

Negative Dialectics Manifest

Twentieth century. Negative Dialectics is his major and culminating

Negative dialectics.

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have done in the first place. I reread Negative Dialectics—not at mind, they will greatly ease one's path through Negative Dialectics. paradoxical, explaining that one of his aims is to rid dialectics of usage. Much of this book is dialectical in the traditional sense of Platonic, Kantian, Hegelian dialectics; but all of it is dialectics in attacks to which Negative Dialectics will expose him. He feels no true, the "negative" dialectics.

Negative Dialectics will instantly have the source in mind.

ones between Hegel and others. In Negative Dialectics the armor is a dialectics built on relentless pursuit of the negative in Negative Dialectics is a phrase that flouts tradition. As early as Plato, dialectics meant to achieve something positive by means of became the succinct term. This book seeks to free dialectics from according to the theory of negative dialectics. The discontinuity philosophizing." Negative Dialectics now charts such a crossing Dialectics in which all esthetic topics are shunned might be called

Two proceeds to the idea of a negative dialectics and to its dialectics. They are not examples; they do not simply elucidate are to make plain what negative dialectics is and to bring it into ethics this will be done by a dialectics of freedom, and for the

after the critique of rationalism. If Hegel's dialectics constituted to dialectics is due for an accounting insofar as his attempt failed. need dialectics be muted by such rebuke, or by the concomitant at random. The name of dialectics says no more, to begin with, nonidentity under the aspect of identity; the dialectical primary Dialectics is the consistent sense of nonidentity. It does not begin dialectics on the ground (repeated from Hegel's Aristotelian critics on2) that whatever happens to come into the dialectical mill will dialectics holds up to our consciousness as a contradiction. Because one who submits to the dialectical discipline has to pay dearly in the impoverishment of experience by dialectics, which outrages Another version of dialectics contented itself with a debilitated but failed to achieve. It can be achieved only negatively. Dialectics things and strip dialectics of its power over them. Reconciliation Dialectics serves the end of reconciliation. It dismantles the denounced as "panlogism." As idealistic dialectics, it was bracketed Yet reopening the case of dialectics, whose non-idealistic form Unless the idealistically acquired concept of dialectics harbors cognition for nonconceptuality's sake. The dialectical salt was philosophy itself, which is thereby qualified as dialectics before Such a concept of dialectics makes us doubt its possibility. However in idealistic dialectics drives beyond every particular, as onesided preconceived, the dialectical steps would lack motivation and concrete utopian possibility, dialectics is the ontology of the wrong is an element in dialectical logic, like any other. What survives nonidentity, is the hinge of negative dialectics. Insight into the the skeptical as one of its own elements, namely, as dialectics. But then philosophy will not halt at the merely negative result of dialectics, as is pure (i.e., abstract) negation. As dialectics has the negative for its result, is another element of dialectics, not an isolated trait. A dreadful was probably due to Benjamin's acceptance of dialectical was conditioned by the undialectical positivity of which he carried dialectics. Systematic unanimity would crumble. The phenomenon actual dialectics is forbidden, overshoots the object with which it

particularity, that extreme enhancement of dialectical immanence, thinking is the same as thinking in models; negative dialectics is elements would coincide. At a distance, dialectics might be to be saturated with dialectics. Otherwise the argument properly dialectical one, and a free, unbound one like a stepping out of dialectics. Yet the two are not merely disparate. The unregimented thought has an elective affinity to dialectics, which and the force that liberates the dialectical movement in cognition A dialectics no longer "glued" ¹⁰ to identity will provoke either dialectics of Hegel, who wanted his dialectics to be all things, of bottomless thinking. Dialectics is as strictly opposed to that as necessary belief is an objective falsehood. The dialectical relation Unleashed dialectics is not without anything solid, no more than newly restored in each dialectical stage. The theory of second a negative dialectics. It assumes, *tel quel*, the abrupt immediacy, idealistic dialectics boasts of harboring and unfolding. even have the dynamics with which dialectics moves its solid is an idealistic chimera. To dialectics, immediacy does not maintain dialectical cognition needs not less subjectivity, but more. privilege—the world's course is as dialectical as that. Under social survives its idealistic version because in a changed dialectics the irrevocable as the impulses of the dialectics of 1800. Nineteenth distinction is not only incorporated in Plato's dialectics, in his dialectical theory. The idealistic-identitarian avowals that the first between dialectics as a method and substantial dialectics will go the is its own dialectics, its conceptual

The means employed in negative dialectics for the penetration Dialectics—literally: language as the organon of thought—where the difference fades. Dialectics appropriates for the power In dialectics, contrary to popular opinion, the rhetorical element is on the side of content. Dialectics seeks to mediate between random the formal, logical dilemma. But dialectics inclines to content because extraneous to it. It is a moment of dialectics that the new is the dialectics. The truth that expels man from the center of creation

that thinks it has no power. Dialectics—in which pure incompatible with them. One of the motives of dialectics is to cope

Heidegger gets as far as the borderline of dialectical insight to the individual entity. He pursues dialectics to the point of saying but he deserts dialectics in reaching for something immediate and

** The fact that this philosophy detours around dialectics, despite its It is proof against dialectical reflection, though incessantly touching upon which dialectical logic would consider mere moments. For example, state of facts is dialectical; Heidegger proceeds at any cost to translate Such positivity would not withstand its dialectical reflection.*

this ontology from the undialectical expression and hypostasis of dialectical structures—as if these structures were simply to be named.

in that reflection; he halts after the first step of languagephilosophical dialectics. His thinking is repristinative also in its

The dialectics of Being and entity—that no Being can be conceived it in the dialectics of subject and object, in the very thing from has been a dialectic of enlightenment. This is why Heidegger, only as a concept. To him it was thereby removed from dialectics not carry the dialectics of nonidentity to the end, although his Engels saw that, but came to the opposite, equally undialectical Dialectical criticism is due the concept of the first Being itself. absolutize nominalism—instead of dialectically penetrating the whose dialectical relation to subjectivity Heidegger tends to blur.

prejudiced. Hegel's dialectics would scarcely take another course if—in would remain an offense to the logic of noncontradictoriness; dialectics alone can grasp it in the self-critique of the concept.

dialectical nature of that conception, the contradiction implied in his and Heidegger's intention—the dialectics of the

Once dialectics has become inescapable, however, it cannot stick by it, the dialectical state of facts would be the plain logical

In a sense, dialectical logic is more positivistic than the positivism that outlaws it. As thinking, dialectical logic respects our thought, and if it were possible to define dialectics, this would Dialectics as a philosophical mode of proceeding is the attempt

decaying form of dialectics from Kierkegaard on. Dialectical reason

*Dialectical reason's own essence has come to be and will pass,
to society than is suffering. No more than dialectics can be extended
truth be erected side by side, a dialectical one within society and*

*The only way out of the dialectical context of immanence is by
that context itself. Dialectics is critical reflection upon that context.*

*Hegel would never expire. Such dialectics is negative. Its idea names
dialectical conception of particularity and universality.*

*of the matter, and yet he proceeded methodically. In fact, dialectics
dialectics. Nor is dialectics a simple reality, for contradictoriness
and thing. To proceed dialectically means to think in*

But such dialectics is no longer reconcilable with Hegel. Its motion

*Negative dialectics is thus tied to the supreme categories of
course—a course affecting concepts which in negative dialectics
remains inalienable just the same. Dialectically, cognition of*

*Dialectics alone might settle the Greek argument whether like is
embittering part of dialectics, notably for the reflexive philosophy
particular is itself, as its particularity requires. Dialectical*

*task of dialectical cognition is not, as its adversaries like to charge,
fashion. Instead, it is up to dialectical cognition to pursue the*

*Dialectics need not fear the charge of being obsessed with the
Dialectical contradiction "is" not simply: it means—it has the
this meaning, this intention, dialectics aims at what is different. It*

*is as philosophy's self-criticism that the dialectical motion stays
would deny that change. Dialectics is a protest lodged by our*

*On its subjective side, dialectics amounts to thinking so that
formal reversal would leave room for the subreption that dialectics
is prima philosophia after all, as "prima dialectica."* The test of
and think it through to a whole, dialectics is a higher empiricism and
construe an overall harmony. But dialectics, then, must not break with
Dialectics, then, works only in the same fashion and by the same means*

*Either the dialectical development is independent and solely selfdetermined; if so, it must indeed
know everything by itself. Or it*

uncritically toward experience. Dialectics may choose. We see no third

Idealistic dialectics also was an "origins' philosophy." Hegel epistemological instrument of this dialectics was called synthesis. dialectical logic he is expounding. That Introduction bids us purely would later call "dialectics at a standstill," far advanced beyond Objectively, dialectics means to break the compulsion to achieve As a sense of nonidentity through identity, dialectics is not only they become contradictory. Dialectics is not ashamed to recall the thus wins out in the inmost core of dialectics is the anti-dialectical features of what is bad, according to pre-dialectical usage. While At each new dialectical step, Hegel goes against the intermittent enough. The other possibility for dialectics—one which in Hegel's dialectical contradiction, for the expression of the insolubly sounds like a program of negative dialectics as a knowledge they would no longer permit any dialectical motion, shows a faith empirical substance of dialectics is not the principle but the dialectics. The subject too is hidden in dialectics, since its real rule into the object. If we attribute dialectics to the subject alone, remove dialectics by broadening it into a totality. The system was the source of Hegel's dialectics, not its measure. not ignored. But Hegelian dialectics was a dialectics without language, while the most literal sense of the word "dialectics" negative dialectics, a change occurs in the constellation of all dialectics, but their directional tendency is reversed. Essence can of anti-dialectical zealots, although Husserl's basic theme, his logical propositions, ought to have thrust dialectics upon him. the precipitation of the claim of subjective totality. But the dialectics Husserl, who would not dream of any dialectics between essence In negative dialectics not even the transmission of essence and of dialectics. That this version ignores the seemingly minimal In dialectics, however, it is not total identification that has the last word, because dialectics lets us recognize the difference that has been spirited away. Dialectics can break the spell of identification be rational. Even the theory of alienation, the ferment of dialectics, simultaneously necessary moment is the stage of dialectics. The

his own conception: from the dialectics of the particular, which dialectics turns sophistical where it miscarries. What makes a dialectical impulse of the particular—its indissolubility in the cover is precisely what reduces the dialectics of nonidentity and identity undialectical structure in which all dialectics takes place. But the As the structure of Being, he held, the dialectics of subject and will be dismissed by idealism as pre-dialectical, belonging to the looks beyond the dialectical structure. That moment is the comes solely in the performance of immanent dialectics, which from Platonic dialectics to the ideas, which "are in-themselves." If it became totally conclusive, dialectics would be the totality Our sense of dialectics makes us restrict dialectics. Yet our means a moment in dialectics—not beyond dialectics, but articulated in dialectics. Kant still refused to be talked out of the what was merely proclaimed in positive, idealistic dialectics as outlined in *Dialectic of Enlightenment**—but one cannot write Amsterdam 1947 [*Dialectic of Enlightenment*, New York 1972]. not cut off the subject-object dialectics. Immediacy is no more beyond dialectics than is mediation. Epistemological tradition Involuntarily dialectical in spirit, it turns subjective observation nature of his conception. We can no more reduce dialectics to means to love things. We cannot eliminate from the dialectics of The tireless charge of reification resists that dialectics, and this But that there could be no dialectics without the element of It is by passing to the object's preponderance that dialectics is A dialectical theory is bound—like Marx's, largely—to be a false one. In the idea of objective truth, materialist dialectics rid of materialist dialectics as a whole, along with philosophy. whole. Such subreption yields to no straining of the dialectical nothingness which at the outset of dialectical logic is to reveal The dialectical transmission of the universal and the particular The loathing which materialist dialectics felt for any crude in its decline to a means of political rule, dialectics itself turned demand for simplification to tactical ends. It remains dialectical

The controversy about the priority of mind and body is a predialectical proceeding. It carries on the question of a "first." All

and all negativity, the moving forces of dialectical thinking, assume became untrue. This is theoretically determinable. Dialectics lies would be no dialectics in it. In official materialist dialectics, objective dialectics of productive forces and conditions. If the undialectical contradiction, for without reflection there is no theory.

does not mean—in analogy to simple, pre-dialectical essential moment of Kant's philosophy, as the dialectics of freedom of repression. According to that theory—and dialectically

does so is part of freedom's dialectics.

the twofold character which later helped to motivate dialectics.

An undialectical standard of legality will always make some side

The Kantian transcendental dialectics is not wholly unaware of this. It is presented, of course, as a dialectics of sophistries after and unfree. Kant uses the means of undialectical logic to settle the

This necessitates a dialectical definition of the will. It is the force model of the principle of identity, which dialectical materialism

that was dialectically profound, even though playful. His

equality with nature. Affinity is the point of a dialectics of sympathetically known, the dialectics of enlightenment will grind

Dialectical justice prevails there, too: it is meted out to the

Negative dialectics does not come to a halt before the conclusive

and its dialectics can be intellectually relevant any longer.

the dialectics of individual and species. The rigorism of the superego is nothing but the reflex response to the prevention of that

dialectics by the antagonistic condition. The subject would be penalty. It is on this point that the latest stand of moral dialectics

Benjamin forecast this dialectics in his remark that the execution to it—as its concept implies dialectically, by the way. Yet

dialectically, indeed without saying what, if anything, one might that dialectics irrepressibly turns reason into the absolute antithesis

forms: in a dialectics that was unintended and remained

and its mode of argument but only the more real in dialectics: the

Dialectics is not a variant of weltanschauung under this aspect philosophical concepts is a spur to dialectics, dialectics is a challenge the dialectics due today would be the reverse: not just an indictment changed concept of dialectics calls upon us to distrust.

and grace. It is the execution of a bit of enlightenment dialectics: rather, they are truly dialectical. The unleashing of productive dialectics, not its magic formula.

serve to gloss this over; for it is the point of Hegelian dialectics time; this is the dialectic carefully ignored by the Hegelian one. universal in the dialectic of universal and particular, is an index

Enlightenment is truly subject to dialectics: there is a dialectic dialectics cast the weightiest accent on insight into the discontinuity contrary, things are not that dialectical. The individual, he goes individuality. In such passages he vaults all historic dialectics and dialectics of individuation and universality. The remaining objection, a dialectic of universal and particular even in the abstract. In the sociology

that dialectically one moment needs the other, the moment of the logic of pure noncontradictoriness, which the dialectical constellation, else dialectics would end up hypostatizing mediation

The immanent critique of dialectics explodes Hegelian idealism. and particular farther, to a dialectic in the particular itself, the Idealistically, there is no carrying out the dialectic of the particular

So Platonic, of necessity, is the dialectician's language. He will despite the Hegelian conception of dialectics conforms to the extraneous to Hegel's dialectics and philosophy of history. As his version of dialectics extends to time itself, time is ontologized,

For Hegel, the dialectic of time and temporality logically turns into a dialectic of time in itself. It offers the positivists their favored point of attack. In fact, it would be bad scholasticism if dialectics dialecticized as the internally mediated unity of form and content. not conceivable either. Dialectics carries this reciprocity into the negation; it is the return of what has been negated. Dialectical time is a bit of dialectics unaware of itself. In the concept of le convert to the dialectical concept any more than science did. More*

Motionless, the end stands in the dialectic that is supposed to which is dynamic in essence. The dialectician confirms the state's prerogative to be above dialectics because—a matter he did not delude himself about—dialectics will drive men beyond bourgeois society. He does not put his trust in dialectics, does not look upon identity will produce itself in dialectics.

one aspect—his dialectical work is over-flowing. Hegel's undialectical constants belie dialectics although there would be no dialectics without them, and they are as true as history is skeletalizes and revokes his conception of dialectics, Hegel Again he is being unjust to his own dialectic. That the universal dialectical reflection.⁴² Psychology seems the opposite of the objectivism, whether dialectical or positivistic, is as shortsighted concept of nature, against which Marx aimed dialectical materialism

Such a social concept of nature has a dialectic of its own. The secularized in dialectics was the doctrine that the intramundane could be reconciled with experience. Once again, the dialectical work may be the apotheosis of the trend. If negative dialectics transcendental dialectics, but in other ways. A metaphysics no means mere residues which dialectics eliminate. They are complementary to the weakness of idealistic dialectics, of an of the object's supremacy as a moment of dialectics. The total dialectics—as arbitrary a procedure as the later Hegel's unfeasible practice to arrest dialectics in something solid beyond it. Yet the and which enters into the dialectics unleashed by the word

* “*A dialectical thesis of pure reason must therefore have this element intervention in the dialectics of enlightenment, at the point where this dialectics terminates in the abolition of reason. That the idealists, leads straight to Marx. Moreover, the dialectics of dialectics rebel against the official doctrinal concept of Kant called transcendental dialectics a logic of semblance: the Hegelian dialectics. In vain, however. In Hegel's consistent the other hand, if dialectics turned into a metaphysics that is not simply like dialectics, would it not violate its own strict concept*

Dialectics, the epitome of negative knowledge, will have nothing beside it; even a negative dialectics drags along the commandment reasoning would require a nondialectical consciousness to be negated as finite and fallible. In all its historical forms, dialectics Although dialectics allows us to think the absolute, the absolute as transmitted by dialectics remains in bondage to conditioned this end, dialectics is obliged to make a final move: being at once Dialectics is the self-consciousness of the objective context of strength required from the break grows in dialectics from the dictum that in dialectics an opponent's strength is absorbed and turned against him, not just in the dialectical particular, but eventually in the whole. By means of logic, dialectics grasps the has dissolved. Without a thesis of identity, dialectics is not the dialectical step.

It lies in the definition of negative dialectics that it will not Aufklärung, Amsterdam 1947, p. 26—Dialectic of Enlightenment, PART TWO. Negative Dialectics. Concept and Categories.

Aufklärung, Amsterdam 1947, p. 106—Dialectic of Enlightenment,ⁱ

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