

Handout for seminar

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FLIGHT, NOT FREEDOM

Marronage as a Manifested Form of the Non-identical

Aim and thesis of the paper

My aim is to examine and discuss the status of freedom of the concept of marronage through Theodor W. Adorno's concepts of the non-identical and freedom. In order to try to understand marronage, I will sketch out stages within the concept of the non-identical. This results in the conceptual categorization of marronage as a *manifested* form of the non-identical and in questioning the idea of marronage as a realized form of freedom. I address this question mainly in relation to Neil Roberts and his book *Freedom as Marronage*.

Central quotes

“Marronage (...) conventionally refers to a group of persons isolating themselves from a surrounding society in order to create a **fully autonomous** community, and for centuries it has been integral to interpreting the idea of freedom in Haiti as well as other Caribbean islands and Latin American countries (...).” (N. Roberts: *Freedom as Marronage*, 2015, p. 4)

“Nowhere in the OED [Oxford English Dictionary], current philosophical literature, or discourse on the social sciences is ‘flight’ at the foreground of defining freedom.” (Ibid., p. 9)

“During marronage, agents struggle psychologically, socially, metaphysically, and politically to exit slavery, **maintain freedom**, and assert a lived social space while existing in a liminal position.” (Ibid., p. 10)

“Dialectics unfolds the difference between the particular and the universal, dictated by the universal. As the subject-object dichotomy is brought to mind it becomes inescapable for the subject, furrowing whatever the subject thinks, even objectively—**but it would come to an end in reconciliation**. Reconciliation would release the nonidentical, would rid it of coercion, including spiritualized coercion; it would open the road to the multiplicity of different things and strip dialectics of its power over them.” (T. W. Adorno: *Negative Dialectics*, 2004, p. 6)

“Freedom can be defined in negation only, corresponding to the concrete form of a specific unfreedom.” (Ibid., p. 231)

“Posited positively, as given or as unavoidable amidst given things, freedom turns directly into unfreedom.” (Ibid., p. 232)