refers to it as 'extremely important' (*KCPR*, 36), 'very characteristic' (*KCPR*, 102), and as possessing 'great force' (*KCPR*, 154). It bears mentioning that this is remarkable given the obscurity of this passage regarding both its systematic and its argumentative place within the first *Critique*. While, as the editor observes in his afterword, the lecture was not intended for publication, it indicates the importance of Kant's critique of reason for Adorno and that notions such as the 'priority of the object' and the thought of the 'non-identical' are directly linked to his reading of Kant (*KCPR*, 286–287).[119]

If Heidegger picked up on the Amphiboly chapter already in the late 1920s, Adorno's critical reference in 1959 can be seen as a conduit linking Adorno's philosophical resistance in post-Nazi West Germany to the intellectual situation of the Weimar Republic. Heidegger's 1927–28 Marburg lecture followed the publication of *Being and Time* (1927) and was synthesised in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, published in 1929. In this early interpretation, Heidegger writes in a 1973 foreword to the fourth edition of the *Kantbook*, 'Kant's text became a refuge, as I sought in Kant an advocate for the question of Being which I posed' (*GA3*, XIV/xvii). With over

[118] Theodor W. Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 3. Henceforth *KCPR*. See also the references in Adorno's 1960/61 lectures, *Ontology and Dialectics*, trans. Nicholas Walker (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019), 28, 37.
[119] See also Brian O'Connor, *Adorno's Negative Dialectics. Philosophy and the Possibility of Critical Rationality* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2004), 99–126.

forty years' distance, Heidegger now disavows this attempt, arguing that, by imposing on it the horizon of *Being and Time*, he had obscured the question proper to Kant's text. While the discussion of the Amphiboly chapter was not included in the first edition of the *Kantbook*, the appendix of the 1973 edition was expanded to include '*Notes on the Kantbook*', which contain some of Heidegger's thoughts on the amphiboly problem (*GA3*, 251–253/176–179).[120] An important contextual aspect of Heidegger's discussion of the amphiboly is that the Marburg lectures and the *Kantbook* fall in the time of increasing political instability in the Weimar Republic and in Europe in general, and Heidegger's thinking cannot be understood in separation from these social and political upheavals and their connections to philosophical debate, as the encounter between Heidegger and Cassirer at Davos in early 1929 illustrates.[121] As Peter Gordon notes in his study of the debate, already at the time there was a vague but abiding sense that it had social and historical implications far beyond academic philosophy.[122] If Heidegger's philosophical opposition to Cassirer, and to neo-Kantianism more generally, has both a conceptual and an historical dimension, his distinct interest in amphiboly during this time is of more than exegetical concern.

As I will argue in 2.3, Heidegger's assessment of the significance of the Amphiboly chapter remains, for all the discontinuities in his thinking, strikingly consistent between his 1927–29 interpretation and his later work. Thus, while in the Marburg lecture he introduces the Amphiboly chapter as an important 'consideration of method' (*GA25*, 107/74), in which he sees Kant reflecting on his own thinking, the 1961 text *Kant's Thesis About Being* describes it as Kant's 'most extreme' step (*GA9*, 472/357). Heidegger does not explicitly link the amphiboly problem to resistance but suggests that following through this most extreme step does not only help overcome the metaphysical relapse of the critical system but also avoid the fallacies of Marxism (*GA9*, 447/338). If, in *Kant's Thesis About Being*, Heidegger does not directly refer to the Frankfurt School—and it is likely that what he has in mind is primarily Sartre's

[120] See also the editor's afterword (*GA3*, 314/220).
[121] See Chapter 4.2.2.
[122] Peter E. Gordon, *Continental Divide. Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 2.

humanist Marxism[123]—the charge can nonetheless be applied to Adorno and his colleagues as well. This is not to say that Heidegger's reading of Marx is adequate, but that it shines a light on how Heidegger positions the amphiboly problem in order to establish, like Adorno, his 'philosophical standpoint'.

The Amphiboly chapter provides a site of struggle for Heidegger's and Adorno's diverging positions, in which Kant's argumentative strategy is translated into opposed strategies of philosophical resistance to the crisis of modernity. Both Adorno and Heidegger challenge Kant on his attempt to establish timeless truth, but their *orientations* differ profoundly: while Heidegger opposes ontological historicity and, later, the topology of being to the fallenness of beings, Adorno seeks to draw out from an immanent point of view the historical implications of the relation between concepts and objects. While both displace Kant's philosophy with reference to time and history, their approaches could hardly be more different. I argue that these divergent orientations are anticipated in Kant's integration of transcendental reflection with transcendental place, in which determining and reflective judgement coincide. Kant's argumentative strategy provides a philosophical basis on which to analyse the ambiguity and reflexivity of the place of resistance. It lays the ground for my reading of Heidegger's appropriation of Kant's strategy for his own purposes, as well as for the critique of Heidegger's account in Chapters 3–5. So, what is this chapter in the *CPR* that accommodates such opposed political positions?

2.2 Kant on amphiboly: The use of place

2.2.1 The place of the Amphiboly chapter

Kant's argumentative strategy in the Amphiboly appendix makes it stand out from the remainder of the *CPR*. If the critical status of the Amphiboly chapter has provoked debates since the first publication of the *CPR* in 1781,[124] this is due, in part, to the

[123] See also the *Letter on Humanism* (*GA9*,313–364/239–276).

[124] See Peter Reuter, *Kants Theorie der Reflexionsbegriffe* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1989), for an overview of German-language responses from the eighteenth century to the 1980s. For the English-language debate, see G.H.R. Parkinson, 'Kant as a Critic of Leibniz. The Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection', *Revue internationale de philosophie*, 35(136–137), 1981, 302–314.

very ambiguity that is its subject.[125] Put bluntly, Kant's argument aims to debunk how both rationalism and empiricism, from opposed perspectives, had committed a transcendental amphiboly by mistaking the word (or concept) *thing* for the thing itself, hence by falling prey to the ambiguity that both links and separates the name from what it names.[126] To circumvent this fallacy, Kant introduces a range of conceptual innovations, among which is the notion of 'transcendental place' (A268/B324, A271/B327). The presentation of this conceptual apparatus is distinct from other parts of the *CPR* in that here we can watch Kant carrying out the philosophical work that is the act of *placing*, an act that, as we will see, involves a delicate balancing of reflection and determination and which, therefore, is instructive for the understanding of resistance proposed here. What makes the Amphiboly chapter as significant is its emphasis on the right *use* of reflection and determination.

More specifically, place is important on three levels: first, with regard to the place that the chapter occupies within the *CPR*, at the transition from the Transcendental Analytic to the Transcendental Dialectic (its architectonic place); second, with regard to its polemic reckoning with a 'fundamental error of occidental thought',[127] through which it asserts the specific place of the critical project within the history of philosophy (its historical place); third, and most importantly, as a crucial element of the conceptual apparatus deployed in the chapter itself (its conceptual place). Since my aim is not primarily to contribute to Kant scholarship but to explore how the theoretical ambiguity tackled by Kant in the Amphiboly chapter can elucidate the political and aesthetic problem of resistance, my focus is on the third aspect. Central

[125] According to the *OED*, amphiboly/amphibology derives from Greek *amphibolos*, from *amphi-* 'both, on both sides' + *ballein* 'to throw'. The term is used in Aristotle's *On Sophistical Refutations* and in Cicero's *Topica*. For an overview of its conceptual history, see Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter, 'Topik, Reflexion und Vorurteilskritik: Kants Amphibolie der Reflexionsbegriffe im Kontext', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 86, 2004, 146–175.

[126] For overviews, see the entries in Julian Würth (ed.), *The Cambridge Kant Lexicon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 17–20; Gary Banham, Dennis Schuling, Nigel Hems (eds.), *The Bloomsbury Companion to Kant* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 168–169; Marcus Willaschek et al. (eds.), *Kant-Lexikon* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 56–57; Howard Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 62–63; Marcus Willaschek, 'Phaenomena/Noumena und die Amphibolie der Reflexionsbegriffe', in *Immanuel Kant, Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, ed. Georg Mohr and Marcus Willaschek (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998), 325–351.

[127] Rudolf Malter, 'Logische und Transzendentale Reflexion. Zu Kants Bestimmung des philosophiegeschichtlichen Ortes der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*', *Revue internationale de philosophie*, 1981, 35(136/137), 294.

to my analysis is the notion of transcendental place, which I use to elucidate the two senses of place I introduced in Chapter 1, ethos and topos. The analysis of Kant's use of the notion of place in the Amphiboly chapter provides the conceptual elements for developing this double perspective with regard to what I have called the ambiguity and the reflexivity of resistance. To begin with, however, a brief look at the architectonic and historical places of the Amphiboly chapter.

By architectonic I refer to the 'systematic unity' (A832/B860) of critical philosophy more generally, as well as to the structure of the *CPR* specifically. The architectonic significance of the Amphiboly chapter consists primarily in the architectonic questions it raises, its position within the first *Critique* being subject to speculation about its provenance and its status within Kant's philosophy.[128] While Adorno and Heidegger are far from the only ones to have recognised the significance of the chapter, its obscure and seemingly non-systematic character has also frequently provoked confusion over its connection to the remainder of the *CPR*.[129] More recent Kant scholarship has begun to appreciate the 'strategic place'[130] of the appendix between the Transcendental Analytic and the Transcendental Dialectic, arguing that it serves to connect the logic of truth to the logic of appearance. Looking back to the Analytic, by introducing the concepts of reflection, the Amphiboly chapter presents an important complement to the deduction of categories, although it has often been noted that the precise relation between categories and concepts of reflection remains unclear.[131]

Looking ahead to the Transcendental Dialectic, the error Kant identifies in the Amphiboly chapter is distinct from the transcendental illusion treated in the Dialectic. If the latter is 'natural and unavoidable' (A298/B354), amphiboly is characterised

[128] Reuter, *Reflexionsbegriffe*, 15–16.

[129] To some, the Amphiboly chapter appears as an instance of Kant's 'patchwork' method (Norman Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'* [Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003], 71, 196, 457): either as a 'remnant from pre-critical times' (Willaschek, 'Amphibolie', 341), or as a chapter that was drafted 'very late, maybe last' (Benno Erdmann, *Kant's Kriticismus in der ersten und in der zweiten Auflage der Kritik der reinen Vernunft* [Leipzig: Leopold Voss], 1878), 37 n. 1, 84 n. 3.

[130] Haumesser, 'Introduction', in *De l'amphibologie*, 7.

[131] Willaschek notes that Kant introduces the concepts of reflection 'without deriving them' ('Amphibolie', 342). Similar assessments are by Henry James Paton ('mysterious concepts'), Eduard von Hartmann and Nicolai Hartmann, for whom their off-handed introduction is scandalous. See Reuter, *Reflexionsbegriffe*, 16–20.

precisely by the fact that, as a problem of a confused use of the understanding, it can be avoided. The amphibolous use of the understanding is distinct both from the antinomy problem and from the paralogisms of the Transcendental Dialectic because the latter two concern errors in the inference of reason (*Vernunftschluss*).[132] Accordingly, in the introduction to the Dialectic, Kant repeats the claim from the Amphiboly chapter that amphibolous errors result from the 'unnoticed influence of sensibility on understanding' (A294/B350), and it is this confusion that transcendental reflection is meant to overcome when it assigns 'every representation […] its place in the faculty of cognition proper to it' (A295/B351). Transcendental illusion, on the other hand, 'carries us away beyond the empirical use of the categories, and holds out to us the semblance of extending the pure understanding' (A295/B352). What causes transcendental illusion is the passing-off of subjective principles as objective ones, while amphiboly concerns the 'subjective conditions under which we can arrive at concepts' (A260/B316). If amphibolous use of the understanding produces 'logical illusion', transcendental illusion, which results from the 'fundamental rules and maxims' of the use of reason, will never 'disappear and cease to be an illusion' (A297–298/B353–354). As Michelle Grier has observed, the distinction between those types of illusions is crucial for Kant's argument in the first *Critique*. Grier argues that, while in the Dialectic Kant offers the doctrine of transcendental illusion, the Analytic and the Amphiboly chapter, in particular, critique the position of 'transcendental realism' for mistaking appearances for things in themselves.[133] Kant's critique of Leibniz and Locke, then, serves to lay the foundation not only for the rejection of general metaphysics (ontology) in the Analytic but also for that of special metaphysics, carried out in the Dialectic.

What the two approaches grouped under the label of transcendental realism—Leibnizian rationalism and Lockean empiricism—have in common is their failure to acknowledge the kind-distinction between the two faculties, understanding and

[132] Reuter, *Reflexionsbegriffe*, 208–209.

[133] Michelle Grier, *Kant's Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 98. While Kant uses the phrase 'transcendental realism' only later in the Transcendental Dialectic (A396, A543/B571), Grier contends that 'the materials for a critique of transcendental realism are well in place in the Analytic, long before Kant officially introduces either the doctrine of transcendental illusion, or his theory of reason and ideas' (99).

sensibility.[134] In the Transcendental Aesthetic, Kant establishes this disanalogy and relates them through the pure a priori intuitions, space and time. Those 'principles of a priori cognition' (A22/B36) are the insuperable and 'indubitably certain' (A48/B66) subjective conditions of possibility of human judgement (B73). Their introduction is crucial for the distinction of the critical from all previous philosophy, and Kant already in the Aesthetic rehearses his critique—which the Amphiboly chapter elaborates—of 'Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy' (A43–44/B60–62). If rationalism and empiricism commit what Grier translates as the 'transcendental employment [*Gebrauch*] of the understanding',[135] this fails to adequately consider the complicated connection between concepts and appearances that results from the disanalogy. From this 'misemployment', which the act of transcendental reflection is meant to overcome, results a twofold judgemental error that conflates both logical with material principles and logical with material objects.[136] As use or employment of the understanding, the act of transcendental reflection belongs not to general logic, which abstracts from the content of thinking, but to special logic, in which this abstraction does not occur (see A52/B76–77). Following Melissa McBay Merritt, who refers to general logic as domain-independent and to special logic as domain-relative, it can moreover be noted that transcendental reflection is not an act of pure (general or special) but of applied logic: if the former is concerned with 'constitutive requirements on thought', transcendental reflection is a '*normative* requirement',[137] indicating the ethical aspect of the Amphiboly chapter. This reference to the ethical stakes of Kant's theoretical argument in the Amphiboly chapter indicates that, in the act of transcendental reflection, both constitutive and normative aspects are at play, which I take to support my claim that Kant's theoretical philosophy can help us understand the political problem of resistance.

[134] Overcoming the impasses of both dogmatic (rationalist) and sceptic (empiricist) metaphysics is what motivates the critical project as a whole. See Eckart Förster, *The Twenty-Five Years of Philosophy. A Systematic Reconstruction*, trans. Brady Bowman (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2012), 17–22.
[135] Grier, *Transcendental Illusion*, 94.
[136] Grier, *Transcendental Illusion*, 95–96.
[137] Melissa McBay Merritt, 'Varieties of Reflection in Kant's Logic', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 23(3), 2015, 497. Similarly, Heßbrüggen-Walter, 'Topik', 159, n. 38.

As for the historical place of the critical project, Kant conceives his effort in the first *Critique* to reground metaphysics as a whole 'revolution of the mode of thought' (BXVI). Analogously to the Copernican revolution in natural science, this 'altered method of our way of thinking' (BXVIII) diverges from the traditional metaphysical conception, according to which 'all our cognition must conform to the objects', by assuming that, inversely, 'the objects must conform to our cognition, which would agree better with the requested possibility of an *a priori* cognition of them' (BXVI). The Amphiboly chapter shows just how difficult this undertaking is in a particularly acute way because Kant here directly tackles the most influential German-language philosophical current at his time, 'Leibniz-Wolffian doctrine' (A273/B329).[138] For the present purposes, Kant's revolutionary philosophical vocation puts the argumentative strategy in the Amphiboly chapter in a specific light, since it is here that Kant carries out the act that is meant to go the whole way, to achieve an '*entire* [*gänzliche*] revolution' (BXXII, my emphasis). My wager is that Kant's 'entire revolution' in theoretical philosophy faces aporias that are instructive for understanding the aporias of political revolution and, with it, the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance. Revolution and resistance form a continuity-discontinuity that comes to a halt when the deposed sovereign needs to be replaced, when the throne is empty. The Amphiboly chapter enacts this replacement philosophically and, as such, its argumentative strategy 'includes within it a counter-movement to both unification and dispersal'.[139] Put differently, Kant, in the Amphiboly chapter, mounts resistance *both* to all previous philosophy *and* to the (anticipated) failure of his 'entire revolution'.

2.2.2 Place in the Amphiboly chapter: The incongruity of reflection and determination

Since my main goal here is to draw out how the Amphiboly chapter presents a particularly clear illustration of the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance, the present discussion is limited to the analysis of Kant's use of place in this part of the

[138] That Kant's critique is not adequate to Leibniz's philosophy has been argued since early on. Already Gebhard Ulrich Brastberger refers to it as a '*Gefecht mit einem selbstgeschaffenen Gespenst*' (*Untersuchungen über Kants Critik der reinen Vernunft* [Halle: Gebauer], 1790, 254), and the sense that Kant constructed a bogeyman based less on Leibniz's own philosophy than on Wolff's and Baumgarten's modifications and eighteenth century *Schulphilosophie* is widely acknowledged but of no further relevance here. See Reuter, *Reflexionsbegriffe*, 12–15.

[139] Howard Caygill, *On Resistance. A Philosophy of Defiance* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 7.

CPR. What I want to show in this analysis is how the apparently inconsistent or dynamic character of Kant's argument in the Amphiboly chapter is due to the fact that Kant here both critiques the rationalist and empiricist amphibolies and, to the extent that he aims at systematic integration, institutes a new, albeit more complex amphiboly. This double move is expressed in the relation between transcendental reflection and pure forms of intuition, which pivots around transcendental place and transcendental topic. The specific character of this relation gives a clear idea of how ambiguity (amphiboly) is tied up with reflexivity.

In the Amphiboly chapter, Kant undertakes to clearly distinguish the transcendental from the empirical use of the understanding and at the same time to specify their relationship. To this end, Kant introduces a notion of reflection (*Überlegung* or *reflexio*) that is not concerned with 'objects themselves' but with the 'state of mind [*Zustand des Gemüts*] in which we first prepare ourselves to find out the subjective conditions under which we can arrive at concepts' (A260–261/B316–317). This distinction marks the fact that what we are dealing with here is explicitly not judgement itself, but an *act* that 'all judgements […] require' and which Kant calls 'transcendental reflection' (A261/B317). This reflection prepares the mind for the use of cognition but is itself not part of cognition in the narrow sense indicated by the phrase 'use of the understanding'. Rather, it reflects on the powers of cognition themselves and locates representations either in pure understanding or in sensibility. Transcendental reflection is a subjective act that, Kant insists, must be distinguished from 'all objective judgments' because it determines the place in which concepts of reflection 'subjectively belong to each other': 'transcendental reflection […] contains the ground of the possibility of the objective comparison of the representations to each other' (A261–263/B317–319). In as far as this subjective act of placing prepares the ground for judging, it differs from the use of the understanding based on 'habit' or 'inclination' (A260/B316). In that sense, it makes up the 'pre-history' of any objective judgement.[140] Given that Kant insists that transcendental reflection is a 'duty from which no one can escape if he would judge anything about things *a priori*'

[140] See Willaschek, 'Amphibolie', 341.

(A263/B319), it is remarkable that it does not appear anywhere else in the first *Critique*.[141]

Failure to carry out the duty of transcendental reflection results in the confusion of the empirical and transcendental uses of the understanding. This is the amphiboly that, Kant claims, Leibniz and Locke equally committed. Despite their apparently opposing views on the status of understanding and sensibility, both fail to carry out the reflexive ordering that would equip them to adequately address the issue of the relation between both faculties. By grounding their standpoints in either understanding or sensibility, they fail to acknowledge the 'conjunction [*Verknüpfung*]' (A271/B327) of both that characterises the relation between human cognition and the world and that requires specification through the act of transcendental reflection. The underlying claim is that the kind-distinction between understanding and sensibility must not be thought in terms of an either-or but as the background against which a complex cognitive constellation of concepts, representations, appearances and objects arises. In the Amphiboly chapter, Kant specifies this constellation so as to overcome the amphibolous disagreement between Leibnizian rationalism and Lockean empiricism, both of which are but variations on the mistaken belief that the true nature of the human constitution can be grasped without a prior determination of the parameters that order cognition.

The resulting confusion of appearances with the true nature of things can only lead to an illusion. As Kant suggests, Leibniz and Locke in this regard continue the tradition of sophistry: they are like the 'schoolteachers and orators' who, 'in order to hunt up certain titles of thinking to find that which best fits their current matter […] rationalize or garrulously chatter about it with an illusion [*Schein*] of thoroughness' (A268–269/B324–325). This tradition is what Kant's revolution is meant to overthrow. Transcendental reflection then has two tasks: on the one hand, to clear away the rationalist 'intellectualisation' of objects as immediately given to the understanding (and, inversely, of the empiricist 'sensitivisation' of concepts as sense data)

[141] Two exceptions are the cross-reference in A295/B351 and a more obscure passage in A175/B217. It should be noted that Kant, neither in the A nor the B edition of the second passage, actually refers to transcendental *reflection* in this passage. For an overview of the different editorial interpretations, see Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1998), 273 n. 13.

(A271/B327); on the other hand, to introduce a new twofold determination that, first, makes objects recede behind appearances and the way we represent the latter and, second, assigns to any representation a place according to whether it belongs to pure understanding or to sensibility. The reflective act itself is not placed in either of the two powers of cognition, but prior or external to the separation.

The counterpart of transcendental reflection is 'logical reflection' (A262/B318), which is not in itself amphibolous but comes to play a crucial role in producing illusion when used without prior grounding through transcendental reflection. Logical reflection denotes a reflection based on already moulded categories and concepts that have not been subjected to scrutiny as to their place in the powers of cognition. It is a 'mere comparison, for in its case there is complete abstraction from the cognitive power to which the given representations belong' (A262–263/B318). Contrary to this abstraction to 'logical form', transcendental reflection pertains directly to the 'content of concepts', that is, 'the things themselves' (A262/B318). Preparing the subjective ground of possibility for the objective comparison of particular representations in logical reflection, only transcendental reflection implies an individual 'act [*Handlung*]' in the emphatic sense: through it, 'I make the comparison of representations in general with the cognitive power in which they are situated, and through which I distinguish whether they are to be compared to one another as *belonging* to the pure understanding or to pure intuition' (A261/B317).What occurs in amphiboly is the failure to account for the cognitive ground on which alone judgements can be valid.

But since all this remains rather difficult to grasp, Kant needs something more illustrative to make the distinction palpable. Therefore, he specifies the task of transcendental reflection as the 'determination of the place where the representations of the things that are compared belong':

> Allow me to call the position that we assign to a concept either in sensibility or in pure understanding its *transcendental place*. In the same way, the estimation of this position that pertains to every concept in accordance with the difference in its use, and guidance for determining this place for all concepts in accordance with rules, would be the *transcendental topic*, a doctrine that would thoroughly protect against false pretenses [*Erschleichungen*] of the pure understanding and illusions [*Blendwerken*]

> arising therefrom by always distinguishing to which cognitive power the concepts properly belong. (A268/B324)

So, to avoid amphiboly and its attendant pretences and illusions, what we require is a subjective reflection that precedes objective judgement and that determines the place of representations or concepts within a topic. All of this, both the act and the order that it yields, is, though describing an act of applied logic, characterised as transcendental. The fact that Kant uses a *spatial metaphor* (place) to *orientate* transcendental reflection (to which, since it determines place, we might refer as an 'act of reflection-determination') has important implications on two levels.

First, there is a reason for the metaphoric character of the notion of place. Strictly speaking, it makes no sense, within the framework of the *Critique*, in which concepts are by definition products of the understanding, to suggest that concepts could be located *either* in sensibility *or* in pure understanding. As Heßbrüggen-Walter observes, this apparent inconsistency is not one if we limit the scope of the claim to the use of concepts in judgements ('in accordance with the difference in its use'), which require *justification* either through sensibility or through the understanding.[142] The transcendental place of concepts and representations is, then, a '*locus* of justification'[143] for different types of judgement. Accordingly, the fact that place is used as a metaphor here does not diminish its significance—on the contrary, it is only on the condition of its metaphoric character that it can integrate reflection and determination. It is in this sense, as both spatial and justificatory, that transcendental place provides a 'topo-ethical' notion in the double sense outlined in Chapter 1.2.

Second, the fact that place and topic play on a spatial register has led several interpreters to refer to Kant's argument as *topological*, to denote that the allocation of places itself is at stake here.[144] But it is also a *topographical* one, in the precise sense that, in as far as the transcendental topic allocates places 'in accordance with rules', it transforms the places that transcendental reflection provides and which, since transcendental reflection is what initially determines, cannot be predetermined by existing rules, into mere positions within a preestablished matrix. Put differently,

[142] Heßbrüggen-Walter, 'Topik', 149–150, 172.
[143] Heßbrüggen-Walter, 'Topik', 163.
[144] Reuter, *Reflexionsbegriffe*, 211–212.

there is a tension between the topological and the topographical aspect, that is, between the emphasis on the reflexive act of placing, on the one hand, and the authority of the rules adduced by the transcendental topic, on the other. This distinction between topology and topography elucidates the twofold strategy Kant pursues in the Amphiboly chapter.[145] Kant's use of a spatial imagery to illustrate transcendental reflection must strike one as odd. If Kant insists that transcendental reflection is prior or external to the division between the cognitive powers, it seems strange that a spatial imagery from ancient rhetoric should be appropriate to describe the act of reflecting on and determining the subjective conditions under which concepts can be gained at all. But this spatial imagery is essential in that it provides a prior orientation for thinking, which Kant elaborates in two essays from 1768 and 1786, respectively.[146]

In the 1768 essay *Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Regions in Space*,[147] Kant designates as 'region' (*Gegend*) the relation between 'absolute space' and 'thing' in contrast to 'position' (*Lage*), which registers the relations among things (2:377). Anticipating the distinction between the transcendental and the logical, the region that binds the thing to absolute or '*original space*' (2:383) exceeds the relation between actual things. Since absolute space exists '*independently of all matter*', '*as itself the ultimate foundation of the possibility of the compound character of matter*' and as '*a reality of its own*' (2:378), there is a fundamental difference between regional and positional space. Kant famously illustrates this with recourse to the ambiguity that characterises 'incongruent counterparts': while the positions of left and right hands are 'perfectly similar and equal' there remains 'an inner

[145] Jeff Malpas and Günter Zöller explore the distinction between a transcendental and an empirical topography in Kant, suggesting that the former operates with a transcendental concept of place, while the latter unfolds around a more narrow, geographical notion of place. Contrary to my argument, however, they treat these uses as conceptually separable and thus tend to obscure the entanglement of both, which is also indicated by their one-sided understanding of amphiboly. See Jeff Malpas and Günter Zöller, 'Reading Kant Topographically: From Critical Philosophy to Empirical Geography', in *Contemporary Kantian Metaphysics*, ed. Roxana Baiasu, Graham Bird, A.W. Moore (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 162, n. 4.

[146] Concerning the plausibility of Kant's discussion of left and right from today's point of view, see Sven Bernecker, 'Kant on Spatial Orientation', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 20(4), 2010, 519–533.

[147] I have not followed Walford's translation of '*Gegend*' as 'direction', since 'direction' also translates '*Richtung*' in the same essay. Although the translator notes (2:368, n. g) that the first indicates an orientation, the latter a motion, he translates both as direction, a decision justified in a separate note (456–457, n.1). In the present context, it is important to be able to distinguish *Gegend* from *Richtung*.

difference between the two' that cannot be accounted for by the concept of position (2:382).[148] To resolve the apparent contradiction between perfect similarity and inner difference, Kant argues that an 'inner ground' orientates what are merely 'external relations' (2:382–383) between positions. These two types of relation are incommensurable, since the former transcendentally orientates, that is, gives direction (*Richtung*) to the latter and is therefore irreducible to a mere position in empirical space. It is our situatedness in regional space that enables us to conceive left and right hands as both equal and different. By referring to the incongruity between hands, Kant evokes a pre-philosophical experience accessible to everyone to elucidate a philosophical problem.

Kant returns to this experience of incongruity in the 1786 essay *What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking*, where the irreducible difference between region and position is expressed as '*subjective* ground of differentiation' (8:135). Kant presents this subjective ground as the '*feeling*' of a bodily incongruity that is in dissonance with what appears to be a lack of difference in the outward 'display […] in intuition' (8:134–135). What in the earlier essay was called the 'inner ground' of the incongruity is now specified as the

> subjective ground for presupposing and assuming something which reason may not presume to know through objective grounds, and consequently for *orienting* itself in thinking, solely through reason's own need, in that immeasurable space of the supersensible, which for us is filled with dark night. (8:137)

Kant resolves the dissonance by first accepting the incongruity as '*a priori* a difference in the position of the objects' and then—in a phrasing that strongly resonates with the description of transcendental reflection—deriving from it a 'faculty for determining position according to a *subjective* ground of differentiation' (8:135). Again, there is more to spatial relations than the mere relations between things: without the a priori difference between left and right, orientation would be impossible. As the title indicates, what is at stake here is not only orientation in space but *in thinking* itself. Kant calls this 'subjective ground' (8:135) the '*right* of reason's

[148] Kant reiterates this point in the *Prolegomena*, section 13 (4:285–286).

need' (8:137). The experienced spatial incongruity is translated into an incongruity that orientates thinking, that is, reflection and determination.

Kant's explications, in conditioning geographical orientation on a subjective pre-orientation, offer if not an answer to then at least a possible explanation for why the Amphiboly chapter does not supply any criteria 'whereby one can actually ascertain in which "power of cognition" representations "belong together"':[149] the act of transcendental reflection is orientated subjectively and, in as far as it is inscribed in a spatial imagery, implicitly guided by an incongruity. Belonging (of concepts and representations) is established by place as a notion that itself does not belong. Place takes its direction from a pre-philosophical experience accessible to everyone and at any time, such as the incongruity between left and right. Kant's philosophical resistance to Leibniz, as expressed in the critique of amphiboly, is complemented by the institution of a new, subjectively grounded order. But at the same time, the systematic impetus of the critical project requires that this subjective orientation be quasi-objective, and this is what the transcendental topic as a rule-bound matrix of order provides. It is here that place and topic diverge: while the former remains open to transcendental reflection, the latter orders in accordance with determinate rules. In this sense, the spatial imagery is internally disrupted and ambiguous.

If the use of a spatial imaginary to illustrate transcendental reflection can be said to 'spatialise' the terms of Kant's argumentative strategy, its use in this context at the same time de-spatialises the notion of 'place' and invests it with a connotation that exceeds the pure forms of intuition. As such, it is not restricted to a determinate position in space. Rather, it mediates transcendental reflection and transcendental topic, just as the pure forms of intuition mediate understanding and sensibility. In as far as its spatial connotation expresses a dominance of space over time in an overall critical framework founded on the unification of space *and* time as pure forms of intuition, the imagery of place and topic functions as a spatio*temporal* imagery. While rationalism and empiricism had, on Kant's reading, failed to consider the specific role of space and time in mediating understanding and sensible intuition, Kant's own spatiotemporal imagery equivocates between a merely subjective and a quasi-

[149] Willaschek, 'Amphibolie', 341.

objective status of space, time and place and, at least when it comes to transcendental reflection, tends to give priority to space. Given its function as illustrating the act of transcendental reflection, transcendental place cannot itself be subject to this act. As a metaphor, its spatiotemporal determination remains obscure and yet effective. Transcendental topic, removed from the purview of transcendental reflection, itself appears as curiously timeless. The question this raises is to what extent transcendental reflection is dominated by a specific spatiotemporal imagery. In any case, Kant's use of this imagery indicates the precarious separation between transcendental reflection, on the one hand, and logical determination under the pure forms of intuition, on the other.

This issue also manifests in the status of the distinction between form and matter. This distinction, which is crucial for Kant's transcendental philosophy, is here listed as one of the four pairs of concepts of reflection. Arguing against rationalism and empiricism, Kant states that the 'possibility [of matter] presupposes a formal intuition (of space and time) as given' (A268/B324). Leibniz's view of the precedence of matter over form, on the contrary, presupposes that pure understanding can be directly applied to objects, and that space and time pertain to these things themselves (A275/B331). Kant attributes this fallacy to the abstract onesidedness of Leibniz's approach:

> The mistake […] lies in this: that […] the objects, i.e., possible intuitions, are made to conform themselves to concepts, but concepts are not made to conform themselves to possible intuitions (on which alone rests their objective validity). The cause of this, however, is in turn that apperception and, with it, thinking precede all possible determination of the arrangement of representations. (A289/B345)

Transcendental reflection describes this act of thinking under the impression of possible intuitions and the pure forms that determine them without being qualities of the objects of cognition. Since it concerns only the ground of that possibility and, rather than reflecting on determinate representations, forms a general capacity to place concepts and representations, the relation of the act of transcendental reflection to the forms of intuition must remain obscure. This is only complicated by the fact that it is tied up with transcendental place. However, the status of place as metaphor allows Kant to complicate the relation between concept and appearance

in a way that both deactivates the direct grasp of objects by the perceiving subject and activates transcendental reflection as an at once reflexive and determining force.

To the amphiboly resulting from a lack of reflection on the transcendental place of representations, Kant opposes the conscious determination of this place according to a transcendental topic. While transcendental reflection, as a questioning of positions, supplies the topological aspect to this double task, transcendental topic, as a reordering into positions, constitutes the topographical element. Transcendental place binds together those opposing elements of Kant's argumentative strategy, which puts it at centre stage of conceptual integration in this context. Whereas the amphibolous strategy, in its failure to reflexively determine the transcendental place of representations, confuses phenomena and noumena and produces illusion and pretences, transcendental reflection fulfils the requirements of the 'revolution of the mode of thought' projected by the *CPR*. But this fulfilment, in as far as it relies on the ambiguity of place, remains an uneasy one that does not settle the difficulties Kant tackles in the Amphiboly chapter.

The ambiguity boils down to the tension between the notion of place and the pure forms of intuition. Place is used with two wholly different connotations in the Amphiboly chapter: while in most instances it is synonymous with an empirical position in a constituted space (A263–264/B319, A272/B328, A282/B338), this is not the case when employed in the context of transcendental reflection. There, Kant invests it with a metaphorical meaning that exceeds that of an empirical spatial position, and which serves to bind the act of transcendental reflection to a transcendental topic. As indicated above, what is important here is that place, as an illustration determined by a specific spatiotemporal imaginary, comes to represent an activity that itself is said to be at the origin of the distribution of representations among the powers of cognition. Since, as we saw with reference to the 1786 essay, the activity of thinking is orientated by an experienced incongruity, it is in place that this incongruity comes to be represented.

Therefore, the link between incongruity and place is the crux of the amphiboly problem. On the one hand, it connects the critical method to an everyday spatiotemporal imaginary and illustrates how both rationalism and empiricism fail

the standards of a transcendental topography of cognition. However, on the other hand, place also exceeds this imaginary, enlisting spatiality as a determining force that affects, and is affected by, the status of the pure forms of intuition. Paradoxically, if it is the notion of place that haunts Kant's critique of amphiboly and that threatens to pull it back into the confusions that it set out to leave behind, the ambiguity that it gives rise to is also what makes his argumentative strategy in the Amphiboly chapter as productive. This strategy is not a mere concern of theoretical philosophy but, in as far as it exemplifies the difficulty of upholding the fundamental distinctions between noumenal and phenomenal, a priori and empirical, reflection and determination, provides a powerful conceptual framework for considering the problem of resistance. As I have argued in the Introduction, the challenge of thinking resistance lies in conceptualising what occurs as a multiplicity of appearances, that is, in determining those appearances as positions in an antagonistic relationship. Thus, it is the specific mode in which Kant here ties the operations of thinking, reflection and determination, to the notions of transcendental place and transcendental topic that opens up a perspective through which the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance can be analysed.

2.2.3 Amphiboly and the resistance to 'that which exists'

For the present purposes, Kant's act of placing in the Amphiboly chapter can serve to expose the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance. I read Kant's argument in those passages as pursuing a twofold philosophical strategy of resistance: first, a revolutionary resistance to the metaphysics of old, which takes the form of the kind-distinction between faculties and the resulting requirement for transcendental reflection. Second, a counter-revolutionary resistance to the anticipated failure to consolidate a new (critical) metaphysics, which takes the form of the specific incongruity Kant introduces to orientate transcendental reflection. By both refuting amphiboly and reproducing it on another level, Kant balances two aspects that I argue are vital for an understanding of how resistance constitutes itself. I suggest that, on the one hand, transcendental reflection is subjectively grounded in a pre-philosophical, experiential incongruity, which leans on the analogy Kant draws between orientation in space and orientation in thinking. This incongruity, in as far as it grounds the kind-distinction between faculties, provides Kant with the basis on

which to reject the rationalist and empiricist fallacies. On the other hand, however, this subjective incongruity is referred to a transcendental topic that orders thinking 'in accordance with rules' and therefore serves as an objective frame of reference.

My wager is that it is in transcendental place that those two conflicting aspects are delicately balanced. Binding reflection to determination, in place reflexivity and ambiguity coincide. If place represents the spatial incongruity as one of thinking, this is, as my analysis of Kant's argumentative strategy in the Amphiboly chapter sought to demonstrate, highly ambiguous because place both retains a spatial connotation and, in its transcendental function, exceeds the two pure forms of intuition, space and time. Those two opposed steps, then, can be considered aspects of the double move involved in resistance that I pointed out in the Introduction. More precisely, Kant's argumentative strategy can help specify the ambiguity of the phrase 'that which exists'. Let me explain this with reference to Kant's emphasis on the distinction between, first, contradiction and opposition and, second, prejudice and the critical suspension of judgement.

In the Amphiboly chapter, Kant describes one of the guiding distinctions that transcendental reflection can provide in the context of his discussion of the second pair of concepts of reflection, agreement and opposition (A264–265, A272–275/B320–321, B328–330). With recourse to the distinction between phenomenon and noumenon, Kant distinguishes 'real opposition' (*realer Widerstreit*) from logical 'contradiction' (*Widerspruch*): while the latter indicates a conceptual negation, the former points to 'reciprocal destruction, where one real ground cancels out the effect of another, the conditions for the representation of which we find only in sensibility' (A274/B330). Rationalism, representing all matter as noumena, must remain blind to this specific opposition that pertains only to phenomenal appearances. While, for Leibniz, all oppositions are merely conceptual contradictions, critical philosophy breaks with this by introducing the possibility of a 'mutual abolition' (A274/B330) of realities. Failing to acknowledge the gap between concept and object, rationalism ignores the importance of specifying their relation adequately. To dispel its illusion of thoroughness and the continuity this implies between object and concept, the act of transcendental reflection-determination relates the two sides through the pure

forms of intuition, space and time. Only this prior act can establish the kind-distinction of understanding and sensibility and at the same time uphold their asymmetry. Therefore, it is the condition for accessing sensible phenomena and, with it, reality.

To underline this point, Kant gives the example of 'two moving forces in the same straight line that either push or pull a point in opposed directions' (A265/B321) and claims that rationalism, which abstracts from direction and only retains movement, cannot account for why those otherwise identical forces cancel one another. My point here is not to assess the adequacy of Kant's critique of rationalism but to suggest that this distinction between a rationalist concept of movement that cannot account for diverging directions and a critical sensitivity to this divergence resonates with that between objective and subjective orientation, so much so that the difference between directions can be seen as another instantiation of the incongruity that is required for orientation in thinking. To counter rationalism's claim that any opposition irreducible to contradiction is but a result of the confusions produced by 'the limits of created beings', Kant maintains that 'the conditions for the representation' of a 'real ground' can be found 'only in sensibility' (A273–274/B329–330). We can only access what is given in sensibility if we do not abstract from space and time, which, as pure forms of intuition, mediate the relation between understanding and sensibility (A283/B339).

In *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, Kant captures the irreducibility of what is given in sensibility to concepts in the formula 'dari, non intelligi' (4:484).[150] Arguing that the difference between 'two circular motions that are otherwise equal in all parts, but differ in direction […] can certainly be given in intuition, but can in no way be captured in clear concepts, and thus cannot be rationally explicated', Kant concludes that space (like time) 'belongs merely to the subjective *form* of our sensible intuition of things or relations, which must remain completely unknown to us as to what they may be in themselves' (4:484). By thus allocating space to the realm of subjective form, Kant makes clear that 'dari, non intelligi' does not imply a strict dualism. Rather, as subjective forms of intuition, space and time are both given, in

[150] See Bernecker, 'Kant on Spatial Orientation', 521–522.

the sense that they determine whatever appearance we experience, and not given, in the sense that they are not themselves appearances. This aporetic status of space (and time) is expressed in the transcendental topic that situates transcendental reflection, an act that itself is meant to be situating—whence my argument above that transcendental place gives orientation by integrating the incongruity of reflection and determination.

If we transpose this to the problem of resistance as I have presented it here, the ambiguity and reflexivity of the place of resistance derives from its being both situated and situating. The starting point for the analysis of resistance is, therefore, its place between a transcendental reflection and a transcendental topic. What does this imply for the notion of judgement at stake in resistance?

That the argumentative strategy Kant deploys in the Amphiboly chapter is relevant for political and social questions is clear from Kant's definition of transcendental reflection as a requirement of all judgement. If transcendental reflection precedes judgement, it links, following Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter, two types of preliminary, non-justified judgement: prejudice and provisional judgement.[151] The former results from a passive use of reason, be it from habit or inclination or from immaturity or submissiveness to an authority, while the latter refers to judgements that are hypothetical or directed towards the formation of judgement proper. Whether a judgement hardens into prejudice or remains within the dynamic of provisional judgement depends on reflection. There are two types of reflection to justify a judgement. First, what Heßbrüggen-Walter calls 'retrospective reflection' ('*nachgängige Reflexion*'), which determines where a given representation belongs and thereby transforms provisional into determining judgement; second, transcendental (or 'antecedent' [*vorgängige*]) reflection, which, as we have seen, involves comparison not of specific, given representations, but 'of representations in general' (A261/B317).[152] What transcendental reflection delivers is a decision on whether a provisional judgement is a 'potential judgement of thought' or a 'potential

[151] Heßbrüggen-Walter, 'Topik', 152–155. McBay Merritt's suggestion that Heßbrüggen-Walter fails to connect the discussion of prejudice with Kant's notion of applied logic ('Varieties', 480, n. 7) overlooks Heßbrüggen-Walter's explicit discussion of those issues in 159, n. 38.
[152] Heßbrüggen-Walter, 'Topik', 162–168.

judgement of cognition'. It is less the outcome of the decision about the place of representations in specific cases that matters here than the capacity to decide that is assigned to transcendental reflection.[153]

This difference is crucial in the present context. It clarifies why I set out my argument on resistance from the amphiboly problem rather than from the capacity to resist Kant introduces in the third *Critique*. What is at stake is not reflective judgement but the reflection on the generation of judgement itself, because it is in this moment prior to the distinction between reflective and determining judgement that the aporetic relation between reflection and determination is most acute: it is here that we can distinguish between mere prejudice and provisional judgement, a distinction that allows specifying the ambiguity of resistance through its reflexivity. If resistance is conceived in analogy with the transcendental place that connects transcendental reflection to transcendental topic, the provisional character of its place stands out. Put differently, the spatial metaphor of transcendental place is *temporalised* by the act of transcendental reflection, while transcendental topic remains static and atemporal. This tension in the spatiotemporal determination of thinking is what the Amphiboly chapter throws into sharp relief. Kant's almost exclusive emphasis on orientation qua spatial incongruity suggests that he neglects the possibility of a temporal incongruity and corresponding temporal orientation.

2.2.4 Colluding opposites

The significance of the Amphiboly chapter for the present investigation is pointedly expressed in Matthieu Haumesser's finding that the amphiboly problem 'concerns *a tendency inherent to the empirical use of the understanding* (precisely in as far as this use necessarily involves the *relation* between understanding and sensibility) to *confuse* phenomena and noumena'.[154] In constituting the opposition that grounds resistance, the confusion and contamination of opposed terms remain a constant threat. This is what Höffe and Kouvelakis point out in their discussions of Kant's ambivalence about resistance in his political writings. In as far as this risk of confusion

[153] On the significance of decision in the Amphiboly chapter, see Haumesser, 'Commentaire', in *De l'amphibologie*, 70; Karin de Boer, *Kant's Reform of Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 191.

[154] Matthieu Haumesser, 'Que signifie pour Kant l'erreur de Leibniz? Autour de l'«Amphibologie des concepts de la réflexion»', *Kant Studien*, 101, 2010, 20.

is inherent to the use of understanding, both in theoretical and in political philosophy, it remains 'problematic'[155]—the argumentative strategy in the Amphiboly chapter does not really solve but rather displaces the problem. Thus, the persistence of the threat of amphiboly in his theoretical philosophy can serve to elucidate Kant's hesitancy about political resistance. It indicates an analogous problem in thinking a political constitution and in thinking the critical system, the latter of which is, in its very architectonic, affected by this potential confusion of the phenomenal and the noumenal. If dominated by transcendental topic, transcendental reflection lapses into logical reflection, and thus fails to relate understanding and sensibility adequately. If not tempered by transcendental topic, on the other hand, it undermines the systematic integration. At the point of amphiboly, 'legitimate collaboration' between the two faculties becomes 'collusion'.[156]

I have argued that the apparent inconsistency in Kant's tethering of reflection to determination in the Amphiboly chapter is intrinsic to the problem at stake. While, given Kant's insistence that the act of transcendental reflection is not itself a judgement but precedes the determination of the relation between concepts and objects, it is not obvious that it should be construed as a determination of place, I have showed how place functions as an incongruent link between the reflexive openness of transcendental reflection and the determinate application of rules by the transcendental topic. What Longuenesse calls a silent judgement, Reuter refers to as an 'originary determination of determinability':[157] the determination as something that can be determined precedes and thereby delimits reflection. This originary grounding stands opposed to the act of transcendental reflection which remains provisional and open to the encounter with that which is 'foreign to thinking'.[158] The aim of this presentation was to show how this aporetic argumentative strategy in Kant can provide a conceptual framework for the analysis of the place of resistance. Accordingly, I want to consider transcendental place as I

[155] Haumesser, 'L'erreur de Leibniz', 20.
[156] Haumesser, 'L'erreur de Leibniz', 20.
[157] Reuter, *Reflexionsbegriffe*, 165.
[158] Reuter, *Reflexionsbegriffe*, 255.

have drawn it out here as a place of resistance, that is, as the moment in which origin and use are contaminated and inextricable.

Critically, transcendental reflection implies an act of self-placing; dogmatically, its place is predetermined by a rigidified transcendental topic. If it fails to actualise transcendental reflection, resistance becomes prejudice. I will return to this issue in my discussion of antisemitism in Chapter 5. Only as a provisional judgement can resistance to 'that which exists' avoid getting trapped within that against which it resists. In this, the two meanings of place, as ethos and topos, coincide. If topology diverges from ethos, it becomes topography, a mere realisation of pre-existing rules. Before Chapters 3 and 4 reconstruct aspects of this place of resistance, Chapter 2.3 presents an analysis of Heidegger's appropriation of this complex Kantian argumentative strategy.

2.3 Heidegger's place: The exposition-location of resistance

2.3.1 On exposition-location

Heidegger's resistance is directed against 'that which exists' in philosophy, in particular against the 'dominance of formalization' (*GA3*, 254/178) in neo-Kantianism, which he thinks relinquishes Kant's thrust to overcome the metaphysical and technological determinations of thinking that have been hegemonic in Western thinking since Aristotle. Put in more general terms, what Heidegger sees in German philosophy is an expression of the 'historical decline' he denounces in the 1934 address cited in the Introduction. The 'force of resistance' Heidegger invokes there echoes his inaugural address as rector of Freiburg university in May 1933, in which he calls for the 'proper force' of resistance to be put into the service of the 'community of combat' between teachers and students (*GA16*, 116). If, a few years later, he would retreat into 'spiritual resistance' or, as Hermann Heidegger puts it, into 'inner resistance'[159] to precisely the regime he had previously vowed to serve, it

[159] Hermann Heidegger, '"Auch mein Vater hat Widerstand geleistet". Hermann Heidegger im Gespräch über seinen Vater', *Information Philosophie*, no date [1997], https://www.information-philosophie.de/?a=1&t=8917&n=2&y=1&c=3, accessed 28 June 2021.

is at least curious that these conflicting standpoints are subsumed under the same political category, that of resistance.

To contrast this apparent discontinuity in Heidegger's political allegiance following his disappointment with the Nazi renewal, I here focus on an important conceptual continuity that underpins Heidegger's philosophical trajectory from *Being and Time* up to his work in the 1960s, and that persists despite his later disavowal of his early focus on time. What I want to argue is that both of Heidegger's self-avowed standpoints of resistance are compatible with this one philosophical standpoint, which he elaborates under the header of the *Erörterung* (meaning the search for, generation of place) of a topology of being. My contention is that with *Erörterung*, Heidegger gives a name to the argumentative strategy Kant pursues in the Amphiboly chapter and, at the same time, fashions a standpoint from which to resist Kant's apparent return to metaphysics and the resulting dominance of formalisation in neo-Kantianism.

Erörterung, which I translate as exposition-location,[160] is Heidegger's name for what in Kant is the reflection-determination of place. As Otto Pöggeler has observed, in Heidegger exposition-location is meant to overcome both the metaphysical gesture of explanation and the phenomenological gesture of elucidation. While explanation pertains to encountering beings 'in a calculative businesslike way, but also scientifically and by way of philosophy, with explanations and proofs' (*GA9*, 318/243), phenomenological elucidation aims to 'show everything in its own essence by means of an unprejudiced describing', to go '"To the things themselves"'.[161] Breaking with

[160] This rather clumsy translation combines Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly's 'exposition' in their translation of *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's* Critique of Pure Reason (*GA25*) with Ted E. Klein, Jr. and William E. Pohl's in their 1973 translation of *Kant's Thesis About Being* (*GA9*), 'location'. It should be kept in mind that place ('Ort') in Heidegger's usage is not positing in the sense of Kant's thesis about being, nor can it be adequately understood as location as a spatial or geographical category. While 'Erörterung' commonly refers to the consideration or discussion of a matter aimed at clarifying it, Heidegger's terminologically restricted use is based on its etymological relation to 'Ort', as both the discovery (exposition) and the constitution (location) of place. This double meaning is what gets blurred in the translation of *Erörterung* as 'emplacement' in the English version of Otto Pöggeler's *Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking* (trans. Daniel Magurshak and Sigmund Barber [Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1987], 227–242). Malpas also comments on this, see his *Heidegger's Topology. Being, Place, World* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2006), 30. Kant introduces *Erörterung* (translated by Guyer and Wood as 'exposition') in some headings of the Transcendental Aesthetic of the B edition (B37, B40, B46, B48) with reference to both space and time.

[161] Pöggeler, *Heidegger's Path*, 229.

both the metaphysical focus on cause and effect and the phenomenological presupposition of an unprejudiced standpoint, exposition-location, Pöggeler holds, interrogates 'what has been thought regarding what is unthought in it' and

> submits itself in its own abode [*Ort*] to the occurrence of truth, and in speaking from this place [*Ort*] in the basic words of its Saying, unfolds a behest of truth. In this manifold sense, emplacement [*Erörterung*] is topology and in accord with its highest possibility a "topology of Being".[162]

In as far as exposition-location concerns an abode or dwelling place, the topology of being pertains not only to topos but also to ethos—just as Kant's critique of prejudice invokes an ethical 'duty' to reflect transcendentally. As indicated in Chapter 1, the *Letter on Humanism* is a crucial conjuncture for this, since there Heidegger rejects both Sartre's reading of his work—and with it what he thinks is the resistance to metaphysics possible on the basis of Marx and Marxism more generally—and affirms the ethical vocation of his thinking based on ethos as dwelling place.

The analysis of Heidegger's appropriation of the amphiboly problem is a central step for the present investigation into resistance because Heidegger politicises the conceptual ambiguity and reflexivity that is expressed in Kant's struggle with amphiboly. By embedding the amphiboly problem in a critique of modernity as the apogee of a way of thinking *and* acting that goes back to ancient Greece, Heidegger's actualisation of amphiboly explicitly politicises its philosophical stakes. This is why Heidegger's appropriation of Kant's strategy in the Amphiboly chapter is important for understanding his resistance posture. Against what he takes to be Kant's recapturing of this 'most extreme' step in the notions of transcendental place and transcendental topic, Heidegger positions place as a proper dwelling place or abode that he hopes gives access to a non-metaphysical thinking and acting. For Heidegger, place opposes the abstractions of traditional philosophy and thereby overcomes the historical decline associated with the latter.[163]

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[162] Pöggeler, *Heidegger's Path*, 238. See also Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology*, 33–34.

[163] Elad Lapidot notes that *Erörterung* 'characterises' Heidegger's overall work in that it strives to point thinking 'from the non-place of abstraction, transcendence and ideality to the concreteness of world, time, place, being—there', 'Die Versammlung. Über Heideggers Logopolitik', in Michael Friedman and Angelika Seppi (eds.), *Martin Heidegger: Die Falte der Sprache* (Vienna: Turia+Kant, 2017), 227.

This turns out to be a rather problematic assumption in that it is directly linked to Heidegger's philosophical antisemitism, which requires careful distinction from his temporary political allegiance to the Nazis. Rather than a passing political adventure, this antisemitism is intrinsic to Heidegger's critique of modernity and in that sense inseparable from his work. Put in the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2.2, this virulent philosophical antisemitism constitutes, through his reconceptualisation of place, an orientating or direction-giving impulse for Heidegger's work. The incongruity Heidegger assumes between *Volk* and Jews (the 'semitic nomads', as he puts it in 1933–34[164]) consists precisely in the fact that only the former can properly claim a place, while the latter have no access to it. The people are associated with orientation, the 'semitic nomads' with the historical decline characteristic of 'that which exists'. Crucial for the antisemitism of Heidegger's thinking is that, as he notes himself, the 'question of the role of *world-Judaism* is not a racial question, but a metaphysical one' (*GA96*, 243/191).[165] Far from downplaying the issue, this highlights antisemitism as a properly philosophical problem.[166] As I will argue, it is intimately linked to Heidegger's reading of the Amphiboly chapter.

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[164] Martin Heidegger, *Über Wesen und Begriff von Natur, Geschichte und Staat*, in Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski (eds.), *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus I. Dokumente*, Heidegger-Jahrbuch 4 (Munich: Karl Alber, 2009), 82.

[165] In German, *Weltjudentum* (*world-Judaism* or *global Jewry*) has a clearly antisemitic connotation (see, for instance, Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich*, trans. Martin Brady [London: Bloomsbury, 2013], 30). See for this and other references Luca di Blasi, 'Territorialisierung des Ursprungs. Zur politischen Topologie Martin Heideggers', in Friedman and Seppi, *Die Falte der Sprache*, 253–278. Di Blasi's analysis is among the best recent commentaries on the subject from within Heidegger studies. Investigating the 'territorialisation of the origin' in Heidegger's thinking between the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927 and the end of the Second World War, di Blasi's analysis powerfully draws out the contamination of political and philosophical vocabulary in Heidegger's use of ground (*Boden*), origin (*Ursprung*) and beginning (*Anfang*). What di Blasi calls Heidegger's 'topological antisemitism' (254) consists precisely in an association of place with ground in a twofold, both existential and political sense. Liberalism, neo-Kantianism (263) and the public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*) (257) are all marked as groundless (*bodenlos*) and opposed to the 'collective new beginning' (273) that Heidegger hoped National Socialism would bring. Heidegger here brings in the distinction between the collective that has a ground, the German people and its 'German space', on the one hand, and the 'semitic nomads' (265), who are associated with 'desertification' (266–267), on the other. It is not so much that the Jewish beginning is foreign to the German beginning, but that Jews are constitutively deprived of beginning, origin, historicity, ground and, therefore, of place (268). Moreover, and this di Blasi does not seem to consider, if Heidegger turns away from Nazism because of the 'metropolitanism [*Großstädterei*] [that persists] in this petty bourgeois "blood and soil"' (*GA94*, 181/133), the reference to the antisemitic stereotype of *Großstädterei* suggests that Nazi antisemitism did not *suffice* Heidegger's philosophical antisemitism.

[166] That Heidegger's 'metaphysical antisemitism' binds the conceptual to the political level is what Donatella di Cesare argues in *Heidegger and the Jews. The* Black Notebooks, trans. Murtha Baca (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018).

Accordingly, it is not despite this philosophical antisemitism but precisely for it that Heidegger, whose critique of modernity still lends a philosophical ground to many theories of resistance, is relevant for the present study. For the analysis undertaken here, it is vital that the ambiguity of resistance be drawn out in full, and antisemitism expresses the politicised amphiboly in acute terms. Heidegger, whose works probe the foundations of Western thinking, nonetheless could not help falling for one of its basic rationalist hypostases, antisemitism. While his *Abbau* of metaphysics continues to provide insights into the ontological foundations of the present, his clinging to place as a sphere to be defended from abstraction is symptomatic of precisely the way of thinking he set out to overcome. If Heidegger's deconstruction is intrinsically incomplete and one-sided, this is instructive for our contemporary understanding of resistance.

2.3.2 Heidegger's appropriation of amphiboly

In *On the Question of Being*, Heidegger distinguishes between those concepts that pertain to 'the modern representing of the actual, an objectifying within which our grasping comprehending moves in advance' (*GA9*, 402/304) and those that go beyond this level of representation, such as exposition-location, place and topology. Contrary to representation and objectification, the latter constitute an approach that should bring about 'a higher ambiguity' and thus lead 'back into the place [*Ort*] of a recovery of metaphysics' (*GA9*, 423–424/320).[167] It is this *return* to place that indicates the distance between metaphysics, nihilism, technology, oblivion, on the one hand, and the standpoint from which to overcome nihilism and to recover metaphysics, on the other. A first outline of Heidegger's resistance to the modern oblivion of being—here expressed in terms of non-representational place—can be given based on his refutation of Ernst Jünger's thinking of resistance as transgression.[168]

[167] 'Recovery' translates *Verwindung*, see the translator's note, 313, n. 6.

[168] See Jünger's *Forest Passage* (1951), in which the forest is a place that opens to the transgression of the forest rebel (*Waldgänger*) in resistance to society at large. I cannot here go into any detail on Ernst Jünger's ethics of resistance, but note that his figures of resistance, such as the forest rebel and, later, the 'anarch' (*Eumeswil*, 1977), are transgressive in that they assert themselves in opposition to society conceived as a total enemy, and in this sense, for all the individualist inversion that distinguishes them from soldiers, derive from Jünger's formative experiences during the First World War and his glorification of the individual soldier as warrior.

The 'higher ambiguity' Heidegger has in mind concerns the phrase *Über die Linie* (*Across the Line*), the title of a text Jünger had dedicated to Heidegger some years earlier.[169] Heidegger intends to show that recovery implies less the transgression of a line than the exposition-location of its place:

> In the title of your essay *Über die Linie* the *über* means as much as: across, *trans*, μετά. By contrast, the following remarks understand the *über* only in the sense of *de*, περί. They deal "with" the line itself, with the zone of self-consummating nihilism. Keeping to the image of the line, we find that it traverses a space that is itself determined by a place [*Ort*]. The locale gathers. Gathering shelters that which is gathered in the direction of its essence. From the locale of the line, the provenance of the essence of nihilism and its consummation emerge. My letter seeks to think ahead to this locale of the line and thus expose-locate [*erörtern*] the line. (*GA9*, 386/292)

While Jünger aims to overcome nihilism through transgression, Heidegger argues that, in nihilism, being and nothing coincide. What matters is, on Heidegger's view, the constitution of the place in which both are gathered. In light of this shift, Heidegger distinguishes Jünger's method as a 'topography of nihilism' that provides 'a description of the place of nihilism and an assessment of the situation and possible mobility of the human being with respect to the place described and designated by the image of the line' from his own 'topology', which is 'an exposition-location [*Erörterung*] of that place which gathers being and nothing into their essence, determines the essence of nihilism, and thus lets us recognize those paths on which the ways toward a possible overcoming of nihilism emerge' (*GA9*, 412/311–312). As we will see, this rejection of Jünger's approach turns on Heidegger's appropriation of Kant's argumentative strategy in the Amphiboly chapter, which reworks transcendental reflection into exposition-location.

It is instructive that Heidegger orientates his distinction between topology and topography through their respective relation to place. While Jünger's topography describes a place and assesses a situation in light of transgression, topology seeks to draw out the common root of being and nothing and thus to achieve a standpoint from which to grasp the dynamics that underlie the historical decline which brings

[169] *On the Question of Being* was originally titled *Über "Die Linie"* (*Concerning 'The Line'*) (see *GA9*, 385/291). Ernst Jünger's essay *Across the Line* is printed in Martin Heidegger and Ernst Jünger, *Correspondence 1949–1975*, trans. Timothy Quinn (London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 67–102.

about 'that which exists'. As we saw in Chapter 2.2, Kant's transcendental place ambiguously connects a subjective transcendental reflection to a rule-based transcendental topic. In Kant, maintaining this ambiguity is crucial in order for the act of transcendental reflection to retain its quality as a capacity to place rather than as a placing of specific representations. Transcendental place, in as far as it integrates a topological and a topographical moment, a reflective and a determining one, is itself ambiguous. Intent on radicalising Kant, Heidegger's critique of the subject strips it of its autonomy and replaces it with a giving: 'There is a giving [*es gibt*]' (*GA9*, 419/317) rather than 'I give'.

Accordingly, if Jünger affirms transgression as a gesture of resistance, Heidegger's topological resistance can only be grasped adequately if understood as inflected by his interpretation of Kant's amphiboly. To delineate his own approach of exposition-location both from rhetoric and from Kant (and neo-Kantianism), he identifies topic with topography and opposes it to topology, which consists of exposition-location as a radicalisation of the act of transcendental reflection. Orientation, in Heidegger, is provided by the notion of place, which undergoes a transformation from transcendental place to dwelling place, integrating topos and ethos. As a result, as Kathrin Busch notes, place comes to occupy a 'transcendental-empirical threshold position'.[170] Haumesser, in his commentary on the Amphiboly chapter, remarks that this gesture of radicalisation is crucial for Heidegger's interpretation of Kant's 'equivocal' argumentative strategy as indicative of a hesitancy or indecision that eventually led Kant to affirm the metaphysical notion of the cogito over transcendental imagination as what connects understanding and sensibility.[171] If this assessment, as Haumesser goes on to argue,[172] is itself inadequate to the complexity of Kant's point of view, it is nonetheless central for understanding Heidegger's appropriation of the amphiboly problem. The remainder of this subsection aims to produce an analysis of this appropriation.

[170] Kathrin Busch, 'Raum – Kunst – Pathos: Topologie bei Heidegger', in Stephan Günzel (ed.), *Topologie. Zur Raumbeschreibung in den Kultur- und Medienwissenschaften* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007), 122.
[171] Haumesser, 'Commentaire', 68–78.
[172] Haumesser, 'Commentaire', 79, 134–135.

The title of the winter 1927–28 Marburg lectures, *Phenomenological Interpretation of the* Critique of Pure Reason, evokes Heidegger's opposition to the 'dominance of formalization' of the Marburg school of neo-Kantianism. The Amphiboly chapter is crucial for the phenomenological interpretation Heidegger develops in those lectures, according to which two notions of form have to be distinguished in Kant. Heidegger contends that it is here that Kant adumbrates the method through which the pure forms of intuition (space and time) can be isolated from mere intellectual forms. He grounds his interpretation in this Kantian 'consideration of method' (*GA25*, 107/74)[173] to show how the distinction between pure forms of intuition and formal intuition exposes the neo-Kantian Marburg School's interpretation as an amphibolous confusion of fundamentally different notions of form (*GA25*, §8). His interpretation of the *CPR* claims that Kant's use of notions such as form, representation, and intuition is ambiguous, and that their double meaning fulfils a specific role that is not circumstantial but lies 'in the matter itself' (*GA25*, 110/76). The form-distinction becomes necessary since space and time are the forms of intuition 'peculiar to humans as finite beings' (*GA25*, 110/75), while intellectual forms are in principle not subjected to this spatiotemporal constraint. Heidegger claims that Kant, faced with the puzzling status of space and time as being both in the mind and in the objects of cognition, eventually reverts to the Cartesian subject as a primary given (*GA25*, 106–108/73–74). As a result, Kant himself anticipates the misinterpretation of neo-Kantian formalisation, side-lining his own 'consideration of method' in the Amphiboly chapter for the sake of systematic integration.

To counter this relapse into Cartesian metaphysics, Heidegger takes from the Amphiboly chapter the point of departure for his own attempt to distinguish space and time from mere intellectual forms in order to secure their 'originary independence […] as pure forms of intuition' (*GA25*, 131/91) and, moreover, to establish the priority of time over space as 'originary pure *self-affection*' (*GA25*, 151/104).[174] Transcendental reflection as determination of place serves Heidegger as

[173] With regard to the Amphiboly chapter, the interpretation advanced in the 1935–36 Freiburg lectures on the *CPR* is similar but less detailed. Heidegger there characterises the Amphiboly in terms of a 'reconsideration of the structure of experience' that shakes up the relation between form and matter underpinning 'formalization' (*GA41*, 209/142).

[174] See §§10–11 for Heidegger's deduction of this priority.

an entry point through which to both critique the persistence of the Cartesian subject in the *CPR* and outline a 'transcendental exposition-location of space and time' (*GA25*, §10) that overcomes the metaphysical preoccupation with what 'is pure and independent of experience' (*GA25*, 108/74). If the previous chapter showed that Kant's tackling of the amphiboly is more complex than this reduction to the Cartesian subject, Heidegger's argumentative strategy is not accidental but a crucial presupposition of his appropriation of the amphiboly problem for his resistance to philosophy, in as far as it allows him to identify a continuity between pre-critical philosophy, critical philosophy and neo-Kantianism.

Focusing in particular on the concepts of reflection form and matter, Heidegger locates the pure forms of intuition as 'the "in terms of which" of an advance "having a view" [*das Worauf der vorgängigen Hinblicknahme*]' (*GA25*, 130/90). This phrase combines the intentional (in terms of which, having a view) with the non-intentional (advance) to reflect the ambiguous position of space and time vis-à-vis understanding and intuition. They are forms that are not formed but rather '*pre-figure* the *space of play* [*Spiel-Raum*] which is the dimension within which what is extant can be encountered' (*GA25*, 131/90). So, space and time are specified as forms that are irreducible to those forms involved in cognition. It is worth noting that Heidegger reserves similar vocabulary for his elucidation of the generation of concepts. Arguing that the origin of the form of concepts in the *Critique* is the act of reflection ('*Reflexion*'), he enquires into 'the structure of reflection itself as a comportment', explaining that 'The *primary* form of the concept is the unity', that this unity must 'be made transparent in individual objects and first be brought into view and held therein', and that this generation of unity is 'the *essence of the act* which Kant calls *reflection*' (*GA25*, 229–230/156–157). As in the formation of space and time, 'a prior bringing into view [*vorgängiges Hinblicken*]' is required for the formation of concepts, and it is the act of reflection that unifies them. But this generation of unity by bringing into view also involves a 'looking away from' or an 'abstraction' that disregards difference (*GA25*, 235–236/160–161) and that first enables the comparison between different objects on which reflection is based.

It is in the context of this discussion that Heidegger refers to the distinction between logical and transcendental reflection, without however explaining it further. Accordingly, the specificity of transcendental reflection as determination of place remains implicit. Heidegger's explicit interpretation of reflection is one-sided: interpreting Kant's term '*Reflexion*' as 'bending back' (*Zurückbeugen*) lets him align it with his claim that reflection merely reflects back onto the Cartesian subject (*GA25*, 233–234/159). But, as Haumesser notes, for Kant, 'reflection from the beginning does not so much characterise a *thinking* turned toward itself as a problematic relationship, within the mind [*Gemüt*], between thinking and sensible intuition'.[175] By suppressing this second meaning of reflection in Kant's argument, Heidegger tries to establish a clear discontinuity between Kant's purportedly one-sided focus on subjective unity and his own dispersal of metaphysics. This clear opposition is vital to Heidegger's gesture of resistance to the philosophical tradition: the more rigid the unity against which it resists, the more forceful and dispersive it appears. But, as we have seen in Chapter 2.2, this plays down the complexity of transcendental reflection, to which belongs a thrust against unity as well as an ethical claim. In light of this, Heidegger's shift lies not so much in the overcoming of Kant's alleged Cartesianism as in his *use* of the amphiboly problem to introduce a specific political orientation. I will return to Heidegger's reference to resistance in the 1927–28 lectures in 2.3.3. Before, however, it is helpful to look at the role of Heidegger's interpretation of the amphiboly problem in his later work.

The productive aspect of reflection is central in Heidegger's 1961 essay *Kant's Thesis About Being*, which provides the most comprehensive account of Heidegger's use of the amphiboly problem. There, Heidegger links it to Kant's definition of 'being as positing' (A598/B626), which he interprets as a specific 'exposition-location of being' (*GA9*, 446/338).[176] This, Heidegger says, presents us with the task to 'bear in mind the site [*Ort*] where what Kant exposes and locates [*erörtert*] under the name "being" belongs' (*GA9*, 447/338), a phrase that echoes Kant's definition of transcendental

[175] Haumesser, 'Commentaire', 69. Kant also uses the word '*Überlegung*' (A262/B318, A269/B325, A276/B332), a term that does not imply a return.

[176] '*Being* is obviously not a real predicate, i.e., a concept of something that could add to the concept of a thing. It is merely the positing [*Position*] of a thing or of certain determinations in themselves' (A598/B626).

reflection as 'determination of the place where the representations of the things that are compared belong' (A269/B325). However, it is only towards the end of the text that Heidegger addresses the Amphiboly chapter, namely as an instance in which Kant 'gives expression to an originary consideration' that runs counter to the architectonic (*GA9*, 447/339) in that it spells out 'what is unavoidable in Kant's ultimate step' (*GA9*, 471/356). This ultimate step consists precisely in a consideration of the difference between being as position and the act of exposition-location that places being:

> Insofar as [Kant] determines it as "merely the positing," he understands being as coming from a delimited site, namely, from positing as an act of human subjectivity, i.e., of the human understanding that is dependent on the sensuously given. Tracing something back to its site [*Ort*] we call exposition-location. Explanation and elucidation are based [*gründet*] in exposing-locating. Thereby we first discern the site, but the network of places [*Ortsnetz*] is not yet visible, i.e., that in terms of which being as positing, i.e., such positing itself, is in its turn expressly determined. (*GA9*, 471–472/356–357)[177]

By defining exposition-location as grounding the conception of being as positing, Heidegger affirms a topological priority of place (or site) over position and thus invests the notion with a specific significance in orientating his philosophy. In the context of the argument developed in *Kant's Thesis About Being*, the distinction between position and place serves Heidegger as a paraphrase of that between beings and being, that is, between the focus of philosophy as metaphysics—beings in their stable presence (*Anwesenheit*)—and that of his own approach—being as it comes into presence, as presencing (*Anwesen*): the explanation of the former is grounded in the latter as a specific mode of 'taking into view'. The link between place and position is the 'network of places', the making visible of the position of beings.

To articulate place and position as the bifurcation between being and beings, Heidegger now distinguishes between reflection as a bending back—in which objects are cognised based the formal intuition of an already posited human subjectivity—and as 'reflection on reflection, as a thinking of the thinking related to perception' (*GA9*, 475/359). This latter, second-order type of reflection concerns the conditions

[177] Translation modified. The *Pathmarks* translation of *Kant's Thesis About Being* was revised by the translators together with William McNeill. See 337, n. 1. It renders *Erörterung* as 'situating by discussion', abandoning the topological connotation.

of possibility of the 'delimitation of the being of beings' and, in this sense, is a transcendental reflection precisely on the 'network of places in the place of being' (*GA9*, 473/358). The network of places that exposes and locates being as position is the condition of possibility of the latter: 'Being as positing is exposed and located, i.e., is put up in relation to the structure of human subjectivity as the site [*Ort*] of its essential provenance' (*GA9*, 474/359). This specific priority of exposition-location is obscured, Heidegger claims, by the fact that even second-order reflection presupposes a posited subject, a thinking I. As a result, the topological ground of being, that is presencing, is reduced to presence. Put differently, if in Kant the conception of being as positing prevails, this obscures being as presencing. What Heidegger does here is to turn Kant's polemic against Leibniz against Kant himself, suggesting that Kant amphibolously presupposes the presence of the Cartesian subject. For Heidegger, then, the place that has to be recovered from under the metaphysical tradition in which Kant remains entangled is characterised by a specific temporality, that of presencing. Kant's critical philosophy failed to realise a 'topology of being' (*GA9*, 447, n. a/338, n. 3) in this precise sense, that is, as a gathering of places of presencing. This is what the question that concludes the essay suggests: 'Does an unthought character of a concealed essence of time here show itself, or more exactly, conceal itself?' (*GA9*, 479/362). It is in this shift from presence to presencing that the incongruity orientating Heidegger's approach can be found.

So far, I have argued that Heidegger appropriates Kant's argumentative strategy in the Amphiboly chapter to mould his own method in terms of an exposition-location of place. This appropriation proceeds mainly through an argument on the status of reflection, in which Heidegger attributes to Kant a notion of reflection that presupposes a posited subject and from which he distinguishes the grounding of being in place. The ambivalence of Kant's own response to the amphiboly, such as the distinctions between opposition (*Widerstreit*) and contradiction (*Widerspruch*) and between prejudice and provisional judgement, remains unacknowledged by Heidegger. While in Kant transcendental place marks the contamination of reflection and determination and the discordance of transcendental reflection and transcendental topic, Heidegger replaces this tripartite structure with a two-tier structure with the two poles of exposition-location and place, which together form a

topology of being. Contrary to Kant's balancing of the openness of transcendental reflection, on the one hand, and the imposition of rules by the transcendental topic, on the other, Heidegger integrates all of it in an encompassing topology that subjects the autonomous I to a heteronomous giving. Self-determination through reflection, which still seemed possible based on the structure drawn up by Kant, is now removed from it. This implies a change in orientation and of the incongruity that provides it.

Heidegger temporalises the incongruity signified by place. If in Kant it derived from the ambiguous status of place as a spatiotemporal notion at the nexus of reflection and determination, Heidegger inscribes it in the temporal difference between presencing and presence. Since time is grounded in place and being, this is linked to the ethical dimension of Heidegger's thinking. 2.3.3 draws out how this can elucidate Heidegger's philosophical resistance through an analysis of how Heidegger redetermines place by associating it with originary temporality and the people (before 1945) or the site (after 1945).

2.3.3 Resistance and true time as pre-spatial place

The 1927–28 lecture course does not only outline Heidegger's critique of Kant's notion of reflection but also provides an example of Heidegger's use of resistance. While the concept is certainly marginal for Heidegger's interpretation of Kant, it is noteworthy that he uses it in this otherwise unpolitical context. Moreover, it occurs in a central yet ambiguous place. The difficulty derives from the fact that Heidegger uses resistance in two distinct ways which, however, are very closely related. First, resistance is what a subject experiences when confronted with objects. Heidegger here plays on the fact that, in German, resistance (*Widerstand*) and object (*Gegenstand*) are cognates, both referring to a standing against. The resistance of specific objects is grounded in a pre-established objectness (*Gegenständlichkeit*) or resistance-ness (*Widerständigkeit*), that is, it presupposes a sphere in which an already constituted (that is, on Heidegger's view, Cartesian) subject encounters objects. But this is only one side of resistance, that of beings. It is complemented by an ontological understanding of resistance, which concerns the constitution of the subject itself and which is illustrated by Heidegger's distinction, in the *Kantbook*, between a resistance of beings (*Seienden*) and a resistance of being (*Sein*) (*GA3*, 73–

74/52). Based on this ontological difference, Heidegger identifies the resistance qua objectness as a specific mode of what he calls 'primary resistance qua time' (*GA25*, 393/267). The latter can only be properly understood if the notion of time characteristic of metaphysics is abandoned and replaced with that of a phenomenologically 'originary temporality' (*GA25*, 418/283). What does this mean?

The vulgar (metaphysical) sense of time is that of a 'constant sequence of nows' (*GA25*, 342/232). Heidegger opposes to this originary temporality, which is 'finite' (*GA25*, 391/265) and 'ecstatic' (*GA25*, 394/267). From this temporal divergence follow two divergent understandings of subject: the Cartesian subject, which remains indifferent to the succession of nows, and the finite, ecstatic self or *Dasein*. Contrary to the Cartesian subject, whose horizon is determined, *Dasein* is '*ontologically creative*, in that it freely forms the universal horizon of time as the horizon of *a priori* resistance' (*GA25*, 417/283). *Dasein* gives itself resistance on a more fundamental level than the time-indifferent subject. Qua originary temporality, resistance is established as an ontological horizon distinct from that of mere objectness. While the latter gives a resistance within the determined field of subject and object, the former refers to a resistance to the constitution of this field itself. We can here see how Heidegger uses resistance to critique the formalist reading of the pure forms of intuition, which his redefinition of time as originary temporality is meant to make impossible. Phenomenological time is both that which 'endures' and 'purest change' (*GA25*, 143/98). If this seems to contradict Kant's notion of time as itself unchanging (A41/B58), Heidegger holds that it is indeed present in the first *Critique*, if only in 'obscure and isolated' ways (*GA25*, 391/265).

The complex argumentative strategy unfolding around the notion of resistance serves Heidegger to philosophically ground his opposition to the forms of thinking that correspond to historical decline. Establishing time as originary is crucial for Heidegger's resistance to neo-Kantian formalisation in that it allows him to project reality—that of finite and ecstatic *Dasein*—into philosophy. However, if Heidegger establishes ontological temporality as the horizon of subjectivity, and if this horizon is conceived as a form of resistance to the constraints of modern subjectivity, then

this requires a specific notion of place to orientate the temporal horizon itself. *Being and Time* provides this notion of place.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger notes that the Cartesian ontology of world is arranged around being as 'constant presence' or an emphasis on what is '*constantly remaining*' and argues that, on this view, 'resistance means that it stays in a determinate place, relative to another thing changing its place, or else that it changes its own place with a velocity that permits the thing to "catch up" with it' (*SuZ*, 96–97/94–95).[178] On Heidegger's view, this understanding of resistance—and the corresponding notion of 'hardness' as pertaining to a thing that does not yield on touch—is indicative of an interpretation of the world that obliterates 'beings in their being' by restricting being to a particular way of being, in this case the 'determinate objective being-next-to-each-other of two objectively present *res extensa*' (*SuZ*, 97/95). The fundamental-ontological horizon of resistance is characterised by a temporality that is, as the reference to the lectures on the first *Critique* showed, defined as both that which endures and purest change. To this sort of time corresponds a different notion of place, a place that is prior to and provides the ground for the appearances of things in their objectness. Heidegger calls this place of objects 'ontological "place"' (*SuZ*, 166/161). In light of this priority of place, *Being and Time* can be seen to stake out the *place* of temporality as the prior determining factor of being. On this interpretation, place plays an important role already in *Being and Time*.

Whereas Heidegger explains why spatiality cannot serve as the focal point of a fundamental-ontological interpretation in sections 19 to 24, he uses the notion of place in the context of developing the idea of being-there (*Dasein*) qua temporality and historicity. This suggests that Heidegger already in *Being and Time* makes use of the notion of place as non-spatial and, in as far as it first of all allows the interpretation of being-there qua time, as prior to temporality. In section 60, Heidegger introduces 'resoluteness' as the 'authentic', 'most originary truth of being-there' (*SuZ*, 297/284), which provides the 'basis' of situation: 'Situation is the there disclosed in resoluteness as which the existing being is there' (*SuZ*, 299/287). This

[178] Similarly, Heidegger argues that Wilhelm Dilthey fails to explore the ontological ground of the phenomenon of resistance beyond its ontic occurrence (*SuZ*, 209–211/201–203).

situation of resoluteness remains closed off to the 'they', which 'knows only the "*general situation*" ["*allgemeine Lage*"]' (*SuZ*, 300/287). In this passage, Heidegger also notes that situation retains a 'spatial meaning' that he will 'not attempt to eliminate' (*SuZ*, 299/286). Thus, Heidegger distinguishes between the general situation that corresponds to inauthenticity and 'lostness in the they' (*SuZ*, 297/285) and the '"concrete situation" of acting' (*SuZ*, 302/289) that corresponds to resoluteness. With the latter, authentic mode of being-there, he associates place: 'existence actually determines its "place,"' based on 'the spatiality of Dasein'. While, similar to situation, place here retains a spatial meaning, this is far from any standard sense of space but, like situation, refers to being-there's concrete action: it '"makes room" [*räumt ein*]' (*SuZ*, 299/286).

This equivocation on place is complemented by a second, related one in the sections on temporality and historicity. Having affirmed the subordinate character of spatiality once more (§70), Heidegger, in sections 72 to 77, relates temporality to historicity with a view to develop an '*ontological* understanding of *historicity*', a 'phenomenological construction' that is carried out in terms of an enquiry into the '*place* of the problem of history' (*SuZ*, 375/358). The understanding of historicity adequate to ontology cannot be based on treating history as an object of science but must be deduced from the horizon of ontological temporality. Accordingly, and in this it parallels the distinction between existential place and spatiality, it has to be delineated from the 'vulgar' understanding of history in which past events are understood exclusively in their relation to the human being as subject (*SuZ*, 379/361) and instead must be grasped in its 'essential constitution' (§74).[179] Historicity thus understood is specified in section 74 with reference to notions such as 'heritage', 'fate', 'destiny', and the 'community' of 'the people' (*SuZ*, 383–384/365–366).

The only notion that Heidegger here does not use equivocally—that is, in a sense that is not immediately evident from its 'vulgar' use—is that of 'the people', which is at

[179] Heidegger distinguishes the phenomenological determination of the place of temporality from that of Hegel which, he claims, is based on the vulgar notion of time first developed by Aristotle in the *Physics*: 'The "systematic place" in which a philosophical interpretation of time is carried out can serve as a criterion for understanding the basic guideline which leads the fundamental conception of time. […] We do not need any complicated exposition-location to make it clear that in his interpretation of time, Hegel is wholly moving in the direction of the vulgar understanding of time' (*SuZ*, 428, 431/407, 409).

the centre of the rectorate address as well as of the less prominent 1934 speech cited in the Introduction, in which the people is cast as the bearer of resistance to historical decline. If Heidegger determines the place of temporality as the concrete situation of resoluteness, and if anticipatory resoluteness determines historicity through collective fate and destiny, then the horizon of resistance is that of the community of the people of the native soil against the lostness and groundlessness of the they.[180] The core of this placing of temporality is the ambiguity of the term place that derives from its position at threshold separating the transcendental from the empirical. It is in this sense that place here stands for an incongruity between a metaphysical, nihilistic, businesslike obliteration of *Dasein* and an authentic, resolute assertion of *Dasein*. The first step, in which Heidegger deploys place to critique existing notions of space and time as one-sided and reductive, is complemented by a second step that grounds place in the soil and its people. Can place be retained as an ontological category without returning it to the soil? This is what Heidegger attempts in his later writings.

In the 1969 essay on *Art and Space*, Heidegger develops the idea he had already touched upon in *Being and Time*: 'In the literal sense, being-there takes space in. It is by no means merely objectively present in the piece of space that its corporeal body fills out. Existing, it has always already made room for a space of play. It determines its own place [*Ort*] in such a way that it comes back from the space made room for to a "place" [*Platz*] that it has taken over' (*SuZ*, 368/350). If, in 'Art and Space', the correlate of place is not being-there but sculpture rather than being-there, what is at the centre of Heidegger's interest is place. While, in *Being and Time*, 'Platz' is defined as that to which being-there returns by determining '*Ort*', Heidegger now turns his attention to the act of making-room (*Einräumen*) that articulates place and sculpture. The notion of making-room allows Heidegger to introduce temporality and change into what 'scientific-technical space' defines as empty and unchanging: 'clearing-away [*Räumen*] is release of places' (*GA13*, 207/5) and 'making-room [*Einräumen*] prepares for things the possibility to belong to their relevant whither and, out of this, to each other' (*GA13*, 207/6). As in Kant's transcendental place, amphiboly does not

[180] See Lapidot, 'Versammlung', 233–235.

really go away since, as Heidegger expressly states, the place of things is prior to clearing-away because it is a 'belonging together' of things (*GA13*, 208/6). What clearing-away gathers already belongs together. Heidegger thus retains and even accentuates the priority of his notions: space is relevant only through its temporalisation as the act of placing, and this act is itself orientated by a prior belonging, which he calls 'direction-order [*Verweisung*]' (*GA13*, 208/6).

The clearest expression of the determination of time qua place is given, however, in the 1962 lecture *Time and Being*. Heidegger there avows that the treatment of spatiality in *Being and Time* was inadequate in as far as it interpreted the spatiality of being-there through temporality (*GA14*, 29/23). What is crucial here is that this affirms place as the origin of both. Space, just as time, has to be thought based on 'Appropriation [*des Ereignens*]'. This, however, presupposes that we have 'previously gained insight into the origin of space in the properties peculiar to site [*Ort*] and have thought them adequately' (*GA14*, 28–29/23). In other words, the priority of place is not affected. What changes is that spatiality is now more actively integrated into the effort to ground time in place, a shift that becomes necessary because the soil that previously orientated placing is now, after 1945, a much less attractive concept. Heidegger now accentuates the 'time-space', for which, he cautions, one cannot enquire through the question word 'where': 'For true time itself, the realm of its threefold extending determined by nearing nearness, is the pre-spatial place which first gives any possible "where"'; 'Time *is* not. There is, It gives time' (*GA14*, 20–21/16). Time *is* place. If seen in this light, Heidegger's avowal does not so much, or at least not centrally, announce a break in the way the relation between space and time is thought as modify the understanding of spatiality to emphasise how the horizon of temporality is orientated by place. To simplify a bit, what might be conceived as a significant discontinuity in Heidegger's trajectory eventually serves the continuity of the method he first derived in conversation with Kant's Amphiboly chapter in the late 1920s, that is, prior to his shifting political allegiances and discordant forms of resistance in the 1930s.

The transformation of exposition-location into topology is prepared in some of Heidegger's essays written after the war, such as *The Turning* (1949) and *Building,*

Dwelling, Thinking (1951).[181] While, in the former, Heidegger explores the place of danger as the possibility of a turning from forgetfulness to 'the truth-safe-keeping [*Wahrnis*] of being' (*GA11*, 119/43), the latter essay concerns itself with the relation between place, site (*Stätte*) and space.[182] Here, Heidegger uses the example of a bridge to illustrate how place is created: The bridge 'gathers the fourfold in *such a* way that it allows *a site* for it. But only something *that is itself a place* can make space for a site' (*GA7*, 156/151). If the coming into existence of place is here orientated by the gathering of the fourfold, the bridge redeems the promise of a non-human creation of a horizon of ontological space and time. This spatiotemporal horizon is one of resistance precisely in as far as it is non-human. Building is not a human act but rather, as Heidegger puts it in another succinct rephrase of the problem of the Amphiboly chapter: 'The place *admits* the fourfold and it *installs* the fourfold. The two—making room in the sense of admitting and in the sense of installing—belong together' (*GA7*, 160/155–156). Read in light of 'the turning', the place created by the bridge provides the conditions of possibility both for forgetfulness and for the 'truth-safe-keeping of being': as 'enframing' (*GA11*, 115/36), it conceals the act of gathering that brings it about and therefore lets it be forgotten. As a dwelling place, it mitigates the 'homelessness' of humans (*GA7*, 163/159).

In the 1969 Le Thor seminar, Heidegger reiterates the inadequacy of *Being and Time*, this time, however, not with regard to the role assigned to spatiality but in terms of a critique of the notion 'meaning of being' (*GA15*, 334/40). Does Heidegger in this late text review the direction-order that had orientated his placing of time and space in his earlier work, which pointed towards the '*Volksgemeinschaft*' of anticipatory resoluteness? To the extent that he rescinds the subjectivist overtones, yes; in as far as place remains the focal point of the interpretation of the question of being, no. If place is not put in terms of soil anymore, but in those of *aletheia* (ἀλήθεια,

[181] In another text from that time, Heidegger explores the link between place (*Ort*) and the poetic fugue (*Dichtung*) in an 'exposition-location' of Georg Trakl's poetry. Here, Heidegger defines *Erörterung* as 'to point out the proper place or site of something, to situate it, and second, to heed that place or site' (*GA12*, 33/159).

[182] The notion of 'site' also abounds in the *Contributions*. Written between 1936 and 1938 (at the same time as the *Black Notebooks*), they mark Heidegger's apparent turn away from temporality. I will look at the *Contributions* more closely in the context of Schürmann's reading of Heidegger in Chapter 3.

unconcealment),[183] the main opponent remains Descartes and his afterlife, now represented by Sartre rather than Kant:

> What is inappropriate in [Sartre's] approach to the question is that it makes it all too possible to understand the "project" as a human performance. Accordingly, project is then only taken to be a structure of subjectivity—which is how Sartre takes it, by basing himself upon Descartes (for whom ἀλήθεια as ἀλήθεια does not arise). (*GA15*, 335/40–41)

This is why, Heidegger continues, his thinking replaced 'meaning of being' first with 'truth of being' and then with 'place [*Ortschaft*] of being' which itself gave way to '*topology of be-ing*', the point in all this being to avoid the closure of the notion of 'project' and to retain its meaning of 'opening disclosure' (*GA15*, 335/41). By distinguishing it from 'human performance', Heidegger presents place as something that gives itself in contrast to the positing that he thinks defines metaphysics between Aristotle and Hegel. More precisely, Heidegger aims to distinguish his topology from the place that serves Hegel as the position from which to conceive being, namely 'consciousness, the place of being conscious of itself' (*GA15*, 348/49). While the positing move characterises all metaphysics, there is nonetheless a qualitative difference between Aristotle and Hegel: together with change, in Hegel, place disappears, and only space and time remain (*GA15*, 354/53), while in Kant there remained a residue of it (*GA15*, 342–343/45–46). This indicates the lasting influence that both of Kant's thesis about being and of the most extreme step he undertook in the Amphiboly chapter exerted on Heidegger's thinking.

2.3.4 Bowing to world-view

In Heidegger's trajectory, place remains a central point of orientation for the phenomenological interpretation. Kant's notion of transcendental reflection—as 'determination of the place where representations of the things that are compared belong'—anticipates the method Heidegger develops into a phenomenological approach to the question of being. I have argued that Heidegger's exposition-location is, just as transcendental reflection, orientated by a place. However, rather than being regulated by a transcendental topic, exposition-location takes its direction-

[183] Heidegger introduces a*letheia* (unconcealment) already in *SuZ* when discussing truth in terms of 'discoveredness' (219/210–211), associating it with the '"place" of truth' (33/31), but it is not developed beyond those two occasions.

order from a topology of being. If transcendental place orientates transcendental reflection through the spatial incongruity of left and right, the incongruity of place in Heidegger derives from a 'topo-ethical' connotation. After the end of the new beginning of *Germania*, the incongruity that orientates place shifts from its '*völkisch*' connotation to a more straightforwardly divine direction-order without a fundamental re-orientation.[184] The structure that allows Heidegger to operate an ontological distinction between a place-having people and placeless Jews is the same as the one supporting his defence of place as *aletheia* against its obliteration by enframing. This is an essential continuity in Heidegger's thinking.

Heidegger defines 'that which exists' in terms of a metaphysically induced oblivion of being, which can be recovered through exposition-location and the attendant topology of being. As I have sought to show, Heidegger in this makes use of the aporias and ambiguities that occur in Kant's argumentative strategy in the Amphiboly chapter. While Kant there presents the use of the understanding as the double act of transcendental reflection and determination, Heidegger's argumentative strategy modifies Kant's orientation of transcendental reflection through incongruous place in such a way as to make place susceptible to the introduction of specific ethical-political claims. Thereby, Heidegger appropriates Kant's philosophical argument for what Elad Lapidot calls a 'logo-politics' operating on dichotomies such as the they and the public sphere, on the one hand, and the historical gathering and the people, on the other.[185] On these political categories, Heidegger maps the philosophical distinction between place and origin, on the one hand, and non-place and groundlessness, on the other. If to this corresponds, in a letter from 1929, the concern about the 'Jewish contamination' of 'German spiritual life',[186] this indicates the antisemitic entanglement of Heidegger's philosophy.

Heidegger's specific notion of place is developed through a range of conceptual dichotomies that can be mapped on the ontological difference: topology against

[184] In this respect, I disagree with both Lapidot's and di Blasi's (the latter speaks of a disappearance [277] or dissolution [278] of Heidegger's antisemitism after the Second World War) optimistic assessment that Heidegger fundamentally changed his orientation after 1945.
[185] Lapidot, 'Versammlung', 233–235, 238, 248.
[186] Martin Heidegger, 'The Jewish Contamination of German Spiritual Life. Letter to Victor Schwoerer (1929)', trans. Manfred Stassen, in *Martin Heidegger. Philosophical and Political Writings*, ed. Manfred Stassen (New York and London: Continuum, 2003), 1.

topography, exposition-location against reflection, *Dasein*/*es gibt* against subject, originary temporality against vulgar time. From those distinctions, Heidegger wrests a notion of place in which empirical meanings are endowed with transcendental status. While Adorno is right in claiming that Heidegger's thinking of being is not all that new, he does not point out that there is something essentially new about it, that is, the introduction of a political world-view into the post-Kantian framework, which allows Heidegger to position his philosophy against Marx and Marxism, which has had considerable success at times.[187] As Mikko Immanen has recently argued, Heidegger's 'promise of concreteness' presented an important if antagonistic point of reference for the Frankfurt School in the late 1920s.[188] Much of Heidegger's allure has to do with his radical attitude, which he displayed, for instance, at the 1929 Davos debate with Ernst Cassirer.[189] There, Heidegger claims that 'Philosophy does not have the task of giving world-view, but world-view is the presupposition of philosophizing', specifying that the world-view endowed by philosophy is less a doctrine than a radicalisation of the 'transcendence of Dasein' that allows the 'liberation of Dasein in the human being'; this world-view, Heidegger argues, is not a matter 'for a learned discussion' but something that 'the individual philosopher has to bow to' (*GA3*, 284–285/200). Bowing to world-view captures nicely the philosophical-political ambiguity with which Heidegger invests place as the standpoint of his resistance to 'historical decline'.

[187] The politicisation of philosophy by Heidegger is of course the reason for Adorno's critique. However, he does not articulate it to the specific problematic of the Amphiboly chapter.
[188] Immanen, *Concrete Philosophy*, 9.
[189] See Chapter 4.2.2.

Chapter 3. Schürmann on ultimate referents: Resistance in a discordant place

This chapter presents Reiner Schürmann's heterodox reading of Heidegger as a decisive additional step in conceptualising the place of resistance. While Heidegger politicises the orientation that Kant's argumentative strategy in the Amphiboly chapter provides, in Schürmann the problematic of orientation is the subject matter of investigation, thereby contributing to the reflexivity of resistance. Schürmann's approach can serve both to critique Heidegger's 'promise of concreteness' and to begin to draw out resonances with Frankfurt School critical theory.

3.1 The place between determinacy and indeterminacy

In a 1984 essay on law and transgression, referring to Kant's claim that resistance and rebellion destroy the foundation of the commonwealth (8:299), Reiner Schürmann notes that 'What haunts Kant quite openly is the evidence that the people's sovereignty remains built into the transcendental act of delegating it'.[190] Similarly, in his lectures on *Kant's Political Philosophy*, Schürmann notes that Kant resolves what presents him with a 'genuine aporia' as follows: 'the denial of the right to resistance rests systematically on the impossibility to will at the same time a commonwealth and the state of nature. As always in K[ant], his strongest stands result from an application of the p[rinci]ple of non-contradiction'.[191] As we saw in Kant's insistence on the distinction between contradiction and opposition in the Amphiboly chapter, this interpretation directly points to the aporias of the critical system. In as far as it outlines the task of 'radical enlightenment' as denouncing 'the arch-metaphysical concept of power as something one possesses and eventually delegates' (*LT*, 120), this Kantian problematic provides the *incipit* for Schürmann's philosophical project.

In Chapter 1 I noted that Douzinas, in his conceptualisation of resistance, leans on a rather traditional idea of autonomy as enabling the individual to mount resistance to heteronomous coercion. On this picture, the distribution between autonomy and heteronomy is straightforward: the former denotes the 'internal moral responsibility

[190] Reiner Schürmann, 'Legislation-Transgression: Strategies and Counter-Strategies in the Transcendental Justification of Norms', in *Tomorrow the Manifold*, ed. Malte F. Rauch and Nicolas Schneider (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2019), 119. Henceforth *LT*.

[191] Reiner Schürmann, *Kant's Political Philosophy*, Fall 1992, unpublished typescript, in *Professor Reiner Schürmann Lectures, 1975–1993*, New School List Center/The New School Archives and Special Collections New York: The New School, 1994, 33–34. I have tacitly corrected obvious spelling mistakes.

that binds the self to a conception of the good', the latter 'the external duty to obey the law'.[192] Resistance emerges when those two injunctions clash or, as Douzinas notes with reference to Hannah Arendt's reading of Kant, when an individual's 'free judgment' concludes that the law is no longer 'morally right and democratically legitimate'.[193] Now, Schürmann's understanding of autonomy and heteronomy complicates this picture. In what is one of the most persistent elements of his thinking, he insists that autonomy and heteronomy are always already entangled within the judging subject, making any properly free judgement an impossibility—at least under the condition of broken hegemonies that characterises our age and that is the only standpoint available to us. By making this conflictual standpoint thematic, it provides an important contribution to understanding the ambiguity and the reflexivity of the place of resistance.

While Heidegger had reduced reflection to a simple return to the subject, Schürmann's approach leaves room for thinking the more ambiguous connotation that Kant invests it with when he observes that, in Kant, being is both indeterminate and determinate (*LT*, 80–94). More precisely, Schürmann's reading is reflexive in that it does not make the aporia of the amphiboly problem its tacit orientation so as to juxtapose the authentic to the inauthentic, the proper to the improper in a way that implies a simple opposition between both. Rather, Schürmann's work explores the historically specific implication of conflicting or, in his lexicon, discordant injunctions from a necessarily determinate standpoint that, however, is at the same time marked by the erosion of historical, philosophical and political determinations.

Accordingly, although Schürmann rejects any attempt to think resistance merely as transgression, he retains a notion of subject. This subject, however, has to be thought in terms of its historical place, for which Schürmann's approach combines a topology of broken hegemonies with an enquiry into the ethos or dwelling place that is circumscribed by the waning of those hegemonies. While Schürmann constructs his critical notion of subjectivity mainly in dialogue with Heidegger and Foucault, his readings of Meister Eckhart—from which he draws the notion of wandering

[192] Douzinas, 'Event', 162–163.
[193] Douzinas, 'Event', 163.

identity—and of Marx—in whose work he finds the idea of moving subjectivity—are important additional references. In a 1986 essay on Foucault, Schürmann argues that 'In the subject, as Kant had already recognized, strategies of heteronomous and autonomous constitution intersect'.[194] Based on his reading of Foucault, and against Kant, Schürmann argues that self-legislation can never be universally autonomous but depends on historically and topologically specific sites or places. Such a place is the 'modern hegemonic fantasm',[195] instituted by Martin Luther's formula *simul iustus et peccator* (*BH*, 413), consummated by Kant and destructed by Heidegger. In this place, justice and sin, ego and self, spontaneity and receptivity, autonomy and heteronomy become inextricably intertwined in the conflictual unity of self-consciousness. The present chapter elucidates how Schürmann conceptualises the trajectory of this modern hegemonic fantasm (which, as we will see below, ends with a destitution that doubles as a 'peremption [*dessaisie*]'[196] of fantasms altogether) and to analyse the complex topological and historical determinations that constitute and at the same time subvert the place in which resistance occurs today.

In *Heidegger on Being and Acting. From Principles to Anarchy* (1987), Schürmann develops an answer to the question 'What is to be done?'[197] that responds to our contemporary site in that it takes seriously the peremption of the ultimate referents that have provided the integrating principles of Western societies since ancient Greece. What this requires is, Schürmann insists, an agent that both resists the temptation to institute yet another ultimate referent and develops forms of

[194] Reiner Schürmann, 'On Constituting Oneself an Anarchistic Subject', in *Tomorrow the Manifold*, 22. Henceforth *AS*.
[195] Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 351–632. Henceforth *BH*. Where necessary, I have modified the translation based on the original French edition, reprinted as *Des hégémonies brisées*. Zurich and Berlin: Diaphanes, 2017.
[196] While the English translation of *BH* renders '*dessaisie*' as 'diremption', Schürmann seems to have preferred 'peremption'. In a typescript, Schürmann defines 'peremption [as] laying down the law', with 'peremption' indicating the nullification of a juridical procedure or decision. See 'Response to remarks by Peg Birmingham and Rodolphe Gasché', *Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy* (SPEP) conference, Boston, undated, NA.0006.01, 3/40, *The New School Archives and Special Collections*, New York: The New School, 19. I will use Schürmann's translation as 'peremption'.
[197] Reiner Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting. From Principles to Anarchy*, trans. Christine-Marie Gros (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), 1. Henceforth *PA*. Where necessary, I have modified the translation based on the French text in *Le principe d'anarchie. Heidegger et la question de l'agir* (Zurich and Berlin: Diaphanes, 2013 [1982]).

transgression that 'hasten' the downfall of ultimate referents (*PA*, 302). It is precisely its reflexivity that makes the mode of transgression possible today such a difficult problem, the vertiginous challenge being to actively oppose ultimate referents without accepting either the terrain on which the struggle comes to be placed or what appears to be the opponent itself at face value: 'The anarchistic subject constitutes itself in micro-interventions aimed at resurgent patterns of subjection and objectification' (*AS*, 30). It emerges from an analysis of and against the philosophical strategies that have sought to institute a consistent and self-sufficient subject (man, ego, individual) precisely by obliterating the act that puts it into place. This anarchistic subject implies that any contemporary 'anarchistic struggle' (a term Schürmann borrows from Foucault)[198] concerns not specific laws but the 'law of social totalization' itself (*AS*, 29). This is Schürmann's version of (Marx's and) Adorno's 'that which exists'. If Schürmann conceives this subjectivity in terms of an 'anarchistic self-constitution' that implies 'the dispersal of inward-directed reflection into as many outward-directed reflexes as there are "systems of power to short-circuit, disqualify, and disrupt"' (*AS*, 39),[199] this underlines the reflexivity of the concept of resistance to which Schürmann's thinking can give rise.

With the anarchistic subject, Schürmann outlines a mode of self-constitution that opposes specific laws only strategically, as access points for a generalised resistance to the repressive police-violence through which the law of social totalisation constitutes and upholds itself. If the subject of this self-constitution is not the transgressive but the anarchistic subject, this is because the latter offers a form of agency in which heteronomous and autonomous, interior and exterior forces enter into a constellation that displaces the transgressive moment intrinsic to the dialectical process of constitution and reconstitution that underpins the form of law. The anarchistic subject, whose sole aim consists in dismantling the structure of domination qua totalising separation, can never coagulate into a stable identity. Rather, its constitution moves along those points of conflict in which it flares up in its 'polymorphic fight against social totalities' (*AS*, 27). It forms an irreducible

[198] Michel Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), 1982, 780.

[199] Schürmann cites Michel Foucault, 'Des supplices aux cellules' (interview), *Le Monde*, 21 February 1975, 16. Reprinted in *Dits et écrits, vol. 2, 1970–1975*, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 720.

individuality that escapes its own fetishisation precisely because its self-constitution does not persist beyond the transience of the antagonism in which it intervenes.

This chapter aims both to provide an overview of Schürmann's work and to read it as a philosophy of resistance. As I have emphasised in Chapter 1, this approach is warranted by the conceptual history of resistance, and Schürmann's thinking, especially in its concern with the notion of place as both topos and ethos, resonates with the aspects of the phenomenon as I have sought to draw it out so far. At the same time, and on the level of the argumentative trajectory of the present thesis, Schürmann can be seen to respond to Heidegger's use of the amphiboly problem in a singular and innovative way: if Heidegger appropriates the problem from Kant to imbue philosophy with a quasi-political vocation that critiques and opposes modern society, Schürmann makes the constituent moments of this appropriation into the very subject matter of his topology of broken hegemonies, thereby *expropriating* Heidegger's strategy. In other words, to Heidegger's ambiguity he adds reflexivity. Beginning in the last section of this chapter, but in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5, I will confront this reflexivity with critiques of modern society that operate in the wake of the Marxian critique of political economy and, more specifically, of Marx's critique of abstraction.

Schürmann's philological strategy consists in reading Heidegger's work 'backward, from end to beginning' (*PA*, 13). Schürmann's wager is that only such an approach can access the anarchic dimension of Heidegger's thinking and thereby counter the archic or thetic dimension that breaks forth in Heidegger's politics of the early 1930s. Schürmann notes that this strategy treats Heidegger as a 'discursive regularity' rather than as a 'man from Messkirch' and steers the work 'in a direction the man Martin Heidegger would not have wished to be led' (*PA*, 3). Schürmann's originality emerges from this reading method. As we will see, the problem of reorientation is central to Schürmann's work as I read it here: as a tenacious search for forms of resistant practice that retain a fundamental asymmetry towards 'that which exists'.

3.2 Resistance as counter-violence: Letting-be and the bloody form of anarchy

In September 1977, members of the second generation of the Red Army Faction (RAF) kidnapped the president of the German employers' organisations, former member of the SS and Nazi official Hanns Martin Schleyer,[200] as part of their 'Offensive 77' (later baptised 'German Autumn'), which aimed to force the liberation of imprisoned members of the organisation, notably by assassinating high-ranking state and private sector representatives. The affair ended with the killing of Schleyer following the failed hi-jacking of the airliner *Landshut* and the deaths of Andreas Baader, Jan-Carl Raspe and Gudrun Ensslin in their prison cells in the early hours of 18 October 1977. While the RAF's struggle was revolutionary, they understood themselves to be part of a wider resistance movement to the 'capitalist system' in post-Nazi Germany, as they explained in their 1998 dissolution announcement, which describes the political activity of the group as an attempt 'to wage resistance to the continuity of German history'.[201]

Asked about his take on the ongoing campaign, Schürmann, speaking to the Catholic French newspaper *La Croix* in late September 1977, interprets the events historically in light of a specifically German inability to form a democratic state, which enabled the rise of the Nazi regime and which, along with a tendency to violently suppress dissenting views, persisted in the Federal Republic. Considering the RAF's campaign in relation to the lack of a 'political conscience' in Germany, Schürmann submits that 'Rather than of violence, we should speak of counter-violence. It is the necessity of this counter-violence that is a new phenomenon. But evidently it can take diverse forms. I don't agree with the bloody form of anarchy'.[202] This can be read as an implicit reference to and rejection of Kant's insistence that even when the government has violated the social contract 'the subject is not entitled to offer

[200] Erich Später, *"Villa Waigner". Hanns Martin Schleyer und die deutsche Vernichtungselite in Prag 1939–1945* (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur Verlag, 2009).

[201] 'The Urban Guerrilla Is History…', The Final Communiqué From The Red Army Faction, 1 March 1998, https://socialhistoryportal.org/raf/6150. See also the 1982 declaration 'The Guerilla, the Resistance, and the Anti-Imperialist Front', https://socialhistoryportal.org/raf/5919, all accessed 28 June 2021.

[202] Reiner Schürmann, 'Reiner Schürmann. Entretien avec un jeune écrivain allemand', *La Croix*, 30 September 1977, 2. Translation based on an incomplete English transcript from the Reiner Schürmann archive. *Reiner Schürmann papers, 1958–1993*. NA.0006.01, 1/11. *The New School Archives and Special Collections*, New York: The New School. Henceforth *E*.

resistance through counter-violence' (8:299). If Schürmann here seems to diverge from one of the most lucid insights of Hannah Arendt, namely that it is useless to trace the historical rise of fascism to particular national characteristics,[203] his attribution of a specifically 'German' deficit both to German society at large and to the protagonists of the German Autumn requires careful consideration. Interpreting the counter-violence that is expressed in the RAF's armed struggle as a 'new phenomenon' in the strict sense demands attention to the political *and* philosophical conditions that give rise to it—and it is those conditions that Schürmann identifies as specifically 'German'. As will become clear, this is less an identification of national characteristics in Arendt's sense than an allusion to Marx and Engels' *German Ideology*, in which the demonym indicates a specific historical and conceptual conjuncture.

By distinguishing counter-violence in general from 'the bloody form of anarchy', Schürmann points towards a theory and practice of resistance that would not reproduce the form of domination to which it responds. The specific concern of his work is to relate philosophy and politics in a way that considers praxis and thinking together through the notion of anarchy. While this does not exclude counter-violence, it does rule out the violence of militarised struggle waged by the RAF.[204] What is more significant, however, is that Schürmann analyses this violence as a product of a specific philosophical, political and historical conjunction. It is a conjunction that makes it impossible to withdraw from a form of life that is integrated around, as Schürmann remarks taking up a phrase used by his interlocutor from *La Croix*, 'an extremely narrow margin, in practice, the margin which you just called

[203] In a 1945 essay, Arendt argues that by 'identifying fascism with Germany's national character and history people are deluded into believing that the crushing of Germany is synonymous with the eradication of fascism'. Hannah Arendt, 'Approaches to the "German Problem"', in *Essays in Understanding. 1930–1945*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 1994), 107.

[204] Similarly, Irving Wohlfarth in a series of three articles has argued that the RAF's understanding of Walter Benjamin's 1921 essay *Critique of Violence* was flawed and that its 'programmatic, self-alienated rhetoric' instrumentalised Benjamin's search for a non-violent, divine or destituent violence for the justification of their increasingly murderous campaigns. Irving Wohlfarth, '*Entsetzen*. Walter Benjamin and the Red Army Faction, Part One', *Radical Philosophy*, 152, 2008, 7–19; 'Critique of Violence: The Deposing of the Law. Walter Benjamin and the Red Army Faction, Part 2', *Radical Philosophy*, 153, 2009, 13–26; 'Spectres of Anarchy. Walter Benjamin and the Red Army Faction, Part Three', *Radical Philosophy*, 154, 2009, 9–24. The quotation is from '*Entsetzen*', 13.

economism' (*E*, 2). Economism, together with the search for security, is what characterises the form of life that Schürmann refers to as 'German'.

As Schürmann sees it, under those conditions, 'those who withdraw from say, "moderate", behavior are confronted with such rigidity that they are more and more on the fringe and are reduced to taking up arms' (*E*, 2). But what sort of withdrawal is it that returns as the bloody form of anarchy, and that needs to be translated into a form of resistance that overcomes that which it resists? Any answer to the question of an adequate, non-reactive counter-violence, for Schürmann, must reckon with the problem of origins:

> Neither insurrection nor submission, but what I call "letting be"—giving everything, in the present, the weight that accords to it. After a time of escape, of a pointless search for a unique and reliable origin—a stable foundation of things, as if that had existed before!—I ended up discovering the following: it is in the absence of a stable identity, in that dislocation, that one needs to situate one's joy. Joy is not a profound rooting or a solidity, which life, my life, has taught me not to desire any longer. Letting be is a wandering joy. What Nietzsche calls the "gay science", that's exactly wandering joy: to accept the chaos and to plant joy in it. (*E*, 2)

It is in the field of tension between the necessity of counter-violence and the possibility of wandering joy that Schürmann in 1977 locates a form of resistance and a form of life that resists domination by origins, be they philosophical, political, or economic. This withdrawal, this wandering joy, does not mistake what Pasolini called the 'anarchy of power'[205] and the material groundlessness many are forced to experience today for an anarchic dislocation. Rather, the 'absence of a stable identity' connects the anarchy of origins—the archic or principled anarchy that is produced by the interplay between the invisible hand of the market and the baton-wielding hand of the state—to the possibility of the destruction and dislocation of domination qua identity. In that sense, it indicates a form of struggle that translates the counter-violence provoked by the violence of that society into a properly anarchistic struggle. In the context of the present investigation, I take this idea of counter-violence as a reference point for resistance. This seems justified since neither does Schürmann distinguish between different forms of political action here nor develop an emphatic

[205] Richard Brody, 'Pasolini's Theorem', *The New Yorker*, 29 December 2011, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/pasolinis-theorem, accessed 28 June 2021.

notion of philosophical or political resistance elsewhere, and it will help outline a consistent perspective along which to develop a concept of resistance in discussion with Schürmann's work.

Wandering identity and preoriginary origin

Wandering joy, *La joie errante*, is also the title of Schürmann's first book (1972), in which he translates and comments on a selection of Meister Eckhart's German-language sermons. There, he identifies a life 'without a why'[206] as the source of wandering joy. Wandering joy feeds on the dialectic of 'releasement' (*Gelassenheit*, 'releasement' or 'letting-be') that drives Eckhart's thinking: between the imperative of law, which demands disappropriation and impoverishment, on the one hand, and the infinitive of original liberty, on the other. Moving between these two poles, letting-be indicates both the detachment from social, political, economic and philosophical standards and the discovery of an originary-yet-standardless identity. This identity without standards is what Schürmann refers to as a 'wandering identity' (*WJ*, xx), which takes its orientation not from particular, legal or quasi-legal injunctions, but from the work of disappropriation and liberation. This offers an apt point of departure for drawing out the relevance of Schürmann's thinking for the present investigation into the place of resistance.

The work of releasement is not a simple task, both in the sense that it is not easy and in that it requires a struggle on different levels, one that offers ways to connect theory and practice without subordinating one to the other. As Schürmann points out in the interview with *La Croix*, he is particularly concerned with the level of language, in which violence finds expression: 'In Germany the most important things are not spoken of. […] The solidity of a surface where a single tone is accepted and all the others suppressed, all that is obsession and anguish nicely covered up—that solidity is going to grow greater' (*E*, 2). This solidification of an impenetrable monotonous surface serves to undermine a confrontation with the past and is directly connected to the rise of counter-violence. Armed struggle and the bloody form of anarchy are the resort of those who are banned from the sphere of expression. Likewise, the

[206] Reiner Schürmann, *Wandering Joy: Meister Eckhart's Mystical Philosophy* (Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books, 2001), 109. Henceforth *WJ*.

democratic deficit of Germany corresponds to the incapacity to allow a discourse in which divergent views can be meaningfully expressed. In other words, the deafening silence imposed by the post-war consensus is what pushes the capacity to resist into the specific form of counter-violence that manifests in the German Autumn. Inversely, this implies that a form of resistance that would not wind up in the dead end of the bloody form of anarchy would have to be thought based on the linguistic regime to which it resists. For Schürmann, one way of resisting this selective silence is writing, a practice that helps 'pierce the veneer of speech' and allows him to explore '"the origins" [that lie] beneath the mental schematics accepted in our everyday relations with people' (*E*, 2).

It is curious, then, that, in the introduction to his book on Meister Eckhart, Schürmann seems to suggest that the goal of the struggle over origins is precisely *silence*. But is it the same deafening, violent silence? Schürmann would surely answer in the negative. The counter-violent silence that responds to Meister Eckhart's 'uneasiness about the fundamental inadequacy of language' registers the attempt to break through the monotony of economism and security, which Schürmann sounds out in conversation with the medieval philosopher: 'Meister Eckhart undertakes the risk of "speculative mysticism," explaining under philosophical guise the overwhelming closeness of the origin beyond God. That this clothing is full of holes suggests to us the fire that consumed him' (*WJ*, xxi). This subtle yet momentous, paradoxical displacement of the meaning of silence—one of the standard themes of mysticism—to 'an origin beyond God' implies a counter-violent struggle that does not give rise to the bloody form of anarchy but that searches for an adequate form of combining thinking and acting. It is this search for a 'right concept' that, 'when it has recourse to paradox, turns into combat, and *after* reasonings and commentaries, at last invites silence' (*WJ*, xxi). The path between the two meanings of silence is the one traced out by wandering identity. Through paradox concept and identity without standards are brought into contact. This is why Schürmann speaks of a 'principle of anarchy' (*PA*, 6).

A second, closely connected semantic doubling occurs in the notion of 'preoriginary origin' (*WJ*, 116–117). Schürmann discovers a twofold meaning of the notion of origin

in Meister Eckhart: one referring to 'the act of expiration, by which created things are diffused outside', the other to 'the tranquil intradivine respiration that precedes creation' (*WJ*, 116). The pneumatic imagery conveys the twofold unity of a life that is prior to God instituted as a metaphysical foundation and that diverges from an understanding of origin as that which is *more* original: 'The preoriginary origin is animated throughout by one single and identical breath. Everything that breathes in the origin is the origin' (*WJ*, 116). This anarchic unity designated by the preoriginary origin must not, and this is central to Schürmann's interpretation of Meister Eckhart as well as to the 'principle of anarchy', be understood as the identification of a chronologically or metaphysically prior instance or moment. Rather, the identity that is at stake here is that between the 'origin of provenance' and the 'origin of imminence' (*WJ*, 116). It points towards both past and future. This temporal aspect is what Schürmann captures in the notion of wandering identity, which is not sequential, moving from an origin towards a goal, but retains both moments in an anarchic unity. The emphasis on the wandering, breathing aspect of this identity aims to abolish the structure of separation imposed by traditional metaphysics, in the sense that it recovers the 'dehiscence' (*WJ*, 107–118), the bursting forth of life, and thus reinstates an identity without standards.

If the preoriginary origin is the place of silence, this is not the silence of separation that dominates the society of economism and security, but the silence of the desert, this 'vast solitude' in which 'there is no place for two' and in which the 'opposition between a Creator and a creature vanishes' (*WJ*, 111). Wandering identity, which is the form of counter-violent resistance that the early Schürmann opposes to the militarised, bloody form of anarchy unleashed by the RAF, must be understood in the context of this rejection of separation. But he also insists that invoking the paradoxical violence that springs from the abolition of the separation between God and human being does not amount to making all antagonism disappear. What changes is the *mode* in which opposition is to be thought and practiced: on Schürmann's approach, it is useless to wage counter-violence from the standpoint of a representation of a possible that takes its categorical and political foundations from the same sphere of separation that characterises the existing form of social organisation. This bloody form of anarchy is conceived on an abstract utopia, to which

Schürmann opposes the most counter-utopian of all places, the desert. By deconstructing the vestiges of instrumentality pervading those forms of resistance that oppose violence with more violence, Schürmann's displacement of utopia provides a forceful critique of militarised armed struggle and first of all prepares the place for a life without domination.

The image of the desert resists the topographic totality of metaphysics. Representing the relation between God and the human being as that between a supreme, perfect being and an imperfect being, metaphysical topography splits and stabilises wandering identity, thereby providing a blueprint for the organisation of society around sovereignty and domination. This is why Schürmann conceives of metaphysics as giving rise to a specific form of totality based on the separation between God and human being. To this determined totality he opposes a 'formless totality', in which separation is abolished and for which the single process of dehiscence provides the anarchic principle (*WJ*, 109). In the formless totality of the desert and of silence, determination-as-separation is replaced by wandering identity, which pivots on a notion of origin as 'always in back of and always ahead of detachment' (*WJ*, 116). This early answer Schürmann gives to the question 'What is to be done?' seeks to oppose what he will later call the 'law of social totalization' with an anarchic totality not structured by domination. Before looking in more detail at Schürmann's attempt to think this twofold notion of origin in opposition to 'that which exists' in his main published works, juxtaposing the idea of wandering identity to the idea of moving subjectivity that Schürmann develops in his reading of Marx a few years after the publication of the Meister Eckhart book can help elucidate his specific notion of an anarchistic subject.

Moving subjectivity and omnilateral practice

In the 1977 lecture course *Reading Marx*, held at the New School for Social Research, Schürmann positions his interpretation of Marx against both scientific and humanist Marxism, arguing that both reproduce what he calls a 'realism of universals',[207] the destruction of which constitutes Marx's specific contribution to an overcoming of

[207] Reiner Schürmann, *Reading Marx. On Transcendental Materialism*, ed. Malte F. Rauch and Nicolas Schneider (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2021), 18–20. Henceforth *RM*.

metaphysics and of the violence-based form of social organisation to which it gives rise. For Schürmann, scientific and humanist Marxisms, by virtue of their anti-philosophical self-understanding, rest on the same ontological foundations as the philosophies they reject. Rather than throwing out the baby with the bathwater, what distinguishes Marx's critique of the metaphysical relation between theory and praxis is, Schürmann argues, its materialist claim that being and praxis are synonymous, while in traditional metaphysics being is identified with theory. At the centre of Schürmann's reading of Marx is thus praxis and its relation to what, in the Meister Eckhart volume, he refers to as the preoriginary origin.

The concept of praxis that Schürmann wrests from Marx is radically immanent. Accordingly, universals and categories are not themselves real but mere products, representations, of a reality of which the essence is individual praxis. If Schürmann designates Marx as a 'transcendental philosopher', this is in the sense that it is 'individual practice' that grounds Marx's critique of capitalist society (*RM*, 14–16). Since this is counter-intuitive given that for Marx it is *social* being that determines consciousness, it is important to note that Schürmann does not aim to reproduce some sort of Feuerbachian materialism which, Schürmann argues, is based precisely on an anthropological realism of universals. Individual praxis, on the contrary, must not be understood as a particular instance of a universal that could be aggregated into a collective praxis or a class praxis. Instead, it denotes the experiential framework of the individual human being and its actions to satisfy the needs that arise within that framework. On this reading, universals are not prior to the practice of human beings but produced by it. What is real is subjective, individual life, and the praxis it engages in to satisfy its individual, corporeal needs.

Keeping in mind what was said about wandering identity above, it should be clear that this notion of the individual is not to be taken in the sense of the modern subject of knowledge, nor as a Feuerbachian species-being (*Gattungswesen*). Rather, it denotes the purview of Marxian materialism as concerning truly individual praxis and its production of subjectivity and history:

> Reality—or being—is found in its total incapacity to step beyond itself, that is, beyond need, hunger, suffering, work. This radical immanence of reality is what Marx calls 'life.' Representation in universals is nothing real: it only

> produces the categorial determinations of that reality. […] The negation of transcendence then means that between reality—or 'life'—and its representation there is at the same time continuity and discontinuity: continuity in so far as the categories in theory are really derived from practice, and discontinuity in so far as they are only categories, unreal. (*RM*, 87)

This constitutes a realism of individual practice that runs counter to the realism of universals reintroduced in Marxist doctrine, which, by confusing representations with reality, effectively remains stuck in the pre-1845 Marx and his reliance on Feuerbachian metaphysics. Understood in this emphatic sense, the individual is not a particular subsumed under a totality of individuals, but a 'moving subjectivity' (*RM*, 18) that, not unlike Meister Eckhart's wandering identity, has the potential to oppose the total violence of separation by withdrawing its support from its ruins.

Crucially, individual practice cannot be considered solely under the aspect of its status in class struggle. Such a perspective would eclipse the individual experiential framework in which this practice is realised by reducing its practice to a generic concept of labour (*RM*, 37–38). Generic labour is that generalisable aspect of individual practice that can be said to be common to all living beings, that in which individuals can be aggregated into species-being, whose activities can be measured, for instance, as a function of the lapse of chronological time (*RM*, 34–36). The distinction between generic and individual labour does not coincide with that between abstract and concrete labour, both of which are generic in as far as concrete labour, too, introduces a universal category of use or use value. On Schürmann's reading, any generalisation of individual needs implies an abstraction. Conversely, individual practice, taken non-abstractly, cannot be objectified and, correspondingly, not be reduced to mere determinate negation.[208] As Schürmann argues in an essay from that time, rather than that between abstract and concrete, the pertinent distinction, and here he draws on his reading of Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, is that between '*omnilateral*' and 'unilateral' activity.[209] While

[208] 'Only in a realism of universals can one speak of "the labor of the negative." This does not designate yet the specifically human labor, but simply the activity of objectivation as such, the self-differentiation of the universal. 'Generic' labor here remains essentially linked to consciousness', (*RM*, 37).

[209] Reiner Schürmann, 'Symbolic Praxis', trans. Charles T. Wolfe, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, 19(2)–20(1), 1997, 62. Henceforth *SP*. The Marx passages Schürmann cites can be found in *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844* (*MEW40*, 473–474/*MECW3*, 238–239).

the former is variable and dynamic, the latter is blinkered and static. As a form of counter-work, omnilateral activity implies the reorientation of purpose beyond that conceivable in a society founded on separation and on the violent subsumption of a plurality of means to a discrete group of ends.

To break the reign of those abstract transcendental principles that replace reality with representations, radical immanence enacts 'a displacement of the understanding of what reality is: precisely not graspable through universally valid rules and laws, but an always localized, finite, concrete effort to satisfy individual needs' (*RM*, 43). So, for Schürmann, the essential contribution of Marx is the emphasis on the discordance between the individual experiential framework and that imposed by constituted, representational wholes such as the class or the state. Schürmann puts this in a way that resonates with the definition of the preoriginary origin as a vital, anarchic unity when he writes that what Marx discovers is that 'There is no origin, but only a profusion of originary actions by which individuals satisfy their basic needs'.[210] Put differently, individual practice is irreducible to the realism of universals on which the society of separation is founded. On Schürmann's reading, this becomes clear in Marx's writings starting with *German Ideology*. It is the recovery of individual life from under the totality of representations that is the task of critique and at the same time supplies the ambiguous anarchic principle of counter-violent resistance to the total violence of 'that which exists'. On this view, Marx's crucial achievement lies not in identifying class antagonism as the driving force of history but in establishing the transcendental character of the individual's appropriation of the means for life.

Wandering identity and moving subjectivity point to the anarchistic subject. While wandering identity undermines the notion of identity as a non-differing and unchanging whole, moving subjectivity, by undermining the static nature of any subject-position, emphasises the topological vocation of resistance in its opposition to the law of social totalisation. The place of resistance is constitutively changing, constantly renegotiating its ambiguity and its reflexivity. To draw out the coordinates

[210] Reiner Schürmann, 'Anti-Humanism: Reflections of the Turn Towards the Post-Modern Epoch', in *RM*, 97–114; 106. Henceforth *AH*. (A revised version of this article, which was initially published in 1979, is included in *PA*, chapter III, 44–60.)

of this wandering or this movement as Schürmann thinks it more clearly, I now turn to his notions of the 'principle of anarchy' (3.3) and of the 'double bind' (3.4), before I return to the anarchistic subject and to a possible critique of his reading of Marx (3.5).

3.3 The principle of anarchy: The condition of resistance

As his early autobiographical text *Les origines* (1976) indicates, what motivates Schürmann's philosophy is that existing ways to make sense of the world have become essentially inadequate. With the Second World War and the Shoah, aporia has become life's ultimate condition.[211] For Schürmann, the expression of dissent under this condition is a matter of counter-violence when it opposes a violence that is both philosophical and political: philosophical, and here Schürmann initially follows Heidegger, in that the conceptual mastery provided by philosophers as 'civil servants' (*BH*, 8) of humanity has, at least in the Western tradition extending from the Greek over the Latin to the modern vernacular, suppressed the spatiotemporal multiplicity of phenomena and their presencing for the sake of the domination of constant presence through 'ultimate referents' (*PA*, 41); political, in that this establishment of 'ultimate referents' on the conceptual plane has provided a blueprint and justification for the organisation of society around first principles as social formations based on the domination of particular value hierarchies. Right at the beginning of *From Principles to Anarchy*, Schürmann notes that his appropriation of Heidegger as a 'discursive regularity' is itself 'violent' in that it aims to change its 'direction' (*PA*, 3). *PA* offers a deconstruction of principles as both rational 'ultimate referents' (*principia*) and authoritative 'standard-setting firsts' (*principes*) to understand the peculiar transformation those principles have been undergoing, a transformation that Schürmann frames as 'a history where the bedrock yields' (*PA*, 1–11). His analysis is a powerful reflection on the material and discursive formations that establish and uphold first principles, one that does not pretend to abolish those principles by

[211] 'Once distilled into textbook dates, even a past full of terror takes on an orderly appearance. […] But I myself cannot consider this past as something external. The distance that would render it comprehensible is denied to me. It invades me in gusts of panic' (*Origins*, trans. Elizabeth Preston [Zurich and Berlin: Diaphanes, 2016], 22).

philosophical sleight of hand but, in its counter-violent change of interpretative direction, displaces Heidegger's main tenets. While remaining close to the text, it constantly goes beyond and against it and thus substantially reworks the understanding of resistance that can be drawn from it.

The 'hypothesis of metaphysical closure' (*PA*, 1) from which Schürmann sets out does not imply a clean chronological break but marks the precarious spatiotemporal constellation outlined in *PA* based on the notion of place, which is directly related to the politico-philosophical violence of principles:

> The *topoi* of being are of two kinds: ruled by principles and ruled only by the event of presencing. […] To speak of the end of epochal history and of the entry into the locus called event is strictly to speak about the same matter twice—of the boundary where one economy expires and another sets in […] With that break in its destiny, Western culture takes the shape of a heritage bequeathed without directions for use. (*PA*, 272)

Schürmann here sketches out a 'horizon of resistance' that differs from Heidegger's in the way in which it relates place, space and time. Whereas, as Chapter 2.3 showed, in Heidegger temporality operates as an a priori but remains subsumed to the act of determination through which a specific political notion of place comes to assign space and time their position, in Schürmann place—and, with it, the problem of amphiboly—is turned into the central problem of analysis. Put differently, while in Kant and Heidegger amphiboly retains an ordering function, Schürmann turns the functioning of place as organisational principle itself into the material of his approach. He reworks the status of those notions that remained separate and in a somewhat unclear relation in Kant and Heidegger: place, space and time. While in Kant the priority of place had served to establish the precedence of the pure forms of intuition over the play of form and matter in cognition, in Heidegger the amphibolous use of place allowed the determinative precedence of a specifically directed notion of proper place—as soil and, later, as quasi-religious site—over time. If, on Schürmann's approach, this orientation-function is conceived as broken and itself incongruous, his philosophy can be considered as an attempt to think the two moments of Kant's treatment of the amphiboly problem—the destruction of pre-critical philosophy and the institution of a critical system—as itself caught up in a '*differend* (*Widerstreit*)'

(*BH*, 29). It is this displacement of the differend that renders Schürmann's thinking crucial for the analysis of resistance attempted here.

As noted above, Schürmann argues that this break indeed occurs already in Kant who, in the *CPR*, enunciates a twofold understanding of being 'as *category* and as pre-cognitive, pre-categorial, pre-predicative *givenness*' (*LT*, 89). If existence precedes categories, this means that the moment of determinacy afforded by the categories is 'equiprimordial' with a moment of 'Indeterminate presence' (*LT*, 86–87). To illustrate this point, Schürmann refers to B626 (the same section that Heidegger discusses in *Kant's Thesis About Being*) to show how both moments together are constitutive of the notion of being that underpins *CPR*.[212] In Schürmann's reading of this passage, the position of the thing refers to its givenness, its indeterminate presence, rather than to its being constituted through subsumption by categories. It is only once the 'certitude of objective reality', that is, the 'facticity' (*LT*, 85) of the thing as matter of experience, is established that experience can emerge as a form that subsumes. However, the 'immediacy of sense data' (*LT*, 85) implied in this sequence is difficult to reconcile with the idea of an intuition premised on pure forms in as far as the latter already involve a mediation. In light of this aporia, Kant's refutation of the rationalist amphiboly appears just as much as an attempt to contain one consequence of his own philosophical system, namely the persistence of a notion of matter as given, a presupposition which, by the standards of the first *Critique* itself, amounts to an amphibolous reintroduction of conceptual objects posing as objects. This gives rise to a notion of the subject as 'broken between indeterminate being which provides ontological moorage but cannot legislate, and determinate thinking which legislates but is not constitutive ontologically' (*LT*, 93). With this, the subject as a unitary whole recedes from the centre stage and makes room for an investigation into the spatiotemporal conditions of the brokenness that characterises the horizon of a priori resistance.

Schürmann's reading focuses on the 'topical strategies' (*LT*, 78) adopted by philosophers in relation to the 'economy of presence' under which they work.

[212] '*Being* is obviously not a real predicate, i.e., a concept of something that could add to the concept of a thing. It is merely the positing [Position] of a thing or of certain determinations in themselves' (A598/B626).

Schürmann uses this latter term to describe the social, political and philosophical set-up of an epoch or, more specifically, the system of rules according to which things appear (present themselves) in a given social formation. Economies of presence 'assign each thing its site or world' and thus 'order the *topoi*, the places, where each phenomenon is what it is' (*PA*, 303). Following this reading, Kant's determination of the place of phenomena in relation to the subject in the Amphiboly chapter can be seen to constitute an attempt to arrive at a notion of being that does not amphibolously presuppose itself. The act of transcendental reflection determines the place of phenomena and makes it possible to question the status of silent judgements. As we have seen in Chapter 2.2, it is Kant's emphasis on use in distinction from the principles of the Transcendental Dialectic that characterises the Amphiboly chapter and that undermines the architectonic of the first *Critique*. The implication of this specific use is that 'the Kantian topos of transcendental legislation is not a displacement of the ultimate norm-providing referent […] but an incipient loss of any such referent; the loss of the origin as unbroken self-possession' (*LT*, 93). As such, Kant's 'revolution of the mode of thought' does not only begin to erode the modern economy of presence but affects the very *sequence* of economies of presence itself, which have provided the principial framework for social formations in the West since the Socratic turn. It is, however, only in Marx, Nietzsche and Heidegger that this erosion is accomplished, leaving behind a 'vacuum of the place deserted by the successive representations of ground' (*PA*, 4) that requires rethinking the relation between theory and praxis, between violence and counter-violence.

As a loss of representations, the erosion of the economies of presence is a directly political issue since 'The political makes public, literally exposes, the epochal principle which life otherwise obeys tacitly' (*PA*, 40). After Marx, Nietzsche and Heidegger, it is not only one particular epochal principle that disappears, but the very formation in which principles can serve as a point of orientation. The notion of place unlocks this twofold character of the epochal set-up analysed by Schürmann: under the hypothesis of closure, the task of politics is not to replace an outdated principle with a new one, leaving the principial framework in place, but to establish a different place for politics outside the 'historical apparatus [*dispositif*]' (*PA*, 299). The critical potential of this understanding of politics lies in the rigorous denunciation of 'new'

principles that merely rehash the oldest ones. On this view, the principle (*principium*) governing rationality is tied up with the principle (*princeps*) governing a social formation. Accordingly, Schürmann specifies the 'site' of politics as the 'public conjunction of things, action, and speech' (*PA*, 40).[213] Any answer to the question of the nature of a counter-violence that does not end up producing the 'bloody form of anarchy' presupposes, then, an analysis of the 'site' in which principles govern the presence of things, actions, and speech.

The method Schürmann develops takes as its point of departure Heidegger's notion of topology. As noted in Chapter 2.3, in Heidegger, 'topology of being' involves exposition-location (*Erörterung*), a method that renders networks of places visible. As a phenomenological method, topology carries out a 'double step backward' from phenomena as they present themselves according to the rules of any economy of presence (*PA*, 19–20). In so doing, it opposes particular philosophical and political principles to their conditions of possibility. The place of politics is the site in which the present (das *Anwesende*), the mode of presence (*Anwesenheit*), and presencing (*Anwesen*) intersect. If understood that way, topology 'leads from the ontologies of the body politic to the topology of the political site' (*PA*, 41). If, as we have seen above, 'letting-be' is the early Schürmann's response to the quest for a politics beyond ultimate referents, what complicates this picture is that this 'beyond' must not to be understood as a clean chronological break between epochs but implies the persistence of principles despite the erosion of the referential function that initially gave rise to them. Put differently, the closure of metaphysics does not denote a simple disappearance of principles but rather a specific temporal transformation of the way in which their authority imposes itself.

Schürmann cautions not to confuse the double step back with mere '*Erörterung*' (*PA*, 41), suggesting that, in Heidegger, the latter is indeed only one step on the way towards topology that itself ultimately falls short of the analysis of presencing. This is in line with Schürmann's emphasis on the 'turning' (*Kehre*) from being-there to presencing and his corresponding assertion that the later Heidegger has definitely

[213] Schürmann translates Heidegger's '*Ort*' variously as 'site', 'locus', 'place' to convey specific nuances of the concept as he puts it to use. See *PA*, 39, 161, 354 n. 29.

left behind the Cartesian overdetermination of being-there. That this 'turning' might not be as clear-cut as Schürmann implies is marked by the fact that, elsewhere in *PA*, '*Erörterung*' is used in a less narrow and more emphatic sense to describe 'the *proper site* established by the topological analysis, *Erörterung* ("situation")'.[214] The verb 'to situate' occurs frequently across *PA* and in most cases designates the process of exposing and locating our historical site. What is different in Schürmann's use of '*Erörterung*' is that it is orientated by a question Heidegger never asks, namely, 'What is to be done?' (*PA*, 1). 'Situation' serves to expose and locate an historical site in order to carry over deconstruction into 'a struggle against epochal principles, the *principes* that reign and the *principia* that order' (*PA*, 93). The '*assignation to a site*' accomplished by 'situation' aims to subvert that epochal site from within (*PA*, 93). Although Schürmann insists that this struggle is already anticipated in Heidegger after the turning, it is only through Schürmann's displacement with a view to praxis that it overcomes the ambiguity which remains present in Heidegger's quasi-religious link of place to the fourfold.

This very ambiguity becomes the subject matter of Schürmann's approach when he defines the anarchy principle as 'the ambiguous situation of a possible transition' (*PA*, 280). The possible transition is reflected in Heidegger's trajectory from the framework of *Being and Time* (*Dasein*) to topology, in which Schürmann sees the transformation of the idea of ontological difference into that of '*temporal difference*' (*PA*, 145). To this transition correspond the two divergent notions of origin we encountered in Schürmann's book on Meister Eckhart and which, in *PA*, articulate the difference between history and temporality. By 'radicalizing' the ontological difference, this temporal difference introduces the change of direction that serves Schürmann to reorientate Heidegger's thinking. It is only against the backdrop of this temporal difference that the specificity of a withdrawal that does not end up as a mere reaction to the violence that it resists can be drawn out. This withdrawal involves a 'shift in standpoint' (*PA*, 146) from history to temporality.

[214] This translation has been suggested by Jean Beaufret (see *PA*, 319 n. 33; Jean Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger*, vol. 2, *Philosophie moderne* [Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1973], 148).

The temporal difference is elucidated by the distinction between the 'original' and the 'originary', in which the former denotes 'historical', the latter 'ahistorical' beginnings (*PA*, 131).[215] Original origins are beginnings that can be reiterated, what they produce is the historically new. They designate those re-arrangements in a social and philosophical formation that replace one ultimate referent with another one: 'What is original in history is the identity between two non-identical beginnings, between a novel disposition of phenomena and the new starting point it provides for thought' (*PA*, 139). Contrary to the renovation of identity played out in original origins, originary origins have an 'event-like identity [that] is essentially ahistorical [and that] resists reiteration. […] As soon as it has occurred, the originary identity between presencing and thinking is lost' (*PA*, 141). The distinction between the original and the originary is conceived in terms of the tension between the historically novel, what presents itself as new within a fixed economy of constant presence, and the ahistorical event, pure presencing. Their relation is temporal: while its momentary character distinguishes presencing from constant presence, once its movement between presence and absence is halted it can be instituted as constant presence. Presencing and constant presence are distinguished by how the appropriation that underlies them is orientated: while presencing corresponds to thinking and acting without reference to entities (*PA*, 140–141), constant presence turns the specificity of one originary event into a model or rule of presencing for future phenomena. Accordingly, the temporal difference between the original and the originary is that between modes of presencing and presencing itself:

> To advocate a "leap" in thinking is therefore not to plead some form of the irrational, but to disentangle the two levels of the temporal difference: that of the "original", in which the coming-about of presence is described as the birth of a more or less short-lived network of present entities, and that of the "originary", in which that coming-about is described without reference to entities. (*PA*, 141)

[215] Schürmann deduces this terminological distinction through a phenomenological interpretation of the differential meanings of *Beginn* (beginning), *Anfang* (inception) and *Ursprung* (origin), see *PA*, chapter VIII, 120–151.

Presencing underlies both the original and the originary, but while the former turns it into an historical principle, the latter does not. In the context of *PA*, it is clear that any resistance would have to set out from this event-like presencing.

The philosophically and politically precarious distinction between a leap in thinking and a regression into the irrational is instructive, since it is the awareness of a possible 'relapse from an understanding of the origin as *event* into its *principial* comprehension' (*PA*, 147) that marks Schürmann's divergence from Heidegger. By surrounding his discovery with 'an aura of mystification', Heidegger reintroduces the original into the originary and thereby prepares the 'transmutation through which presencing institutionalizes itself into principles that rule and justify action' (*PA*, 147). Schürmann locates the Heideggerian regression into metaphysical categories in the hypostatisation of heteronomy in the notion *It gives* which, as 'apophatism' (*PA*, 147), reveals its quasi-religious character.[216] The change of direction introduced by Schürmann most forcefully applies here: Rather than radicalising mystification, 'Radical phenomenology […] not only brings principial history to an end, but it takes away from absence the aura of authority by showing its temporal "direction and sense"' (*PA*, 147). Put differently, in rejecting Heidegger's collapsing of the originary into the original, Schürmann reorientates the relation between presencing and constant presence.

Contrary to Schürmann's insistence that this hypostasis remains somewhat marginal to Heidegger's philosophy, Chapter 2.3 has suggested that the primacy of a mystified notion of place over space and time extends from his early to his late works. If the orientation of Heidegger's thinking is given by place as 'direction-order' still in 1969, it is indeed difficult to subtract the aura of authority from this lexicon. By reading the Heideggerian strategy of spatiotemporal determination in light of its root in Kant's amphiboly, the continuity of orientation that guides the incongruity asserted by both Heidegger (incongruity of time countervailed by proper place) and Kant (incongruity of space) becomes visible. In line with this, Schürmann defines the problem that 'any

[216] The apophatic invocation of God designates his transcendence through negation (negative theology). The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines 'apophatic' as 'The Orthodox tradition of apophatic, or negative, theology holds that none of our concepts can properly be affirmed of God, who transcends all human concepts', see https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/apophatic, accessed 28 June 2021.

order of presence locates, and in this sense, even precedes, pre-understanding' as an 'amphiboly of the original' (*PA*, 135).[217] While Schürmann does not himself make this link explicit, it is precisely this amphiboly of the original that persists in Heidegger, as well as in those bloody forms of resistance that subscribe to a realism of universals. And this not by accident but out of necessity: origin guarantees the consistency of thought and action. Radical phenomenology, on the other hand, is bought at the price of the thematic inconsistency of the 'principle of anarchy'.[218]

This inconsistency is, for Schürmann, not fortuitous but responds to a topological condition. If, as the above quotation has it, '*topoi* of being are of two kinds: ruled by principles and ruled only by the event of presencing', it is the conflict between those two kinds that defines the 'historical site' of the anarchy principle. This historical site is that of the boundary or transition between principle-ruled and non-principled economies of presence. Schürmann grasps this break by recourse to the 'hypothesis of closure', which is specified in two ways: 'it is a *systematic* closure, inasmuch as the norms for action formally "proceed from" the corresponding first philosophies; and it is an *historical* closure, since the deconstructionist discourse can arise only from the boundary of the era over which it is exercised' (*PA*, 4). As noted above, this closure must not be understood as the simple sequence of a replacement of one condition by another one, but as the conflictual conjuncture of different temporalities in one historical site. Those diverging temporalities are indicated, in the quotation, by the 'epochal history' and the 'event of presencing', respectively. The historical site analysed by Schürmann is characterised by the intersection of the conflicting temporalities underlying this place.

The force of the hypothesis of closure as Schürmann puts it to work is adumbrated by his insistence on the understanding of place as 'originary conflict' (*PA*, 144) or

[217] Schürmann makes explicit reference to the Amphiboly chapter in his lectures on *Kant's Critique of Judgment* (Spring 1990, unpublished typescript, in *Professor Reiner Schürmann Lectures, 1975–1993*), noting that all judgements require an act of transcendental reflection and that the concepts of reflection are irreducible both to the categories and to judgement (9–9bis).

[218] Giorgio Agamben takes the paradoxical French title (*Le principe d'anarchie*) to indicate the limitations of Schürmann's approach: 'Anarchy can never be in the position of a principle' (*The Use of Bodies*, trans. Adam Kotsko [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015], 275–276). Agamben, however, fails to consider more closely the ambivalence of the notions of position and place in Schürmann's account.

'broken foundation' (*PA*, 148). This use of place as situating both the historical site of the philosopher and the temporal condition of her object of analysis contrasts with the role assigned to place by Kant and Heidegger.[219] Schürmann draws out the conflictual space-time underpinning place as a self-abolishing human condition. Accordingly, the question of action—and with it, that of the withdrawal from and counter-violence against the violent suppression of difference—is addressed as one that pertains to a paradoxical recovery of the new: the possibility of anarchic thinking and acting is new in that it had been excluded from the field of possibilities for the whole sequence of the economies of presence established by philosophy in ancient Greece. It is recovered in as far as it asserts a capacity that derives from the condition of natality and mortality. The discordant relation between those two poles is at the centre of his late work, *Broken Hegemonies*.

3.4 Resistance and the double bind: Discordant oppositions

In *BH*, Schürmann refers to resistance in two distinct senses. While neither of them explicates a proper concept of resistance, they are nonetheless instructive in that they refer to two opposing directions of resistance. In most instances, resistance is the resistance of the singular to subsumption (e.g., *BH* 545, 608). Towards the end of the book, however, Schürmann refers to the resistance of the 'metaphysician in us', who resists the 'knowledge that the ultimate is not simple' (*BH*, 631). This resistance is what Heidegger fell prey to and, we might infer from what has been said so far, also applies to the strategy adopted by the RAF.[220] This paradoxical nature of resistance highlights its ambiguity and the reflexivity.

Schürmann develops the notion of temporal difference to think an incongruous human temporality from the point of view of a specific historical site. The incongruity Schürmann envisions differs from that employed by Kant and Heidegger in that it affects the place from which thinking departs, that is, the extra-philosophical incongruity on which any systematisation rests. In other words, on Schürmann's

[219] In this, it resonates with the question posed by Hannah Arendt in *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1 (New York: Harcourt, 1978), part IV: 'Where are we when we think?'.
[220] This implies attributing to Heidegger the same position as the latter attributed to Nietzsche (see *PA*, 184, n. 12).

approach, the 'direction-order' that orientates the assigning of positions to appearances and representations cannot be separated from incongruity but remains in an 'originary conflict' with it. What Kant calls amphiboly—that is, the failure to use one's understanding adequately—is thus transformed into the material condition of possibility both of the history of principles and of the destruction of a form of social organisation that gravitates around first principles. In *BH*, Schürmann outlines what it means to think and act under the twofold temporal condition of natality and mortality and how, more specifically, this affects the relation between concepts and appearances. *BH* thus works through more thoroughly the entanglement of letting-be and withdrawal with history. This possibility to think a form of resistance that cannot be easily inserted into a dialectic of unification and dispersal but that takes the "dialectical apparatus" itself as its subject matter is an important achievement of Schürmann's approach.

Under the anarchy principle, the answer to the question 'What is to be done?' has to be reconsidered in terms of presencing. If the rule of principles is an illusion that tends towards totalisation, this question can be reformulated in the following way: 'What is the practice—and the politics—of mortals?' (*PA*, 60). As counter-violent resistance, this practice would have to strip the idea of *It gives* of its aura of authority. Schürmann's later work specifies the implications for resistance of this attempt to reintroduce temporality into appearance by introducing the notion of an 'historial differend' (*BH*, 538). The interpretative effort with which *BH* wrests the ahistorical temporality of the event from history is remarkable and, in its scope, goes well beyond the analysis of *PA*. This might be attributed to Schürmann's reading, pivotal to *BH*, of Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy* (first published in 1989). If already in *PA* the separation between history and temporality was complicated by the entanglement of modes of presence and presencing, the withering away of the principial economy of presence now appears as even more protracted and fraught with regressions. With this, the amphibolous collapsing of the time of the event into historical time becomes a yet more urgent analytical concern. It pushes further the focus on the place of resistance as the site in which incongruous forces struggle for hegemony. Gérard Granel captures the opposition between different temporalities in the phrase of the 'superimposition of the bygone and the interminable': it indicates

an historical site in which '*everything* is finished, *the* end as such has been reached—and that, on the other hand, this very end never ceases (and never will cease) to come to an end'.[221]

BH is divided into two volumes, the first of which addresses the Greek and the Latin economies of presence, while the second volume, which this section focuses on, addresses the modern one.[222] Each of the three parts examines the 'hegemonic fantasm' of the respective period from two points of view, that of its 'institution' and that of its 'destitution'. Schürmann focuses on the instituting discourses of Parmenides, Cicero and Augustine, Luther and Kant, arguing that in each of them a specific 'hegemonic fantasm' is instituted as the ultimate referent of what can be said, thought and done in an epoch. These fantasms—'the One' for the Greek, 'Nature' for the Latin and 'Consciousness' for the Modern hegemony—determine the historical-ontological horizon of the corresponding social formation, a horizon that prevails until it starts showing the cracks caused by the discordance that had undermined it from its inception. Their demise, on the other hand, is illustrated with reference to Plotinus, Meister Eckhart, and Heidegger. What those destituting discourses discover is that their respective epochs each had, in a *metabasis eis allo genos*, hypostasised some phenomenon as its ultimate referent. Importantly, these cycles of institution-destitution are not symmetrical. Thus, the modern hegemony is not only destituted but experiences a 'peremption' that undoes the whole pattern of institution-destitution which had governed 'European humanity' (*BH*, 3) since Parmenides. As already indicated with reference to Kant, the modern ultimate referent, consciousness, implies a reflexivity that erodes the sequence of economies of presence from within. It is this sort of demise specific to modernity from which Schürmann's analysis draws its particular urgency for an enquiry into the place of resistance.

Schürmann's interpretation of the history of European societies focuses on its linguistic continuities and discontinuities, arguing that the texts through which he analyses the institutions and destitutions of epochs provide a key not only to the

[221] Gérard Granel, 'Untameable Singularity (Some Remarks on *Broken Hegemonies*)', *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, 19(2)–20(1), 1997, 215.
[222] All references in this paragraph are to the table of contents, *BH*, ix–xii.

understanding of what, in any of the societies in its scope, it is possible to think, do and say, but also of the ways in which these horizons become drawn and undrawn. In the context of my investigation, the point is not whether Schürmann's periodisation, which relies exclusively on philosophical texts, accurately reflects the complex conceptual and material determinations of the history of European societies but to consider its heuristic purchase for the analysis of the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance. For this, it is not so much the epochalisation that matters, but the analysis of the dynamics of institution and destitution.

In his analysis of the peremption of the modern epoch, for which the basic text is Heidegger's *Contributions*, Schürmann specifies the relation between history and temporality operated by Heidegger as that of a 'historicist-historial amphiboly' (*BH*, 537).[223] This linguistic amphiboly results from two divergent phenomenological perspectives on history, one positivist and one anarchic, a distinction that is marked by the difference historicist/historial. From a historicist perspective, the shift from one hegemonic language to another (such as from Greek to Latin) appears as the transition of meaning, hence as a continuity underlying discontinuity. The historial perspective, on the other hand, focuses on the foundational quality of shifts in linguistic hegemonies and on the change of horizons that a new standard-setting language brings. The historicist-historial amphiboly is a condition of human linguistic expression since 'no thought […] has ever resisted being carried away by its own language' (*BH*, 4) and, as such, feeds into the '*historial differend* that twists one's words as soon as one asks: What sets the standard?' (*BH*, 538). Adumbrating a concept of history that is implicated within the very continuity-discontinuity it analyses, this provides the point of departure for a phenomenological critique of the reference to proper place in Heideggerian thinking.

Heidegger's *Contributions*, expressing this amphibolous concept of history, is 'symptomatic' (*BH*, 516) of the historical site dominated by the paradoxical anarchy principle. While the book contributes to the analysis of the hypostatisation of specific linguistic patterns of reference into quasi-ontological horizons, its confusion of the

[223] Busch's description of place as occupying a 'transcendental-empirical threshold position' can be seen to paraphrase this.

original and the originary, the historicist and the historial simultaneously reproduces this hypostatisation. In the *Contributions*, a thinking that resists 'any representation and cooptation' is accompanied and subverted by a 'return of representational thinking' (*BH*, 518–519). As noted above, what implicitly informs the reading of the amphiboly presented by Schürmann is the fact that the return to representational thinking also constitutes a form of resistance, a denial of the hypostatisation that underlies economies of presence. The two forms of resistance are precisely what intersects in place: one perpetuates continuity (by denying hypostatisation), the other undoes it. Schürmann marks this ambiguity of resistance by noting that 'Heidegger lends his voice both to the forces of repression as well as to those of the repressed' (*BH*, 526). Thus, the historicist-historial amphiboly expresses the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance.

The historicist side of the amphiboly finds expression in Heidegger's invocation of the people as the agent through which being is realised in continuity with the realisation of the Greek polis: 'the state remains for Heidegger an abstract *notion* of everydayness. But only a concrete gathering, in the sense of the everyday, can become phenomenal' (*BH*, 519).[224] At play in this opposition between the abstract and the concrete is the specific relation between continuity and discontinuity that makes up the historicist perspective: on the one hand, it holds up a discontinuity by opposing the realisation of being qua people to the historical decline inscribed into 'that which exists'; on the other, however, this imagery of discontinuity and resistance implants the continuity of the Greek hegemonic fantasm onto the modern economy of presence. Put differently, the political solution to the crisis of modernity proffered by Heidegger is not specific to the modern economy of presence but harks back to a previous one and reproduces a metaphysical notion of origin. In this sense, it is as abstract and formalist as any notion of the state might be. Its resistance to the present contributes to the reproduction of the material conditions of possibility of that very present. While Schürmann's analysis makes possible this specific critical interpretation of the Heideggerian amphiboly, it nonetheless fails to consider in more

[224] As we saw in Chapter 2.3, the rectorship address does in fact attempt to bring State and *völkisch* community together, most monstrously in the phrase 'volklich-staatliches Dasein' (*GA16*, 110), a being-there fusing the people and the state.

detail the role that Heidegger's adoption of the 'principle of the people' (*BH*, 520; '*völkisches Prinzip*', *GA65*, 42/30) plays in orientating his thinking.

Against this relapse into the representational thinking of a realism of universals, Schürmann draws out the counterstrategy of the historial differend. While Heidegger short-circuits being and people through a particular idea of concrete gathering, Schürmann suggests that a real turning away 'from subjectivism […] forces one to think the political in another way. […] The gathering can no longer take place around, or by, or on, a self-conscious subject such as the people' (*BH*, 520). He extracts the historial from the historicist by focusing on the 'there' in 'being-there' (*Dasein*). Contrary to the *völkisch* 'here' that underpins Heidegger's being-there, the 'there' is meant to express the gap between the actual and the possible and thus to indicate a *discordance* between the two sides of the amphiboly. The notion of discordance, which marks the limitation of determinate negation, requires a bit more unpacking.

If the historial differend suggests that the identification of representations with being—as in the case of 'the people' and being—is a mark of the metaphysical economies of presence that have dominated European societies since ancient Greece, then undermining this relation is the task of a thinking of resistance that aims to elude being recaptured by the categories which it sets out to oppose. As previously in *PA*, Schürmann aims to distinguish the temporality of the event from the history of representations. Accordingly, the historial differend is not the final word but points 'toward a more originary *discordance*' (*BH*, 546). To stress the groundlessness of the temporality he seeks to delineate, Schürmann begins to describe this discordance in terms of the Heideggerian line according to which 'The abyss is the *originary unity* between space and time' (*BH*, 549; *GA65*, 379/264). The abyssal event, in which space, time and place converge, is 'structured from within' by '"momentary places" [*lieux d'instants*]' (*BH*, 551).[225] The momentary place is at the centre of the topological approach: as possible, it is 'not yet' (*BH*, 553). In momentary place, non-presence and possible presencing intersect. Read in light of Kant's and Heidegger's uses of incongruity, it could be said that momentary places mark the capacity of

[225] Schürmann's *lieu d'instant* (*BH*, 549) translates Heidegger's '*Augenblicksstätte*' (*GA65*, 375/261). The translation of *BH* renders *lieu d'instant* variously as momentary place, momentary site, or place of an instant.

incongruity without however determining it in any specific way as a representation, be it as left and right or as yesterday and tomorrow. In this sense, the standpoint of momentary place offers a perspective on an anarchistic subject capable of reorientation. The negative temporality of the not yet is the perspective from which Schürmann undermines the identification of representation and being.

This leads back to the extraction of the historial from the historicist by means of the notion of 'there' and the question 'How is the *there* deferred?' (*BH*, 553). Schürmann elucidates the 'not yet' through an 'anticipatory topology' that 'deals with a possible historial place, one already given, yet still to be occupied', the description of which 'is first of all negative, since *topos* here no longer signifies any region of beings whose relations can be maximized to produce some archic referent' (*BH*, 557). For Schürmann, then, 'The difficulty consists in understanding anticipation without any utopian or millennial postponements' (*BH*, 557). The negative aspect of anticipatory topology is expressed in Schürmann's rejection of the idea that the historical site characterised by the closure of metaphysics can be overcome by a 'resolute leap' (*BH*, 552, 567). This idea, which Schürmann attributes to 'the advocates of post-modernity' (*BH*, 552), but which also applies to Heidegger and the RAF, presupposes that European humanity could leave the ruins of several thousand years of metaphysics behind by 'mere fiat' (*BH*, 613). If Schürmann suggests a proximity between this sort of utopian or millennial understanding of the 'there' and bloody forms of violence, the critical point here is the attempt to think place neither as a mere position in space but as an historical situation while at the same time avoiding the relapse into those images of origin and proper place that determine the modern formation of domination. Put differently, Schürmann seeks to resist capture by 'the metaphysician in us'.

The question then becomes how to grasp the temporal possibility of the deferred there as a possibility immanent to the broken hegemony of modernity. Schürmann approaches this problem through an attempt to dismantle 'the pairing of "empirical given" and "*a priori* condition"' (*BH*, 569). On this view, the specifically modern distinction between empirical and transcendental has obstructed the presencing of phenomena by referring them back to an ultimate referent. To this pattern of

reference belongs what Schürmann calls a 'spatial and temporal apriorism': 'For the moderns, the originary unity of space and time resides in the subject who prescribes them to every object of possible experience in view of its universal *mathesis*' (*BH*, 548–549). Rather than integrating temporality in the subject as the inner sense that spatiotemporally determines the place of phenomena, Schürmann aims to separate the spatiotemporal place of phenomena from what can be determined by the subject, thus inverting the priority. This separation is articulated as a break with the notion of space and time as simultaneity and sequentiality, which Schürmann replaces with an emphasis on discordance and conflictuality. What follows from this reordering is that the conceptual distinction between space and time is deactivated precisely by being referred to a place that remains indeterminable for the subject. Contrary to Kant and Heidegger, space and time are here not ordered by an incongruity that remains implicit to the philosophical approach. Instead, they are directly related to this act, which Schürmann grasps as exceeding the a priori bounds of the modern subject. If 'the distinctions between place and time become blurred' (*BH*, 579), this opens up a new analytical perspective on the spatiotemporal determinability of resistance. The notion of temporal discordance specifies the conflictuality of the place in which concepts and appearances come together.

In his analytic of ultimates, Schürmann conceives this discordance based on the phenomenological traits of natality and mortality, which together form a 'dissymmetrical double bind':[226]

> The first, the archic trait, prompts us toward new commencements and sovereign commandments. It makes us magnify norms and principles. The second always wrests us from the world of such archic referents. It is the singularizing, dispersing, desolating, evicting, dephenomenalizing, exclusory trait. The two do not pair off. One does not oppose the other as a determinate negation. They are originary, yet not binary, traits. (*BH*, 624)

What Schürmann identifies here is an incongruity (discordance) of times based on a temporality of being constituted by mortality and natality. Mortality and natality are temporal potentialities intrinsic to human life. Anchoring place in these potentialities,

[226] Reiner Schürmann, 'Ultimate Double Binds', in *Tomorrow the Manifold*, 137. Henceforth *UDB*. Schürmann notes (*UDB*, 122, n. 2) that he takes the notion of the double bind from a 1956 study by Gregory Bateson et al., 'Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia', in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 206–208.

Schürmann emphasises that these traits do not indicate datable facts—such as the birth and death of any individual human being—but rather discordant pulls (*UDB*, 124–125). This distinction allows him to grasp the double bind as constituted by essentially irreconcilable traits that, applied to the notion of place, render it both dynamic and precarious and subvert its connotation of something to be conserved.[227] Schürmann considers this 'fractured condition' (*UDB*, 124) on the level of every individual human being as paradigmatic of the conflicts that pervade social formations in general. Just as individual life is propelled by the discordant opposition of natality and mortality, the rise of social formations bears the seeds of their decline. They constitute a place that is never fully constituted, since any institution carries with it its destitution. The double bind registers a situation that, while inextricably conflictual, can provide a standpoint for the anarchistic subject.

Any counter-violent resistance to the of the modern sovereign distribution of life and death that tries to situate itself in discontinuity to 'planetary violence' (*BH*, 19) would have to occupy this possible historial place. Put differently, resistant praxis is about bringing to bear a '*fundamentum concussum*' (*BH*, 560) or a '*dissecutio temporum*' (*UDB*, 124) on the critique of today's formation of domination. Schürmann conceives this broken foundation and this temporal discontinuity in terms of a phenomenological 'double bind of natality-mortality' that

> is phenomenologically first in the sense of the *origin* of each and every experience. It is not first in the sense of *principles*, not foundational in any way. Principles and affiliated representations arise only from the subsumptive violence that turns whatever is the case into a case of whatever universal.[228]

The difference between 'subsumptive violence' and counter-violence can also be expressed in terms of two different sorts of expropriation: phenomenologically, mortality expropriates, natality appropriates. On the level of the modern economy of presence, however, what expropriates is the subsumptive violence of principles, based on a hegemonic fantasm as ultimate referent. To subvert the structure in which

[227] Schürmann distinguishes the notion of 'fissured time' from Heidegger's 'ecstatic time': the former complicates the affirmative gesture and emphasises the involvement of both sides of the double bind. See *BH*, 587.

[228] Reiner Schürmann, 'Technicity, Topology, Tragedy: Heidegger on "That Which Saves" in the Global Reach', in *Technology in the Western Political Tradition*, ed. Arthur Melzer, Jerry Weinberg and M. Richard Zinman (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 204.

an ultimate referent functions as the standard-setting first that itself appears as absolute, Schürmann stresses the relational thrust of the topology of broken hegemonies: it analyses ultimate referents in their relation to the phenomena that they determine and distribute, thus deconstructing their ability to serve as absolute points of reference.

If Schürmann's approach can help think through resistance, this is conditioned on the detour through place. This detour becomes necessary since resistance, just as counter-violence, has to be conceived in its non-simplicity. Schürmann makes this difficulty explicit: '*counter* and *anti* gestures necessarily operate right in the middle of that which they commit themselves to denying' (*BH*, 514). Accordingly, he rejects agency as traditionally conceived: 'My world says No to me. It is a destitution without a rebel, transgression without an offender, negation without speakers, expropriation without expropriators' (*BH*, 615). At the same time, he contends that the historical site brought about by the Kantian 'revolution of the mode of thought' differs from previous destitutions in that it forfeits the pattern of ultimate referents altogether. However, Schürmann insists that the historical site of peremption does not imply that the principial economies of presence wither away as if automatically. So the question 'How to emancipate life from the great fantasised authorities?' (*BH*, 47) is indeed a pertinent one for him.

Illustrating what it means when 'my world says No to me', Schürmann refers to Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel*, in which a bicycle rim is mounted upside down on a stool. Transposed from wheel to artwork, the rim loses its world: 'a No traverses its phenomenalization as the possibility of a being dislodged, a dislodging that here exiles it to a stool in an exposition and that singularizes it there' (*BH*, 618–619). Singularised, the wheel can no longer fulfil the purpose that had first brought it into existence. If any purpose carries the possibility of being thus negated, this immanent separation between manifestation and subsumption affects not only objects such as the rim but historical social formations in their entirety.

The temporalities traversing the place of the double bind undermine any constant presence. The notion of a possible place, in Schürmann, emphasises the anarchic impulse traversing any attempt to establish ultimate referents over the Heideggerian

return to proper place. It denotes a condition in which different temporalities coexist as factual possibilities. Schürmann describes this as a condition that is in itself incongruous.[229] To resist 'the metaphysician in us' means to take the '*the formal discordance of times*', in which intention (spontaneity) and givenness are precariously combined, as the standpoint from which to wage a non-bloody form counter-violence.

3.5 Schürmann and Krahl: Omnilateral activity or prerevolutionary practice

In *PA*, Schürmann cites Marx as having thought presencing in distinction from epochally fixed modes of presencing (*PA*, 149; 350 n. 184). Thus when, in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx critiques Proudhon for considering history as a function of principles rather than vice versa,[230] this articulates a double discovery: the factual rule of seemingly ahistorical principles in original economies of presence as well as their originary (historical, material) basis and the corresponding possibility to subvert them. As a result, 'the lineage of hypostatized principles passes away' (*PA*, 59). Contrary to Heidegger, the originary is here not endowed with an aura of authority but sought in praxis as revolutionary activity.

But Schürmann does not follow the dialectical consequences Marx draws from this. For Schürmann, the dialectical process is arrested already on the level of individual experience, so that every sublation beyond that necessarily implies what in his lectures on Marx he called a 'realism of universals'. As my presentation so far has suggested, this is not an Arendtian individualism but an interpretation that stakes out the ambiguity of belonging so as to retain a capacity for reorientation rather than as ruling out the requirement of a collective for any form of resistance. In this section, I want to go back from Schürmann's analyses from *PA* and *BH* to his readings of Meister Eckhart and Marx introduced in 3.2 to indicate both the potential and limitations of his notion of an anarchistic subject.

[229] 'Or des espaces-temps incongrus […] ne peuvent être accordés que par une *condition en elle-même incongrue*.' Schürmann, *Des hégémonies brises*, 700.
[230] Karl Marx, *Das Elend der Philosophie*, *MEW4*, 134/*MECW6*, 170.

To emphasise the specificity of Schürmann's reading of Meister Eckhart and Marx and to prepare the transition to the critique of political economy in Chapter 4, it can be helpful to contrast Schürmann's notion of anarchistic struggle with Hans-Jürgen Krahl's conception of counter-violence and class struggle. In an obituary of Adorno published in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* a few weeks after the philosopher's death in August 1969, Krahl, one of the leaders of the anti-authoritarian movement in Germany at that time, writes:

> Contrary to the French proletariat and its political intellectuals, Germany lacks an unbroken tradition of violent resistance, and with it the historical conditions for a discussion of the historical legitimacy of violence that is free from irrationalisations. The ruling violence […] would not be one if the Marxist "weapon of criticism" would not have to be complemented through the proletarian "criticism by weapons". Only then is criticism the theoretical life of revolution.[231]

The perspective is different from Schürmann's here, both geographically and historically. Looking towards France from Germany, Krahl regrets that there is no similar continuity and intellectual grounding of class struggle on his side of the Rhine. He also, however, looks at the problem of counter-violence from a point in time that precedes the RAF's armed struggle. Having died in a car accident in early 1970, Krahl did not have the opportunity to react to this development. Nonetheless, his writings can elucidate his effort to theoretically ground an historically legitimate form of counter-violent resistance, which makes for an intriguing comparison with Schürmann's notion of an anarchistic subject.

In October 1969, a few years before Schürmann published his book on Meister Eckhart, Krahl delivered his famous 'Angaben zur Person' during the trial of the "ringleaders" of a protest against the award of the German book traders' peace prize to Senegalese president Léopold Sédar Senghor. In this speech, Krahl traces his path to becoming a political intellectual in the service of class struggle. Laying out his rise out of 'one of the darkest regions' of Germany, Krahl remarks:

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[231] Hans-Jürgen Krahl, 'Der politische Widerspruch der Kritischen Theorie Adornos', *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 23 August 1969. Reprinted in Hans-Jürgen Krahl, *Konstitution und Klassenkampf. Zur historischen Dialektik von bürgerlicher Emanzipation und proletarischer Revolution* (Frankfurt: Verlag Neue Kritik, 1971), 292. Henceforth *KK*.

> I learned to think conceptually through the mysticism of Meister Eckhart and Roswitha of Gandersheim: through ideologies which, if one wants to interpret them in a Marxist sense, can be explained as forms of utopian thought (as Ernst Bloch has done), but which reproduce a state of darkest "immaturity" [*Unmündigkeit*] if they are adopted within the experiential framework of the dominant class.[232]

Krahl's presentation of his own intellectual emancipation places the mysticism of Meister Eckhart in the beginning of a journey through the history of German philosophy, providing as it were the negative foil for anti-authoritarian maturity. Schürmann's emphasis on 'wandering identity', drawn out in 3.2, indicates that it is worth revisiting the relation between 'forms of utopian thought' and the 'experiential framework of the dominant class' from the point of view of the anarchistic subject and thus avoid to prematurely reduce Meister Eckhart's mysticism to ideology. Could Schürmann's counter-utopian reading of Meister Eckhart offer an antidote to its ideologisation and assimilation to the ends of violence? And, inversely, how can the notion of class struggle be brought to resonate with Schürmann's notion of a counter-violence based on the distinction between the totality of 'that which exists' and the formless totality of the preoriginary origin? How does Schürmann's doubly bound anarchistic subject relate to the proletariat?

In *Symbolic Praxis* (*SP*), Schürmann critiques Ernst Bloch's theory of music for reducing music to the horizon of expectation of a utopian totality, to be glimpsed in song in a fragmentary way and to be completed through the process of dialectical materialism. This interpretation of music remains inadequate for Schürmann since, by situating it within a horizon of preformed expectation, its method excludes a 'Phenomenological *poietics*' that 'affirms the essence of a praxis' (*SP*, 52). From this phenomenological perspective, song is seen as 'gather[ing] up the "has-been" in the imminence of a promise' (*SP*, 51). This twofold temporal direction echoes Schürmann's notion of preoriginary origin and reveals song, as 'praxis *par excellence*' (*SP*, 49), as an example of wandering identity. Insisting that 'once music is reduced to expression and perception, it reverts back to information' and that this amounts to 'an ideological understanding of music, not a phenomenological one' (*SP*, 52),

[232] Krahl, 'Angaben zur Person', in *KK*, 19–20. An English translation (based on the Italian translation), can be found here: https://viewpointmag.com/2018/04/14/personal-information, accessed 28 June 2021.

Schürmann claims that Bloch's notion of 'concrete utopia'[233] remains subsumed to categories that are external to experience. If Schürmann holds that Bloch's reduction of the phenomenological specificity of music to an expression of class society remains itself ideological, this shares the sense conveyed by Krahl's statement that considering phenomena (in this case, mysticism) only in light of their utopian potential to anticipate a future classless totality is insufficient.

Despite this parallel, it would seem that Schürmann's standpoint is irreconcilable with the consequence Krahl draws from this insight, namely that Meister Eckhart's thinking is ideological in as far as, in capitalist modernity, it must reproduce 'a state of darkest "immaturity"'. Contrary to Schürmann's attempt to draw out an anarchic origin through which to abandon the foundations of domination, the continuity between the darkness of Krahl's native region and that of immaturity—both express the failure to realise the promise of Enlightenment as man's emergence from self-incurred immaturity—seems unavoidable. However, a possibility to turn away from and thereby overturn this opposition is offered by Krahl's qualification that mysticism is ideology 'if […] adopted *within the experiential framework* of the dominant class' (emphasis added). As we have seen in 3.2, Schürmann's reading of Marx, with its insistence on the irreducibility of individual to generic practice, offers both a critique of the experiential framework of capitalist modernity and a corrective to the reduction of the problem of violence to that of a 'dominant class'.

The violence of abstraction

While Schürmann strongly opposes Althusser's scientific reading of Marx, his approach is not *per se* anti-theoretical—what he rejects is a theory that is thought to precede and instruct praxis (*RM*, 17). His concern is that both theory and ideology are based on abstractions from individual practice and therefore not radically immanent. One might object to this that it is precisely the difficult task of developing theory against both ideology and its own tendency to completely subsume whatever appearances to existing categories, and that this necessarily involves at least a moment of dialectical relation between concept and appearance. But this would mean failing to recognise that it is precisely what he understands to be the

[233] Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1962), 151.

presupposition of dialectics—the formal commensurability of theory and practice—that Schürmann tries to banish from his analysis and that he opposes with his almost obstinate insistence on individual practice as *truly* individual.

Schürmann does, moreover, recognise the 'strategic' value of theoretical operations in the struggle between individual practice and objectified categories of labour (*RM*, 67). As stratagems, theories remain regional, that is, they do not lay claim to a universal, transhistorical sphere of application. Schürmann finds an example of this strategic use in Marx's call, in the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, for the formation of the proletariat: 'A class must be formed which has radical chains […] There must be formed a sphere of society which claims no traditional status but only a human status […] This dissolution of society, as a particular class, is the proletariat'. Schürmann comments: 'The status of the entire Hegelian vocabulary of essence, opposition, self-alienation, universals suddenly turns from a metaphysical to a strategic one when it is used by Marx to make himself understood by "the Germans" who only hear dialectic' (*AH*, 105).[234] What this strategic use doubles and expresses politically is the transcendental materialism of individual practice after Marx's 'discovery of originary practice and its monadic, atomistic allotropism' (*AH*, 107). For Schürmann, this discovery implies the rejection of abstraction as an adequate perspective of comprehending individual practice. Krahl, however, makes an observation that can provide an important complement to Schürmann's reading of Meister Eckhart and Marx.

The challenge posed by Krahl—through which he transposes critical theory to the level of strategy—is that, in modern capitalist society, individual practice *is* always already abstracted, that is, it materially expresses and realises existing—lived, practiced, experienced—thought abstractions and reproduces them. This *real* abstraction is at stake when he refers to the 'experiential framework of the dominant class'. If individual experience is not independent of but determined by material reality, which itself is a product of previous individual as well as collective practices, this would seem to present a serious issue for Schürmann's reading. How, under those conditions, could individual practice serve as a transcendental horizon against

[234] Schürmann modifies the translation (*MEW1*, 390/*MECW3*, 186).

which to conceive a form of counter-violence that does not reproduce the RAF's militarised struggle? For Krahl, Marx's critique of political economy must translate, through a specific articulation of theory and practice, into the struggle against the violence of real abstraction. It is in this conjunction that Krahl allocates to counter-violence a crucial role.

In his essay 'On the Logic of Essence of Marx's Analysis of the Commodity', Krahl develops Marx's critique of abstraction from *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847) to the *Grundrisse* (1857–1858), observing a shift from what he calls a 'nominalist' opposition between abstract and concrete in the former to a concept of abstraction as 'concrete in thought' in the latter.[235] On this, there might indeed be a gap in Schürmann: in his lecture course, he reads only the former of the two works systematically, while references to the latter seem to be mainly re-citations from Michel Henry's book on Marx.[236] Thus skipping the *Grundrisse*, Schürmann can claim that *Capital*, by introducing the category of value, reverts to a realism of universals (*RM*, 85; *AH*, 106). The introduction to the *Grundrisse*, to which Krahl refers and which contains the critical reflection on the method of political economy and the category of exchange value, seems to have gone unnoticed by him.

There, Marx distinguishes between exchange value as, first, an 'abstract, one-sided relation within an already given, concrete, living whole' and, second, a category, as which it pretends to 'an antediluvian existence',[237] uniting concrete and abstract in the precarious and contradictory unity of the timeless category. Philosophy up to Hegel has considered the concrete as a product of the movement of the category, as if the actual world came into being by way of its comprehension. But this means putting the cart before the horse. 'In fact', Marx writes, this world is but a 'totality of thoughts' or a 'concrete in thought', a product of 'the working-up of intuition [*Anschauung*] and representation [*Vorstellung*] in thought'.[238] Through thought, we 'appropriate' the concrete and reproduce it as a 'concrete in thought', but by no

[235] Krahl, 'Zur Wesenslogik der Marxschen Warenanalyse', in *KK*, 31–32.
[236] Michel Henry, *Marx*, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1976). In collaboration with the author, an abridged English translation was published as *Marx: A Philosophy of Human Reality*, trans. Kathleen Blamey McLaughlin (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).
[237] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 101/*MEW42*, 36.
[238] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 101/*MEW42*, 36. Translation modified.

means does this capture the 'process by which the concrete itself comes into being'.[239] The 'real subject',[240] therefore, remains entirely untouched by this theoretical thought process. So far, this chimes well with Schürmann's characterisation of individual practice as something that remains beyond the scope of theory.

But, as Krahl reminds us, for Marx these abstractly general categories have a 'social reality'.[241] Their abstractions are real in that they are socially constitutive: 'They are forms of thought which are *socially valid*, and therefore objective' for the historically specific form of social organisation that is commodity-production.[242] Categories such as value are, for Marx, not universals but only *present themselves as such* when seen from within the horizon of capitalist society. So, if, in the *Grundrisse*, he refers to them as 'forms of being' and 'characteristics of existence',[243] this applies to an historically determinate society, but does not make them into 'antediluvian' universals. This difference marks a tension between the understandings of reality in Schürmann and Krahl: for Schürmann, reality indicates what is real beyond the violence exacted by our historically specific social formation, while for Krahl, qualified as *social* reality, it refers to precisely this violent social formation. If for Schürmann reality is the vantage point of the critique of modern capitalist society, for Krahl it is its object. It is this dissonance between their approaches that marks the unstable ground on which resistance to 'that which exists' must emerge.

As Krahl underlines towards the end of his essay on the 'Logic of Essence', it is its social reality that links abstraction directly to the problem of violence and counter-violence:

> The abstraction that manifests itself in the money and capital relation is therefore not nothing, but material violence, because it usurps the concrete world of objects [*Gegenstandswelt*]. It can only be dissolved practically through material counter-violence, which, for Marx, results immanently from

[239] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 101/*MEW42*, 35.
[240] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 101/*MEW42*, 36.
[241] Krahl, 'Wesenslogik', 31.
[242] Karl Marx, *Capital*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin, 1993), 169/*MEW23*, 90. Emphasis added.
[243] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 106/*MEW42*, 40.

> the structural antagonism between objectified and living labour in the organised power of the proletariat.[244]

This turn to violence concludes a lengthy analysis, laid out around his reading of the *Grundrisse*, of the genealogy of a society in which the worker confronts the products of her labour as something external to herself. The use value she has produced confronts her as (exchange-)value, behind which the actual use or utility of the produced object becomes eclipsed. This divide, or this 'duplicity of the product', marks the 'antinomically fractured experience that bourgeois society has of itself'.[245] It is Kant's critique of the 'hypostasis of logical abstraction'—in which the actual thing becomes eclipsed by logical operations—that Krahl puts to work for his critique of capitalist abstraction as the 'objectification, in the money form of the commodity, of an abstract labour detached from any natural basis'.[246] Abstraction separates from itself this natural basis: social value 'permanently occupies […] a nonidentical natural form';[247] exchange-value 'inflicts injustice on use value'.[248] This objectification (*Verdinglichung*) of mere logical things at the cost of the use value of real things is historically specific to the abstractions of capitalist society. Within this horizon, it is productive activity that provides the standpoint from which counter-violence can be thought and practised as a resistance to and an overcoming of domination by abstraction.

The agent of material counter-violence against the separation and corresponding re-articulation of the relation between the living human being and the products of her labour is, as the quotation tells us, 'the organised power of the proletariat', which provides the experiential framework that can overcome that of the dominant class. But in order to constitute this proletarian experiential framework and with it the organised power that can actualise class struggle, it is necessary that political intellectuals develop the theories to help the proletariat understand the 'infinitely manipulative and integrative domination in late capitalism'[249]—which, among other things, expresses itself in the ideology of non-violence. It is up to these intellectuals

[244] Krahl, 'Wesenslogik', 57.
[245] Krahl, 'Wesenslogik', 51, 47.
[246] Krahl, 'Wesenslogik', 54.
[247] Krahl, 'Wesenslogik', 41.
[248] Krahl, 'Projektion und Konstitution', in *KK*, 364.
[249] Krahl, 'Angaben', 23.

to theoretically formalise the proletarian experiential framework and to translate it into a corresponding organised counter-violence. In as far as this theory is, however, not to be developed in separation from practice but can only be unfolded in 'practical struggle', it presupposes an existing form of organisation. Here, in this contradictory emphasis on practice, lies Krahl's main contribution to a critical theory of society, as well as his critique of his teachers: as he claims in his obituary of Adorno, the latter, by giving in to a 'regressive fear of forms of practical resistance',[250] had himself been taken in by the ideology of non-violence. To this passivity, Krahl opposes a 'prerevolutionary practice' that, while its appearance might initially seem flawed, is right 'in principle'.[251] While Krahl's qualification of practice as prerevolutionary strikingly resonates with Schürmann's idea of preoriginary origin, the latter's analysis of principles as ultimate referents shows that it is precisely the articulation of practice to a pre-established principle that recaptures resistance.

Yet, for all his insistence on the centrality of organised class struggle, Krahl, throughout his mostly unfinished writings, does not provide a coherent idea of the subject of this struggle. Rather, he oscillates between more traditional accounts of strategies for the liberation of the proletariat in polemical contexts (such as his 'Angaben zur Person' and the obituary of Adorno), on the one hand, and a complex critique of the aporias and antinomies that threaten to throw critical theory back into the experiential as well as categorical framework of domination at every step. If Schürmann's approach has to face critique of ideology, an analogous problem confronting Krahl is that the understanding of struggle and practice through which the experiential framework of the dominant class is to be abolished does not point beyond this framework but asserts one aspect of its dualistic apparatus of domination against the other: the liberation of living productive activity from abstract labour. Life thus asserted against abstraction remains in thrall to the generic production of use values.

Across the ice-desert of abstraction

[250] Krahl, 'Widerspruch', 291.
[251] Krahl, 'Widerspruch', 292.

In his search for a common ground for critique and practice, Krahl tries to rethink the relation between ethics and symbol. In one of his last writings, he observes that 'proletarian class struggle is an ethical war' and wonders, without directly answering the question: 'what is the concept of a non-institutionalised symbol?'.[252] Schürmann is getting at a similar problem when he distinguishes between the 'perverted symbolism' that upholds the separation and instrumental relation between human being and nature, on the one hand, and 'symbols of reconciliation', on the other (*SP*, 61). In light of these parallels, it might not require a complete break with the orientation of Krahl's evolving thinking to suggest that wandering identity offers a powerful complement to his emphasis on practice. As Schürmann notes, ethics is one of the concepts that Kant, in the *Critique of Judgement*, singles out as being cognisable only through symbolic analogy, since there is no sensible intuition that adequately presents it (*SP*, 42). The analogy between ethics and its symbol (the beautiful) is created by free imagination, which is an act of reflective judgement and, on Schürmann's approach, of phenomenological poiesis. If, in Kant, this symbolic structure remains limited to mental acts, Schürmann extends it to individual praxis, including song and work, and thereby 'broadens Kant's free synthesis of the imagination to the dimensions of existence in its entirety. Life is constituted through "purposiveness without purpose" and "lawfulness without law"' (*SP*, 46). While song is a symbol of reconciliation, work (as labour) is perverted symbolism *par excellence*, since there is no reason to labour other than what is external to the activity itself.

Krahl not only identifies the real abstraction of labour as the crucial mechanism underwriting separation and domination in capitalist society, but also resists a reduction of production to 'labour as instrumental action of the immediate metabolism between human being and nature'.[253] While he points out that production is not to be confused with proletarian labour—he writes: 'If the proletarians see through themselves as producers and nonetheless recognise themselves only as workers, then class domination continues to exist; dictatorship of the proletariat is not its self-abolition.'[254]—his emphasis on production still

[252] Krahl, 'Projektion und Konstitution', *in KK*, 364–365. For his more speculative writings, see also 'Produktion und Klassenkampf', in *KK*, 392–415, in particular 394–397, n. 1 and 2.
[253] Krahl, 'Produktion und Klassenkampf', 401.
[254] Krahl, 'Thesen', in *KK*, 353.

presupposes the universalised categories of consumption and nature, and hence regards the individual human being as an instantiation of a species-being. Schürmann recovers a place—an *ethos*—in which individual praxis would refer not to the human being's capacity to carry out a determinate practice (that is, to produce use value) but to her *omnilateral capacity* to determine her own activity. The dissonance between Krahl and Schürmann then lies in the status of the individual's ability to orientate herself: while in Krahl she seems inevitably orientated towards production, in Schürmann the very capacity for reorientation is the hallmark of wandering identity. Contrary to Marx's understanding of the concrete as that which is exhaustively determined, for Schürmann, the concrete is the indeterminate, the formless, the potential of moving subjectivity, the possible change of direction.

What the shift offered by Schürmann allows is not a primitivist utopia of non-production, but the displacement of economic activity and of repression as the integrative principle of society. In Krahl's oscillation between different strategies of abolition, divergent forms of counter-violence are envisaged. One of these forms might have come to express itself a few years later in the campaigns of the RAF, where they met a dead end, while others branch out in ways that resonate with the form of preoriginary counter-violence Schürmann finds symbolised in individual praxis. Only if the principle of prerevolutionary struggle is an anarchic principle—in the sense that it resists subsumption to universal categories—can it give rise to a form of resistance that does not objectify itself.

Anarchic counter-violence in this sense is essentially asymmetrical, its resistance being as much an active abandonment as a reactive expression of resentment. It does react, but it does not exhaust itself in its opponent. A trace of this might have been observable in the resistance to police-violence in the wake of the murder of George Floyd in 2020—the festive burning of the third precinct of the Minneapolis police and the return of youths to the centre of Chicago to take what they want illustrate the precarious asymmetry precisely in as far as they are but moments in a decomposition of identity, to which also belong the formation of friendships and the experiences made in taking back the streets. They are at the same time chaotic—and in this sense risk being recaptured by the anarchy of power or by delight in destruction—and, due

to their capacity to reorientate, anarchic in an asymmetrical sense. To develop the asymmetry between individual practice and the social realism of universals, transgression and judgement need to be combined.

While Schürmann's reading expropriates the directionality of Heidegger's thinking and opposes what Marcuse identifies as Heidegger's 'fake concreteness',[255] the reference to place in the present thesis requires more sustained attention to the problem of abstraction and the ambiguous status of place. I turn to this in the next chapter.

[255] Herbert Marcuse, 'Heidegger's Politics (1977). An Interview with Herbert Marcuse by Frederick Olafson', in *The Essential Marcuse*, ed. Andrew Feenberg and William Leiss (Boston: Beacon Press, 2007), 119. See *PA*, 317, n. 4.

Chapter 4. 'They do not know it, but they do it'*:* Resistance and abstraction

The place of resistance that Chapters 2 and 3 brought out captures both the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance: its ambiguity in that it seems to offer—based on Heidegger's transposition of Kant's reference to transcendental place as an ordering category from philosophy to politics—a concrete standpoint for resistance to a totalising and subsumptive dynamic but at the same time registers the fact that whatever concrete place we might occupy, it is already affected by 'that which exists'; its reflexivity in that Schürmann's expropriation of Heidegger asserts—analogously to Kant's careful binding of transcendental place to transcendental reflection—the capacity of resistance to exceed this abstract-concrete entanglement. This implies a repositioning of the incongruity that guides Kant's and Heidegger's orientation, which Schürmann expresses in the notions of the principle of anarchy and the double bind.

The conflictual and discordant site this outlines provides an important additional step for my attempt to rethink resistance through place. In Schürmann, the ambiguity of place itself is reflexively displaced, from its functioning as an extra-philosophical precondition constituted by a topo-ethical incongruity (spatial in Kant, temporal in Heidegger) into the topological site circumscribed by the historical collapse of the sequence of hegemonic ultimate referents. This displacement is complemented by Schürmann's attempt to rethink, rather than abandon, subjectivity in terms of an anarchistic subject whose resistance is characterised by its capacity to reorientate itself within a conflictual site. This capacity for reorientation is a decisive step away from the fixed orientations in Kant and Heidegger.

However, as the brief juxtaposition between Schürmann's and Krahl's perspectives on counter-violent resistance revealed, the problem of abstraction that was already discerned in Heidegger's use of place remains an issue for Schürmann's anarchistic subject. The remaining chapters address this relation between the place of resistance and abstraction. Before Chapter 5, taking seriously the persistence of antisemitism in Heidegger's appropriation of Kant, investigates the status of antisemitism in resistance, Chapter 4 examines the notion of real abstraction in critical theory. The two main sections analyse, first, a political-philosophical constellation in first generation Frankfurt School critical theory, involving Alfred Sohn-Rethel, Max

Horkheimer and Adorno (4.2), and, second, Postone's reinterpretation of Marx's critique of political economy (4.3). Both sections focus on the issue of abstraction in relation to the place of resistance as Chapters 1 to 3 have presented it.

As the reference to Adorno in the Introduction suggested, the problem of resistance is central to the formation of Frankfurt School critical theory. In its attempt to construct a concept of resistance based on a philosophical investigation into the problem of its place rather than following existing political philosophies of resistance, the present thesis works through some of the conceptual and historical difficulties that are associated with the phenomenon of resistance. The remainder of the thesis shows how adopting the perspective of the Marxian critique of political economy can help further our understanding of this philosophical problem. Before turning to those discussions, however, and in order to situate them more firmly within the argument I pursue here, 4.1 returns to the Amphiboly chapter and to Kant's understanding of abstraction in relation to transcendental reflection.

4.1 Abstraction, its use, and opposition

A limitation of Schürmann's reading of Marx is that it focuses on the early writings and omits the later methodological developments. Thus, while Schürmann registers the 'double meaning of man' in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* as designating, 'on the one hand, the *abstract* realization of the totality of attributes as it results from the complementary relations in civil society, and on the other hand the *concrete* realization of these attributes in *each* man' (*RM*, 37), he leaves aside how Marx develops this ambiguity later in the *Grundrisse* or, with respect to the commodity-form, in *Capital*. As a result, the status of abstraction remains underexposed.

Marx's emphasis, in the 1857 introduction to the *Grundrisse*, on the double character of value as both an historically specific social relation and a timeless category, binds the problem of abstraction to an aporia: if, from within the horizon of modern capitalist society, value appears as a universal, it is only under the structures of social validation specific to that society that this appears so—in other words, what shows itself to be universal is grounded in a particular social condition. Likewise, what

appears as concrete (such as a country's population) is already an abstraction, a fact that seventeenth century economics had ignored. Now Marx distinguishes this 'represented concrete' as a 'chaotic representation of the whole' from the 'concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the manifold'.[256] They are connected by two movements, the first leading from the represented concrete to the 'simplest determinations', the latter from there to the 'concrete in thought'.[257] While Marx criticises those who take the 'represented concrete' to be truly concrete for failing to acknowledge that they are already operating with an abstraction, Kant similarly criticises Leibniz for having taken 'that from which abstraction has been made […] as something that is not to be encountered at all, and nothing conceded to the thing except what is contained in its concept' (A281/B337–338). If abstraction becomes obscured, the concept—or the represented concrete—is held to be the thing itself, a confusion that entails amphiboly.

But Marx here not only sets out his critique of classical political economy but also of Hegelian dialectics. While Hegel's method avoids the fallacy of mistaking abstract representations for concrete ones, it nonetheless collapses the real concrete into the thought concrete, thus obliterating the fact that the latter, as concept-formation, can only ever reproduce and thus appropriate reality, but never change it. It is, Marx submits, crucial to recognise that concepts are never pure or independent of their social context but, on the contrary, are always 'products of thinking, of comprehending',[258] that is, of an historically specific act of concept-formation. While Kant does not consider the problem of social validation, he also—and contrary to Marx's Hegel—does not assume that the real and the thought concrete can coincide. I take Marx's self-understanding as engaged in 'criticism in the *melee*'[259] to refer to this contamination of the abstract and the concrete, of the universal and the historically specific: what is at issue here is not only the conflictual circumstances in which criticism must be developed, but also that it does not happen on a clean slate. My point is not to find a way out of the aporia that presents itself here, but rather to

[256] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 100–101/*MEW42*, 35.
[257] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 100–101/*MEW42*, 35.
[258] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 101/*MEW42*, 36.
[259] *MEW1*, 381/*MECW3*, 178.

conceive it as the place in which resistance has to orientate itself. So how to avoid taking the particular for the universal?

It is here that Kant's emphasis on the *use* of the understanding in the Amphiboly chapter is important. If we understand transcendental place as a both topological and ethical requirement, this does not so much resolve the aporia as subject it to the capacity of orientation and, potentially, of reorientation. The distinction between contradiction (*Widerspruch*) and opposition or conflict (*Widerstreit*) indicates this (A273–274/B329–330). Kant defines opposition as a relation between 'Realities in appearance (*realitas phaenomenon*)' that 'can certainly be in opposition with each other and, united in the same subject, one can partly or wholly destroy *the consequence of the other*, like two moving forces in the same straight line that either push or pull a point in opposed directions' (A265/B320–321). Kant goes on to explain that opposition cannot be found on the logical plane, because there only conceptual objects, hence merely contradiction, exist. Contrary to this limited viewpoint, opposition indicates 'reciprocal destruction, […] the conditions for the representation of which we find only in sensibility' (A274/B330). While Kant does not further develop possible implications of this mutual cancelling out of appearances in the same subject, the notion of opposition might be taken to account for a surplus left by the spatiotemporal determination of transcendental place. In this context, abstraction is what occurs if phenomenal opposition is conceived as mere conceptual contradiction (A282/B338).

This definition of opposition resonates with that of abstraction in Kant's 1763 *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy* as a '*negative attention* […] a genuine doing and acting [*Handlen*] which is opposed to the action [*Handlung*] by means of which the representation is rendered clear; the combination of the two yields zero, or the lack of a clear representation' (2:190–191). Aside from emphasising the use of abstraction, Kant, by opposing it to the action that renders representations clear, suggests its opposition to determination. Now, while this opposition becomes complicated in the Amphiboly chapter, where determination and transcendental reflection are tied together into one single act of

placing, what persists is the emphasis on the particular negativity of abstraction as grounded in a 'true real ground' (2:190) rather than in mere contradiction.

Kant insists that the cancellation of any representation, in as far as it has become 'real in virtue of the activity of the soul' and therefore has a real ground, requires an opposed real ground that, in turn, can only be brought about by a 'genuine effort [*Thätigkeit*], and commonly a large one' (2:190). It is important to note that this is not to be confused with a mere instantiation of a pre-critical empiricism but that it emphasises use as a genuine source of thinking. This is the work Kant carries out in the Amphiboly chapter, and which Marx transposes to the critique of political economy when identifying two separate movements of abstraction.

In a footnote to his 1790 refutation of Eberhard's critique of the *CPR*, Kant proposes an important qualification for any discussion of the relation between the abstract and the concrete. Taking issue with the distinction between abstract time and concrete time suggested by Eberhard, Kant cautions that

> One does not abstract *a concept* as a common mark, rather one abstracts *in the use* of a concept, from the diversity of that which is contained under it. Chemists alone are able to abstract something in the proper sense, as when they remove a liquid from other matter in order to isolate it. The philosopher abstracts from that which he, in a certain use of the concept, does not wish to take into consideration. [...] The distinction between abstract and concrete refers only to the use of concepts, not to the concepts themselves. (8:199)

What matters is the orientation that the thinker brings to a concept when she makes use of it, not whatever intrinsic quality the concept might have. It is only in use that a 'judgement concerning an object' (8:199) is spelled out. Kant distinguishes judgements that consider objects and their temporal and spatial character as of a logically composite nature and, accordingly, as logically separable, from judgements that proceed on the basis of the distinction between the a priori and experience: while the former produces an amphibolous 'semblance of knowledge' (8:199), only the latter method can test the boundaries of experience and establish a priori principles. As I have argued in Chapters 2 and 3, it is this field of tension between experience, semblance of knowledge and the establishment of a priori principles that situates transcendental place at a precarious position between transcendental reflection and the determinate transcendental topic.

Kant takes up the distinction again in the *Jäsche Logic*, where abstraction is listed as one of three acts 'through which concepts are generated as to their form' (9:94). Since 'no concept *comes to be* through abstraction', which 'only perfects it and encloses it in its determinate limit' (9:95), abstraction is but the negative condition of the generation of representations, the positive conditions being comparison and reflection. To underline the division between the two types of abstraction, Kant adds that 'Since only individual things, or individuals, are thoroughly determinate, there can be thoroughly determinate cognitions only as *intuitions,* but not *as concepts*; in regard to the latter, logical determination can never be regarded as completed' (9:99).[260] Contrary to Marx, Kant suggests that subsumption can never be fully accomplished, that unity of the manifold—and hence the concrete—remains but a goal. As in Marx, what is at stake is the appropriation of the concrete.[261] The question that the remainder of this chapter addresses is if and how 'that which exists' can be changed even if the appropriation of the concrete can never be completed.

In what follows, I explore abstraction as a conflictual social reality and its role in the directional dynamic of modern capitalist society, following Marx's analysis of the 'twofold nature of the labour contained in commodities'.[262] As Alberto Toscano has argued in his analyses of abstraction, a '*materialism of real abstractions*' must be 'attentive to the potent *immateriality* of capital's social forms'.[263] In line with Marx's dictum that 'They do not know it, but they do it',[264] this suggests that immaterial social forms are in a complex relation with material appearances. These forms, while themselves immaterial, capture 'an abstraction other than that of thought' and are therefore 'incommensurate with the […] *Begriff* ("concept") of the tradition'.[265] Both Sohn-Rethel and Postone emphasise this real abstraction underlying the dominant

[260] This distinction between intuition and concept reiterates the idea, explicated in the Table of the Nothing that concludes the Amphiboly chapter (A290–292/B346–349), that time and space, as pure forms of intuition, are not '*Gedankendinge*', *entia rationum*, but *entia imaginaria*, empty intuitions without objects. Highlighting the 'extreme ambiguity' (Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary*, 39) of abstraction, Kant in *On a Discovery* seems to contradict this distinction when he writes that time and space are 'conceptual entities [*Gedankendinge*] and beings of the imagination' (8:203).
[261] See Marx, *Grundrisse*, 101/ *MEW42*, 35.
[262] Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*, 132/*MEW23*, 56.
[263] Alberto Toscano, 'Materialism without Matter: Abstraction, Absence and Social Form', *Textual Practice*, 28(7), 2014, 1223.
[264] Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*, 167/*MEW23*, 88.
[265] Alberto Toscano, 'The Open Secret of Real Abstraction', *Rethinking Marxism*, 20(2), 2008, 281.

forms of thinking and knowing in modern capitalist society. However, and this is where the amphiboly problem comes in, they can be seen to part ways when it comes to the 'transcendental place' of this society. While Sohn-Rethel identifies the principle of exchange as that place and opposes to it the idea of living labour as the standpoint of opposition, Postone insists that the transcendental place of the capitalist social formation integrates concrete and abstract, which together constitute a dynamic historical site. The analysis should demonstrate how Kant's amphiboly can be used for critical analysis of political and social phenomena.

4.2 Towards a real change of being: Sohn-Rethel on real abstraction and the transcendental subject

Sohn-Rethel's work is relevant for the present investigation because it locates the conditions of possibility of thinking opposition in a specific social formation, tracing the abstractions of science and epistemology to a prior 'real abstraction' that constitutes capitalist society as mediated by exchange. On this perspective, the place of resistance cannot be one entirely external to 'that which exists' but has to take into account its entanglement within it. Reading Kant's philosophy as an expression of capitalist society rather than of universal truths, Sohn-Rethel from the 1920s onwards develops a reading of Kant that is at odds with both the Southwest German School and the Marburg School of neo-Kantianism (he studied with Ernst Cassirer in Berlin and with Heinrich Rickert in Heidelberg). While, as we will see, there are some structural parallels in their work, Sohn-Rethel's historical materialism also significantly diverges from Heidegger's critique of Neo-Kantianism. While Sohn-Rethel's idiosyncratic perspective provoked in particular Max Horkheimer's scathing criticism, his attempt to take up the problem of origin in an historical-materialist manner is indicative of the ambiguity that underpins the notion of resistance and its grounding in space and time.

From the point of view of early Frankfurt School critical theory, the ambiguity of Kant's notion of time and space as forms of intuition expresses the relation between epistemology and society. Horkheimer indicates as much in *Traditional and Critical*

Theory when he asserts that the 'determinate individual' which is the subject of critical thinking

> is no point like the "I" of bourgeois philosophy; its representation consists in the construction of the historical present. Furthermore, the thinking subject is not the place where knowledge and object coincide, nor consequently the starting-point for attaining absolute knowledge.[266]

For Horkheimer, the thinking subject does not provide an adequate perspective for the critical analysis of the direction orientating bourgeois philosophy. Debunking the ideological character of this philosophy cannot mean establishing 'directionless intellectual play' but aims at a 'new organisation of labour'.[267] Sohn-Rethel specifies this re-orientation as an overcoming of the exchange relation characterising capitalist society when he argues that 'commodity exchange is anything but the place for philosophising, to such an extent that in this place consciousness of the underlying structure is impossible'.[268] For all their differences, Horkheimer and Sohn-Rethel here share a topographical view, according to which bourgeois philosophy is tasked with generating thought systems that 'make room for the existing order',[269] an order that suppresses the 'space of social existence'.[270] The place of resistance is here orientated by the material social dimension of space and, more specifically, by the position of thinking in relation to labour and class struggle. The ambiguity of Kant's transcendental place is understood in terms of a social antagonism.

This chapter presents Sohn-Rethel's critique of Kant through the distinction between thought abstraction and real abstraction, reading Sohn-Rethel's account as applying Kant's critique of amphiboly to the sphere of social relations. It compares it to

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[266] Max Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Continuum, 2002), 211. Translation modified.
[267] Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', 209.
[268] Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Geistige und Körperliche Arbeit. Theoretische Schriften 1947–1990*, vol. 1, ed. Carl Freytag, Oliver Schlaudt, Françoise Willmann (Freiburg: ça ira, 2018), 236–237. Henceforth *TS1*. References to the English translation are included where available: *Intellectual and Manual Labour. A Critique of Epistemology*, trans. Martin Sohn-Rethel (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1978), xiii.
[269] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 74. Henceforth *DE*. Where necessary, I have modified the translation based on the German text: Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente*, in Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1987).
[270] Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Von der Analytik des Wirtschaftens zur Theorie der Volkswirtschaft* (Freiburg: ça ira, 2012), 278.

Cassirer's and Heidegger's interpretations of Kant and confronts it with the critique, formulated by Adorno, that it rehashes an idealistic first philosophy. With reference to Schürmann's approach, I suggest that Sohn-Rethel's concern with origin reproduces the structure of the logic of capital and the ways in which its ultimate principles produce a seemingly ahistorical ontology.

4.2.1 Resisting 'Geisterglauben': Sohn-Rethel's critique and appropriation of Kant

In what follows, I draw out Sohn-Rethel's critique of Kant in parallel to Kant's critique of rationalism. Where Kant criticises rationalist doctrine for amphibolously reducing the pure forms of intuition, space and time, to conceptual forms, Sohn-Rethel argues that Kant's own notion of space and time repeats this amphiboly. Kant's way out of amphiboly is deemed one-sided by Sohn-Rethel in that it corresponds to an understanding of space and time as continuous and as purged of any social-historical dimension that would allow establishing a link between the philosophical description of the relation between human being and the world, on the one hand, and the economic realities of a social formation orientated by commodity exchange, on the other. Taking as its point of departure Marx's insight into the twofold character of the commodity form as both abstract and concrete, Sohn-Rethel's approach centres around the equally twofold character of commodity-producing labour. As a human practice, labour brings about both use value and exchange value: while use value is irreducible to commodification, exchange value subsumes the products of human labour to a specific form of social organisation. It is the way in which Sohn-Rethel relates labour as a concrete, situated human activity to labour as an abstraction that is indicative for the notion of opposition that can be drawn from it. What Sohn-Rethel's approach affords is an idea of resistance from the standpoint of concrete, living labour.

Sohn-Rethel spent most of his intellectual life articulating a discovery he had made during his studies in Heidelberg in the early 1920s, according to which 'in the innermost core of the commodity structure there was to be found the "transcendental subject"' (*TS1*, 192). It is important to emphasise that the structural equivalence between transcendental subject and the formal structure of the commodity analysed by Marx is a 'discovery':

> From the standpoint of materialist thinking, pure spirit does not exist, it results from a mere belief in spirits [*Geisterglauben*] which is, however, willingly cultivated since with it a monopoly on domination can be founded and justified [*begründet*]. Idealist epistemology builds on a context of conceptual inventions—materialist epistemology, on the other hand, on one of discoveries that refer to the social mode of coherence, that is to say, to social synthesis.[271]

On this view, the pure forms of intuition are 'conceptual inventions', despite Kant's effort to distinguish them as *entia imaginaria* from mere *entia rationum*. Sohn-Rethel's Marxian interpretation suggests that Kant's distinction between concepts and pure forms of intuition, which is critical for the elimination of amphiboly, cannot hold if intuition does not refer to the principle of 'social synthesis' around which a society coheres. To Kant's assimilation of the spatiotemporal to the transcendental, Sohn-Rethel opposes an enquiry into the spatiotemporal determination realised by social synthesis. He thus transposes Kant's critique of the 'illusions' (*Blendwerke*) that result from collapsing the transcendental into the logical into a critique of the 'delusion' (*Verblendungszusammenhang*)[272] that results from collapsing the social into the transcendental.

Sohn-Rethel's shift from an idealist to a materialist standpoint is, however, also an appropriation of Kant: enquiring into the social determination of philosophy, it radicalises the demand for 'a determination of the place where the representations of the things that are compared belong' (A269/B325). As such, Sohn-Rethel's critique of epistemology attempts a reflexive application of what Kant outlines as the proper procedure to determine the place of appearances to the standpoint of the philosopher herself. The underlying dichotomy that propels this displacement in Sohn-Rethel opposes societies of appropriation, or synthetic societies, to societies of production, in which the social synthesis is brought about by 'the labour relationship in the production process' (*TS1*, 294/83) rather than by commodity exchange. Sohn-Rethel thus builds on Kant when he describes his project as 'a social deduction of categories' that is 'functionally equivalent' (*TS1*, 200) to transcendental deduction.

[271] Alfred Sohn-Rethel, 'Einige Unterbrechungen waren wirklich unnötig', 1989 conversation with Matthias Greffrath (*TS2*, 974).
[272] Alfred Sohn-Rethel, 'Der historische Materialismus als methodologisches Postulat', 1970, in *TS1*, 37.

The socially determined place around which Sohn-Rethel's materialist topology takes shape undermines Kant's transcendental place by upsetting his ordering of the transcendental topic through the determination of space and time as pure forms of intuition. Sohn-Rethel's materialist inversion of Kant's refutation of the amphiboly reorientates the critique in terms of Marx's phrase that 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness'.[273] The real abstraction of exchange value takes place on the level of social existence and provides the blueprint for the thought abstractions of consciousness (*TS1*, 216/20).

Sohn-Rethel carries out this radicalisation by way of a critique of bourgeois philosophy's notion of origin. Similar to Lukács and the early Frankfurt School, Sohn-Rethel argues that cognition of its own social origins is constitutively blocked for this type of philosophy, which requires the invention of an origin that at the same time functions to justify the monopoly on domination. Contrary to his contemporaries, his critique of Kant's assertion 'that a genetic, i.e., spatiotemporal explanation of the origin of the "pure faculty of understanding" is impossible' is not complemented by a dialectical critique of the notion of origin but opens onto an analytical enquiry precisely into 'the historical, spatiotemporal origin of the logical capacity of the hypotheses' (*TS1*, 233). Sohn-Rethel attributes the preformation Kant sought in the mind to the social and, more specifically, to the division between intellectual and manual labour. This division is mediated by an abstraction, similar to that at work in amphiboly, that turns the products of manual labour into commodities and that is confirmed on the intellectual plane when appearances are subsumed to categories. The 'functional socialisation' intrinsic to this separation results in philosophy's blindness vis-à-vis its own practical preconditions: it is based on an 'entwinement of human existence [*Daseinsverflechtung*] through exploitation' that is 'mediated by the appropriated products as identically existing things'.[274] On Sohn-Rethel's interpretation, then, the philosophical forms of thinking that have been cultivated since the rupture between intellectual and manual labour express an historically

[273] Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, *MEW13*, 9/*MECW29*, 263.
[274] Theodor W. Adorno and Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Briefwechsel 1936–1969*, ed. Christoph Gödde (Munich: edition text+kritik, 1991), letter 2, 20.

specific mode of practical appropriation of existing things—in exchange: products of labour, in philosophy: any appearance—as commodities. This appropriation is realised in the exchange relation, which operates on the basic presupposition of the commodity form, according to which all things, as commodities, are formally identical.

It is this presumption of identity of otherwise disparate concept-appearance relations that first makes exchange possible and that prepares its place. To achieve this, it enacts a specific spatiotemporal determination that clears the place of exchange of any irregularities that might undermine the posited identity of things across space and time. It is 'By virtue of the elimination of use' from exchange that

> time and space themselves become abstract. Just like commodities in their determinateness as "substances", they lose any specific determinate location in relation to others, any specific moment that distinguishes them from others. They become unhistorical, that is, historically timeless determinations of abstract time in general and abstract space in general. (*TS1*, 248)

This 'abstractification' or real abstraction is realised in the social relation between the parties of exchange, which becomes generalised in modern capitalism. Theoretical thought abstractions re-enact this prior abstraction to the extent that, just as commodity exchange, philosophy posits the spatiotemporal identity of the phenomena to which it attends. 'Phenomenal nature' is superimposed by the specific 'abstract nature' generated by a society that draws its social synthesis from exchange (*TS1*, 277A). The philosophical form of thinking, on this materialist-phenomenological account, is modelled on an historically specific form of social practice, exchange. This historical specificity undercuts philosophy's endeavour to supply timeless and spatially universal truths and renders it historical-materially amphibolous.

Sohn-Rethel's account challenges the relation of form and matter proposed in the *CPR*. If Kant there claims that the spatiotemporal form of sensible intuition is 'original' and precedes all appearances and data of experience, that is, that the very 'possibility [of matter] presupposes a formal intuition (of space and time) as given' (A268/B324), Sohn-Rethel does not simply invert this claim, which would only rehash pre-Kantian materialism. Rather, the analytical force of Sohn-Rethel's approach lies in his attempt to show that cognition is preformed not by the mind but by an historical practice.

Rather than exploring the spatiotemporally specific origin of reason, Kant attributes space and time as pure intuitions to the transcendental subject. This obscures the conflictual origin of abstraction and the resistance of appearances on the level of social relations. If Kant tackles only the conceptual side of amphiboly, Sohn-Rethel's critique of Kant allows considering amphiboly as a social and historical phenomenon. The transcendental place of critical philosophy, then, unwittingly reproduces the marketplace. From this point of view, resistance appears essentially as a struggle against the unification of human practices exacted by the marketplace as a socially integrative principle. However, Sohn-Rethel's resistance to unification is complemented by the introduction of another transcendental place to unify the opposition into a specific conceptual antagonism.

4.2.2 Sohn-Rethel on the Magic Mountain: Philosophical resistance in the Weimar Republic

Several references to Ernst Cassirer in the 1989 edition of *Intellectual and Manual Labour* elucidate the structural correspondence between philosophical thinking and the form of exchange-based society. Sohn-Rethel argues that Cassirer's approach illustrates—more starkly than Kant's own project—how modern science corresponds to the requirements of modern capitalism. This is because Marburg School neo-Kantianism, which forms Cassirer's philosophical background, rejects Kant's emphasis on the dualism of pure intuition and pure understanding and instead posits a '"logical idealism"' in which '"reality" becomes incorporated within the realm of pure thought itself'.[275] Contrary to Kant's own insistence on the mediating role of pure intuition and its forms, space and time, this approach operates on conceptual and hence non-spatiotemporal a priori logical structures.[276] This neo-Kantian radicalisation of Kant is evident in a passage, cited by Sohn-Rethel, from Cassirer's *Substance and Function*, according to which reality can be fully cognised only when dissolved into an intellectual system of movements as specific spatiotemporal relations. Space and time are here conceived 'in their strict *mathematical* determinations', that is, on 'the continuous and homogeneous space of pure

[275] Michael Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways. Carnap, Cassirer and Heidegger* (Peru, IL: Open Court, 2000), 31.
[276] See Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways*, 26–28.

geometry' (*TS1*, 277B–278B). Reality, as exact nature, is understood in analogy with the idea of mechanism. Just as things are transposed into commodities by positing their formal identity, science formulates phenomena in pure concepts and thus 'homologises' them to the 'general constitution of society' (*TS 1*, 359B).

In Cassirer's enquiry into 'the origin of exact science',[277] Sohn-Rethel argues, 'the exact concept of nature and the idea of mechanism are rooted in the same place of origin: in the primary abstraction of exchange' (*TS 1*, 372B). As we have seen in 4.2.1, Sohn-Rethel *displaces* the notion of origin from the philosophical to the social plane. However, although, contrary to Cassirer's scientific perspective, Sohn-Rethel frames his account in sociological terms, his analysis of the relation between real abstraction and thought abstraction remains orientated by the problem of origin. To what extent Sohn-Rethel retains the neo-Kantian directionality of Cassirer's enquiry can be clarified with reference to the challenge brought against Cassirer by Heidegger in their debate at Davos in 1929, which Sohn-Rethel attended. This moreover allows contrasting Sohn-Rethel's materialist-phenomenological critique of epistemology to Heidegger's early existential-ontological displacement of neo-Kantianism. As indicated in Chapter 2, the Davos debate also presents a display of philosophical opposition in a highly unstable social context. Heidegger's push to destruct Kant's critical philosophy relies on a one-sided reconstruction of the latter and an appropriation of the amphiboly for his own purposes. This strategy culminates in Heidegger's attacks against Cassirer, whom he casts as a representative of precisely that image of Kant he had himself erected. In this way, Heidegger positions himself in resistance to the hegemony of a tradition that betrays the most important insights of Kant.

A crucial point in the debate between Cassirer and Heidegger is the status of Kant's 'Copernican turn', according to which 'the object of cognition does not stand "behind" or opposed to our experience but is rather constituted out of our experience by the application of a priori forms of thought'.[278] Cassirer, Heidegger and, later, Sohn-Rethel all explicitly situate their work with regard to Kant's revolution of

[277] Ernst Cassirer, *Philosophie und exakte Wissenschaften* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1969), 39. Quoted in *TS1*, 356B.
[278] Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways*, 53.

the mode of thought. Similar to Sohn-Rethel, Heidegger disputes Cassirer's claim that philosophy aims at timeless truths and timeless being. Instead, he suggests that being needs to be grasped through its temporality, as *Dasein* that is always already historical (*SuZ*, §66). Refuting the idea that the critical system realises a 'Copernican turn', Heidegger contends that Kant does not abandon the concept of truth as correspondence between judgement and object, but rather takes it as an undisputable premise (*SuZ*, §44). Contrary to this continuity that Kant, Heidegger suggests, inherits from the Aristotelian tradition, the really revolutionary shift is the dissolution of the distinction between essence and existence, which existential ontology is meant to achieve.

In his review of the second volume of *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, Heidegger argues that Cassirer's account of mythical thought misses this shift precisely because it hinges on the idea of a Kantian 'Copernican turn', 'according to which all "actuality" is to be considered as a formation of productive consciousness' (*GA3*, 265/186). From Heidegger's standpoint, that of the question of being, 'productive consciousness' itself is a specific expression of *Dasein* and not timelessly true being. It is in this context that Heidegger criticises Cassirer for not providing an '*explicit and systematic* elucidation of the origin of the forms of thought and intuition from out of the "form of life"', linking this failure to bring to light these 'original connections' to the 'indeterminacy of the systematic place of *mana-representation*' (*GA3*, 266/187). On Heidegger's view, then, Cassirer fails to consider the historically specific character of forms of thought and intuition, which requires the phenomenological analysis of *Dasein*.

This produces a curious constellation. On the one hand, Heidegger's refutation of Cassirer's teleological strive for timelessness puts him on the same page with Sohn-Rethel.[279] On the other, Sohn-Rethel joins Cassirer in rejecting Heidegger's ambition to acquire a more direct understanding of being, which is implicit in his conceptualisation of *Dasein*. Sohn-Rethel's and Cassirer's opposition to existential ontology share the conviction that, under the present epistemological conditions,

[279] This is acknowledged by Sohn-Rethel in two passages in the 1989 edition of *Intellectual and Manual Labour*, where he refers to Heidegger's specific interpretation of *aletheia* as unconcealedness (*TS1*, 328, 331).

there can be no standpoint outside the specific mediation of civilisation.[280] If Cassirer, however, defines civilisation qua language as the end point of a teleological development, for Sohn-Rethel, on the contrary, civilisation is synonymous with a society based on the separation between intellectual and manual labour. Accordingly, for Sohn-Rethel, a standpoint that transcends civilisation is possible: it is tantamount to overcoming the separation brought about by the exchange relationship. Heidegger's 'direct realism', on the other hand, is historical in as far as he considers *Dasein* an historical category; this is why for him there can be no such thing as 'a philosophy without standpoint' (*GA3*, 284/200). The same holds for Sohn-Rethel: real abstraction produces a form of society based on a specific spatiotemporal determination. Sohn-Rethel agrees that every standpoint is historically specific. Moreover, when he locates the origin of real abstraction in ancient Greek coinage, this to some extent parallels Heidegger's quest for the Greek answer to the question of being. Nevertheless, Sohn-Rethel inverts Heidegger's claim that metaphysics brings about Western society as determined by a certain understanding of being, instead contending that the form of social being to which metaphysics corresponds was there first. Thus, he displaces the origin into the realm of the social, uncovering the materialist ground of idealist epistemology and its entanglement in an historical-materialist amphiboly. This reorientation, however, remains guided by a notion of origin as firstness.

Against the backdrop of Schürmann's reworking of the notion of topology presented in Chapter 3, the difference between Cassirer's, Heidegger's and Sohn-Rethel's approaches can be analysed in terms of their respective *topological* strategies rather than by dwelling on the materialist/idealist dichotomy. 'Topology' is here understood as referring not to the analysis of positions in a fixed spatiotemporal grid (for which, as indicated in Chapter 2.2, the term 'topography' is more appropriate), but to an investigation into the strategies of placing and displacing by which theory determines its own scope. Using 'topology' in this context is of course not unequivocal, since it appropriates a term used by Heidegger but not by Sohn-Rethel. What I want to suggest, however, is that Sohn-Rethel's approach can help turn the topological

[280] See Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways*, 134.

against Heidegger in terms of its historical aspect, and thus specify Schürmann's appropriation of the notion. Heidegger's topological move—the refutation of the possibility of a philosophy without standpoint and the corresponding adoption of a specific *position* qua exposition-location (*Erörterung*)—anticipates his later interest in a topology of being, which translates his insight into the historicity of *Dasein* into an attempt to gain ground—as it were, to reground time. The topological strategy pursued by Cassirer differs in that, in line with the neo-Kantian interpretation of the 'Copernican turn', any possibility of a standpoint outside of the teleological topography of civilisation is excluded right from the start. On this view, positing an outside is necessarily suspicious, precisely because this presupposes the possibility of direct access to a reality that must remain obscure to human reason.

Sohn-Rethel's topological strategy is at odds with both Heidegger's and Cassirer's. First, contrary to Heidegger, it blocks the philosophical attempt to reconceptualise ground temporally, which must end up spatialising time in a way that posits a territorial origin that serves an all too familiar political agenda. This reproduces the spatiotemporal determination of commodity exchange, and consequently all its announcements of a different standpoint fall back into the same metaphysical framework that it set out to overcome. Second, against Cassirer's timeless geometrical topography, Sohn-Rethel would object that it obscures the historical specificity of the spatiotemporal determination and fails to reflect on its own standpoint. Sohn-Rethel's strategy reveals as amphibolous the spatiotemporal premises underlying the existential-ontological as well as the neo-Kantian standpoints. With Sohn-Rethel, the topological perspective can thus be reappropriated from Heidegger. The latter, in *Time and Being*, designates the 'place' of time, in which place indicates a 'prespatial' category (*GA14*, 21/16). In the debate with Cassirer, Heidegger insists that while philosophy is not itself concerned with giving worldviews, it is not 'standpoint-free' (*GA3*, 284/200). The transcendental place operated by Heidegger's philosophy, and which orientates his resistance to the modern form of social organisation, at this point was at least latently nationalist. In Sohn-Rethel, much to the contrary, transcendental place is provided by the idea of living labour. The opposition between living labour and labour abstracted by the

exchange requirement serves Sohn-Rethel for his localisation of workers' resistance within the political economy of modern capitalist societies.

4.2.3 Labour abstraction, or abstraction from labour

The way out offered by Sohn-Rethel is influenced by the accelerating political decomposition he found upon returning to Germany from Davos (having spent two years there to cure a tuberculosis) in 1931. As noted above, the structure of amphiboly as a socially grounded phenomenon is determined by the 'twofold nature of the labour contained in commodities' as both abstract (with regard to exchange) and concrete (with regard to their production by living labour). On Sohn-Rethel's interpretation, it is the role of commodity exchange as the principle of social synthesis that lets the abstract side dominate the concrete side of labour and the goods that it produces. Its abstraction of time and space comes to determine both the act of producing and its products. Sohn-Rethel develops this perspective while dealing with first-hand political-economic information during a job he landed after his return with a lobby group of the German heavy industry. Following the collapse of the world market in late 1929, the liberal principle of free market exchange had failed to provide the industry (steel, coal, etc.) with the contract volume it needed to run its factories (which, in Germany alone, employed up to 200,000 people) profitably. In this situation of slumping demand, parts of the industry concluded that only the state and the artificial demand it was able to create could guarantee profitable operations. As Sohn-Rethel recounts much later, this collapse of the free market, together with the volatile political situation in the Weimar Republic—the erosion of the fragile compromise between different social forces and the rise of the Nazi party—translated into the progressive decomposition of democratic institutions and brought the end of free market liberalism, which was replaced by a dictatorship that both boosted demand and provided (if forcible) integration of society. In this way, social synthesis based on the principle of exchange was maintained.

Accordingly, Sohn-Rethel interprets the handing over of power to the Nazis in early 1933 as the assertion of appropriation over production, of the exchange relation over the labour relationship in the production process. Sohn-Rethel himself was involved

in the attempt to halt workers' defection to the NSDAP.[281] In an anonymous contribution to a circular distributed among German industrialists, written in September 1932, Sohn-Rethel writes in the guise of an advocate of the industry's interests, outlining the prospects of a 'social reconsolidation of capitalism' with the help of the Nazi party.[282] He argues that the Nazis could take over the role played by the Social Democratic Party in the early days of the Weimar Republic, dividing the working class in order to defuse any revolutionary potential and to integrate it into the state structure. Sohn-Rethel secretly passed a copy of the circular to the outlets of the Communist party, which reported in great detail about what they read as a bourgeois strategy paper. His intention, Sohn-Rethel later argued with regard to his double play, was to show the Left what the industrialists were trying to accomplish and to indirectly warn the working class of its division. In this, he asserted his belief in the capacity of the working class to oppose the social synthesis through real abstraction. It is in the rigid distinction between the synthetic assertion of the exchange principle, on the one hand, and in principle unalienated labour, that the limitation of Sohn-Rethel's understanding of real abstraction shines through. This limitation is indicative of an ambivalence inherent to the materialist standpoint developed by and in the wake of Marx.

As Michael Heinrich observes, the fact that real abstraction '*really* occurs, independent of what the participating commodity owners think […] is not always made clearly by Marx'.[283] This is due to the invisible 'fantastic' or '"spectral objectivity"' of value as opposed to the visibility of the actual thing that instantiates the commodity.[284] The invisibility of value does not make it less real, just as the visibility of the individual commodity does not make it more real. Developing what

[281] In the 1973 preface to *Industrie und Nationalsozialismus* (*Die deutsche Wirtschaftspolitik im Übergang zum Nazifaschismus. Analysen 1932–1948* [Freiburg: ça ira, 2016], 219–362), Sohn-Rethel recalls how, in the early 1930s, he worked with 'three illegal socialist resistance groups' (223). He also notes that his connection to one of these groups was through Joachim Ritter, a former student of Cassirer's and fellow attendant of the Davos meeting. In November 1933, Ritter would, like Gadamer and Heidegger, sign the 'Vow of Allegiance of the Professors of the German Universities to Adolf Hitler and the National Socialistic State' and, after 1945, become an influential philosopher in the Federal Republic.

[282] Alfred Sohn-Rethel, 'Die soziale Rekonsolidierung des Kapitalismus', *Wirtschaftspolitik*, 57–63.

[283] Michael Heinrich, *An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx's Capital*, trans. Alexander Locascio (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004), 50.

[284] Heinrich, *Introduction*, 49. The term 'gespenstige Gegenständlichkeit' is from Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*, 128/*MEW23*, 52.

Krahl called the 'social reality' of categories, what is 'real', on this view, is what is socially efficient, that is, that which determines the relations between human beings. The value-form, according to which every commodity can be assigned a certain value quantity, captures both the abstract and the concrete side of labour. Its spectral objectivity superimposes whatever potential objectivity the concrete acts that make up living labour might otherwise possess. In the capitalist social formation, thought abstraction obscures real abstraction as the generalised socially integrative principle. It is the contradiction between those two types of abstraction that has to be brought into 'critical confrontation' in order to overcome the separation between form of thought and historical social process (*TS1*, 217/21). This separation is such that human beings involved in acts requiring thought abstractions remain oblivious of the real abstraction that both structures their actions and is reproduced by them. This is Sohn-Rethel's point when, echoing Marx's insight that individual products of labour are equated only once they are submitted to the act of exchange—'They do not know it, but they do it'—he argues that 'It is not people who originate these abstractions but their actions' (*TS1*, 216/20). By fracturing the notion of agency based on conscious identity, this bifurcation between human beings and their actions raises the question of the implication of resistance in that which it opposes.

There is another aspect relevant to the occurrence of real abstraction, one that concerns the nature of concrete labour. If its visibility is determined, for instance, as 'physiological' expenditure of human labour power,[285] a shift occurs that applies the 'spectral objectivity' of value to the concrete act of labour. By contrasting abstract to concrete labour in a way that counters conceptual subsumption to abstract labour by apparently non-conceptual subsumption to concrete (e.g., physiological) labour, real abstraction is displaced but not abolished (in Schürmann's terms, this shift to concrete labour would still rely on a generic notion of labour). Amphiboly creeps back in once labour is grounded in (phenomenal) nature, that is, once 'concrete labour' is used as a concept that is surreptitiously applied to appearances in order to then present those appearances as phenomena of a certain conceptual order (concrete, physiological, etc.). In other words, by capturing human acts in terms of concrete

[285] Heinrich (50) quotes from Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*, 137/*MEW23*, 61.

labour, an amphibolous determination of what resists subsumption under concepts—that is, individual experiences—is repeated.

In the context of resistance, the problem emerges once concrete labour is affirmed *against* abstract labour as the standpoint from which to resist and overcome a social synthesis dominated by the value form. This is precisely what Sohn-Rethel does when he opposes appropriation society to production society, commodity-producing labour to productive labour, abstract labour to living labour. The concept of labour that is rescued here is not industrial labour but human labour *per se*, thought as the metabolism between human being and nature that secures human subsistence. As a result, Sohn-Rethel sees in the increase of productivity a chance to overcome the market principle. The market—irrespective of whether it is a free market or one facilitated by the state—is for Sohn-Rethel synonymous with capitalist, bourgeois society because he locates its reproduction exclusively in the sphere of exchange: 'Commodity abstraction is exchange abstraction, not labour abstraction' (*TS1*, 245). This echoes Marx's line that 'It is only by being exchanged that the products of labour acquire a socially uniform value-objectivity, which is distinct from their sensuously varied use-objectivity'.[286] But does that not imply that labour orientated by use-objectivity can be thought as a potential standpoint from which to resist the domination of the value-form? Heinrich's description also remains ambivalent on this. If 'it is exchange, that consummates the abstraction that underlies labor',[287] this can be easily misread as the possibility to subtract labour from exchange and thus to liberate it from the value-form. This subtraction, however, is an amphibolous illusion (*not* a transcendental one, but one brought about by an amphibolous use of the understanding), since what it does is to abstract one part (labour) from a whole (commodity-producing labour) as if it were a chemical process that distils an essence from its composite form.

As a result, the bifurcation between people and their acts that is implied by Sohn-Rethel's statement indicates both the destruction of the traditional idealist transcendental place that assures the continuity between epistemology and social

[286] Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*, 166/*MEW23*, 87.
[287] Heinrich, *Introduction*, 50.

organisation (as ontology) and the reconstruction of a transcendental place through the attribution of 'concrete labour' to human activities beyond the sphere of exchange. Sohn-Rethel is explicit about this when he submits that 'labour itself eludes the concepts of commodity-producing societies and "transcends" them' (*TS1*, 207) and that 'labour does not abstractify itself' (*TS1*, 218) but becomes abstract only in the exchange relation. The critique of the moment of exchange as that 'most unusual moment' in which 'the "abstract" activity of equivalence and commensuration is concrete, while use-value becomes a matter of ideal representation, and thus turns out to be abstract'[288] is, in Sohn-Rethel, complemented by a transcendental reflection that determines (concrete) labour as the principle of a society not governed by exchange. If labour is subtracted from its entanglement in the value-form, the critique of the transcendental from the point of view of the social relapses into a para-logical assertion exposed to that same Kantian transcendental critique which it was meant to overcome. In this, Sohn-Rethel's theory provides an important additional step to the investigation into the place of resistance. While it displaces what seems a merely philosophical problem into the historical, social and political sphere, it at the same time retains some of the principles structuring that philosophical way of thinking. In 4.2.4, I will clarify this with reference to the critique of Sohn-Rethel formulated by Adorno.

4.2.4 Adorno's reservation: Resistance between prima philosophia and the primacy of the object

In a letter to Sohn-Rethel dated 3 November 1936, Adorno expresses his concern that Sohn-Rethel's approach transforms 'materialist dialectic into a prima philosophia (I won't say: an ontology), while Horkheimer and I [aim to] replace it with an ultima philosophia'.[289] The distinction between prima and ultima philosophia, which resonates with Schürmann's analysis of ultimate referents, is indicative of a break with the image of time and space produced by their determination as pure forms of intuition. In ultima philosophia, the position of philosophy itself receives a temporal

[288] Toscano, 'Materialism without Matter', 1228.
[289] Adorno and Sohn-Rethel, *Briefwechsel,* letter 1, 10–11.

(or historical) index, while prima philosophia denotes philosophy as the identification of timeless truths.

While the reproach of an 'idealist dressing-up' of materialist premises is confirmed by a damning letter written by Horkheimer to Adorno a few weeks later,[290] Sohn-Rethel, in his reply to Adorno's concerns (which in turn prompted an enthusiastic reaction from its recipient), responds confidently to the challenge of prima philosophia. Outlining his 'methodological standpoint' as confining itself to the 'critique of the occlusions' of 'historical being' rather than as expounding an idealist essence,[291] he argues that this occlusion results from the split between subject and object specific to appropriation society. Due to this split, the idealist form of thinking, while indeed determined by the object, constitutively ignores that the 'form of the object is itself determined by the process of functional association'.[292] Functional association here denotes the determination of the form of social organisation by the logic of appropriation rather than by production, the latter of which, on Sohn-Rethel's view, finds only its 'affirmative negation' in exchange.[293] The resulting tension between the critical standpoint and the positive identification of a praxis that is negated in appropriation society is tangible: if Sohn-Rethel's approach draws out the 'historical origin of the order of "existence" ["*Dasein*"] and the identity mode of things', this carries with it an ahistorical notion of the human being's 'practical-productive relation to nature'.[294] What this adumbrates is a double-notion of origin, one 'historical', that is, existing appropriation society, and one that remains spatiotemporally undetermined, namely potential production society. The ambiguity that results from this idea of existence as production not subsumed by appropriation makes it difficult to decide whether Sohn-Rethel's critique of real abstraction is directed against abstraction *per se* or against its historical appearance in a society organised around exchange.

From the point of view of Adorno and Horkheimer, Sohn-Rethel's critical appropriation of Kant runs the risk of reproducing the idealist notion of timeless

[290] Adorno and Sohn-Rethel, *Briefwechsel*, 38–41.
[291] Adorno and Sohn-Rethel, *Briefwechsel*, letter 2, 26.
[292] Adorno and Sohn-Rethel, *Briefwechsel*, letter 2, 23.
[293] Adorno and Sohn-Rethel, *Briefwechsel*, letter 2, 18.
[294] Adorno and Sohn-Rethel, *Briefwechsel*, letter 2, 17–18.

truth, since its own standpoint partially resists the dialectical method. In the few passages of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* directly devoted to Kant, they suggest this double sense of concepts, which 'in advance' determine the senses prior to perception: 'the citizen sees the world as made *a priori* of the stuff from which he himself constructs it' (*DE*, 65). In modern capitalist society, this double sense bifurcates into two extremes: the positivist rejection of Kant's work in as far as it 'transcends experience as mere operation' (*DE*, 66) and its hypostatisation in antisemitism, where the aporetic 'identical I' loses itself in paranoid projection (*DE*, 155–156). If the former entails the utopia of solidarity, the latter denotes the real historical domination of the principle that presupposes itself. Adorno develops this interpretation of Kant with great force in his 1959 lectures on the *CPR*. On Adorno's reading, which, as I noted in Chapter 2.1, registers the Amphiboly chapter as a centrepiece of the *CPR*, the only possible consequence of Kant's critique of Leibniz is the 'dialectical conception of philosophy' (*KCPR*, 155). Although Kant here hits upon the very aporia of his own system, Adorno argues, he fails to draw the consequence, falling back on the same amphiboly he criticises in rationalism. Rather than abandoning the attempt to find a common origin for the two irreducible aspects of cognition, concept and appearance, he reconciles them in the idea of the transcendental subject. In other words, while Kant here anticipates the Hegelian universal mediation, he does not follow through its implications, namely 'the proposition that the *dialectical* path alone is open' (*KCPR*, 159). It is on this point that any emphatic notion of resistance is bound to remain a problem of amphiboly, since it consists precisely in oscillating in and out of mediation.

On Adorno's interpretation, the ambiguous continuum encompassing appearance, object and the thing in itself is most explicit in the Amphiboly chapter. Amphiboly occurs where a concept of reflection is no longer referred back to the given from which it abstracts, and where the pure object of the understanding is confused with the thing itself. The specific relation of abstraction that links concept to given is obliterated and the concept treated as if it had 'absolutely nothing in common with the thing from which it has been abstracted' (*KCPR*, 146). The amphiboly that Leibniz—and, despite himself, Kant—commits is, then, the 'confusion between abstract concepts and that for which they stand in, and which they refer back to, just

as much as these contents point back to those concepts as form' (*KCPR*, 156). Adorno, in his reading of the *CPR*, underscores the centrality of use for abstraction, which both separates and links concepts and appearances, through the notion of 'act of thinking' and an emphasis on the irreducibility of the different moments of this act to one another (*KCPR*, 151).

Contrary to Kant, Adorno opens up the 'dialectical way' by treating the two irreducible moments of the constitution problem (*constituens* and *constitutum*) in terms of the 'insolubility of this contradiction' (*KCPR*, 158). Considering the irreducibility of the two moments as a contradiction follows from the fact that, as Kant writes, 'we cannot understand anything except that which has something *corresponding to our words* in intuition' (A277/B333, emphasis added). Adorno explains this specific interpretation of the opposition between concept and appearance in more detail in *Against Epistemology*, where contradiction indicates the 'breakdown of epistemology itself'.[295] If Kant, in the schematism section of the *CPR*, resolves the problem of the non-identity of concept and appearance, of form and matter, by reference to a preformation occurring in the 'depths of the human soul' (A141/B180), this leaves a 'surplus' that is not captured by 'subjective concepts'.[296] Sensible intuition is identified with the latter, and amphiboly repeats itself. This is why the determination of space and time as forms of intuition rather than as concepts is as important. For Adorno, however, this distinction is unsustainable because 'space and time cannot be represented without spatial and temporal things', it presupposes 'experience without experience'.[297] Only as a 'speculative construction' can pure intuition be envisaged and as such, Adorno argues, it has been overtaken by relativity theory (*KCPR*, 230). The dialectical way out of the aporia focuses on the 'contradictory assertions' according to which space and time are both intuitions and forms.[298]

While Adorno uses addition to illustrate synthesis (*KCPR*, 151), he makes no reference to opposition as mutual abolition. In an earlier session of the lecture course, which

[295] Theodor W. Adorno, *Against Epistemology. A Metacritique*, trans. Willis Domingo (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity, 2013), 147.
[296] Adorno, *Against Epistemology*, 147.
[297] Adorno, *Against Epistemology*, 146–147.
[298] Adorno, *Against Epistemology*, 147.

evokes Kant's notion of the 'battlefield' of metaphysics (AVIII), he refers to opposition as well as contradiction but does not distinguish between both terms. Accordingly, Adorno attains the 'primacy of the object'[299] without elaborating on the distinction between opposition and contradiction, the tension between something and nothing. For Kant, there remains something irreducible to the concept that resists not only the integration into dialectical logic but already its very conceptualisation as a constituent part of the opposition between subject and object. This is what the distinction between *Widerstreit* (opposition) and *Widerspruch* (contradiction) marks. The irreducibility of this surplus is not something positive but consists precisely in the fact that it remains appearance. In this respect, ultima philosophia, Adorno's 'philosophical position', subtracts contradiction from opposition.

Sohn-Rethel, in a note added fifty years later to a reprint of the above-mentioned letter to Adorno on the issue of prima philosophia, draws out the difference between his approach and Adorno's through their respective ideas of how to reach real transcendence. Sohn-Rethel argues that Adorno would have affirmed that his approach aims to achieve transcendence through immanent critique, overcoming the failure of philosophical synthesis intrinsic to idealism and the failure of material synthesis represented by economic crises in capitalism. Sohn-Rethel replies that philosophical immanence is merely symbolic and cannot transcend the real 'walls of immanence' imposed by capitalist economy, concluding that 'only the real change of being, that is, the act [*Tat*], is transcendent, and this is unattainable if we follow your way'.[300] Aware that Adorno would have rejected this view, Sohn-Rethel defends the priority of 'real' opposition against the dialectical path of contradiction. While Adorno, faced with amphiboly, draws the conclusion that only immanent dialectical mediation provides a reliable critical perspective on the subject-object relationship in capitalism, Sohn-Rethel retains the emphasis on transcendental opposition to think

[299] Theodor W. Adorno, 'On Subject and Object', in *Critical Models*, 249.

[300] This note is printed only in the revised and expanded 1989 re-edition of *Geistige und körperliche Arbeit* (Weinheim: VCH, 1989), 145. In this emphasis on 'the act', Sohn-Rethel's view is closer to the student movement than to its intellectual forefathers. The militant potential of Sohn-Rethel's approach is reflected in the fact that it was translated into Italian already in 1977 and there (like Krahl's texts, published in 1973) widely read in autonomist and workerist circles. See the 'Materials from *Lotta Continua* on Alfred Sohn-Rethel' (trans. Richard Braude) in the recent re-edition of *Intellectual and Manual Labour* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 173–193.

the overcoming of oppression. Schürmann's anarchistic subject, as his emphasis on symbolism to which I referred at the end of Chapter 3 showed, can here be seen to occupy a third position, in its attempt to retain a mobile, changeable orientation, irreducible to either Adorno's or Sohn-Rethel's.

In those divergent ideas on the primacy of the object, the aporia is articulated between a hypostasis of the act and the reduction of opposition to contradiction. While both are strategies to deal with real abstraction, they arrive at divergent standpoints. Postone has provided a critical account of both standpoints, claiming that they fail to properly account for the way in which the concrete and the abstract are bound up in capitalist society. The following section turns to his critique which, as we will see, outlines a 'temporal standpoint' that will serve as a point of departure for the analysis of different forms of resistance in Chapter 5.

4.3 The place of resistance and the standpoint of labour following Postone

As I have argued in my analysis of Kant's strategy in the Amphiboly chapter, the fixation of the phenomenon of opposition in conceptual bifurcations that underpin philosophical systems and the social practices to which they pertain relies on the institution of incongruities such as left and right, which provide them with what Heidegger called a 'direction order'. Postone's theory can be seen as a response to this problem. In his reinterpretation of Marx's critique of political economy, he identifies a directional dynamic that propels a contradictory double-sided development of *transformation* and *reconstitution*. His central finding is that for all the transformative impetus of capital (increase in productivity through technological innovation), modern society paradoxically recuperates whatever potential for the emancipation from labour this specific sort of progress offers in order to reconstitute a form of society that rests on oppression and domination. For Postone, the crucial problem is how to wrest transformation from the reconstitution of domination. If, as we will see below, resistance has a negative connotation in his approach, this is because he conceives it as mere reaction to the capitalist form of social organisation that does not transcend the material and epistemological foundations of the latter. To contrast this understanding, I will bring the concept of resistance developed so far

to resonate with Postone's dualistic problematic. I argue that, by considering the opposition between abstract and concrete as what drives an historically specific philosophical and political dynamic, it can contribute significantly to understanding the ambiguity and reflexivity of resistance.

Postone explains the reconstitutive character of the directional dynamic in terms of an antinomy between abstract and concrete time, which he considers both as driving the extraction of surplus value and as constituting social relations in capitalism. I explore Postone's approach by setting out from his critique of the 'pessimistic turn' of early Frankfurt School critical theory.[301] What is crucial for the present investigation into the place of resistance is that Postone frames his critique in terms of a rejection of the 'standpoint of labor' (*TLSD*, 5) in favour of a standpoint of critique that is 'temporal, rather than spatial' (*TLSD*, 361). The implications of this standpoint are elucidated with reference to Werner Bonefeld's critique of Postone's allegedly one-sided notion of class and labour. The chapter aims to situate resistance with regard to the twofold temporal form of capitalist society analysed as a directional dynamic driven by the antinomy between the concrete and the abstract. It allows conceiving the transcendental place of modern society through this temporal antinomy.

4.3.1 The 'pessimistic turn' from contradiction to antagonism in the early Frankfurt School

In his reinterpretation of Marx, Postone presents a critique of what he calls the 'pessimistic turn' of early Frankfurt School critical theory. Focusing in particular on Horkheimer, Postone identifies two theoretical moments to trace Horkheimer's increasingly pessimistic assessment of the possibility of emancipation. While, Postone argues, in 'Traditional and Critical Theory' (1937), Horkheimer still 'grounds critical theory in the contradictory character of capitalist society' (*TLSD*, 105), in 'The Authoritarian State' (1940), he 'expresses a new, deeply ambiguous attitude toward the emancipatory potential of the forces of production' and highlights the 'antagonistic and repressive nature' of a system that 'no longer has the form of an

[301] Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination. A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 84–122. Henceforth *TLSD*.

intrinsic contradiction' (*TLSD*, 110–111). On Postone's analysis, this shift from antagonism to contradiction eclipses capitalism's temporal dimension and results from an inadequate grasp of the nature of its temporal domination.[302]

With regard to the 1937 text, Postone registers the distinction between critical and traditional theory in terms of the former's capacity to account for both manifest and non-manifest social relations. Critical theory's thrust to overcome the blindness, characteristic of the post-Cartesian 'dualism of thought and being', for the social constitution of what appears as 'quasi-natural facticity' is rooted in Kant's attempt to conceive facticity as a product of the relation between concept and appearance (*TLSD*, 105–106). The aporia confronted by the question of what comes first expresses the specific double-sidedness of capitalist society, in which, as we have seen with reference to Marx's considerations on method in the *Grundrisse*, explicit formal determination presupposes implicit social preformation. Only the former appears as goal-directed, while the latter remains opaque. According to Postone, the tension between those two sides of determination—as simultaneously determinative and determinate—is interpreted by Horkheimer as expressing a real social contradiction, that between forces and relations of production. On this view, the contradiction results from the alienation of the forces from the relations of production. Driving a wedge between what is (domination and unfreedom) and what could be (emancipation and freedom), 'production is socially totalizing, but is alienated, fragmented, and increasingly arrested in its development by the market and private property. Capitalist social relations hinder the totality from realizing itself' (*TLSD*, 107). In other words, it is the irrationality of the existing mode of production that blocks the full development of a rational social totality. The contradiction results from the tension between the rational and the irrational. The possibility of emancipation lies in overcoming this tension.

The position Horkheimer articulates in 1940, on the contrary, all but eliminates this possibility. Postone illustrates the ambiguity of this later text with reference to a passage in which Horkheimer suggests that revolution consists of 'two opposite

[302] Similarly, Christian Lotz argues that Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of abstraction in *DE* remains tethered to an 'idealist framework' (*The Capitalist Schema. Time, Money, and the Culture of Abstraction* [Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2014], 113–116).

moments': while one moment brings about 'what would happen without spontaneity in any case', such as the societalisation of the means of production, the other one 'will never happen without active resistance and constantly renewed efforts of freedom: the end of exploitation'.[303] In this opposition, Postone identifies a relapse into the aporia of traditional theory, in which necessity (the passive, automatic moment of revolution) becomes separated from freedom (the active, spontaneous resistance to domination). By conceiving the former moment deterministically and the latter voluntaristically, Postone argues, 'Horkheimer no longer considers freedom as a determinate historical possibility but one which is historically and therefore socially indeterminate' (*TLSD*, 113). As a result, the social antagonism that constitutes capitalist society is no longer conceived as dynamic and subject to change but as static and irresolvable. The determinate aspect eclipses the determinative one, which is confined to the indeterminacy of 'active resistance and constantly renewed efforts of freedom'. In the face of the integration of the working class into Nazi state capitalism and the stabilisation of totality on these oppressive premises, the possibility of emancipation vanishes. For Postone, then, the loss of the temporal dimension implied by the shift from dynamic to static is tantamount to the bifurcation of the dialectically determinative and determinate contradiction into deterministic societalisation and indeterminate or voluntaristic resistance.

In the shift from 1937 to 1940, Postone identifies a breaking down of the dialectical unity obtaining between the two moments and its replacement by a mere opposition between irreconcilable poles. In as far as it rejects any dynamic mediation between the opposite poles, this reproduces the aporias of traditional theory.

On Postone's reading, Horkheimer's pessimistic turn results from his underlying conception of the capitalist directional dynamic, which, rather than considering its categorial basis as historically specific, projects particular categories (history, labour) as generic essences of any social formation. The discontinuity between 1937 and 1940, then, reveals a deeper continuity on the level of theoretical assumptions: the

[303] Max Horkheimer, 'Autoritärer Staat', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5 (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1987), 307. See *TLSD*, 112. The English translation renders '*zwei entgegengesetzte Momente*' as 'two contradictory Moments', rather than as 'opposite' ('The Authoritarian State', *Telos*, 15, 1973, 12). This is inaccurate since it is precisely the conceptual tension between opposition and contradiction that is at stake here.

pessimistic turn illuminates the shortcomings of the critical theory developed in the earlier essay. Horkheimer's standpoint is that of labour, which is considered as an appearance not determined by its historically specific context. This at least is what Postone argues: if Horkheimer's critical theory scrutinises the rational adequacy of the relation between forces and relations of production, it nonetheless fails to address the historically specific character of production itself, that is, of the activity of producing (labour), instead assuming it as the standpoint from which to analyse the capitalist contradiction. Contrary to Marx's mature theory, this 'critique of distribution is based on a transhistorical understanding of labor as an activity mediating humans and nature that transforms matter in a goal-directed manner and is a condition of social life', a view on which labour is 'treated in a historically indeterminate way […], is posited as the principle of social constitution and the source of wealth in all societies'.[304] Critique formulated from this standpoint, however, is limited to a specific (industrial) mode of labour and cannot pertain to the form of labour in capitalism itself. The change of direction it allows remains in the wake of traditional theory in that it fails to reflect on labour as a social and historical practice.

With the ascent to power of fascist regimes thanks also to the electoral support from considerable parts of the working class, this standpoint turns out to be a dead end: the social totality orientated by labour is no longer the emancipatory 'standpoint of the critique' but 'the grounds of oppression and unfreedom' (*TLSD*, 114). On Postone's reading, it is at this point that Horkheimer realises that Hegelian dialectic, in as far as it is geared towards totality, is not emancipatory but, on the contrary, affirms the existing order. Rather than considering labour and totality as historically specific categories—that is, as extending the dialectical method to his own standpoint –, however, Horkheimer now posits a 'disjunction between concept and object': 'Horkheimer's understanding of the disjunction of concept and reality hovers mysteriously above its object. It cannot explain itself' (*TLSD*, 114–115). To put it in the terms of the present investigation: by making the standpoint of labour its

[304] Moishe Postone and Barbara Brick, 'Critical Theory and Political Economy', in *On Max Horkheimer*, ed. Seyla Benhabib, Wolfgang Bonß and John McCole (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1993), 227.

transcendental place and by failing to carry out transcendental reflection, this position reproduces amphiboly. While rationalism mistakes the conceptual object for the object itself and obliterates its own contribution to the constitution of that object, thereby conjuring away the problem of the relation between concept and appearance, Kant's critical philosophy hypostasises the subjective contribution to the determination of the object by attributing it to the transcendental subject's pure forms of intuition, at the same time entrenching the sphere of the thing in itself beyond the grasp of human perception. In this sense, Postone's critique of Horkheimer pertains to what is the transcendental place of his critical theory, that is, the standpoint of labour as both determinative and determinate. If, to counter this, Postone formulates a critique that undermines both the Kantian critical system and 'traditional Marxism' (*TLSD*, 43–83), this can be seen to modify the Kantian critique of amphiboly so as to include the demand for the self-reflexive abolition of the very standpoint of critique itself.

The bifurcation between the two aspects of determination results in a split between determinate contradiction and indeterminate antagonism. With the social totality orientated by labour realised in state capitalism, what remains is only a generic antagonism between exploited and exploiters. For Postone, this implies that the historical specificity of class antagonism is dissolved in an antagonism of power (*TLSD*, 101). If Horkheimer's critical theory appears as dialectical but ultimately retains a standpoint external to the relation between the subject and the object of critique, Postone's analysis applies to Horkheimer the same critique that the latter had reserved for Sohn-Rethel. On Postone's view, Sohn-Rethel's attempt to shift the origin from the transcendental subject to a specific social act (exchange) does not automatically imply a return to prima philosophia. While his emphasis on exchange over production is wrong for the same reasons as Horkheimer's standpoint of labour, the problem of the origin as one intrinsic to the social totality orientated by labour emerges as a legitimate issue for critical theory. Postone points out that his own approach is similar to Sohn-Rethel's in that both aim to deduce forms of thought from forms of social synthesis, although it diverges where Sohn-Rethel, based on a transhistorical notion of labour, opposes the capitalist to a socialist social synthesis (*TLSD*, 177–179). Postone's critique extends real abstraction from the sphere of

exchange to the sphere of production in order to grasp labour itself as historically specific. Where Horkheimer gives up all hope for emancipation through the self-realisation of labour, Sohn-Rethel maintains that labour, as a productive activity to be liberated from the requirements of exchange, retains the potentiality to orientate emancipation. Sohn-Rethel's transcendental account of labour is then as it were the optimistic counterpart to post-'pessimistic turn' critical theory, with both firmly rooted, according to Postone, in a standpoint of labour. The split between labour as potentially emancipatory transhistorical practice and practice subsumed to social synthesis through exchange that characterises Sohn-Rethel's approach distinguishes it from Horkheimer's (and Adorno's) identification, after the consolidation of German fascism, of labour *per se* with instrumental action corresponding to instrumental reason.

It is for this reason that Sohn-Rethel's account is, paradoxically, closer to Postone's, since for Postone it is the conceptual reduction of labour to labour in capitalism that limits the perspective of traditional Marxism. That is to say, if Postone rejects the standpoint of labour, this is because in it the specifically capitalist form of labour is turned into a transhistorical category: 'Social labor as such is *not* instrumental action; labor in capitalism, however, *is* instrumental action' (*TLSD*, 180). By Postone's own standards, this is a curious statement in that it seems to affirm what his whole approach otherwise denies: that anything could be said about labour as such.[305] It indicates how Postone's rejection of transhistorical categories despite itself involves the attempt to gain a transcendental foothold for the critique in which the 'separation and opposition between manual and intellectual labor' would be overcome (*TLSD*, 29). Accordingly, Postone shares with Sohn-Rethel the perspective that a social practice which is not a mere function of the generation of surplus value can be envisioned from the point of view of an immanent critique, thus refusing the pessimistic view of state capitalism as an insurmountable totality or as an 'identity that incorporates the socially nonidentical in itself so as to make the whole a noncontradictory unity, leading to the universalization of domination' (*TLSD*, 185). If, contrary to Sohn-Rethel, his approach rejects existing forms of labour as

[305] For instance: 'According to Marx, social labor per se […] is a mere phantom, an abstraction that, taken by itself, does not exist at all' (*TLSD*, 56).

instantiations of this social practice, this registers the ambiguity informing the distinction social labour/labour in capitalism.

Postone's rejection of social antagonism as indeterminate, highlighted by the reference to Horkheimer's opposition between historical development and spontaneous resistance, points to the core of his theory of capitalism. Postone adds an important qualification to the discussion of the subtraction of contradiction from opposition indicated in Chapter 4.2: by relating the problem of standpoint directly to contradiction, Postone's interpretation outlines a topological approach in the sense of an historical-materialist amphiboly, that is, as the search for a transcendental place from which to grasp and critique dominant images of time and space and the ways in which they determine the capitalist social formation. Postone's ambivalent use of the notion of social labour and his one-sided understanding of resistance indicate possible aporias in his approach. Before turning to Postone's much contested rejection of the working class as revolutionary subject, however, I will give a more detailed exposition of Postone's account of an adequate critique of political economy.

4.3.2 A temporal standpoint for critique

Central to Postone's reinterpretation of Marx's critical theory is his analysis of the temporal dimension of modern capitalist society. On this approach, the modern form of social organisation is essentially a function of the temporal requirements of the logic of capital. Accordingly, and this is what Horkheimer failed to do, the standpoint that any adequate critique of and opposition to the historical dynamic producing the capitalist dialectic of transformation and reconstitution must develop is temporal. It is this connection of time and standpoint that marks the relevance of Postone's theory for the present investigation into the place of resistance. In what follows, I aim to show how Postone, by reworking the entwinement of reflection and determination in terms of transformation and reconstitution and by transposing the problem of orientation from transcendental philosophy to the analysis of forms of social organisation, can be seen to put Kant's amphiboly to use for the purpose of critical theory.

Postone's critique of the standpoint of labour, as the perspective adopted by many traditional Marxisms, has an ontological scope. By shifting the standpoint of critique, it aims to displace labour as 'the ontological principle of society' (*TLSD*, 61), that is, as the hypostatisation of an historically specific form of social practice into a transhistorical human condition. Albeit from a different perspective, this resonates with Schürmann's critique of the reduction of individual practice to generic labour. Postone can be understood as putting the critique of amphiboly to work: for all its opposition to modern forms of production and circulation, the standpoint of labour unwittingly shares this ontological principle with the social formation it purports to overcome. If considered as reworking Kant's argumentative strategy in the Amphiboly chapter for the use of social analysis, Postone's critique of the standpoint of labour can both provide a point of departure for conceiving resistance in distinction from this standpoint and allow analysing existent forms of resistance with regard to their implication in 'that which exists'.

Contrary to traditional Marxism, Postone contends, the Marxian standpoint of critique 'is a determinate possibility that emerges historically from the contradictory character of the existent order and should not be identified with the existing form of either of this order's dimensions. In this sense, the standpoint of the critique is temporal, rather than spatial' (*TLSD*, 361). 'Spatial', meaning external to the existent order, implies a separation between subject and object rather than a critique that situates itself within the relation between both; 'historically', on the other hand, indicates the immanent character of a critique that does not ontologise labour into a principle. If Postone analyses the existent order as contradictory, he does not imply a contradiction between its real and its ideal form, but one that is immanent to the extant form and therefore to 'that which exists'. The difficulty—as well as the potentiality—of this critical standpoint arises from the fact that on this perspective the capitalist order constitutes a totality that is contradictory and not a 'unitary whole' (*TLSD*, 88). Any attempt to overcome this order cannot assert one pole of the contradiction against the other but has to be directed against the totalising form itself. This complicates the thinking of opposition in a way that can complement Schürmann's approach. As in Schürmann, only an anti-totalising political practice can counter the contradictory integrative forces of capital. Although Postone would

hesitate to refer to such practice as resistance, my reading of his approach highlights productive ways to bring these thoughts together.[306]

Postone's conception of Marx's critique of political economy as a 'categorial analysis' (*TLSD*, 17) and as a 'social theory of consciousness' (*TLSD*, 77) points to the epistemological dimension of his account. With its understanding of the reliance of the Kantian 'Copernican turn' on transcendental a priori categories firmly rooted in the Hegelian critique of Kant, Postone's approach casts Hegel's philosophy in terms of the totality of the identical subject-object as the attempt to resolve the Kantian aporia. On this view, Marx takes up Hegel's idea of a totality but interprets it not as social objectivity but as social mediation. This shift away from objectivity indicates that the identical subject-object is not an ontological category but specific to 'the form of alienated social relations expressed by the category of capital' (*TLSD*, 218). Marx's approach then provides an alternative response to the Kantian aporia rather than its Hegelian resolution and formulates a categorial critique at a distance from both Kant and Hegel. Rather than identifying the overcoming of capitalism with the realisation of the dialectical totality, Postone submits that the mature Marx 'analyzes the social validity for capitalist society of precisely those idealist Hegelian concepts which he earlier had condemned as mystified inversions' (*TLSD*, 75). In other words, rather than viewing the Hegelian totality as idealistically veiling the true subject of the historical process (i.e., the working class), Marx conceives of the process itself as realising a form of social relations the subject of which is neither the working class nor humanity, but value. The core problem arising from Postone's reconsideration is then the way in which social practice (re)constitutes the social form of value, and how this form can be changed or whether every transformation merely contributes to its reconstitution.

The peculiar directional dynamic characteristic of capitalism, which refers every transformation back to a reconstitution, emerges from the antinomic character of the categories labour, value and time. In capitalism, the constitution of social form

[306] See Chapter 5 for a more extensive critique of Postone's notion of resistance.

has two sides, one abstract and one concrete. The double character is materially objectified in the commodity:

> The commodity is both a product and a social mediation. It is not a use value that *has* value but, as the materialized objectification of concrete and abstract labor, it is a use value that *is* a value and, therefore, has exchange value. This simultaneity of substantial and abstract dimensions in the form of labor and its products is the basis of the various antinomic oppositions of capitalism and […] underlies its dialectical and, ultimately, contradictory character. In its double-sidedness as concrete and abstract, qualitatively particular and qualitatively general-homogeneous, the commodity is the most elementary expression of capitalism's fundamental character. As an object, the commodity *has* a material form; as a social mediation, it *is* a social form. (*TLSD*, 154–155)

As Postone's critique of the standpoint of labour highlights, the attempt to appropriate the concrete side fails to overcome the logic of this dynamic, instead reproducing the underlying totalising principle of labour. If, as Postone claims, production in capitalism has no substantive end, this means that it has no end that transcends the logic which compels to renewed production, and thus the reconstitution of its own principle (i.e., the expenditure of labour time) as ontological. In that sense, any concrete production is a mere means to an abstract end. This very lack of a substantive end, however, constitutes the basis for increases in productivity and hence the precondition for rendering increasingly superfluous the expenditure of human labour time by automatisation. Capitalism both liberates the human being from the metabolic need to labour and binds her to a dialectic of transformation and reconstitution that requires her to continue to expend living labour. The capitalist social formation pivots on labour as a quasi-ontological principle, which provides the 'essential *ground* of domination' (*TLSD*, 125), a domination realised as temporal domination (*TLSD*, 215).

Postone argues that the antinomic dualism between abstract and concrete that drives this dynamic is essentially a *temporal* one: it unfolds between the abstract unit by which time is measured, on the one hand, and a specific form of concrete time, historical time, on the other. In this dynamic, the two aspects of labour, as a productive and as a socially mediating activity, become interlocked and produce a framework of domination in which increases in productivity paradoxically do not lead

to a reduction in the overall amount of time units that have to be expended. While the amount of concretely produced value (use-value, material wealth) increases with productivity, abstract (exchange) value does so only temporarily, until an innovation has been generalised, that is, adopted by all producers. Postone calls this the 'treadmill effect' (*TLSD*, 289) of the capitalist order: it is the source of the specific domination exerted by the dualistic form of capitalist social relations. It produces a double temporality. On the one hand, the units of abstract time remain constant throughout productivity increases. On the other, however, their 'social content' changes: the time unit becomes denser and socially necessary labour time is redetermined along the axis of abstract, linear time. What Postone calls the 'event of redetermination'—such as a technological innovation—changes the labour time required to produce a certain use-value, but it does not change the formal condition according to which living labour has to be expended. Abstract time as the formal axis is itself not redetermined but 'moved "forward in time"' (*TLSD*, 292). This 'movement of time' constitutes capitalist temporality as '*a mode of (concrete) time that expresses the motion of (abstract) time*' (*TLSD*, 293).

Postone analyses this dynamic in terms of a spatialisation of time, in which concrete (historical) time and abstract (present) time interact dialectically. Taking his definition of spatialised time from Lukács—as time that 'freezes into an exactly delimited, quantifiable continuum filled with quantifiable "things"' (*TLSD*, 215 n. 109)[307]—Postone argues that the capitalist historical dynamic operates on a 'metamorphosis of substantial time into abstract time *in space*, as it were, from the particular to the general and back' (*TLSD*, 293). While the relation between concrete and abstract is dialectical, it is the abstract that provides the framework within which concrete 'events' occur.[308] Rather than considering temporality as 'a pre-given, unmoving frame within which all forms of social life move', this view focuses on what Postone

[307] George Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: The Merlin Press, 1971), 90.

[308] Postone's analysis of the historical development that led to the domination of concrete time by abstract time cannot be presented here in any detail. On this analysis, time in pre-capitalist society is a variable 'dependent' on events in the natural world, such as sunrise and sunset, and is accordingly fluctuating in terms of modern time units (the day is shorter in winter than in summer). Specific historical developments since the thirteenth century, however, brought about a concept of time as an 'independent variable', that is, as measured without regard for actual events (*TLSD*, 200–216).

refers to as the 'historically specific temporality' of capitalism.[309] On this analysis, it is the directional dynamic that results from the historically specific relation between concrete and abstract time (the dialectic of transformation and reconstitution), that produces the form of domination characteristic of capitalist society. If what Kant identified as an amphibolous abstraction produces, following Marx and Postone, both the abstract *and* the concrete, the illusion of thoroughness that the Amphiboly chapter was meant to dispel becomes the very principle of an oppressive social integration. The paradox underlying this form of domination is that transformation is both necessary and impossible, since it is constitutively reduced to its capacity to reconstitute the temporal framework in which it emerges. However, Postone contends that the linear dimension on which transformations are lined up nonetheless produces a growing disparity between what could be (e.g., fully automated production) and what is according to the law of value (to reproduce the expenditure of living labour) (*TLSD*, 297). It is here that Postone finds the increasingly anachronistic character of value as being at odds with the '*potential* of the species-general capabilities that have been accumulated' in the course of numerous transformations (*TLSD*, 360).

Since Postone's critique locates itself within the contradiction that is its object, any emancipatory perspective has to be developed from this same contradiction of temporality. Without really developing this, Postone adumbrates that the finitude of the capitalist totality is linked to its historical specificity (*TLSD*, 143). From the standpoint of labour, capital exploits the forces of production (living labour) for the generation of surplus value. Emancipation from capitalism would then entail the assertion of living labour against its exploitation, 'the victory of living labor over dead labor' (*TLSD*, 256). On Postone's interpretation, however, this opposition obscures the double-sided character of capitalism and obliterates the insights of Marx's analysis, according to which dead labour, as 'the structure constituted by alienated labor', is 'not only the locus of domination in capitalism but also the locus of possible emancipation' (*TLSD*, 256). If Postone here identifies an ambiguous place in which domination and emancipation converge, this can serve as a strong analytical addition

[309] Moishe Postone, 'The Current Crisis and the Anachronism of Value: A Marxian Reading', *Continental Thought & Theory. A Journal of Intellectual Freedom*, 1(4), 2017, 47. Henceforth *CA*.

to what I have so far argued with regard to the place of resistance. In light of my argument, this paradoxical locus is the transcendental place of Postone's recovery of Marx's critique of political economy precisely because it marks the need, for any attempt to overcome capitalism, to abolish rather than affirm labour as the quasi-ontological principle.

In as far as it highlights its implications within 'that which exists', it sheds light on the place of resistance: it is from the viewpoint of dead labour that emancipation can be envisioned, since only by wresting accumulated historical time from its role as both transforming and reconstituting capitalism can modern society rid itself of social domination qua time. Postone illustrates this with reference to a passage from Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, which paraphrases the relation between "dead" and "living" labour constituting modern capitalist society as 'The tradition of all the dead generations [that] weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living'.[310] Similar to Schürmann, with Postone the struggle against amphiboly is a question of the relation between life and death.

4.3.3 Resistance and the working class

Postone's approach has been criticised for evacuating the standpoint of opposition to capitalism and class struggle in favour of a philosophical analysis limited to an eventually incapacitating critique that blocks any conceptualisation of a revolutionary agent. While comprehensively rehearsing recent debates on the relation between labour and capital exceeds the scope of this discussion, the problem of agency that surfaces in debates about the apparent dissolution of the class antagonism in post-liberal capitalism directly pertains to the problem of resistance in as far this opposition, as the antagonism between rich and poor, between expropriators and expropriated, has provided the blueprint for social struggles in modern capitalist society. To illustrate this debate and the role the problem of origin plays in it, I will briefly introduce Werner Bonefeld's critique of Postone's 'deceitful publicity',[311] a notion taken from Kant's *The Conflict of the Faculties*. In Kant, it indicates the legally

[310] Karl Marx, *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, *MEW8*, 115/*MECW11*, 103. Quoted in *TLSD*, 351.

[311] Werner Bonefeld, 'On Postone's Courageous but Unsuccessful Attempt to Banish the Class Antagonism from the Critique of Political Economy', *Historical Materialism*, 12(3), 2004, 105. Henceforth *PC*.

decreed dissimulation of the true nature of the constitution of a people, for which Kant holds responsible those philosophers who take their allegiance to the rulers a bit too far:

> This representation of the nature of the case has something delusive about it so that the true constitution, faithful to law, is no longer sought at all; for one imagines to have found it in an example already at hand, and a false publicity deceives the people with the illusion of a limited monarchy in power by a law which issues from them, while their representatives, won over by bribery, have secretly subjected them to an absolute monarchy. (7:90)

The reality of the absolutist state is obscured by the appearances of the parliamentarian system, leading the people to believe that their constitution restricts the monarch's power. By interpreting the failure to adequately compare conceptual object to appearance as a deliberate strategy of deception, this passage transposes the problem of amphiboly to the level of politics and the state, in which the philosophers prop up the absolute ruler by making the people believe that their constitution is what it clearly is not.

Bonefeld's rebuttal of Postone sets out from the claim that the latter confuses explanandum and explanans. On this count, Postone presupposes what needs to be analysed, namely the fact that the human being is 'class-divided' and reduced to 'a human attribute of things' (*PC*, 104). In order to reinstate the thrust of Marxian critical theory, Bonefeld argues, its original '*reductio ad hominem*' (*PC*, 104) has to be taken into view. Bonefeld does this by asserting that Postone's analysis of the origins of social domination in capitalism puts the cart before the horse: rather than examining the genesis of capitalism out of the separation of the human being from the products of her labour and thus from the point of view of the human being prior to capitalism, Postone considers capital as the subject and its logic as being prior to the act that makes it possible. At the heart of Bonefeld's critique is, therefore, the suggestion to consider this problem of origin inversely:

> the pre-positing action of the separation of labour from its condition is not the historical result of capitalism but its presupposition, a presupposition which renders capital a social-production relation based on the separation of labour's social productive force from its conditions and, even more pronounced, confers on these conditions the power of applying labour rather than being controlled by it. (*PC*, 109)

Much of Bonefeld's refutation consists of a sustained effort to justify this change of sequence without committing the mistakes that Postone's approach identified as resulting from an ontologisation of labour, that is, without reintroducing a transhistorical concept of labour. That this is a difficult task indeed becomes clear when Bonefeld posits a transhistorical substrate of labour as 'purposeful human social practice' in opposition to wage-labour, the latter of which, like Postone, he considers unfit to provide 'an antagonistic subject' (*PC*, 113–114). In its struggle to define human practice without subsuming it to a generic representation, this recalls the debate between Krahl and Schürmann staged in Chapter 3. Bonefeld's notion of labour then has no phenomenal basis in existing forms of labour but posits purposeful human social practice itself as the concrete basis of society. While Bonefeld reveals a weak point of Postone's conceptualisation, the way out he presents is disappointing in that it tends to be a mere reiteration of what Postone tries to overcome.

What Bonefeld opposes to Postone's focus on labour as an ontological principle of social domination is a reminder of the humanist origins of Marxian critical theory, what he refers to as the 'standard of critique' (*PC*, 116). However, the standard that he deduces from his critique begs the question that Postone's approach raises, namely that for a critique and praxis that does not merely borrow its standards from 'that which exists'. While Bonefeld rightly identifies the potentially debilitating effect of a withdrawal from the powerful labour antagonism, the vanishing point of his reduction ad hominem turns out to be curiously indeterminate: 'The standard of critique is the human being, her dignity and possibilities' (*PC*, 117). Bonefeld explains the loss of dignity and possibilities under the pre-positing action that both separates the human being from the product of her purposeful activity and prepares the rise of capitalism with recourse to Marx's notion of 'perverted form' (*PC*, 110).[312] If, as Bonefeld points out, 'verrückt' (translated as perverted) means both mad and displaced, the topological connotation of this description of capitalist forms conveys not only the violence of the pre-positing act but also, at least on Bonefeld's interpretation, that 'each form is "perverted form"' (*PC*, 113). It is the proper place of purposeful productive activity that is broken apart by the form in which its

[312] See Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*, 169 (there translated as 'absurd form')/*MEW23*, 90.

products are seized. The distinction between what is in its place and what is displaced implied by Bonefeld's interpretation of the notion 'verrückt' makes possible his critique of Postone's approach as one-sided and raises the question 'Is resistance to this conquest [of time] really just constitutive to the development of capitalism?' (*PC*, 121). As justified as this question is, it seems to reduce the insights afforded by Postone's approach to some sort of quietism, while its actual intention is to clarify the challenge, crucial for the problem of resistance, implied by the attempt to both remain immanent to and transcendent 'that which exists'.

Contrary to what Bonefeld seems to hold, it is far from obvious that Postone suggests that there can be no resistance to the conquest of time that does not merely reconstitute the capitalist trajectory. What his analysis of temporal domination suggests is that the antagonism between classes, if understood in terms of the relation between capitalists and working class, cannot consist in a conflict based on claims of right, which merely affirms the distribution of subjectivity and objectivity in capitalism. On Postone's view, the horizon of adequate opposition puts an end to the central role played by labour in society: 'Far from entailing the *realization* of the proletariat, overcoming capitalism involves the material *abolition* of proletarian labor' (*TLSD*, 33). Here, the self-abolition of labour does not point to a condition in which the human being is reunited with the product of its labour but to one in which purposeful productive activity does not serve as the principle of social integration but is 'predicated on the historical *negation* of that socially constituting role played by labor in capitalism' (*TLSD*, 363). The distinction, reminiscent of the one Krahl makes between the dictatorship of the proletariat and its self-abolition, between self-realisation and self-abolition is crucial. While Postone's approach entails no statement against returning dignity and possibilities to the human being, it rejects the idea that this can be thought through the affirmation of class as the subject of history. The difficulty it introduces is that this history itself is one of capital and cannot simply be carried over into new ownership. Accordingly, the overcoming of capitalism has to be sought in the contradictions of the existing order rather than in the opposition between the abstract and the concrete. Bonefeld's focus on dignity and possibilities, on the other hand, risks reproducing categories of a universality that is not transhistorical but intrinsic to capitalism (*TLSD*, 366).

It is not necessary, though certainly possible, to deduce from Postone's approach that resistance is futile. His approach is not so much 'deceitful publicity' about the 'constitution of the people' as a taking stock of those theoretical paths that promise nothing but a reconstitution of the same. Postone's polemic against class struggle has to be seen in light of his attempt to dissolve the standpoint of labour as a viewpoint for emancipation. This is registered by his insistence on uncovering the 'strategic thrust' (*TLSD*, 316) of Marx's theory to avoid misconceptions such as the standpoint of labour. For instance, while Bonefeld (as well as Heinrich, as indicated above), highlights Marx's contradictory characterisations of abstract labour—as physiological or social and historical phenomenon—and the 'great trouble' he apparently has 'in expressing value objectivity as a social relationship between things',[313] Postone argues that this ambiguity is indicative of the precarious standpoint of critique with regard to its object. The ontological, transhistorical appearance of the capitalist social forms is essential in that they constitute 'a total "social mediation" that simultaneously provides its own forms of appearance as transhistorical, ontological, and hence, physiological'.[314] What this draws out is a relation between appearance and essence that is necessarily fetishist: 'It is labor's unique role in capitalism that constitutes labor both as an essence and as a form of appearance' (*TLSD*, 166). On Postone's view, contrary to what Bonefeld argues, 'Marx's immanent analysis is *not* a critique from the standpoint of a social ontology; rather, it provides a critique of such a position by indicating that what seems to be ontological is actually historically specific to capitalism' (*TLSD*, 167). While Bonefeld agrees that abstract labour is 'a specifically capitalist form of labour',[315] his affirmation of a transhistorical substrate of labour fails to depose it as the standard around which society is organised. What Postone's approach allows is considering what appears as concrete to be always already an abstraction. Bonefeld, on the other hand, seems to suggest access to the idea of a non-abstract substrate of labour.

[313] Werner Bonefeld, 'Abstract Labour: Against Its Nature and On Its Time', *Capital & Class*, 34(2), 2010, 266.
[314] Elena Louisa Lange, 'Moishe Postone: Marx's Critique of Political Economy as Immanent Social Critique', *SAGE Handbook of Frankfurt School Critical Theory*, ed. Beverley Best, Werner Bonefeld, Chris O'Kane (Los Angeles and London: SAGE, 2018), 527.
[315] Bonefeld, 'Abstract Labour', 257.

Postone banishes the class antagonism in as far as the resistance that could take this antagonism as its standpoint would rest on an image of time that does not reflect the necessary implication of both abstract and concrete time within the antinomic contradiction that creates the directional dynamic of capitalist society. If the focus of his approach is on temporality rather than on class domination, the strategic need of this shift is confirmed by Bonefeld's insistence on the simple opposition between 'the time of class struggle'—which would aim to mend the separation between producer and product—and the idea that 'time is money' (*PC*, 115). Postone's point is precisely that neither of these contradictory notions of time says anything about the role labour is to play in a free social association. Both are grounded in the same ontological principle of labour. In both cases, the struggle 'to meet human needs' (*PC*, 121) remains essential. Postone, however, tries to envision a form of human association in which social metabolism is no longer the integrating principle. It is nonetheless true that, in the framework of his reinterpretation of Marx, he does not supply a more detailed appreciation of the fact that, as Bonefeld notes, 'strike action, refusal to comply, and resistance take courage' (*PC*, 121). But this courage, in turn, requires a viewpoint that does not immediately relapse into the same categories the material domination of which it aims to overcome, and for this Postone's approach provides a valuable resource.

4.4 Conclusion

According to Sohn-Rethel's materialist topology, the origin of abstraction—of real and of thought abstraction—lies in human labour becoming subsumed to the exchange relation. Exchangeability of the products of human labour is guaranteed by money as mediating otherwise singular things created by an activity of individual human beings. On Sohn-Rethel's approach, then, resistance can be thought based on the assertion of human (living) labour against its subsumption to exchange. This is similar to what Chapter 3 noted to be Krahl's and, to the extent that it affirms individual practice as non-generic, Schürmann's perspective. However, as Schürmann's later work on the double bind indicated, the place in which an

anarchistic subject would have to be thought is constituted by a discordance between singularising and universalising temporalities.

To further elucidate this precarious place, I examined Postone's critique of the standpoint of labour. Postone argues that the capitalist directional dynamic is driven by the antinomy between the abstract and the concrete. The specificity of the standpoint afforded by Postone's approach is that it does not imply the overcoming of one pole of the antinomy by the other but conceives the whole antinomic apparatus as the origin of capitalist historicity. Put differently, the standpoint Sohn-Rethel secures for opposition is not external to but constitutive of 'that which exists'. Capitalism rests on a veritable metaphysics of labour, the deconstruction of which must be the presupposition of any worthwhile opposition to this form of social organisation. Postone's approach thereby substantially complicates the conceptualisation of the social antagonisms in modern society, including many influential ways of thinking about this antagonism as constitutive of its dynamic. The conceptual shift that occurs here is that from self-realisation to self-abolition, which can be brought into discussion with Schürmann's insistence on a paradoxical principle of anarchy.

In the next chapter, I turn to an amphibolous form of resistance that entertains a constructive relation with the capitalist directional dynamic and that has historically been among the most destructive anti-capitalist social and political movements, that is, antisemitism. In this last chapter, the conceptual work carried out in Chapters 1 to 4 will be translated into the argument that specific forms of resistance are intrinsic to the capitalist form of social organisation and that forms that point beyond or transcend this form require a destruction of the material principles of integration that perpetuate it. The notion of place developed here is instructive for this destruction.

Chapter 5. Judging resistance: Antisemitism and reflection

5.1 Postone's resistance

A tension arises on Postone's conception of the capitalist social formation between his rejection of the 'pessimist turn' of Horkheimer and Adorno as premised on a standpoint of labour, on the one hand, and his own rather bleak remarks on the prospects of political opposition, on the other. This can in part be attributed to his understanding of resistance as a mere reaction that does not point beyond 'that which exists', which is likely a strategic move to distinguish his approach from what he considers the uncritical turn, since the 1960s, of left militants to reactionary national liberation struggles.[316] There remains, however, the question of how transformation without reconstitution is to be thought if resistance is thus altogether discarded. As I have argued in Chapter 1, a clean conceptual separation between revolution and resistance is philosophically as well as historically unsustainable. In the present chapter, I put my analysis of the place of resistance to the test of the critique of antisemitism as a specific form of resistance based on an amphibolous confusion of abstract and concrete (5.1), investigate the status of judgement in resistance (5.2) and, finally, read Postone's call for self-abolition together with Schürmann's principle of anarchy (5.3).

This structure roughly maps on Postone's distinction, in *TLSD*, between three forms of 'socially constituted critique and opposition in capitalism' (392). The first of these comprises those expressions of resistance that defend specific forms against capitalist destruction. This can be the working class, construed as an exclusive (e.g., nationalist) subject, or the delusional antisemitic resistance to the destruction of lifeworld by 'the Jew'. The second form pits the ideal of capitalist society against its reality, demanding the realisation of the capacities intrinsic to this society, which Postone discovers in Horkheimer and Adorno's approach. The third form, which is the temporal standpoint at which his analysis aims, takes into account the antinomic directional dynamic of capitalism, basing itself 'on the growing gap between the possibilities generated by capitalism and its actuality' (*TLSD*, 392). Against this backdrop, Postone criticises the notion of resistance as 'undialectical': resistance, he

[316] Moishe Postone, 'History and Helplessness', *Public Culture*, 18(1), 2006, 93–110.

claims, 'says little about the nature of that which is being resisted or of the politics of the resistance involved—that is, the character of the determinate forms of critique, opposition, rebellion, and "revolution"'.[317] The contamination of reflection and determination I have investigated in this thesis makes this simple refutation of resistance implausible. Since Postone brings resistance into proximity with antisemitism, it is necessary to look at it in more detail.

Postone's critique of resistance derives from his notion of antagonism as static and indeterminate opposition that obscures the historical dynamic of the capitalist social formation. Observing that resistance is highly ambiguous and 'has occluded the ability of many on the Left to distinguish reactionary from progressive movements',[318] Postone considers it as particularistic opposition to capitalist social domination and uses it interchangeably with the false identification of the possibility of emancipation with the concrete pole of the antinomic capitalist dynamic. Postone rejects resistance as a mere 'anti-'posture (anti-globalisation, anti-imperialism, anti-immigration, etc.) that does not point to a possible transformation. Affirming its ontological conceptual framework, resistance partakes in the reconstitution of the society which it purports to oppose precisely because it remains oblivious to the abstract-concrete mediations on which this form of social organisation functions (*ET*, 3). At the same time, Postone's approach, responding to the disappointment which their failures incurred, also undermines existing notions of revolution. Against the backdrop of the analyses produced in Chapters 2–4, Postone's rigid separation of resistance and transformation, if referred to the notion of place, might itself be transformed into a more productive conceptual relation. A possible point of departure for this is Postone's search for a temporal standpoint of critique that does not exhaust itself in the dualism between abstract and concrete time and that allows turning transformation against reconstitution.

On this view, the assertion of living labour against its abstraction, which persists in Sohn-Rethel's work, does not only not suffice, conceptually or politically, to deactivate the capitalist historical dynamic but, in asserting the concrete over the

[317] Postone, 'History and Helplessness', 108.
[318] Moishe Postone, 'Exigency of Time: A Conversation with Harry Harootunian and Moishe Postone', *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies*, 38(2), 2012, 30. Henceforth *ET*.

abstract, shares an important point of reference with regressive forms of opposition such as the one that could be derived from Heidegger's thinking. It is this position that Postone identifies with resistance as 'politically and historically indeterminate' (*CA*, 52). Concrete time, as the temporality that pertains to the expenditure of living labour, is not the standpoint from which resistance can be articulated, but the source of value creation. The very conflict between heterogeneous and homogenising forces is what produces the historical dynamic of the capitalist social formation, a point that, as we will see below, resonates with Schürmann's interpretation of the principle of anarchy. That this problem is at the centre of Postone's theory is indicated by a 2012 conversation, in which the interviewer, drawing on a question Heidegger had not answered explicitly (but, as I have argued, implicitly), asks: where does philosophy get its 'directive' from, and 'what is the starting point of philosophy, or how does philosophy legitimate its point of origin?' (*ET*, 8). Postone reiterates that 'there is no time outside of its context' (*ET*, 9) but that any opposition has to be developed immanently. Later in that same conversation, he submits that what he is trying to do is to 'consider the ways in which capitalism itself is generative of other possibilities that could conceivably negate it' (*ET*, 21). This proposal, however, remains rather vague here as elsewhere in Postone's work.

In *TLSD*, for instance, he suggests that the category of 'disposable time',[319] introduced by Marx in the *Grundrisse*, points towards an historically specific form of judgement that critically distinguishes between leisure time as mere antithesis of labour time and disposable time as reversing the negativity of superfluous time and thereby constituting a 'social individual' (*TLSD*, 375–376). Judgement would then necessarily have a reflective element, as Postone emphasises when he links 'the judgment of the older form', that is, the capitalist one, to 'the imagination of a newer one' (*TLSD*, 375). This crossing of the distinction leisure time/disposable time with the distinction judgement/imagination relates to another conceptual differentiation that is crucial for Postone's approach, that between the self-realisation and the self-abolition of the proletariat (*TLSD*, 69). While self-realisation implies the reconstitution of the logic of

[319] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 704–711. The phrase is from an 1821 pamphlet, 'The Source and Remedy of the National Difficulties, Deduced from Principles of Political Economy, in a Letter to Lord John Russell', https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/economics/dilke/1821/sourceandremedy.htm, accessed 28 June 2021.

capital, self-abolition is 'a process of material self-transformation' (*TLSD*, 33). Only self-abolition provides the determinate negation that can overcome the capitalist historical dynamic. What must be abolished is the self constituted by labour as an effective ontological principle that integrates society. In a 1978 essay, Postone puts this in terms of the distinction between '*class-constituting* and *class-transcending* consciousness'.[320] It is the latter that, based on the 'need for meaningful activity, for active self-fulfillment',[321] promises the possibility to transcend the experiential framework of modern capitalist society and that could lead to 'the material abolition of the concrete labor'[322] which the proletariat does. Not unlike Schürmann's anarchistic subject, Postone's notion of agency searches for a link between 'that which exists' and an experiential point of reference for a reorientation that does not fall back into the metaphysics of labour.

However, if Postone's critique of resistance is that it is conceptually and historically indeterminate and hence ambiguous, then it would seem that—in light of the relation between reflection and determination elucidated in this thesis—it paradoxically provides not the least but the most adequate starting point to challenge a form of social domination that, as Postone affirms on several occasions, 'has no determinate locus' (*CA*, 47). Postone's critique of resistance as indeterminate is insufficient in that it does not allow for a process of reflection and determination as forming resistance, but only refers to a 'self-reflexive social epistemology' (*TLSD*, 259) and 'possible determinate negation' (*TLSD*, 373) as already constituted categories. One way to fill this gap is through linking resistance to judgement by including Postone's insight that the form of domination constituting the capitalist social formation relies on the specific temporality it produces and distributes. It is the objectifying conceptualisation of time as an independent variable that captures the excess of whatever reality (experience, labour, etc.) is contained in an event and refers it to a specific unity of time that provides the measure for all social activity in that society. According to Postone, transformation without reconstitution would require the 'determinate negation of the existing order' to be carried out from a standpoint he

[320] Moishe Postone, 'Necessity, Labor, and Time: A Reinterpretation of the Marxian Critique of Capitalism', *Social Research*, 45(4), 1978, 782.
[321] Postone, 'Necessity', 785.
[322] Postone, 'Necessity', 753.

describes as 'a determinate possibility that emerges historically from the contradictory character of the existent order and should not be identified with the existing form of either of this order's dimensions' (*TLSD*, 361). It is difficult to see how this would not include a certain productive indeterminacy in the process of negation.

I will develop this claim, as it were *ex negativo*, starting from antisemitism, one of the most catastrophic and yet abiding forms of resistance that is intimately related to Western politics and philosophy, and in which the capitalist metaphysics of labour reaches its deathly apex. Antisemitism corresponds to labour-constituted subjectivity as a form of resistance that dehumanises not by mere abstraction but, as Bonefeld writes, 'through "abstractification": The abstract concept Jew was made into a numbered cipher and it was then *made* abstract […] The identified puppet master was transformed into smoke-filled air'.[323] To elucidate the place of antisemitic resistance, in 5.2 I examine Arendt's and Postone's notions of antisemitism and the ways they relate it to philosophical thinking and the analysis of modern society. 5.3 turns to the notion of judgement to sketch out an opposition to antisemitism. It juxtaposes Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of post-Kantian paranoia and their turn to reflective judgement to Arendt's notion of judgement as political action. Schürmann's critical revision of Arendt's notion of judgement prepares a discussion of similarities and differences between Postone's and Schürmann's approaches in 5.4, which points out a few possible syntheses.

5.2 Antisemitism and the place of resistance

This section examines the concepts of antisemitism developed by Arendt and Postone. 5.2.1 situates Arendt's concept of antisemitism within her wider theory of modernity, arguing that her understanding of antisemitism reflects some of the difficulties with her general approach. In particular, it draws out how her specific mode of equivocating between the empirical and the ontological is both essential to her approach and renders it unsustainable. 5.2.2 turns to Postone's theory of antisemitism, which outlines a more pervasive conceptual framework for the analysis

[323] Werner Bonefeld, 'Critical Theory and the Critique of Antisemitism: On Society as Economic Object', *The Journal of Social Justice*, 9, 2019, 15.

of resistance than Arendt's. The phenomenon of antisemitism, as historically and in its very impotence paradoxically one of the most compelling forms of anti-capitalism, exposes the full ambiguity of resistance. It presents the apogee of the amphibolous use of concepts in that it takes rationalism to its conclusion: entirely detached from the material world, antisemitism operates on 'the Jew' as the conceptual object par excellence. Its prejudice is instrumental and constitutes an irrational rationalism that has led to 'abstractification', that is, the extermination of that human reality which, through its mere existence, threatens the structure of domination.

Antisemitism is an essential regulative principle of modern Western societies.[324] First, it is a form of resistance that deflects opposition to real domination into the delusional antagonism between the nation/people and a rootless and greedy elite, an imaginary that thrives on the amalgamation of entrenched (religious, economic, political) stereotypes and a truncated critique of capitalist modernity. Second, as a *détournement* of this first manifestation, antisemitism has recently enjoyed popularity as a form of governance to discredit expressions of political opposition that are increasingly difficult to realign with the 'deceitful publicity' of democratic participation. Between the liberal attempt to defuse contestation by promising more of the same and the fascist drumming up of nationalist sentiments to keep people going, contemporary governing techniques tread a thin line. While the modern European state does not fabricate antisemitism, it makes use of it as a strategy to deflect and suppress discontent. This strategy was of little use during the so-called 'golden age' and the material improvements it brought to the voting public of post-war liberal-democratic countries. The temporary suspension of the use of antisemitism as a political strategy imposed itself, first, as a result of the real terror with which humanity realised where antisemitism could lead as well as, second, a temporary shift of hostility to a dualistic geopolitical conflict. It has, however, gained new traction since the end of the economic boom, the resulting gradual demolition of the vestiges of welfare and the collapse of Soviet-style state capitalism.

[324] The qualification as 'Western' is warranted here since it is the European philosophical and political tradition that is implicated in the rise of antisemitic opposition.

5.2.1 Arendt's concept of antisemitism and the eclipse of 'man's capacity for novelty'

Arendt's influential work on the emergence of modern antisemitism and its role in the formation of totalitarianism can be elucidated through a central notion of her political theory, natality. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt introduces birth and death, natality and mortality as 'the most general condition of human existence', arguing that by virtue of natality humans possess 'the capacity of beginning something anew'.[325] Natality, as 'man's capacity for novelty',[326] is the standpoint of Arendt's critique of modern society. With the rise to hegemony of modern science and social upheavals like the French revolution, this capacity, Arendt contends, becomes entangled with and dominated by an 'image of man'[327] that suspends it as a capacity and replaces it with a 'strange pathos of novelty'.[328] This shift from capacity to pathos registers the ambivalent foundations of the specifically modern form of the political, the nation-state. Apart from its profound effect on the political, the obliteration of the capacity for novelty expresses itself economically in original accumulation becoming the paramount goal of the imperialist nation-state. The political decay propelled by the rise of the economic and the social corresponds to an ongoing process of expropriation that turns the human being into 'mass man'[329] and creates a condition of 'worldlessness'.[330]

Arendt argues that the origins of totalitarianism have to be sought in this modern obliteration of the capacity of beginning anew. Since political action is the realisation of this capacity *par excellence*, its obliteration is tantamount to the eclipse of the political by the social. Modern antisemitism arises in a society thus purged of the political and is expressed by the transformation of social conflicts into mob violence. While Arendt's approach provides a powerful analysis of the rise of antisemitism in the nineteenth century, recent scholarship suggests that her account fails to resolve an important conceptual tension between, on the one hand, the assertion that

[325] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 8–9.
[326] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1990), 34.
[327] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1973), 291. Henceforth *OT*.
[328] Arendt, *On Revolution*, 46; Arendt, *Condition*, 248.
[329] Hannah Arendt, *Vita activa oder vom tätigen Leben* (Munich: Piper, 1981), 252. The German version of *Condition* here diverges from the original English edition.
[330] Arendt, *Condition*, 118.

modern antisemitism is entirely detached from any empirical Jewish reality and, on the other, the reproduction of antisemitic tropes connected to her rigid distinction between the social and the political. My analysis links this ambivalence to Arendt's conceptual equivocation between historical-empirical and ontological claims. It is this equivocation—which resonates with the empirical-transcendental threshold status of place in Heidegger—that orientates her critique of modernity as a whole.

A genealogy of modern antisemitism

The specificity of modern antisemitism, for Arendt, is that it discovers '*the* Jew […] to be the evil principle of history'.[331] The inversion of the medieval hatred of Jewish people into their personifying an historical 'principle' constitutes the abstraction at the heart of modern antisemitism. This abstraction results in the bifurcation between the antisemitic image of the Jew and empirically existing Jews, to the extent that "the Jew' becomes a function of the self-image of non-Jews that serves as a negative foil for the antisemitic stereotype: 'Since the Jew no longer has an indisputable identity in Western European nations, one of the antisemite's most urgent needs is to define him'.[332] By thus both detaching itself from hatred of concrete Jews and abstracting medieval antisemitic stereotypes, modern antisemitism operates on a veritable 'fear of ghosts',[333] according to which 'the "Jew is everywhere and nowhere"'.[334] As Robert Fine and Phil Spencer note, Arendt's notion of antisemitism can be read as a refutation of an approach to politics in which whoever does not belong to a specific group is excluded and as a plea for a really cosmopolitan form of social organisation.[335] On their interpretation, Arendt's emphatic embrace of the status of the pariah and of statelessness appears as a form of resistance to oppression based on 'uniqueness, singularity, a deeper sense of plurality'[336] and the ability to 'see the world from the standpoint of others.'[337] Despite their careful delineation of this perspective from 'abstract forms of cosmopolitanism', what remains unclear on Fine

[331] Hannah Arendt, 'Antisemitism', trans. John E. Woods, in *Jewish Writings*, ed. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman, (New York: Schocken, 2007), 64.
[332] Arendt, 'Antisemitism', 69.
[333] Arendt, 'Antisemitism', 65.
[334] Arendt, 'Antisemitism', 66.
[335] Robert Fine and Phil Spencer, *Antisemitism and the Left* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 80–82.
[336] Fine and Spencer, *Antisemitism and the Left*, 91, n. 63.
[337] Fine and Spencer, *Antisemitism and the Left*, 87.

and Spencer's account is how this opposition between exclusionary politics and the regulative idea of a 'real cosmopolitanism'[338] relates to the political ontology that drives Arendt's philosophical works. More specifically, they do not sufficiently address how Arendt's analysis and critique of actually existing antisemitism is related to her ideal of 'real cosmopolitanism'. While they insist on the distinction between illusory and real cosmopolitanism, Arendt's frequent equivocations between the historical and the ontological make it difficult to ascertain this distinction in a way that could make it politically and analytically useful.

Contrary to Fine and Spencer's assessment, which is based mainly on the 1938–39 essay 'Antisemitism' and other early works, a recent analysis of *OT* is sceptical about the reliability of Arendt's account. Probing the accuracy of her historical claims, Peter Staudenmaier concludes that 'Much of Arendt's account of the genesis, structure and significance of modern antisemitism […] is conceptually flawed and historically untenable'.[339] Examining Arendt's claims in light of recent historical scholarship, Staudenmaier draws out their incoherence and suggests that ambivalence is constitutive of the concept of antisemitism developed by Arendt. For instance, Arendt reproduces the 'antisemitic canard'[340] according to which Jews have long abided by a 'principle of separation' (*OT*, 55 n. 1) from their surroundings. Her critique of this separation is complemented by an equally trenchant—and, according to Staudenmaier, equally undifferentiated—critique of assimilation that 'places the burden of the double bind of assimilationist expectations squarely on Jews'.[341] This perspective is taken further by Arendt's 'litany of Jewish inadequacies'[342] that distorts her conception of antisemitism. The purported Jewish principle of separation is hypostasised in the claims that Jews are 'the only non-national European people' (*OT*, 22), who 'avoided all political action for two thousand years' (*OT*, 8) and stubbornly preferred 'capital trading' to engaging 'in industrial enterprises' (*OT*, 354).

[338] Fine and Spencer, *Antisemitism and the Left*, 86.
[339] Peter Staudenmaier, 'Hannah Arendt's Analysis of Antisemitism in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*: A Critical Appraisal', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 46(2), 2012, 155.
[340] Staudenmaier, 'Arendt's Analysis', 169, n. 64.
[341] Staudenmaier, 'Arendt's Analysis', 167.
[342] Staudenmaier, 'Arendt's Analysis', 171.

These misrepresentations, which ground her assertion that Jews have a specific responsibility for the rise of modern antisemitism, are the flipside of Arendt's exaggerated distinction between social and political antisemitism. Thus, Staudenmaier refutes the claim that antisemitic parties were themselves somehow anti-political, pointing out that 'quite a few of them identified loyalty to their government with hostility to the Jews'.[343] Arguing that modern political and social antisemitism have always been interdependent, Staudenmaier estimates that 'the social-political dichotomy […] warps Arendt's analysis in significant ways' and that 'the narrowly political focus of Arendt's narrative limits its effectiveness'.[344] Her downplaying of political antisemitism as a passing phenomenon (*OT*, 61, 86) that became pernicious only with the complete collapse of the political and the rise of totalitarianism is related to her attempt to align the genealogy of antisemitism with the political ontology she went on to formulate as a critique of modernity in terms of the obliteration of the 'capacity for novelty' by the social. The insistence on the divide between the political and the social is key for this critique, and it is maintained by some jarring equivocations between historical and ontological statements. That her concept of antisemitism becomes subsumed to that of totalitarianism can be seen from her use of the notions of novelty and beginning.

In *OT*, the rise of antisemitism and the 'disintegration of the nation-state' (xxi) as elements of totalitarianism are closely intertwined with the suspension of the capacity for novelty. The essay 'Ideology and Terror' that concludes the second edition ends on the following note:

> […] the crisis of our time and its central experience have brought forth an entirely new form of government which as a potentiality and an ever-present danger is only too likely to stay with us from now on […]. But there remains also the truth that every end in history necessarily contains a new beginning; this beginning is the promise, the only "message" which the end can ever produce. Beginning, before it becomes a historical event, is the supreme capacity of man; politically, it is identical with man's freedom. […] This beginning is guaranteed by each new birth; it is indeed every man. (*OT*, 478–479)

[343] Staudenmaier, 'Arendt's Analysis', 173.
[344] Staudenmaier, 'Arendt's Analysis', 175–176.

Arendt introduces two different types of possibility—the *potentiality* of totalitarianism as a form of government and the *capacity* of man—in conflict with each other, suggesting that beginning as an a priori capacity of man exceeds the mere historical potentiality of 'every end'. If beginning is a quasi-ontological category, and ends are merely historical, resistance is to be grounded in that opposition to history.

The elimination of the specifically human temporality encapsulated in the capacity for novelty is characteristic of modernity, in which the social and its empty linear time encroaches on the temporal interplay between the public and the private that supports the political. As Arendt argues in part two of *OT*, imperialism, as unrestrained colonial expansion and dissolution of the nation-state's boundaries, reverses the order between public and private and subjects everything to the requirement of capitalist economy, original accumulation (*OT*, 126, 137, 139). This realises 'the endless process of history' (*OT*, 143) and erodes the temporality of the public sphere: hostile to the finitude of individuals, never-ending accumulation expands to the 'sphere of public affairs and borrow[s] from them that infinite length of time which is needed for continuous accumulation' (*OT*, 145). The complement of this encroachment is a form of government resting on ideology and terror, and its deterioration into totalitarianism is accompanied by antisemitism as the form of resistance that corresponds to capitalism's essentially atemporal time.

The elements of modern antisemitism—accusing Jews of non-belonging and of undeserved wealth (*OT*, 4–5)—reflect the very principles of that new imperialist world ruled by original accumulation. Imperialist and totalitarian society *externalises* its proper obliteration of the capacity for novelty into antisemitism as the hatred for a ghost-like agent that eludes subsumption to the nation-state. The rise of modern antisemitism coincides with the collapse of the system of nation-states and the onset of the imperialist era, and the dissolution of political boundaries and the economic expansion driving globalisation become associated with Jews and their purported characteristic as cosmopolitan money traders. Jews are identified with the very 'evil principle' of political disintegration that dismantles the nation-state. Jews, represented as 'without a government, without a country, and without a language' (*OT*, 8), become the object of social hatred. Although Arendt recognises that Jews are

only contingently related to this process, both Staudenmeier and Fine and Spencer observe that she does not always uphold this and instead at times seems to suggest an at least partial responsibility of Jews for antisemitism.[345] This ambivalence is down to an equivocation regarding the nation-state, which both expresses the ontological capacity for novelty and, as the guardian of original accumulation, heralds the historical negation of that capacity.

Accordingly, her critique of antisemitism has a second moment that tends to reproduce the antisemitic externalisation. While *OT* combines the analysis of different elements of the totalitarian dynamic—'*antisemitism, decay of the national state, racism, expansion for expansion's sake, alliance between capital and mob*'[346]—they are interpreted only in terms of the social-political dichotomy. Opposing the totalitarian deterioration brought about by the social, Arendt suggests that it is historically and conceptually external to the political. While this move might help derive an emphatic concept of the political, it blocks the analysis of the political as involving its own obliteration, that is, of the possible production of the social by the political. The ontologisation of the difference between the social and the political creates a dichotomy of temporalities—empty linear time against the singular event of beginning—that obscures their conceptual and historical interdependence.

Property and the bifurcation of temporalities

In *The Human Condition*, this temporal dichotomy is cast in terms of immortality and eternity. The latter, which corresponds to empty linear time, 'can occur only outside the realm of human affairs and outside the plurality of men'.[347] Immortality, on the other hand, can be achieved by human beings realising their 'capacity for the immortal deed, by their ability to leave non-perishable traces behind'.[348] Contrary to eternity, immortality implies the possible overcoming of the linear timeline extending between birth and death by an action that exceeds the human life span and influences the plurality of men beyond the disappearance of its creator. In her

[345] Fine and Spencer, *Antisemitism and the Left*, 76; Staudenmaier, 'Arendt's Analysis', 172–173.
[346] 'Imperialism', in 'Outlines and Research Memoranda', quoted in Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt. A Reinterpretation of her Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 28.
[347] Arendt, *Condition*, 20.
[348] Arendt, *Condition*, 19.

critique of the modern prevalence of eternity over immortality in *The Human Condition*, Arendt maintains that the suppression of new beginnings brings about the 'worldlessness' of the modern human.[349] Arendt describes this process of world alienation that characterises modernity in terms of the 'strange pathos of novelty and of absolute originality' that have governed 'modern events' since the seventeenth century.[350] The beginning of modernity is an historical event that, itself absolutely original, paradoxically eclipses novelty as a capacity. The overcoming of spatial and temporal boundaries achieved by modern technological innovation destroys the sense of distance and its concrete meaning for human earthly life, 'alienating man from his immediate earthly surroundings'.[351] A related modern development consists in the 'world-alienating expropriations' of church property and the peasantry, which spells the end of the feudal and the rise of the capitalist system.[352] The coincidence of these two events of alienation, the first resulting from man's temporal and spatial domination over the earth, the second from economic domination of some over others, translates the modern eclipse of the capacity for novelty into the modern form of social organisation.

De-distancing and expropriation are linked by the notion of property (*Eigentum*),[353] which crystallises the equivocation between the ontological and the historical. As opposed to wealth and appropriation, property for Arendt is a precondition of the realisation of the capacity for novelty: 'expropriation [is] one of the modes in which world alienation takes place'.[354] Private property, as 'the most elementary political condition for man's worldliness',[355] is eliminated by accumulation and expansion. By considering property and 'immediate earthly surroundings' as constitutive of the human condition, Arendt turns them into ontological categories corresponding to man's capacity for novelty.[356] Expropriation and de-distancing are opposed to this

[349] Arendt, *Condition*, 118. This corresponds to Arendt's distinction, in *Condition*, between labour, work, and action. In modernity, the human being is reduced to an 'animal laborans' (118): 'Labor, caught in the cyclical movement of the body's life process, has neither a beginning nor an end' (144).
[350] Arendt, *Condition*, 248.
[351] Arendt, *Condition*, 251.
[352] Arendt, *Vita activa*, 247.
[353] Arendt, *Condition*, 253–257.
[354] Arendt, *Vita activa*, 248.
[355] Arendt, *Condition*, 253.
[356] Arendt emphasises that 'the human condition is not the same as human nature' (9–10). While not naturalising the human condition, her equivocations nonetheless ontologise it.

capacity as historically specific. Property is not considered as an historically specific category, but expropriation is. Historically, however, original accumulation does not only expropriate, it also produces 'private property' in the first place: the early capitalist expropriation of the commons through enclosure first established the modern private as opposed to communal property.[357] As in the case of beginning, Arendt's use of the notion of property is ambivalent: on the one hand, it articulates an ontological principle of the political as the capacity for novelty; in its historical manifestation in modernity, on the other, it is the result of an expropriation in the service of accumulation and expansion. How the discontinuity between these opposing uses is brought about historically and conceptually remains unanswered.

On Arendt's view, it is the fact that the European nation-state itself is founded on principles that reduce the plurality of men to a community bent on accumulation and expansion that produces antisemitism—as a spurious and ghost-like "explanation" of the modern temporal dynamic by means of which the 'déclassés' (*OT*, 87–88) are recruited into the mob, itself an exemplary modern pseudo-political manifestation—as a form of resistance that blindly reproduces the conditions of original accumulation. The ambivalent role the nation-state plays in her account can be gauged from her identification of a 'small group of true republicans, headed by Clemenceau' (*OT*, 108) that resisted the antisemitic campaign against Dreyfus in France. These 'true republicans' have somehow weathered the imperialist-totalitarian dynamic and express a genuinely political moment. To this republican element corresponds the people, of which the mob is but the 'caricature' (*OT*, 107). In imperialism, the nation-state transgresses the boundaries of its 'unique national substance […] not valid beyond its own people and the boundaries of its own territory' (*OT*, 127). The imperialist and, eventually, the totalitarian dynamic are an upshot of original accumulation, not of the nation-state. The social-political dichotomy operates on this distinction. As a result of her equivocation on the notions of beginning and property, the relation between the nation-state and original accumulation remains obscure.

[357] Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*, 877–895/*MEW23*, 744–761.

The political-social dichotomy opposes ancient Greek political principles to their modern hypostasis into absolute principles. While existing social and political formations are historicised, the conceptual apparatus itself eludes historicisation. The result of this selective historicisation, Jürgen Habermas argues in a 1966 review of *On Revolution*, is that Arendt 'reduces the revolutionary process to the classical cyclical framework in which different forms of government alternate', a conception that provides the background for her distinction between the American and the French Revolution: 'in order to convince us that these basic tenets are not only historically sanctified, but appropriate to human nature, [Arendt] invents the story of the two revolutions: a good and an evil revolution'.[358] While Arendt forcefully draws out the ambiguity of political opposition in modern Western societies, her approach is not reflexive in the sense that it does not subject its philosophical framework to a proper historicisation of opposition. In this, Arendt is closer to Heidegger's affirmation of proper place than to Schürmann's emphasis on the discordance of place. Arendt's approach points to the fact that modernity has complicated the place of resistance through a bifurcation of linear and cyclical temporalities, but asserts the ontological character of property against expropriation. Schürmann's reflexive achievement is the critique of this idea of property. Arendt's political ontology, according to which modernity is characterised by the eclipse of the political by the social, supplies a powerful narrative for resistance. However, as my analysis has sought to show, the attempt to squeeze antisemitism into this narrative is inconsistent.

5.2.2 Antisemitism as a fetish form of resistance and the abstract-concrete antinomy

Postone concurs with Arendt's nineteenth century genealogy of modern antisemitism, when the old social roles of some European Jews, as mediators between European nation-states and as financiers of governments, became 'historically superfluous'.[359] But he contests that this alone can adequately elucidate the Shoah. Instead, he seeks to explain how the rise of antisemitism and its

[358] Jürgen Habermas, 'The Story of the Two Revolutions', trans. Nicolas Schneider, *Philosophy Today*, 64(2), 2020, 494.
[359] Moishe Postone, 'The Holocaust and the Trajectory of the Twentieth Century', in *Catastrophe and Meaning. The Holocaust and the Twentieth Century*, edited by Moishe Postone and Eric L. Santner (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 86. Henceforth *HT*.

culmination in the planned extermination of European Jews is directly related to the capitalist logic of accumulation. Both Arendt and Postone cast the temporal dynamic that underpins the increasing intertwinement of state and capital in the late nineteenth century in terms of the combination of a ceaselessly recurring act of original accumulation with a progressive, universalising development. While, on Arendt's analysis, antisemitism remains somewhat extrinsic to this twofold temporal dynamic, Postone interprets it as an expression of the antinomic logic that propels modern capitalist societies.

Both Arendt and Postone address the political emancipation of European Jews in the early nineteenth century and the ensuing increase in visibility of Jewish differences (*OT*, 55). As we saw, on Arendt's view, antisemitism emerges from the eclipse of the political that is characteristic of modernity: once political equality (as 'equality of conditions' of 'otherwise unequal people') is generalised, it tends to be understood as an 'innate quality' according to which all individuals are alike (*OT*, 54). This transformation of political into social equality, Arendt argues, brings about makes possible the shift from an increased visibility of Jews to antisemitism. Postone, in turn, analyses the legal emancipation of Jews in terms of the distinction between state and civil society, which splits the individual into citizen and person. While the former is entirely abstract, the latter is concrete. Contrary to Arendt, Postone notes that, in the European nation-state, this separation was never fully realised because the 'nation was not only a political entity; it was also concrete, determined by a common language, history, traditions, and religion' (*HT*, 94). If Postone registers the political—as expressed by the state and the citizen—as abstract, the person as concrete, what is important here is not whether this inverts Arendt's understanding of the distinction between the political and the social, but whether the *relation* between the abstract and the concrete is thought as continuous or as discontinuous. On Arendt's view, the rupture or discontinuity resulting from the eclipse of the political by the social becomes the determining factor in the trajectory of modernity since the French Revolution. On Postone's approach, on the contrary, the poles of the dualism between state and society, between the abstract and the concrete, are not external but intrinsic to and continuous with one another. As Chapter 4 showed, Postone's crucial insight is that the concrete cannot simply be wrested from the

abstract. This re-orientation allows for an analysis of what is considered concrete *in its relation* to the abstract rather than as something that is *externally opposed to* it. If the political and the social are conceived not as mutually exclusive, but as interrelated, this has important consequences for the conceptualisation of antisemitism.

This is clear from Postone's and Arendt's takes on the question of Jewish resistance to Nazi policies. Postone, in his analysis of antisemitism and National Socialism, criticises the tendency, emerging in the New Left since the 1960s, to accuse Jews of a lack of resistance during the Nazi extermination campaign.[360] Arendt, for her part, notoriously suggests that the Jews' 'lack of decision' determined their 'social destiny' (*OT*, 67). Their lack of a 'political tradition or experience' (*OT*, 23) makes Jews involuntarily complicit in the modern obliteration of the political by the social, to which only a political decision could resist. Postone's account does not reject an analysis according to which a specific historical dynamic brings about modern antisemitism. However, it shifts the focus from Arendt's human conditions to an enquiry into the very production of these conditions by specific historical formations. The place of phenomenal regions is then not ontologically opposed to their encroaching on other regions but itself an effect of the relation between different phenomenal regions. Put bluntly, there is no outside that can serve as a conceptual measure for understanding modernity.

Postone agrees with Arendt that antisemitism is not a specifically German problem but points to a broader continuity in which the Holocaust must be seen as embedded. In a 1945 essay, Arendt argues that by 'identifying fascism with Germany's national character and history people are deluded into believing that the crushing of Germany is synonymous with the eradication of fascism'.[361] As she explains, the 'radical negation of tradition'[362] that made Nazism possible is not confined to individual nation-states but pertains to a much more fundamental historical development. This view allows her to formulate a powerful critique of what she takes to be deeply

[360] Moishe Postone, 'Anti-Semitism and National Socialism: Notes on the German Reaction to "Holocaust"', *New German Critique*, 19(1), 1980, 101. Henceforth *AN*.
[361] Hannah Arendt, 'Approaches to the "German Problem"', in *Essays in Understanding. 1930–1945*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 1994), 107.
[362] Arendt, 'Approaches', 107.

misguided policies (such as plans to deindustrialise Germany and to reassert the principle of national sovereignty) as well as praise of the resistance to Nazism as itself a project of 'European Resistance'[363] rather than as one in the service of any particular state. For Arendt resistance, under the condition of the totalitarian form of government, can only be realised on a transnational level. As Anson Rabinbach points out, the potential downside of Arendt's critique is its claim that Nazism is wholly external to the history of ideas: 'Arendt, who elsewhere makes ideology into one of the twin pillars of totalitarianism, disavowed any attempt to make German ideas into ideology'.[364] The continuity she asserts against those who would claim the end of fascism with the capitulation of Germany itself rests on asserting a discontinuity between the philosophical tradition, on the one hand, and fascism and totalitarianism, on the other. This separation between the philosophical and the political tradition historicises political formations but not the conceptual apparatus that pertains to them. Accordingly, Rabinbach concludes that Arendt's 'loyalty to what she called "the tradition" […] stood in the way of a more differentiated analysis of the role the philosophical tradition played (and plays) in the transformations and consolidations of forms of social organisation'.[365]

Postone's account of modern antisemitism reiterates Arendt's critique of a purported break occurring with the end of the Second World War:

> In emphasizing the discontinuity between the Nazi past and the present, liberals and conservatives have focused attention on the persecution and extermination of the Jews when referring to that past […] The emphasis on antisemitism has served to underline the supposed total character of the break between the Third Reich and the Federal Republic and to avoid a confrontation with the social and structural reality of National Socialism, a reality which did not completely vanish in 1945. (*AN*, 97–98)

The emphasis on a purported rupture or discontinuity with the event of the Holocaust has, on this reading, been 'instrumentalized and transformed into an ideology of legitimation for the present system' (*AN*, 98). Underlying this instrumentalisation is a continuity that Postone addresses through a 'socio-historical epistemology' (*AN*,

[363] Arendt, 'Approaches', 116.
[364] Anson Rabinbach, '"The Abyss That Opened Up Before Us": Thinking about Auschwitz and Modernity', in *Catastrophe and Meaning*, 58.
[365] Rabinbach, '"The Abyss"', 60.

108). If Arendt, in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, explains the genocide in terms of bureaucracy and the 'banality' of the irresponsible attitude of people like Eichmann, this cannot account for the existence of a programme of extermination in the first place. Postone's analysis sets out from the fact that the organisation of the extermination programme was an end in itself that diverted resources away from military needs and was therefore entirely non-functional in terms of accumulation and expansion.[366] To elucidate this puzzling non-functionality, Postone explores Nazi Germany's extermination campaign as a consequence of a specifically modern antisemitic 'form of thought' (*AN*, 106) that personifies the abstract processes emerging in the wake of nineteenth century capitalist industrialisation. On this view, it is the very dualistic epistemological framework opposing the concrete to the abstract that requires examination in order to understand modern antisemitism both in its culmination and in its persistence. As an amphibolous form of thought, the modern antisemitic world view is not specific to the Shoah but intrinsic to the rationality of modern Europe, which is why the reference to Kant's struggle with amphiboly is as important in the present context. The analysis of a specific historical event brings to light a form of thinking that, if itself historically specific, is not limited to those periods in which it manifests. The discontinuity of the Shoah as an event is underlined by a continuity in the form of thinking that propels modern society.

Among the main features of modern antisemitism is its scientific claim. Its systematic force is applied to the personification of what appears to be a superhuman dynamic of abstract forces: since Jewish people have been excluded from the concrete foundations of the European nation-state (language, history, traditions, religion), their apparent abstractness as mere citizens together with existing antisemitic stereotypes singles them out for this personification. Traditional antisemitic stereotypes are adapted to the changed situation of industrialisation. The crimes imputed to Jews are exacerbated by the specific quality of power ascribed to them,

[366] Postone refers to the 'significant proportion of vehicles [that] was used to transport Jews to the gas chambers, rather than for logistical support' of the German armies retreating under the pressure of the Red Army in the final years of the war (*AN*, 105). Arendt also observes this, see Hannah Arendt, '"What Remains? The Language Remains": A Conversation with Günter Gaus', trans. Joan Stambaugh, in *Essays in Understanding. 1930–1945*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 1994), 13–14.

corresponding to the force with which socioeconomic upheavals changed European societies in the nineteenth century. The personification transfers the qualities of these abstract developments onto Jews as their concrete bearers. In Postone's words, 'What characterizes the power imputed to Jews in modern antisemitism is that it is mysteriously intangible, abstract, and universal' (*HT*, 89). In this form of thought, Jews wield a power that 'stands behind phenomena, but is not identical with them. It is hidden – conspiratorial' (*HT*, 89). If modern antisemitism is defined by the way it links Jewish people to a *superior* capacity to steer and manipulate global developments, this has a twofold consequence: first, Jews, as 'the manifest abstract', are identified with capitalism, the implication of which is that the 'overcoming of capitalism and its negative social effects became associated with the "overcoming" of the Jews' (*HT*, 93). Second, paradoxically, this form of thought reproduces the dualism of the abstract and the concrete, generating a form of resistance to capitalism as opposition of the concrete to the abstract. For Postone, this 'fetishized anticapitalism' (*HT*, 92) reproduces '*the form of a quasi-natural antinomy in which the social and historical do not appear*' (*AN*, 109) and which is characteristic of capitalist social relations. How does Postone specify this '*quasi-natural antinomy*'?

Analysing antisemitism as an expression of those thought forms that correspond to what Marx examines in terms of fetishism (*AN*, 108),[367] Postone introduces a distinction between the essence and the appearance or manifest form of capitalism. While, as we saw already in Chapter 4, its essence is the antinomic yet interdependent dualism of the abstract and the concrete, its manifest form suggests that the concrete is external or prior to the abstract. To appearance corresponds the belief that '*Industrial capital [is] the linear descendent of "natural" artisanal labor, in opposition to "parasitic" finance capital*' (*AN*, 110). In capitalism, labour falls into two dualistic parts: as a socially productive activity, it is concrete and, as a quasi-objective form of social mediation, it is abstract. Labour thus mediates the basic social relations of capitalism. Abstract labour is that moment of labour which 'displaces and transforms the overt social relations that characterize other forms of social life' (*HT*, 90). According to Postone, they become objectified in the form of the commodity:

[367] Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*, 163–177/*MEW23*, 85–98. See *TLSD*, 61–63.

the latter is then not only an objectification of concrete labour, but also a form of objectified social relations. This duplication of the commodity corresponds to the bifurcation of the 'fundamental relations of capitalism' (*HT*, 90) into abstract value and concrete use-value, expressed in money and the commodity, respectively. Appearance disguises the fact that the antinomy between abstract and concrete is based on a unified logic that mediates both dimensions and that, accordingly, neither of the two moments is external or prior to the capitalist logic. In other words, the concrete is no more natural than the abstract, the opposition between artisanal labour and finance capital intrinsic to the dynamic logic of capital. As with transformation and reconstitution, both moments together constitute capitalism as a 'structuring historical category' (*HT*, 83). This category plays out in an antinomy that underlies modern antisemitism as well as those anti-capitalist forms of resistance that assert the concrete against the abstract. On this interpretation, the antinomic structure on the level of appearance is what realises capitalism's historically specific directional dynamic.

The quasi-natural antinomy on the level of appearance has two implications. First, it indicates how the logic of capital obscures its own historical specificity and presents its social forms as what might be called a human condition. This, second, makes possible the fetishist form of thought which, rather than rejecting the transhistorical claim of the abstract-concrete apparatus, assimilates the idea of a transhistorical, concrete essence in order to oppose the abstract as false and '"parasitic"' (*AN*, 110). Modern antisemitism, according to Postone, arises out of this broader epistemological framework as a 'particularly pernicious fetish form' (*HT*, 95) that produces the opposition between the concrete and the abstract as one between what is visible and what is hidden—that is, between phenomena and what stands (secretly) behind them. It enacts the same logic that determines the antinomies of capitalism without, however, submitting these antinomies to scrutiny. The discontinuity it detects between concrete life and abstract threat to life remains oblivious of the implication of both moments in the continuity of capitalist social relations. Antisemitism, then, is characterised by the identification of Jewish people with the abstract superior power behind phenomena as they present themselves in capitalism. Underlying this is a fallacy that involves the misrecognition of the

historical dynamic of capitalist social relations, that is, the continuous relation between abstract and concrete. Postone analyses this specific 'directional dynamic' as a 'form of unfreedom, […] of domination, of heteronomy' (*CA*, 43). Historically, this means that the form of abstract domination of capital that emerged with the rapid industrialisation of countries across Europe in the nineteenth century confronted people with a complex set of dynamic forces which exceeded their grasp and which were consequently attributed to the domination of 'International Jewry' (*AN*, 107). While it need not result in topological antisemitism as in Heidegger, talk of proper place is one symptom of this confusion that still underwrites many forms of resistance.

It is the emphasis on historical situatedness and the continuity of apparently discontinuous elements that distinguishes Postone's account of antisemitism as a form of resistance from that of Arendt. As grounding a fetishist 'form of "anti-capitalism"' (*AN*, 112), antisemitism cannot be separated from the philosophical tradition but points to the continuity underpinning the relation between epistemology and the forms of social relation constituting modern societies. Contrary to Postone's analysis, in which the relation between abstract and concrete constitutes the historical dynamic of modern capitalist social relations, Arendt's analysis relies on the opposition between empty homogeneous time and time as a function of the human 'capacity to begin something anew'. On this view, it is singular, concrete events that bring about change and possibly overcome the abstract homogeneity of modern time. Where Arendt suggests a deep discontinuity between the two temporal poles, Postone emphasises an antinomic continuity between them. Put differently, while Arendt conceives her political theory around the *situating* capacity of the plurality of men, Postone's critical theory draws attention to the *situated* character not only of political acting, but also of the form of thinking that lends 'the political' its directionality.

Rather than opposing the concrete time of natality to the abstract time of totalitarianism, Postone argues that the interplay between both brings about the historically specific temporal dynamic of capitalism. On the conceptual plane, antisemitism obliterates the tension between determining and reflective judgement

and hence realises what Kant calls amphiboly, that is, a rationalism that shapes the world according to its own parameters. If it is precisely this tension between reflective and determining judgement that is at stake in the antisemitic form of resistance, then the question arises how its temporal determination (as a hypostatisation of the fetish form of thinking emerging from the abstract-concrete antinomy) can be opposed by a reflection on this dualistic time that produces a temporality at odds with the historical dynamic of capitalist social relations.

5.2.3 Conclusion

This section has introduced two influential concepts of antisemitism, which relate the phenomenon to a wider social dynamic and inscribe it in the spatiotemporal structure of capitalist modernity. It presented antisemitism as a form of resistance specific to modern European politics. While Arendt argues that antisemitism results from the suppression of a specifically human temporality that comes with the obliteration of the political at the hands of the social, Postone locates the antisemitic mechanism within the very forms of thought that dominate modern capitalist society. If Arendt's account operates on an equivocation between ontological and empirical statements, Postone develops a perspective that is historically specific and aims to not posit an origin outside the dynamic of which antisemitism is a part. Rather, as we have seen in Chapter 4, Postone's approach makes it possible to relate what appears to be more concrete or original to the abstract in a way that does not imply a movement of decay or simple alienation. For some commentators, the continuity between form of thought and social organisation analysed by Postone implies too 'direct and inevitable [a] path from the commodity fetish to Auschwitz'.[368] On this view, what is cancelled out is the possibility to penetrate fetishism as a 'structural background […] on the basis of experience and reflection'.[369] This is true for Sohn-Rethel, who explicitly argues that from the origin of abstract thinking, 'straight lines lead directly to Auschwitz'.[370] Given that Postone's analysis goes against the grain of Sohn-Rethel's

[368] Heinrich, *Introduction*, 236, n. 61.
[369] Heinrich, *Introduction*, 185.
[370] Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Geistige und Körperliche Arbeit. Theoretische Schriften 1947–1990*, vol. 2, ed. Carl Freytag, Oliver Schlaudt, Françoise Willmann (Freiburg: ça ira, 2018), 978.

'reproach of abstraction'[371] by focusing on the dynamic between the concrete and the abstract, it is least questionable whether this critique can be applied here.

With Postone, we can formulate a critique of those 'forms of romanticism and revolt which, in terms of their self-understandings, are anti-bourgeois, but which in fact hypostatize the concrete and thereby remain bound within the antinomy of capitalist social relations' (*AN*, 109). Arendt's concept of antisemitism and her interpretation of modernity appears as a sophisticated variant of this approach. With regard to the place of resistance, the difference between Postone's and Arendt's analyses of antisemitism can be seen in terms of the respective status of incongruity and orientation. Arendt locates incongruity in natality and draws orientation from the ontological-empirical tension between property and expropriation. Thus orientated, she develops a critique of modernity as the loss of world, of which antisemitism is but a symptom. This grounds a standpoint of resistance that combines withdrawing into an ancient philosophical framework with interventions in current debates. Postone, and in this reflection on standpoint his approach runs parallel to Schürmann's reflection on place, by identifying incongruity (antinomy) as the driving force of the modern capitalist dynamic, makes it into the condition of struggle. Since this does away with clear references, however, it essentially complicates orientation. This is why, I would argue, Postone could not supply more satisfying answers to the question of agency and of the relation between revolution and other forms of resistance (revolt, rebellion, etc.). Thus, contrary to Sohn-Rethel's affirmation of living labour and Arendt's (and, one might add despite all differences, Heidegger's) affirmation of a proper sphere of politics, Postone's and Schürmann's approaches can provide an adequate framework for understanding the ambiguity and reflexivity of the place of resistance. To prepare the direct comparison between Schürmann's and Postone's accounts in 5.4, the next section looks at the place of judgement in resistance, investigating Horkheimer and Adorno's analysis of antisemitism and Arendt's conceptualisation of political action based on aesthetic judgement.

[371] Peter Osborne, 'The Reproach of Abstraction', *Radical Philosophy*, 127, 2004, 21–28.

5.3 Resistance and judgement

The instrumentalisation of antisemitism as a technique of government that is interesting here implies not so much a direct use of antisemitism by governments,[372] but its application aimed to disqualify social or political movements that resist their subsumption to the electoral process. To assert the existence of such strategies does not imply that antisemitism does *not* play a role in the antagonistic images entertained by those movements. What it does imply, however, is the assumption that those movements, in as far as they consist of different currents and might develop differently over time, cannot be reduced to the antisemitic mechanism. While they necessarily are ambiguous, their potentiality depends on their reflexivity, that is, on their understanding of the place in which resistance occurs. To elucidate this, I first turn to Horkheimer and Adorno's classical critique of antisemitism in terms of a generalised paranoia and their attempt to position reflective judgement as a way to counter antisemitism. To this I relate Arendt's conceptualisation of political action in terms of Kant's aesthetic judgement and confront it with Schürmann's critique. This prepares the ground for my argument, in the final section (5.4), that any adequate judgement on the place of resistance, its ambiguity and reflexivity, needs to be thought as a provisional judgement *in* and *on* time.

5.3.1 Resisting paranoia

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, antisemitism is, as 'false projection' (*DE*, 159), intrinsically linked to paranoia. Horkheimer and Adorno develop their notion of paranoia in the 'Elements of Anti-Semitism' based on the abyss, brought about by Kant's 'Copernican turn', between the world of objects and that of subjective perception.[373] As on Postone's interpretation, Horkheimer and Adorno argue that Jews are identified with that which nobody can but everybody wants to have: 'happiness without power, reward without work, a homeland without frontiers,

[372] This of course also exists, as in the case of the Hungarian government's discourse and legislation. See The *Guardian*, 'Hungary passes anti-immigrant "Stop Soros" laws', 20 June 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/20/hungary-passes-anti-immigrant-stop-soros-laws, accessed 28 June 2021.

[373] While Horkheimer and Adorno ground their critique of Kantian epistemology in psychoanalysis, I leave the psychoanalytic dimension aside to focus on the philosophical aspect, in particular in sections VI and VII of the 'Elements'. For a more exhaustive recent account of Horkheimer and Adorno's analysis in the 'Elements', see Lars Rensmann, *The Politics of Unreason. The Frankfurt School and the Origins of Modern Antisemitism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2017), 275–319.

religion without myth' (*DE*, 165). Contrary to Arendt's genealogy, this projection, as the replacement of 'categorial work' with 'stereotyped thinking' (*DE*, 166), is an eminently philosophical issue. The paranoia underlying antisemitism substitutes the passive passivity of the schema for the 'active passivity of cognition' (*DE*, 167). On Horkheimer and Adorno's reading, this has become the generalised condition of a social formation organised around an intrinsically antisemitic 'ticket mentality' (*DE*, 172) that liquidates reality.

In *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View*, Kant gives a definition of 'dementia' (*Wahnsinn*) as including 'Those who believe they are surrounded by enemies everywhere, who consider all glances, words, and otherwise indifferent actions of others as aimed against them personally and as traps set for them' (7:215).[374] This type of 'derangement' is 'methodical': it obeys the 'formal laws of thought', all the while mistaking its 'self-made representations' for perceptions, 'owing to the falsely inventive power of imagination' (7:215). On this definition, paranoia results from the failure to establish an adequate correspondence between subjective perception and object on the level of intuition, where a representation stemming from the power of imagination is taken for one from sense data. Paranoia is essentially a misjudgement in which determining and reflective moments come to be confused. This amphibolous use of the understanding indicates a lack of the orientation offered by transcendental place. For Horkheimer and Adorno, however, paranoia is not confined to an individual pathology but a product of the obliteration of the subjective element that constitutes all perception. In this sense, any judgement that fails to reflect remains prejudice.

Their analysis centres around the *CPR*'s Schematism chapter and concerns the relation between the power of imagination and the conditions of its form. Kant there states that time and space, as the pure forms of intuition, determine the schemata of pure concepts of understanding and of sensible concepts, respectively. As determinative of 'appearances and their mere form', the schematism 'is a hidden art in the depths of the human soul, whose true operations we can divine from nature

[374] Since *Wahnsinn* denotes any 'derangement and deprivation of healthy reason' (see Johann Christoph Adelung, *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart*, vol. 4 [Wien: Bauer, 1811], 1343–1344), paranoia can be considered as a subset of this general condition.

and lay unveiled before our eyes only with difficulty' (A141/B181). For Horkheimer and Adorno, this produces the problem that

> Wherever intellectual energies are intentionally concentrated on the world outside […], the subjective process is easily overlooked in the schematization, and the system is posited as the thing itself. Objectifying thought, like its pathological counterpart, has the arbitrariness of a subjective purpose extraneous to the matter itself and, in forgetting the matter, does to it in thought the violence which later will be done in practice. (*DE*, 159)

Paranoia emerges already in the act that constitutes the object. Accordingly, Kant's formal spatiotemporal conditions of determination are implicated in objectification and obscure the subjective process involved in their constitution. Taken at face value, the transcendental place afforded by the schematism renders the abyss between subject and object tolerable, at the price of a fixation that blocks reflection and conjures false projection. As such, it permeates even 'the healthy cognitive process as a moment of its unreflecting naivety, which tends toward violence' (*DE*, 159).

On this view, paranoia is not only an individual aberration of the power of imagination but a possibility constitutive of the relation between sensibility and understanding. Sensible perception is premised on its determination by cognitive power:

> Every percept unconsciously contains conceptual elements, just as every judgment contains unclarified phenomenalistic ones. […] [Perception] is a mediated immediacy, thought infused with the seductive force of sensuality. It blindly transfers subjective elements to the apparent givenness of the object. (*DE*, 159–160)

Analysing the amphiboly as resulting from the blind determination of the transcendental place of appearances in the field separating sensibility from understanding, Horkheimer and Adorno propose a reflexive displacement of Kant's critical system that applies the rigour of the system's stipulations to its own realisation. As the objectification that countervails transcendental reflection, it cannot be separated from paranoia but induces it. The 'exclusion of reflection' essential to antisemitism itself produces a delusional 'resistance, of which the paranoiac complains indiscriminately at every step' and which, in truth, 'is the result of the lack of [that] resistance' (*DE*, 156–157) which reflection could provide. The ambiguity of resistance here consists in this: failure to reflect—because reflection

would generate resistance to the self-constitution of the subject—generates a paranoid semblance of resistance to the constituted subject from the outside world.

Horkheimer and Adorno envisage resistance qua reflection in terms of a temporal shift that allows considering the potentially paranoid relations between inside and outside as a series of judgements in time. Through reflection, judgement transcends the paranoia of preceding judgements. Aware of its own paranoid dimension, reflective judgement overcomes paranoia through negation:

> The negating step beyond the individual judgment, which rescues its truth, is possible only in so far as it takes itself to be truth and in that sense is paranoid. True derangement lies only in the immovable, in thought's incapacity for the negation in which, unlike the fixed judgment, thought actually consists. (*DE*, 160–161)

To overcome the paranoid repetition produced by the stereotyped schema, Horkheimer and Adorno shift the spatiotemporal determination of representations: what allows breaking out of the temporality of repetition of 'fixed judgement' is the temporality of the sequence of 'self-reflective antithesis' (*DE*, 156). The circularity of the schematic judgement that is always thrown back onto itself can only be overcome by the linearity of reflection. The categorial work of reflection maintains the tension present in the transcendental reflection that determines the place of appearances.

Horkheimer and Adorno suggest two ways to resolve this tension. The first, characteristic of the dialectic of enlightenment, consists in a 'blind subsumption' (*DE*, 166–167) that eliminates the act of judgement from judging, which is analogous to the withdrawal of the perceiving agent from the process of perception. The elimination of the subjective element can be counteracted by a judgement that does justice to 'the perceived object [*Gegenstand*]' (*DE*, 167) by recuperating the 'capacity to arrest [*stillzulegen*] thought at a position [*Stelle*] designated by social need, to demarcate a field which is then investigated in the minutest detail without transcending it' (*DE*, 161). This method introduces a different temporal orientation, that of 'hesitation' and 'wasted time' (*DE*, 170). The second way to resolve the amphiboly is that of the 'dialectical process between subject and reality' in which liquidation is replaced by sublation and formal by determinate negation (*DE*, 170). Although Horkheimer and Adorno present this as a thing of the past, it points to a

possible end of antisemitism in which the 'unmediated contradiction' (*DE*, 170) of paranoia is replaced by the reconciliation qua temporal mediation. As I have argued in Chapter 4.2 with regard to Adorno's lectures on Kant, the focus on contradiction and on a linear temporality of reflection limits the perspective by dichotomising it as either unmediated contradiction or sublation. This perspective differs from Heßbrüggen-Walter's emphasis, in his analysis of the Amphiboly chapter, on provisional judgement (see 2.2.2) in that the latter implies reflexivity but not necessarily a dialectical process. Rather, the ambiguity of opposition and contradiction—the simultaneous indistinguishability and irreducibility of both—has to be confronted anew at every step. What results on Horkheimer and Adorno's view is that, with the path of negative dialectics blocked by late capitalism, the bifurcation between the 'enlightenment of the mind' and the 'real emancipation of humanity' (*DE*, 163) seems to become insurmountable.

In his 1951 essay *Cultural Criticism and Society*, Adorno explicitly associates paranoia with the spatiotemporal determination of the transcendental method and its 'Archimedean position above culture and the blindness of society':

> The choice of a standpoint outside the sway of existing society is as fictitious as only the construction of abstract utopias can be. […] Topological thinking, which knows of every phenomenon where it belongs, and of none, what it is, is secretly related to the paranoiac system of delusions which is cut off from experience of the object.[375]

As 'topological' Adorno characterises a thinking that severs off the dynamic relation between subject and object. This determination is spatiotemporal in that it fixes the place of appearances and imposes a specific schema of space and time on perception. For Adorno, the topological method is synonymous with paranoia in that it must deny its own contradiction: it has to presuppose a position to allocate one. To this transcendental method, Adorno prefers the immanent one 'as the more essentially dialectical' procedure.[376] The problem of the boundary and of the 'topological' method that violates its own stipulations is taken up again in *Negative Dialectics*, where Adorno presents an account of the 'antinomical structure of the Kantian

[375] Theodor W. Adorno, 'Cultural Criticism and Society', in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981), 31, 33.
[376] Adorno, 'Cultural Criticism and Society', 32.

system',[377] that is, of its aporetic situation with regard to both idealism and positivism. 'Kant's topological zeal' expresses itself in the 'Kantian map'[378] that draws a boundary which itself presupposes a position *external* to the supposedly exhaustive map. The cartographic metaphor refers to the passage, in the section preceding the Amphiboly chapter, in which Kant likens 'the land of pure understanding' to an island of which he has 'carefully inspected each part', has 'surveyed it, and determined the position [*Stelle*] for each thing in it' (A235/B294). What Kant presents in this passage is indeed a topo*graphic* image, a delineation of the fixed ground of 'positions' and oceanic abyss.

But is it also a topo*logical* one? Or might distinguishing between the topographic and the topological help turn the paranoia of philosophy into a philosophy of paranoia? The role of amphiboly is precisely to qualify the ability to unequivocally position 'each thing' in pure understanding. As I have argued in Chapter 2.2, Kant is far from unambiguous about this, to the extent that it seems plausible to contend that in Kant both topological and topographic strategies occur and interfere with one another. The fixing of positions that underlies the Kantian map is topological in the sense that it denotes the process of spatiotemporal determination that puts into place the phenomena around which the critical system coheres. In the Amphiboly chapter, on the other hand, Kant lays bare the ambiguity that supports the determination of place qua transcendental reflection. Determinate topography and determining topology are, while bound up with one another, distinguished by the active, momentary quality of the act of placing.

If the topographic image consists of a map of lines and determinations, the topological—as I have tried to draw it out in this thesis—is concerned with the strategies that bring about these determinations. On this view, the immanent dialectical method devised by Adorno and Horkheimer, in as far as it displaces the temporality of judgements from paranoid repetition to supersession in time, is itself a topological method.

[377] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 381.
[378] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 383.

5.3.2 Resisting common sense

Postone submits that the growing contradiction generated by the logic of capital between the superfluous and the necessary indicates the 'increasingly anachronistic' (*CA*, 50–51) character of the capitalist form of social organisation. This anachronism outlines 'a future beyond value – that is, a post-proletarian future' (*CA*, 53). To develop this future, Postone admits, 'a widespread imaginary' (*CA*, 53) is required. On his approach, however, imagination is curiously separated from judgement: 'The basic contradiction of capitalism, in its unfolding, allows for the judgment of the older form and the imagination of a newer one' (*TLSD*, 375). Against this one-sided identification of judgement with sentencing, Arendt's considerations of aesthetic judgement as the paradigm of political action can help substantiate the tentative character of Postone's view of transformation. It allows conceiving a type of judgement that brings together Postone's categorial critique of capitalism as a specific form of temporal domination with Horkheimer and Adorno's reconsideration of judgement as reflection. In distinction from the reproach of abstraction that lingers in their account, Postone's temporal standpoint attempts to resist the dualism between abstract and concrete time and to position the very incongruity between those antinomic dimensions as a point of departure for turning transformation against reconstitution. This implies a form of resistance that takes seriously the double bind in which it finds itself placed. In the present sub-section I argue, with reference to Schürmann's critique, that Arendt's theory of judgement, in order to be made productive for a theory of resistance, itself requires some revisions. The final section confronts Postone's critical theory of capitalism with Schürmann's principle of anarchy, aiming to outline a notion of judgement in and on time as a provisional place of resistance.

If there are elements for a theory of resistance in Arendt, they must be sought in the emphatic notion of aesthetic judgement as a paradigm for political action that she begins to develop in *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. As she notes in a letter to Karl Jaspers in 1957, her re-reading of the *Critique of Judgement* confirmed that it is there, rather than in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, that 'Kant's real political

philosophy is hidden'.[379] This interest in judging finds expression in her reporting on the Eichmann trial in 1961 and the ensuing controversy about her claims regarding the responsibility of Jewish institutions in facilitating the German extermination campaign. In a 1963 letter exchange, Gershom Scholem criticises her judgement of 'Jewish behavior under extreme conditions'—Arendt accuses in particular the Jewish Councils of a lack of resistance—as unbalanced, arguing that a fair judgement might not be possible at this point.[380] To this, Arendt retorts that 'I believe we will only get this past behind us if we begin to make judgments, forceful judgments in fact'.[381] When Scholem replies that 'the certainty of your judgments […] at decisive points to me seem to be entirely ungrounded',[382] he fails to see that, on Arendt's view, it is precisely this ungroundedness that makes judgement as important for political action.

Judging as political action is grounded not in cognitive or scientific propositions, 'which are not judgments, properly speaking', but in '*sensus communis*':[383] 'One judges always as a member of a community, guided by one's community sense, one's *sensus communis*. […] one is a member of a world community by the sheer fact of being human; this is one's "cosmopolitan existence"'.[384] What orientates judgement is, on this view, not a concept or a category, but the common sense that emanates from one's being among others, and the plurality of perspectives to which this 'sheer fact' gives rise. It is in this spontaneous and autonomous combination of perspectives that the capacity for novelty emerges as a genuine political capacity, since 'one can never compel anyone to agree with one's judgments […] one can only "woo" or "court" the agreement of everyone else. And in this persuasive activity one actually appeals to the "community sense"'.[385] As resulting from a deliberation among the

[379] Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers, *Correspondence: 1926–1969*, ed. Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner, trans. Robert and Rita Kimber (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1992), 318.
[380] Hannah Arendt and Gershom Scholem, *Correspondence*, ed. Marie Luise Knott, trans. Anthony David (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), 203. For the passages, see Arendt, *Eichmann*, 117–118. Arendt rejects this charge in the conversation with Gaus: 'Nowhere in my book did I reproach the Jewish people with nonresistance' ('What Remains?', 15).
[381] Arendt and Scholem, *Correspondence*, 207.
[382] Arendt and Scholem, *Correspondence*, 212.
[383] Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 72.
[384] Arendt, *Lectures*, 75.
[385] Arendt, *Lectures*, 72.

plurality of individuals that make up the world community, judgement is thereby directly linked to political action and detached from any cognitive truth claims,[386] which might constitute an alternative way to avoid paranoia. It has been noted that 'Arendt's insistence on judgment as a faculty that is autonomous is a regulative idea of sorts […] in the sense that for her it is necessary to demand this unconditional autonomy in times when judgment has been corrupted and deprived of its spontaneity'.[387] If, in totalitarianism, judgement becomes suppressed since the 'order of mankind'[388] that regulates human interaction is eclipsed in false equality, Arendt's standpoint in her exchange with Scholem can be seen under precisely this heading of unconditional autonomy.

As the 'Postscriptum to Thinking' suggests, the autonomous standpoint she assumes when passing 'forceful judgments' is that of the historian 'who by relating [the past] sits in judgment over it'.[389] But what in turn situates the historian? If *sensus communis* gives judgement direction, its transcendental place is that of autonomy and spontaneity. This short-circuits the whole problem of transcendental reflection as the determination of place by pretending that reflection can be had without determination. This is where Schürmann's reflexive account of place comes in. He analyses Arendt's attempt to oppose political action to cognition and practical reason in terms of a 'topology of specifically political phenomena' in which the 'phenomenal site' of political phenomena is 'akin to that of aesthetic objects'.[390] Schürmann claims that the way Arendt relates philosophy and politics fails to account for the entanglement of the former with the latter and that, by severing history from temporality, Arendt precludes the analysis of revolutionary or insurrectionary events in a way that could properly account for the role of philosophy within their occurrence.

Arendt's concept of the political is mapped on the three parts of the critical project: the political can be neither a matter of cognition, which reduces human affairs to an

[386] Arendt, *Lectures*, 13.
[387] Rodolphe Gasché, 'Is a Determinant Judgment Really a Judgment?', *Washington University Jurisprudence Review*, 6(1), 2013, 120.
[388] Arendt, *Eichmann*, 272.
[389] Arendt, *Lectures*, 5.
[390] Reiner Schürmann, 'Introduction. On Judging and Its Issue', in *Public Realm*, ed. Reiner Schürmann (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 1–24; 5.

object of management (cognition therefore belongs to the social), nor a matter of will, since this would result in 'perpetual *coups d'état*'.[391] Cognition corresponds to the empty linear time of modernity, the will to the ecstatic time of blind upheaval. Judgement, on the contrary, attends to the singular and meets the phenomena 'head-on'.[392] On Schürmann's view, this separation of judgement from the two other dimensions leads to a peculiarly thin concept of the political, in which the complex links between the different elements of Kant's critical system—epitomised by the topo-ethical implications of the amphiboly problem—are obscured by the emphasis on judgement as mere reflection. Arendt omits this conceptual ambivalence and replaces it with the ontological equivocation of the human condition that runs through her work. Her 'fascination with singulars' lets her ignore that even aesthetic judgement presupposes standards that 'are taken from experiences', and that, for Kant, 'history is the locus where we emancipate ourselves from our self-incurred tutelage'.[393] Casting it in terms of the '*hic et nunc*',[394] Arendt thus detemporalises the *sensus communis* and considers the power of judgement as grounded in an historically unspecific 'transcendental principle [of] reflection' (20:213).

This results in a bifurcation between the history of politics and the time of the mind. Schürmann argues that while Arendt, in *The Life of the Mind*, temporalises the faculties of the mind (thinking, willing, judging), she fails to reconcile the corresponding 'phenomenological discourse on time and her political discourse on history': but if Arendt's 'concept of history does not need her concept of time', the faculties of thinking are separated from 'constitutive acts of existence'.[395] This missing link expresses Arendt's adherence to an idea of philosophy as external to history, to which both Habermas' and Rabinbach's critique referred. In this, her approach fails to live up to its own point of departure: to overcome the metaphysical fallacies of the philosophical tradition. This unbridgeable gap between her political theory and her philosophy produces a schizophrenic view akin to that implied by the

[391] Schürmann, 'On Judging', 5.
[392] Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt, For Love of the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1982), 452–453. Quoted in Schürmann, 'On Judging and Its Issue', 4.
[393] Schürmann, 'On Judging and Its Issue', 6–7.
[394] Schürmann, 'On Judging and Its Issue', 7.
[395] Reiner Schürmann, 'The Time of the Mind and the History of Freedom', *Human Studies*, 3(3), 1980, 307.

double bind, in which the discontinuous, singular quality of political events is hypostasised and the continuity of the philosophical tradition blurred. Since it does not acknowledge the double bind as a philosophical and historical condition, Arendt's theory cannot provide the means with which her political insights could be interpreted philosophically. Instead, the 'ecstatic temporality' of new beginnings is subsumed to the 'axial' temporality on which her philosophy operates.[396] Political action remains separated from the faculties of the mind in that it realises the human capacity for novelty. At the same time, however, it draws its notion of temporality not from the history of revolutionary acts, but from the philosophical tradition. Arendt's topological move is therefore double: while asserting the political, modelled on aesthetic judgement, against will and truth, a second act of placing reproduces the philosophical determination of the political drawn from the philosophical tradition. The reflective moment of judgement is joined by a determinative one. Despite the ontological grounding it supplies, the determining element remains unaccounted for.

Ever since Kant's 'Copernican turn', the very philosophical framework of the twofold circular-linear temporality is at stake. When the 'ontological rift'[397] opened up by this turn is only held together by a notion of judgement that precariously reconciles the singular and the particular aspect of any appearance by binding reflection to determination, the topology of phenomena is essentially amphibolous and not, as Arendt has it, unequivocally singular. It is the twofold character of the act of transcendental reflection as determination of place that becomes obscured in what Arendt conceives as political action. By begging the question of the origin of history, Arendt must implicitly assume a determinate concept of history. Arendt's focus on reflective judgement obscures the determining judgement that comes with it and blocks a self-reflexive approach to resistance that does not proceed on the assertion of a formal community sense against heteronomous determination.

The strong emphasis on judgement and the almost anarchic gesture that comes with the reference to a world community rests on an anthropology in which 'Men =

[396] Schürmann, 'Time of the Mind', 307.
[397] Schürmann, 'On Judging and Its Issue', 1.

earthbound creatures, living in communities, endowed with common sense, *sensus communis*, a community sense; not autonomous, needing each other's company even for thinking'.[398] Her privileging of reflective judgement based on community sense over the determining propositions of cognition and science avoids the problem of the determination of place rather than overcoming it. Thus, Arendt does not address the difficulties involved in the claim that *sensus communis* guides judgement, such as the obvious problem that on this view community sense must remain outside of the remit of judgement and hence at least formally replicate that which Arendt wants to overcome, namely the implicit pre-determination of cognitive and scientific propositions. Arendt's claim that one judges 'as a member of *this community* and *not* as a member of a supersensible world'[399] chooses to ignore an important problem: that the world in which one judges is always both sensible and supersensible, both concrete and abstract.

Arendt's insistence on reflection illustrates the powerful revision carried out by Schürmann's interpretation of Heidegger. From Arendt's rethinking of political action, the incongruity that Heidegger had transposed from Kant into his exposition-location of proper place emerges largely unscathed and retains its status as a formal direction-order that orientates the distinctions between eternity and immortality, the social and the political, wordlessness and *sensus communis*. The problem with this is that it does not reflect on the ambiguity of this set-up and instead pushes the concrete over and against the abstract. But if, based on the analysis in Chapter 4, common sense itself has to be considered as always already permeated by abstraction, then this risks reproducing a double bind. Schürmann, on the other hand, while not sufficiently addressing the problem of abstraction, makes this double bind (and the attendant principle of anarchy) into the place in which any political action must emerge. For the present investigation into the place of resistance, this is significant in that it is only through a self-reflexive attitude towards the ambiguity that results from its implication in 'that which exists' that resistance can retain its capacity for reorientation and uphold an asymmetric opposition. Arendt's approach is important in that it highlights the role judgement can play in this but fails to provide

[398] Arendt, *Lectures*, 27.
[399] Arendt, *Lectures*, 67.

the necessary reflexivity. I will now attempt to synthesise Schürmann's and Postone's analyses so as to further complicate the notion of judgement relevant for resistance based on the problem of amphiboly (the contamination of reflection and determination) rather than on merely reflective judgement.

5.4 Self-abolition and the principle of anarchy: Resistance as judgement in and on time

The question that all this comes down to is, perhaps, how resistance can both retain a distance in the sense demanded by Kant and take seriously Marx's observation that it is always already caught up in the melee. Put differently, and more daunting still: how can resistance at the same time remain in opposition and indifferent to 'all that exists'? While this is hardly a new question, the approach and response that this thesis has tried to outline, based on a confrontation of phenomenology and critical theory, supplies a novel perspective on the problem. In an attempt to synthesise the main insights of the investigation, I suggest conceiving the place of resistance in terms of a provisional judgement in and on time. This turns the 'blind spot' connecting Schürmann's and Postone's thinking into a prism of resistance.

As we have seen, Postone hits on a paradox similar to that of Schürmann. It results from the radicalisation of the aporias intrinsic to modern European philosophy that Kant draws out forcefully in his analyses of amphiboly, abstraction, and opposition. While in Schürmann it is expressed in the notions of *principle of anarchy* and *double bind*, in Postone the paradoxical relation between theory and emancipation is encapsulated in the requirement of the *self-abolition* of the proletariat as a condition for the overcoming of the directional dynamic of the capitalist social formation. Both these notions remain within the ambit of amphiboly: between ambiguity and reflexivity, reflection and determination, the transcendental and the empirical, opposition and contradiction. In light of my analysis of the amphiboly, both Schürmann and Postone can be seen to develop their critiques of modernity in terms of the spatiotemporal determination of the place from which opposition can be conceived. If from distinct points of departure, both challenge an approach to politics that prioritises constitution over critique and deconstruction. In this, a common concern can be discerned, namely that of the peculiar continuity that underpins

political thinking in terms of constitution and that seems to render resistance a notion deprived of any emancipatory force beyond a mere improvement of conditions within the 'transcendental topic' in which it manifests. I have argued that it is this transcendental problematic that we encounter in both approaches as the attempt to take seriously the problem evoked by amphiboly.

Neither Postone nor Schürmann fleshed out a concept of resistance but focused on the analysis of existing standpoints of critique and deconstruction, trying to provide correctives to those. Notwithstanding, their respective analyses of the relation between images of space and time and their significance for the understanding of modern society can, if brought together, contribute to a critique of existing notions of resistance. Moreover, with the help of their approaches, resistance can be conceived as a combination of a displacing critical analysis of the antinomic temporal structure of the capitalist social formation and a positioning in relation to this structure as recovering a *temporality* that essentially contravenes the directional dynamic of that society.

Schürmann outlines a topology of broken hegemonies that pivots on an ultimate double bind as stretching out between natality and mortality. The irreducible discordance that links the heteronomous temporalities of natality and mortality does not allow for a simple concept of time but constitutes a place in which universalising and singularising impulses enter into conflictual convergence. The double thrust of universalisation and singularisation confronts us with a double bind that ties legislating and transgressive forces together. This condition determines Schürmann's interpretation of the principles that have governed Western societies over the past millennia as from the start undermined by their own eventual destitution and peremption. Heidegger's philosophy, on this view, is symptomatic of the disintegration of the modern hegemony: it both hypostasises and deconstructs its principle. Postone, in turn, identifies a dualism at the centre of the historically specific dynamic of capitalism. The antinomic dynamic between historical time and abstract time constitutes modern society as caught between transformation and reconstitution. It is from this double thrust that results, on Postone's view, the specifically capitalist form of domination that subjects the human being to a

temporality that obliterates disposable time as mere superfluous time in relation to the expenditure of living labour. The social form of value-creating labour, and the corresponding duality of exchange value and use value, is the principle around which modern society coheres and from which its specific domination results. From this, Postone concludes that labour as a metaphysical form of social practice that turns relations between humans into relations between things has to be abolished, and with it any notion of the proletariat as the automatic bearer of emancipatory potential. Accordingly, both Schürmann and Postone ground their considerations of temporality in a twofold temporal dynamic that, in Schürmann, is analysed as a human condition and, in Postone, pertains to an historically specific social formation. Importantly, both emphasise that neither side of this dynamic can be harnessed to think its overcoming. The difficulty that results from this concerns, in both cases, the conception of a standpoint from which the transcendental place of the modern form of social organisation—the metaphysics of labour—can be opposed.

Postone's critique of the labour standpoint has been accused of surrendering the question of the emancipatory subject. The present thesis has argued that, while Postone's approach might end with a rather vague prospect for an emancipatory agent, the limitations of attempts to defend the priority of the working class as the counter-subject to the logic of capital are becoming increasingly obvious in the contemporary conjuncture of crises. The important problem raised by Postone is that any such attempt runs the risk of reproducing labour of some sort as an ontological principle around which society coheres. By attempting to think the liberation of transformation from reconstitution, Postone's approach rejects the idea that, in a non-capitalist society, labour would remain 'socially constitutive'—an idea that, contrary to Marx, reduces social praxis to labour (*TLSD*, 221):

> if a movement, concerned with workers, were to point beyond capitalism, it would both have to defend workers' interests and have to participate in their transformation – for example, by calling into question the given structure of labor, not identifying people any longer only in terms of that structure, and participating in rethinking those interests. (*TLSD*, 371–372)

It is this 'gap between what is and what could be' that orientates the standpoint of critique, the task of which is 'the determinate negation of the existing order' (*TLSD*,

360–361). The rejection of the idea of the working class as counter-subject and the focus on its self-abolition can be seen as the first step in this destruction of the socially constitutive role of labour rather than as the abandonment of emancipatory struggle. It is, however, true that Postone does not provide much to work with when it comes to this displacement itself, in particular leaving obscure the relation between 'determinate negation' and judgement, and on this count can contribute only in limited ways to conceiving an emphatic notion of resistance.

To elucidate the relation between negation and judgement it is helpful to confront Postone's with Schürmann's approach. As his critique of Arendt's use of aesthetic judgement showed, Schürmann emphasises the historical and experiential determination of reflective judgement, which he thinks through the double bind of natality and mortality. On this account, the gap between what is and what could be needs to be thought in terms of the place constituted by this double bind. If Arendt's approach rests on singularity, Schürmann, on the contrary, considers the tension between the singular and its subsumption to a universal as constitutive of both the individual human life and the hegemonies that have governed Western societies since ancient Greek philosophy started devising *archai*. By bringing natality and mortality together and by applying them to the analysis of historically specific forms of social organisation, Schürmann goes beyond both Arendt and Heidegger. As I have argued in Chapter 3, the anarchistic subject renders the discordant place in which we find ourselves the standpoint of counter-amphibolous action. The notion of resistance that could emerge from this is one that retains a capacity for reorientation and thus avoids being captured by 'that which exists'.

Schürmann's twofold analysis, the two sides of which are the principle of anarchy and the double bind, provide what Postone's dichotomy of antagonism and contradiction lacks. While, on Postone's reading, antagonism and resistance constitute the bad, ambiguous, and static perspective on struggle, contradiction involves the historical dynamic of capitalism and therefore points beyond it. This, however, conflicts with his insistence that domination in capitalism has no determinate locus, which requires at least a moment of what Horkheimer and Adorno call the 'capacity to arrest'. The difficulty involved here is, of course, to think this capacity in a way that does not fall

back into a dualistic opposition of concrete and abstract time. Rather than consider antagonism as corresponding to the concrete-abstract antinomy, my analysis of Schürmann's work and the amphiboly problem outlines a perspective that relates the static moment of antagonism to the dynamic moment of contradiction. Contrary to Postone's playing off of antagonism against contradiction, Schürmann's notion of differend retains opposition (*Widerstreit*) in the Kantian sense as an issue for judgement. The possibility of a mutual abolition of appearances provides what Schürmann refers to as the 'minimum of creativity' (*E*, 2)—what Postone calls a 'widespread imaginary' (*CA*, 53)—that is needed to articulate the contradictory antagonism produced by the capitalist form of social relation. While Postone criticises the 'disjunction of concept and reality' (*TLSD*, 115) in a way that blocks a deeper understanding of this disjunction, the turn to amphiboly offers a more productive perspective on the problem. It is this disjunction that Kant tried to overcome by casting transcendental reflection as determination of place. However, Kant's transcendental place fixes time and space in a way that, as Postone shows, allows ordering experience in terms of labour as an ontological principle. Postone's notion of the self-abolition of the proletariat and Schürmann's notions of destitution and peremption respond to this historically specific ordering of experience.

Any resistance that aims to turn its own implication in the antagonism against this antagonism has to set out from this idea of self-abolition and peremption. Only then does resistance respond to the transcendental place of the logic of capital. The double sense of self-abolition (as sublation and cancellation) is underpinned by the emphasis on the differend as discordant with contradiction. This is what Schürmann, in his early work, tries to capture as wandering identity (in the book on Meister Eckhart) and as moving subjectivity (in the lectures on Marx), and which, later on, he calls anarchistic subject. Its omnilateral activity is what can render the incongruity discovered by Kant properly incongruous. In basing itself on omnilateral activity, the resistance of the anarchistic subject creates temporary unities that do not coagulate into positions which contribute to the reproduction of the status quo.

Postone, despite rejecting the concept of resistance for its ambiguity, centres his approach on this differend when he contends that 'Marx understands dead labor—

the structure constituted by alienated labor—to be not only the locus of domination in capitalism but also the locus of possible emancipation' (*TLSD*, 256). The shift from the assertion of living labour (still present in Sohn-Rethel as well as in Horkheimer and Adorno) to dead labour as the standpoint of emancipation implies a displacement of the critique of abstraction: critique does not aim to overcome abstraction but 'to historicize the production of ontology and the concept of time'[400] of modern society. With the differend between natality and mortality, Schürmann provides the principle of anarchy that can *orientate* this historicisation. Both Postone and Schürmann move away from the assertion of life as the ground of a resistant subjectivity because both suspect, if from different philosophical points of departure, that the form of life commonly implied when life is invoked is too entangled with the capitalist form of social organisation. Far from venturing into biopolitics, both try to think what life beyond domination might be by conceiving a standpoint based on the conceptual problem of mortality and death. Postone's breaking-up of the dualism between abstract and concrete time and Schürmann's development of the *dissecutio temporum* as discordant time offer a perspective on the place of resistance as opposition to Kant's transcendental topic that does not, as in Heidegger, ground temporality in a specific, territorial notion of space.

Resistance might then be conceived as a *provisional judgement in and on time* that struggles with amphiboly: it is a judgement *in* time in that it situates itself historically against the transcendental place of capitalist society. It is a judgement *on* time in that it derives from this act of self-positioning the parameters for its self-abolition in terms of the principles that govern this modern form of social organisation. Self-abolition destitutes the metaphysics of labour by provisionally judging on the experiential framework supplied by socially realised amphiboly. In as far as its opposition is grounded in a discordant place, it is not dialectical in the sense envisioned by Horkheimer and Adorno. Peremption obliterates labour as socially constitutive and, in that sense, contributes to a 're-mediation'[401] of the temporalities that constitute modern society.

[400] Viren Murthy, 'Introduction. Reconfiguring Historical Time', in Moishe Postone, *History and Heteronomy* (Tokyo: The University of Tokyo Center for Philosophy, 2009), 20.
[401] Murthy, 'Introduction', 23.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explored the place of resistance in order to elucidate the ambiguity and reflexivity of social and political opposition under the modern capitalist form of social organisation. To this end, I have developed a notion of place as orientating the framework of opposition presupposed by resistance, and thereby as determining both the standpoint of resistance and its concept of that to which it resists. I conceive place in this context as containing and representing an incongruity that grounds the orientation of resistance and that, accordingly, determines its specific ambiguity and reflexivity.

With reference to Kant's analysis of amphiboly, I have argued that place provides a conceptual viewpoint that allows a critical perspective on representations of space and time and the way they produce reality. In Kant's Amphiboly chapter, the establishment of space and time as pure forms of intuition is precariously grounded in the notion of transcendental place, which itself cannot be accounted for systematically but rests on an extra-philosophical experience that orientates reflection. I have argued that the orientation in thinking offered by the binding together of reflection and determination in Kant's theoretical philosophy can elucidate the difficulties we face when conceptualising resistance. I have sought to express this in terms of the double aspect of the place of resistance as both placing and placed. I have traced the philosophical and political implications of this performative quality of place through Heidegger's appropriation of Kant's argumentative strategy in his notion of exposition-location and Schürmann's expropriation of Heidegger's thinking in the ideas of the principle of anarchy and the double bind. I have argued that, while Heidegger politicises place, Schürmann effects a displacement that historicises place and renders it—as a discordant, conflictual spatiotemporal site—the point at which thinking and acting coincide.

With reference to Schürmann's notion of an anarchistic subject, which responds to this discordant place, I have suggested that a possible limitation of Schürmann's approach is the failure to adequately address the role of abstraction in conceiving resistance. To counter philosophical intuitions that would conceive resistance by playing off place as concrete against space and time as abstract, I have developed a

critical perspective on the place of resistance setting out from Kant's and Marx's notions of abstraction. Any understanding of resistance that cannot account for principles of thinking as not only precepts for but also outcomes of social and political practices must remain external to the specific historical reality in which it intervenes and which situates it. If incongruity remains blind to abstraction, the orientation of resistance leads to an inadequate grasp of 'all that exists'.

To flesh out this problem more fully, I have used the vantage point provided by my analysis of the amphiboly problem to prepare an understanding of different historical forms of resistance. As Sohn-Rethel's critique of Kant indicates, the notion of real abstraction can help develop a perspective on the relation between resistant practices and labour as an integrative principle of modern capitalist society. Crucially, this analysis allows identifying abstractions that pervade the opposition between resistance and 'all that exists' and draws out how resistance, in a continued conceptual struggle, both shares and exceeds the conceptual framework of that which it opposes. On the one hand, those progressivist approaches that conceive resistant or revolutionary subjectivity in terms of class or humanity risk reproducing the forms of thinking they try to resist. On the other hand, reactionary forms of resistance hypostasise as more originary what is supposedly outside of or prior to a specific social formation. I have tried to show that both these strategies result from inadequate reflection on their own standpoint or place and the corresponding failure to properly grasp what it is that they resist to.

Contrary to both these strategies, I have suggested that conceiving resistance in terms of the ambiguity and reflexivity of its place can contribute to shaping a standpoint that remains open to reorientation. To bring this out, I have confronted Horkheimer and Adorno's notion of judgement with Postone's analysis of the double temporal dynamic of modern capitalist society. To this, I have contrasted a version of Arendt's notion of judgement, which I have revised based on Schürmann's critique of her rigid separation between the philosophical tradition and political action. In conclusion, I have suggested that both Schürmann's and Postone's theories powerfully draw out the ambiguous character of resistance and opposition in contemporary capitalist societies, contending that a twofold notion of judgement—

a provisional judgement in and on time—provides a starting point for conceiving a place of resistance that reckons with the spatial and temporal domination that keeps the present going.

Rather than surrendering the concept to reaction and refusal, my analysis has sought to think resistance as an intrinsic moment to any formation of opposition. This does not mean to downplay its ambiguity but to take seriously the conflictual moments involved in this formation. The concept of resistance both allows for the destruction of the deceitful publicity of forms of resistance that perpetuate domination, such as antisemitism, and points to a temporal form of resistance that fractures the historical dynamic of modern capitalist society.

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