

Professor Zygmunt Bauman

EACH TIME UNIQUE...

LSE, Tuesday 8 November 2005

Death is unlike any other event in the world. 'Death' stands for the unique, for the irrevocable, for the irreversible, for something that can't be repeated – for the 'point of no return', for the 'once for all'. 'Death' gives meaning to all those images and phrases; all other applications of such images and phrases are but metaphors. 'Death' is the only meeting point between human experience and 'eternity' – condition known to the mortals solely in its denial.

We know of eternity when it is blatantly, cruelly and unconditionally refused to us. Deaths are rehearsals of that refusal. Sharing with his readers the three shocks he experienced in 1990 having learned in quick succession of Althusser's, Benoist's and Loreau's departures, Jaques Derrida observed that each death is the end of *a world*, and each time the end of a *unique* world, a world that can never again reappear or be resurrected<sup>1</sup>. Death gives its brute, direct, non-metaphorical meaning to the 'point of no return': each death is *a loss* of a world – a loss *forever*, an *irreparable* loss. It is the *absence* of that world that will never end – being, from now on, *eternal*. It is through the shock of death, and the gaping absence that follows it, that the meaning of eternity, of uniqueness, of individuality in its twin Ricoeurian facets of *la memêté* and *l'ipséité*, are revealed to us, the mortals.

That said, let's reflect and note that death, in spite (or because of) coming closer than anything else to the idea of universality, is less than anything else amenable to generalization. Death is, after all, the experiential and epistemological foundation of the idea of *uniqueness*. Each death is the end of a world, and each world is unique – yet the gravity of the losses may and does vary; the traces which the lost worlds leave on the eternity of their absence are not the same. Their 'objective' equality

(if we knew what 'objectivity' meant in their case) could be postulated, but wouldn't be subjectively experienced. Those worlds cannot but differ in their importance, and the losses of each must differ in their gravity – since us, the bereaved, are as unique as the worlds of which we have been bereft, and the abyss left by each disappearing world is fathomed by the degree to which our own individual worlds have been intertwined with the world now lost and so impoverished presently by its departure.

Ralph Miliband's departure was a particularly cruel and painful shock to those among us who rejected the panglossian belief that everything that could be done to make the planet more hospitable to human and *humane* life has been already done, and who refused to accept that no further improvement was conceivable. His departure deprived us forever of a world which was Ralph's own, unique and inimitable, but since it was a world of undying hope it became an indispensable part and a source of perpetual enrichment of our own worlds.

Ralph entered my own world when in the company of Wright C. Mills he visited Warsaw in 1957, shortly after the 'Polish October', to explore at point blank and to savour one of those rare moments when critical thought and positive practice seemed to beckon to each other and the redemption and emancipation seemed to come within the reach of human powers. He never left my world since, nor would be allowed to leave it – if I had my way. A year later, at the time of my postdoctoral fellowship at the LSE, he guided me into the dialectic intricacies of dreams and realities in the past and present of British Labour. Our worlds did not overlap: they spoke to each other though, quarrelled more often than spoke in unison, but desperately sought reconciliation. Ralph search for the point from which to start; I could not forget the finishing line. Ralph knew where he wished to go; I knew where a momentary lapse of vigilance may bring one who is going there. I guess I needed Ralph more than he needed me: to keep going.

But enough of the role Ralph played in my personal world with its short life expectation, a world bound to go with me to my own grave. More to the point is what Ralph represented to those 'us' to whom I referred a moment ago – to that 'we'

which (unlike the many 'I's who compose it) *defies* mortality. Alerted by Derrida's warning that using the disembodied name of the deceased is always an act of treason regardless of the use to which it may be put, I'll take nevertheless the risk of treading on a treacherous ground and suggest that Ralph's work and legacy stood for the momentous challenge confronted by the intellectuals of his time (such thinking people as went on believing that the ultimate purpose of thought is to make the world better than they found it) and for the ways and means by which they tried to respond to that challenge.

The challenge in question was the slow yet relentless decomposition of the 'historical agent', hoped by the intellectuals, mindful of the 'organic' standards set by Antonio Gramsci's code of conduct and painfully aware of the limited practical effects of pure thought, to usher, and/or be ushered into a land in which the leap towards liberty, equality and fraternity adumbrated by the thinkers of Enlightenment but later diverted into the capitalist or the communists cul-de-sacs, would finally reach its socialist destination.

For at least a century, the prime intellectual choice for the role of 'historical agent' of emancipation was a collective composed of the assortment of skills and trades summarily categorized as 'working class'. Forced to sell their labouring, creative capacity at a fraudulent price and victims of the refusal of human dignity which went together with such sale, working class was expected to unite in a revolution aimed to put end to their suffering; since the causes of their misery had systemic roots, that class of sufferers was however, according to Karl Marx's unforgettable sentence, the sole class of people that could not emancipate itself without emancipating the whole of human society and could not end its misery without putting an end to all human misery. Once ascribed such potency, working class offered a natural and secure haven to hope; so much more secure than the far-away cities where the writers of early modern utopias placed the enlightened despots legislating happiness upon their unwitting or unwilling subjects.

Whether the ascription was or was not warranted, was from the start a moot question. It could be argued that contrary to Marx's belief the restlessness on the early capitalist factory floors was prompted more by the loss of security than by the love of freedom, and that once security was regained or rebuilt on another foundation the unrest would inevitably have boiled away, stopping well short of its allegedly revolutionary destination. It could be argued as well that the recycling of dispossessed craftsmen and farm tenants or farm hands into an apparently homogenic working class was more power-assisted than self-made, and that economic power could decompose it as much as it was once instrumental in its composition. These and other caveats were however easier to make with a benefit of hindsight – as the evidence accumulated that far from being a preliminary step to the revolutionary overhaul of the power system, the collective bargaining and the deployment of 'nuisance capacity' in the defense of wage differentials were set on targets placed well inside the limits of the capital-labour relations; and that through the regular, nearly routine correction of intolerable, and hence potentially explosive deformities they served as a homeostatic, stabilizing, 'equilibrium restoring' device, rather than disrupting, let alone undermining, the capitalist order.

After a long period of initial unrest associated with the melting of pre-modern economic structures came the period of 'relative stability', underpinned by the emergent, apparently solid structures of industrial society. The politically administered instruments of 'recommodification of capital and labour' became constant feature of the capitalist world – with an active role of the state in 'pipe priming', promoting and insuring both the intensive and the extensive expansion of capitalist economy on one side, and the reconditioning and rehabilitation of labour through the multiple provisions of the social state on the other. However harsh the hardships suffered at the receiving end of the capitalist expansion, and however disconcerting the fear of periodic bouts of economic depression, the frames fit to accommodate life-long expectations and equipped with the tested and trustworthy repair tools appeared firmly set, allowing for

long-term planning of individual lives, confidence in the future and rising feeling of security. Capital and labour, locked in an apparently unbreakable mutual dependency, increasingly convinced of the permanence of their bond and certain to 'meet again and again' in the times to come, sought and found mutually beneficial and promising or at least tolerable modes of cohabitation, punctuated by repetitive tug-of-wars but also by successful renegotiations of the rules of cooperation.

Frustrated and impatient with the ways things seemed to be going, Lenin complained that if left to their own devices workers would have developed only the 'trade-union mentality' and been far too narrow-minded to perform their historic mission. What irritated Lenin, the founder of the 'short cut' and 'professional revolutionaries' strategy, was also spotted, but viewed with mildly optimistic equanimity, by his contemporary, Eduard Bernstein – the founder (with not inconsiderable help from the Fabians) of the 'revisionist' programme of accommodation and pursuit of socialist values and intentions inside the political and economic framework of the essentially capitalist society: of the steady yet gradual 'amelioration' rather than a revolutionary, one-off overhaul of the status quo. As the developments kept confirming Lenin's somber and Bernstein's sanguine anticipations, György Lukacs explained the evident reluctance of history to follow Marx's original prognosis with a custom-coined (though harking back to Plato's shadows on cave walls) concept of 'false consciousness' that the fraudulent 'totality' of capitalism insidiously promotes and won't fail to promote unless counteracted by the efforts of the intellectuals striving to see through the deceitful appearances into the inexorable truth of historical laws and after the pattern of Platonian sages sharing their discoveries with the deluded cave-dwellers.

When combined with Antonio Gramsci's concept of 'organic intellectuals', Lukacs's reinterpretation of the vagaries of post-Marx history elevated the historical role and so the ethical/political responsibility of intellectuals to new heights. But by the same token, a Pandora box of reciprocal accusations, imputations of guilt and

suspensions of treachery was thrown open and the era of the charges of *trahisons des clercs*, un-civil wars, mutual defamations, witch-hunting and character-killings started. If labour movement failed to behave in line with the prognosis, and particularly if it shied away from the revolutionary overturn of the capitalist power, no one but the intellectuals betraying their duty or botching its performance were to blame. Paradoxically, the adoption of such unflattering view of themselves was for the acknowledged, aspiring or failed intellectuals a temptation difficult to resist, since it converted even the most spectacular displays of their theoretical weaknesses and practical impotence into powerful arguments reasserting their key historical role. I remember listening, shortly after coming to Britain, to a Ph.D. student, who after perusing a few of Sidney Webb's writings hurried to proclaim, to an unqualified approval of the tightly packed seminar audience, that the causes of the socialist revolution's late arrival in Britain were all there.

There were writings on the wall that if read carefully would cast doubt on the intellectualist conceit, but recently discovered thoughts of Lukacs or Gramsci did not exactly help to decode the messages they conveyed. How to link, say, student unrest to the winter of discontent? Was one witnessing rear battles waged by troops in retreat, or the avant-guard units of advancing armies? Were they distant echoes and belated rehearsals of old wars, or prodromal signs and augury of new wars to come? Symptoms of an end, or of beginning? And if a beginning, than ushering into what? News from abroad only added to the bewilderment and confusion, as the announcements of the 'farewell to proletariat' drifted from behind the Channel together with Althusser's reminders that time has finally matured for revolutionary action. E.P. Thomson's enchanting vision of the working class's immaculate conception met with a frontal assault by the New Left Review editors for its theoretical poverty (meaning, probably, the conspicuous absence of intellectuals in Thompson's edifying story).

It is tempting, but would be dishonest and misleading, to claim retrospectively one's advance wisdom, just like it would be unjust and not at all

illuminating to blame those locked inside fast running affairs for their confusion. The impending end of the 'glorious thirty' (the three after-war decades have been so named only after the conditions for which they stood had ended, and only when it became obvious that they had) threw the familiar world out joint and made useless the tested tools of that world's scrutiny and description. The time of hunches and guesses had arrived; orthodoxies dugged in ever deeper trenches while heresies, growing thicker on the ground, gained in courage and impertinence although moving nowhere near consensus.

The explicitly pointed or glossed over source of intellectual disarray was, let me repeat, the apparent vanishing of historical agent, at first experienced on the intellectual left as a growing separation and a breakdown of communication with 'the movement'. As the theoretically impeccable postulates and prognoses were one by one refuted by events, intellectual circles (with but few exceptions – some resisting the trend consistently, like Tony Benn or indeed Ralph Miliband, and other sporadically, on the occasions of 'secondary picketing' or ad-hoc groups formed in spiritual support of striking miners), turned ever more zealously and conspicuously to the self-referential interests and pursuits, as if in obedience to Michel Foucault's announcement of the advent of the 'specific intellectuals' era.

Whether the concept of specific or specialized intellectual can be anything else than an oxymoron was of course then as it is now a mooted question. But whether or not the application of the term 'intellectual' is legitimate in the case of university lecturers visiting the public arena solely on the occasion of successive disagreement on salaries, or the artists protesting about successive cuts in the subsidies for theatre or film making, one thing is certain: to that new, institutionally confined, variety of political stand-taking and power struggle the figure of 'historical agent' is completely irrelevant and can be dropped from the agenda with no guilty conscience and above all without the bitter aftertaste of a loss.

Must however the hopes and the jobs of emancipation follow the vanishing 'historical agent', like Captain Ahab beckoned his sailors to do, into abyss? I would like to argue that the work of Theodore W. Adorno can be re-read as one long and thorough attempt to confront that question and to justify an emphatic 'no' as the answer. After all, long before the British intellectuals' passions for historical agent started to dull, Adorno warned his older friend Walter Benjamin against what he called 'Brechtian motifs': the hope that the 'actual workers' would save arts from the loss of their aura or be saved by the 'immediacy of combined aesthetic effect' of revolutionary art.<sup>ii</sup> The 'actual workers', he insisted, 'in fact enjoy no advantage over their bourgeois counterpart' in this respect – they 'bear all the marks of mutilation of the typical bourgeois character'. And then came the parting shot: beware of 'making our necessity' (that is the necessity of the intellectuals who 'need the proletariat for the revolution') 'into a virtue of the proletariat as we are constantly tempted to do'.

At the same time, Adorno insisted that though the prospects of human emancipation focused on the idea of a different, and better society, appear now less encouraging than those which seemed so evident to Marx, neither the charges raised by Marx against the world unforgivably inimical to humanity have lost any of their topicality, nor a competent jury has offered a clinching proof of unreality of the original emancipating ambitions; and so there is no sufficient, let alone necessary, reason to take emancipation off the agenda. If anything, the contrary is the case: the noxious persistence of social ills is one more and admittedly powerful reason to try yet harder. Adorno's admonition is as topical today as it was when first written down: 'The undiminished presence of suffering, fear and menace necessitates that the thought that cannot be realized should not be discarded'. Now as then, '(P)hilosophy must come to know, without any mitigation, why the world – which could be paradise here and now – can become hell itself tomorrow'. The difference between 'now' and 'then' ought to be sought elsewhere than in the task of emancipation losing its urgency or the dream of emancipation having been found idle.



What Adorno hastened however to add was the following: if to Marx the world seemed prepared to turn into a paradise ‘there and then’ and appeared to be ready for an instantaneous u-turn, and if it looked therefore that ‘the possibility of changing the world “from top to bottom” was immediately present’<sup>iii</sup> – this is no longer, if it ever was, a case (‘only stubbornness can still maintain the thesis as Marx formulated it’). It is the possibility of a *shortcut* to a world better fit for human habitation that has been presently lost from view.

One could also say that between this world here and now and that other, ‘emancipated’ world, hospitable to humanity and ‘user friendly’, there are no visible bridges left. Neither are there crowds eager to stampede the whole length of the bridge in case such a bridge was designed, nor the vehicles waiting to take the willing to the other side and deliver them safely to the destination. No one can be sure how a usable bridge could be designed and where the bridgehead could be located along the shore to facilitate smooth and expedient traffic. Possibilities, one would conclude, are *not* immediately present.

‘The world wants to be deceived’ – Adorno’s blunt verdict sounds as a commentary to Lion Feuchtwanger’s doleful story of Odysseus and the swines, or for that matter Erich Fromm’s ‘escape from freedom’, or to the archetype of them all – Plato’s melancholy speculation on the tragic fate of philosophers trying to share with the cavemen the good tidings brought from the sunlit world.

People are not only, as the saying goes, falling for the swindle... (T)hey desire a deception... (T)hey sense that their lives would be completely intolerable as soon as they no longer clung to satisfactions which are none at all.<sup>iv</sup>

Adorno quotes with unreserved approval Sigmund Freud’s essay on group psychology: the group

wishes to be governed by unrestricted force: it has extreme passion for authority: in Le Bon’s phrase, it has a thirst for obedience. The primal father is the group ideal, which governs the ego in the place of the ego ideal.<sup>v</sup>

In Adorno's words, 'spirit' and 'concrete entity' have parted their ways and the spirit can cling to realities only at its own, and so ultimately of the reality itself, peril.

'Only a thinking that has no mental sanctuary, no illusion of an inner realm, and that acknowledged its lack of function and power can perhaps catch a glimpse of an order of the possible and the nonexistent, where human beings and things would be in their rightful place.'<sup>vi</sup> 'Philosophical thinking begins as soon as it ceases to content itself with cognitions that are predictable and from which nothing more emerges than what had been placed there beforehand.'<sup>vii</sup> 'Thinking is not the intellectual reproduction of what already exists anyway. As long as it doesn't break off, thinking has a secure hold on possibility. Its insatiable aspect, its aversion to being quickly and easily satisfied, refuses the foolish wisdom of resignation. The utopian moment in thinking is stronger the less it...objectifies itself into a utopia and hence sabotages its realization. Open thinking points beyond itself.'<sup>viii</sup>

Philosophy, Adorno insists, means the 'determination to hang on to intellectual and real freedom', and only on that condition it may, as it should, remain 'immune to the suggestion of the status quo.'<sup>ix</sup>

'Theory', Adorno insists<sup>x</sup>, 'speaks for what is not narrow-minded'. Practice, and *practicality* in particular, is more often than not an excuse or a self-deception of 'scoundrels', like that 'idiotic parliamentarian in Doré's caricature', who is proud of not looking beyond the immediate tasks. Adorno denies practice the esteem that tends to be lavishly poured upon it by the spokesmen for the 'positive' science and such professionals of academic philosophy (indeed, an overwhelming majority of them) as surrender to their terror.

If 'emancipation', the supreme objective of social critique, aims at 'the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves'<sup>xi</sup> – it is up against the awesome resistance of 'culture industry'; but also against the pressure of that multitude whose cravings that industry promises to gratify – and deceitfully or not, does.

So where does all that leave the intellectuals, the guardians of unfulfilled hopes and promises of the past, the critics of the present guilty of forgetting them and abandoning them, unfulfilled?

By a common opinion, inaugurated it seems by Jürgen Habermas and contested by a few only of the Adorno scholars and only relatively recently, Adorno's answer to these and similar questions is best conveyed by the image of the 'message in a bottle'. Whoever wrote the message and put it in, sealed the bottle and threw it into the sea, had no idea when (if ever) and which (if any) sailor will spot the bottle and fish it out; and whether that sailor, once he uncorks the bottle and pulls out the piece of paper inside, would be able and willing to read the text, understand the message, accept its content and put it to the kind of use which the author intended. The entire equation consists of unknown variables only, and there is no way the author of the 'message in a bottle' could resolve it. He could, at best, repeat after Marx: *Dixi et salvavi animam meam*: the author has fulfilled his mission and done all that was in his power to save the message from extinction. The hopes and promises he knew, but most of his contemporaries never learned or preferred to forget, won't pass the point of no return on their way to oblivion; they will be given at least a chance of another lease of life. They would not die together with the author – at least would not have to die, as they die must in case the thinker himself, instead of using a hermetically sealed bottle, would give himself up to the mercy of waves.

As Adorno warns, and repeatedly, 'no thought is immune against communication, and to utter it in the wrong place and in wrong agreement is enough to undermine its truth.'<sup>xii</sup> And so, when it comes to communicating with the actors, with would-be actors, with abortive actors and those reluctant to join the action in his own time – '(f)or the intellectual, inviolable isolation is now the only way of showing some measure of solidarity' for those 'down and out'. Such self-inflicted seclusion is not in Adorno view an act of treachery – neither a sign of withdrawal, nor a gesture of condescension (or both: 'condescension, and thinking oneself no better, are the same' as he himself points out). Keeping distance, paradoxically, is an act of engagement – in the only form in which engagement on the side of unfulfilled or betrayed hopes may sensibly take: 'The detached observer is as much entangled as the active participant; the

only advantage of the former is insight into his entanglement, and the infinitesimal freedom that lies in knowledge as such'.<sup>xiii</sup>

The 'message in the bottle' allegory implies two presumptions: that there was a message fit to be written down and worthy of the trouble needed to set the bottle afloat; and that once it is found and read (at the time which cannot be defined in advance) the message will be still worthy of the founder's effort to unpack it and study, absorb and adopt. In some cases, like Adorno's, entrusting the message to the unknown reader of an undefined future may be preferred to consorting with the contemporaries who are deemed un-ready or un-willing to listen, let alone to grasp and retain, what they heard. In such cases, sending the message into unmapped space and time rests on the hope that its potency will outlive the present-day neglect and survive the (transient) conditions that caused the negligence. 'Message in the bottle' expedient makes sense if (and only if) someone who resorts to it trusts values to be eternal, believes truths to be universal, and suspects that the worries that currently trigger the search for truth and the rallying in defence of values will persist. Message in the bottle is a testimony to the *transience of frustration* and the *duration of hope*, to the *indestructibility of possibilities* and the *frailty of adversities* that bar them from implementation. In its Adorno's rendition, critical theory is such a testimony – and this warrants the metaphor of the message in a bottle.

In the Post-Script to his last magnum opus, *La Misère du Monde*,<sup>xiv</sup> Bourdieu pointed out that the numbers of personalities of the political stage who can comprehend and articulate the expectations and demands of their electors are fast shrinking; the political space is inward-focused and bent on closing upon itself. It needs to be thrown open again, and that can be only done through bringing the (often inchoate and inarticulate) 'private' troubles and cravings into direct relevance to the political process (and, consequently, vice versa). This is easier said than done, though, as the public discourse is inundated with Émile Durkheim's 'prénotions' – rarely spelled out overtly and even less frequently scrutinised presumptions, uncritically deployed

whenever subjective experience is raised to the level of public discourse and whenever private troubles are categorised, processed in the public discourse and re-represented as public issues. To do its service to human experience, sociology needs to begin with clearing the site. Critical assessment of tacit or vociferous *prénotions* must proceed together with an effort to make visible and audible the aspects of experience that normally stay beyond the individual horizons, or beneath the threshold of individual awareness.

A moment of reflection would show, though, that 'to make aware of the mechanisms that render life painful or even unliveable, does not mean yet to neutralize them; to draw the contradictions into light, does not mean to resolve them'. A long and tortuous road stretches between the recognition of the roots of trouble and their eradication, and making the first step in no way assures that further steps will be taken, let alone that the road will be followed to the end. And yet there is no denying the crucial importance of the beginning – of laying bare the complex network of causal links between pains suffered individually and conditions collectively produced. In sociology, and even more in a sociology which strives to be up to its task, the beginning is yet more decisive than elsewhere; it is this first step that designates and paves the road to rectification which otherwise would not exist, let alone be noticed.

Indeed, we need to repeat after Pierre Bourdieu: 'those who have the chance of dedicating their lives to the study of the social world, cannot rest, neutral and indifferent, in front of the struggles of which the future of the world is the stake'.<sup>xv</sup> I put it to you that these words read as a summary of Ralph's Miliband's life. And of the legacy with which his world enriched ours. Ralph's legacy is the duty to hope.

But what are we to hope for?

As it has been stated before, none of the twin accusations raised by Karl Marx almost two centuries ago against the capital – of its wastefulness and its moral iniquity – has lost any of its topicality. Only the scope of waste and injustice has changed: both have acquired by now *planetary dimensions*. And so did the formidable

task of emancipation, whose urgency prompted the establishment of the Frankfurt Institute more than half a century ago and guided its labours since.

Let me note however that it is the increasingly 'transnational' knowledge elite, the ever more assertively and blatantly *extraterritorial* class of symbol-makers and symbol-manipulators, that stand in the forefront of 'globalization' – that shorthand for the genuine or putative, gradual yet relentless weakening of most territorially fixed distinctions and the replacement of territorially defined groups and associations with electronically mediated 'networks' negligent of physical space and cut loose from the hold of localities and locally circumscribed sovereignties. And let me note that it is the knowledge elite, first and foremost, that experiences its own condition as 'transnational', and that it is such experience which it tends to re-process into the idea of 'global culture' and of the 'hybridization' as its dominant trend; an image that the less mobile remainder of humanity might well find difficult to adopt as a fair representation of their own daily realities.

The compact between 'the intellectuals' and the 'people' whom they once undertook to uplift and guide into history, has been broken – or rather revoked as unilaterally as it was announced at the threshold of the modern era. The descendants of the intellectuals of yore, the knowledge elite, having shared in the 'secession of the contented', move now in a world sharply different from, and certainly not overlapping with, the many and different worlds in which the lives and the prospects (or their absence) of the 'peoples' are ensconced and locked.

One may wonder what the readers would make of Adorno's message were the bottle found its way to the South Seas, to the coasts of sub-Saharan Africa or the shores of Asia... Would they understand it? And if they did, would they not take it for another insult or perhaps for a hint that another enemy assault is being plotted? Would they be able, and would they have time and patience, to set it apart from the messages pumped daily through media satellites up there?

Adorno's precept, embodied in Ralph's life, that the task of critical thought 'is not the conservation of the past, but the redemption of the hopes of the past' – has lost nothing of its topicality; but it is precisely because of that precept's continuing topicality that critical thought needs continuous rethinking in order to remain up to its task. As before, the hope of striking an acceptable balance between freedom and security, the two not immediately compatible yet equally crucial, *sine qua non* conditions of humane society, needs to be placed in the centre of the re-thinking effort. Among the hopes of the past that need to be most urgently redeemed, those preserved in Kant's own 'message in the bottle', his *Ideen zur eine allgemeine Geschichte in weltbürgerliche Absicht*, can rightly claim a meta-hope status: of a hope that make all hoping possible.

---

<sup>i</sup> See Jacques Derrida, *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde*, presented by Pascale-Anne Brault & Michael Naas, Galilée 2003.

<sup>ii</sup> See Adorno's letter to Benjamin of 18 March 1936, in *Theodor Adorno & Walter Benjamin Correspondence 1928-1940*, Harvard UP 1999, p.127-133.

<sup>iii</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14.

<sup>iv</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *The culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. By J.M. Bernstein, London, Rotledge 1991, p.89.

<sup>v</sup> *Ibid.*, p.119.

<sup>vi</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15.

<sup>vii</sup> *Ibid.*, p.128.

<sup>viii</sup> *Ibid.*, p.292-3.

<sup>ix</sup> *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p.243.

<sup>x</sup> *Critical Models*, p.263.

<sup>xi</sup> *Ibid.*, p.92.

<sup>xii</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, trans. By E.F.N. Jephcott, London, Verso 1974, p.25.

<sup>xiii</sup> *Ibid.*, p.26.

<sup>xiv</sup> *La misère du monde*, sous la direction de Pierre Bourdieu, Paris, Éditions de Seuil 1993, pp.1449-1554

<sup>xv</sup> Claude Lanzmann & Robert Redeker, 'Les méfaits d'un rationalisme simplificateur', *Le Monde* 18 September 1998, p.14.