

Introduction: once more, with feeling

Once the last trace of emotion has been eradicated, nothing remains of thought but absolute tautology.

– Theodor W. Adorno¹

For most of its history, political philosophy has been distrustful of feelings. Its adherents have often cordoned off the mind from the body, thought from feeling, active subjects from passive objects. From the pre-Socratics onward, the bulk of philosophical tradition has been concerned with policing the boundaries between *reason* on the one hand, and *emotion* on the other. In turn, this division gives rise to an axiological hierarchy in which reason is placed over and above emotion. Where reason is respected for being universal, objective, and principled, emotion is rejected for being particular, subjective, and unruly. For many philosophers, the emotions constitute a threat to the procedural march of reason, having the potential to derail the calm process of rational deliberation with their unpredictability and volatility.

Numerous examples from the ancient world can be said to have established a precedent for this rationalist philosophical discourse. Plato famously banished the poets from his ideal republic because they awaken and nourish feelings, induce *pathos*, and impair reason. Aristotle wrote of the importance of *catharsis*, the arousal and subsequent purgation of fear and pity via the aesthetics of tragic drama, which would serve as a useful safety-valve so that such affects would not encroach upon the properly rational life of the *polis*. The Stoics believed that feelings denoted incorrect judgements about the world and one's place in it; emotionality was seen as a false step that the mature and learned individual would soon overcome through acceptance of one's circumstantial limitations. For instance, in *The Enchiridion*, Epictetus offers the following guidance: 'When therefore we are hindered, or disturbed, or grieved, let us never attribute it to others, but to ourselves; that is, to our own principles.

An uninstructed person will lay the fault of his own bad condition upon others. Someone just starting instruction will lay the fault on himself. Some who is perfectly instructed will place blame neither on others nor on himself.

But perhaps the most revealing moment in philosophy's anti-emotional narrative is to be found in Plato's dramatic account of the moment when Socrates drinks the fatal hemlock:

Crito had turned away even before I did, when he was unable to restrain his tears. Apollodoros had been crying throughout the entire time, and when he howled with grief and anger at that moment in particular, nobody who was present could help breaking down, except Socrates himself. And he said, 'What a way to behave, you remarkable men! I sent the women away mainly for this reason, so that they would not make such an offensive sound, because I have heard that one must meet one's end in calmed silence. So be quiet and collect yourselves'.

From ancient philosophy, then, one quickly learns that emotions are too vulgar and fickle to be granted entry into the lofty realm of ethical and moral life. Indeed, if on occasion certain emotional states (for instance, 'anger' in Aristotelian philosophy) have been granted a degree of virtue *in potentia*, this is only on condition that reason be brought in to validate and justify such emotions in an appropriately philosophical register.² Understood in this way, rationalized or justified feelings may even be pressed into the service of the self, enhancing our 'emotional intelligence', as more recent self-help guides proclaim.³ But emotion in and of itself, that is to say, feeling without or prior to rational regulation, the capacity to affect and be affected, is seen as philosophically and politically illegitimate.

Additionally, revisiting the scene of Socrates' death provides a vivid reminder that the historical denigration of feeling and affect has often contributed to a gendered division of labour in ways that reaffirm the conditions of women's oppression. In this regard, one can point to the ways in which reason is traditionally figured as masculine-active, while emotion is figured as feminine-passive. Indeed, the word 'passive' has in common with 'passion' the Latin root *passio* meaning 'suffering', which proves crucial to the respective values attached to thinking and feeling. As Sara Ahmed notes:

To be passive is to be enacted upon, as a negation that is already felt as suffering. The fear of passivity is tied to the fear of emotionality, in which weakness is defined in terms of a tendency to be shaped by others ... The association between passion and passivity is instructive. It works as a reminder of how 'emotion' has been viewed as 'beneath'

the faculties of thought and reason. To be emotional is to have one's judgement affected: it is to be reactive rather than active, dependent rather than autonomous ... Emotions are associated with women, who are represented as 'closer' to nature, ruled by appetite, and less able to transcend the body through thought, will and judgement.⁴

This fear of affect-as-passivity is a theme that runs through the anti-emotional history of politics and philosophy. Indeed, the suspicion inaugurated by the ancients has been inherited and reaffirmed in the modern era. The reassuringly neat textbook version of the Enlightenment, shorn of all conflicting impulses and self-critique, has all but cemented the superiority of Reason over against its myriad others.⁵ Immanuel Kant – that most unavoidable, paternal figure within the history of European philosophy's *Bildung*⁶ – provides one of the strongest and most influential cases against feeling. In the development of his moral philosophy, Kant seeks a wholly rational and disinterested foundation for action. He sharply distinguishes between universal, objective, rational principles on the one hand, and particular, subjective, capricious sensations ('melting compassion') on the other. Only the former are held to be justifiable grounds for moral conduct. A curmudgeonly Kant advises that the 'ineffectual sharing of one's feelings in order to appear sympathetically in tune with the feelings of others, thus allowing oneself to be affected in a merely passive way, is silly and childish'.⁷ Indicative of the historical continuity of philosophy's general vilification of feeling is the fact that Kant's modern philosophy shares much in common with the ancient Stoics' renunciation of affect. Kant cites his forebears approvingly when he writes of the 'principle of *apathy* – namely that the wise man must never be in a state of affect, not even in that of compassion with the misfortune of his best friend, is an entirely correct and sublime moral principle of the Stoic school; for affect makes us (more or less) blind'.⁸

Admittedly, the Kantian position in relation to feeling is somewhat more complicated than my heuristic account can accommodate. There are moments when Kant ventures to include affect in the moral universe by way of a fine-grained distinction between 'sensitivity' [*Empfindsamkeit*] and 'sentimentality' [*Empfindelheit*]. But this simply equates the former with power and strength, and the latter with weakness and docility, reiterating the original dualism between the active and passive. Sensitivity, Kant tells us (in atrociously, if unsurprisingly, sexist language), is 'manly'; it represents the capacity one has to allow pleasure or displeasure to enter the mind, which implies an act of volition. By contrast, sentimentality is a weakness, a yielding that allows others to affect us, even against our will.⁹ Thus, inasmuch as we might cultivate and control such 'sensitivity', this should only be done to bolster the development of the rational will. If an inclination arises that is in conflict

with the moral duty to act, then the rational will must override it; if an affect naturally moves us to an action that duty would require of us in any case, then (and only then) can the affect be permitted. In either case, in practical terms affective content is seen as extraneous to the need to obey the moral law, which for Kant must be rational through and through.¹⁰

The tradition of all dead rationalist philosophers weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. One of the reasons for my wanting to revisit early critical theory is to recall and mobilize certain moves against the anti-emotional core of the Continental philosophical and political tradition, many of which have yet to receive the attention they warrant. By way of an opening salvo in the service of such a project, it is worth turning to *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, in which Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer offer a trenchant critique of Kantian rationalism, or 'formalized reason', taking their cue from the work of Marquis de Sade (1740–1814). The authors make their case with reference to Sade's *Juliette*. In that novel, the eponymous character, having been seduced by a woman who swiftly disabuses her of religious faith and morality, undertakes all manner of cruel and inhumane acts utterly without affect or sentiment. She acts purely by cold reason alone. Juliette is in no way 'enthusiastic' or 'fanatical' (the two terms that would become synonymous with revolutionary terror); 'her procedure is enlightened and efficient as she goes about her work of sacrilege'.¹¹ To take but one example, on the calm discipline required of the would-be criminal, Juliette offers the following advice:

Work out your plan a few days beforehand; consider all its consequences; be attentive to what might assist you ... what might betray you, and weigh up all these things with the same callousness you would apply if you were certain to be discovered [...] Let your features express calm and equanimity; and try to summon up an extreme degree of callousness ... [I]f you were not certain that no pangs of conscience would attack you ... all your efforts to control your features and gestures would be of no account.¹²

Similarly, Juliette's accomplice, Clairwil, proudly asserts her stoic virtue, her 'serene command over the emotions', while denouncing compassion as womanly and childish (echoing Kant's language above). Clairwil's avowed stoicism – the bourgeois philosophy *par excellence* – allows her 'to do, and to continue to do, everything without any feeling'.¹³ Adorno and Horkheimer cite Sade and Nietzsche – the darkest writers of the modern age – because their writings lay bare the unsettling core of *ratio* unencumbered by any social or historical phenomena, untouched by feelings, customs, beliefs, values, and so on. Uprooted from its material and historical basis, reason becomes

naturalized, free-floating, and formalized; in other words, mythic. This process of formalization is dangerous, not just because it can all too readily produce a theodicy for the status quo, but also because its weight of obligation resists all particularity, meaning that atrocities can be carried out without the least pang of conscience or compassion.

In addition, there is undoubtedly something ironic in philosophy's longstanding opposition to feeling, insofar as this aversion has often been accompanied by a fervent passion and zeal of its own. One need not have recourse to psychoanalysis to note that such disavowal likely discloses the ghostly presence of that which one most desires to purge. In his 1959 lectures on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Adorno mischievously refers to the 'emotional thrust' of Kant's work, a provocative description given the Königsberg philosopher's resolute attempts to disqualify feeling from the moral universe. Defending the use of such a seemingly incongruous turn of phrase, Adorno draws his students' attention to the fact that identical theses, when differently expressed and cathected, can convey divergent meanings.¹⁴ It is not the case that affect simply follows on from, or is subjectively appended to, an objectively reasoned argument; rather, an argument's very structures and theses are charged with affective content. From a critical-theoretical perspective, then, far from being merely supplementary to an otherwise dispassionate argumentation, the 'emotional force' is in fact a constitutive part of an argument. For Adorno and Horkheimer, the enlightenment exaltation of Reason turns 'mythical' precisely by imagining itself to be free of all somatic elements, and by severing all affective components of experience from thought. The present project will try to show how a re-reading of early critical theory can help reconnect thinking with its extra-conceptual other.

The project is a timely one. The legacy of pro-rational/anti-emotional discourse is prevalent to this day. Alongside the steady rise of 'militant atheism', which prizes a secular, robust, scientific rationality above all else, there has been a resurgence of interest in traditional methods of emotional management. This is especially evident in the United Kingdom, a country that not only retains but also trades in a nostalgic fascination with its own (un)emotional history, unerring pragmatism, sangfroid, and famed 'stiff upper lip'. Indeed, while the UK government has funded large-scale investigations into the nation's emotional wellbeing (via the 'Happiness Index'), many of its leading business advisors, management consultants, therapists, and academics (not to mention welfare officers) have been rediscovering the tenets of stoicism. 'Stoic Week', an annual event now in its fifth year, is the result of a collaboration between Birkbeck College and the University of Exeter. The experiment brings together a range of academics and psychotherapists with the aim of evaluating the extent to which Stoic philosophy can offer useful and practical guidance

on how to live well today. Participants are encouraged to 'live like a Stoic for a week', and are provided with a handbook containing a range of daily activities to carry out and reflect upon. At the end of the week, self-assessments of the participant's wellbeing are completed and compared to those filled out at the start of the week.¹⁵ For an ancient philosophy so steeped in principles, it seems telling that one of the event's organizers, Donald Robertson, a cognitive-behavioural psychotherapist, has previously provided workshops on 'psychological resilience' to managers at Shell Oil, under the title 'How to think like a Roman Emperor'.¹⁶ Presumably, the ancient Stoics' disavowal of material goods, comfort, and plenitude, in favor of cardinal virtues such as justice, wisdom, temperance, and courage, has not fully transferred to all of stoicism's modern-day champions.

But quite apart from this direct conflation of emotional management and business management, more generally it is hardly surprising that an interest in stoicism should return at a time when neoliberalism and its inherent crises have become 'second nature', our latest *habitus*. Both the modern-day Stoic and the neoliberal self are well trained in viewing conflict and adversity as not simply unavoidable, but valuable opportunities for 'growth'. For the modern Stoic, one's experience of hardship is creatively rebranded as a chance for personal and moral development, while for the neoliberal, major crises attest to the market's tendency towards 'creative destruction', which again produces important new prospects, new revenue streams, new investment sites, and so forth.¹⁷ At the individual level too, the neoliberal self is compelled to be endlessly entrepreneurial, seeing itself as an ongoing project. In such a cold climate, joblessness, to take but one example, rather than being the effect of systemic, political-economic developments, variable capital flows and outsourced (as well as surplus) labour, simply reflects a 'learned helplessness',¹⁸ an insufficiently developed work ethic or lack of desire on the part of the individual concerned. The best response to such 'inevitableities', so the dominant discourses tell us, is to 'keep calm and carry on'. As ever, unbridled feeling, emotion, and affect are seen as obstacles to a more balanced, rational, and reasonable response to suffering and hardship. Today, both neo-stoicism and neoliberalism converge on the same point of hard-nosed idiomatic realism: shit happens.¹⁹

The point of a critical theory is to interrogate how and why certain types of shit tend to happen more frequently and systematically to certain groups of people. Once it becomes clear that shit does not 'just happen' (in the manner of an ostensibly 'natural' disaster), then the grounds for forever remaining calm in the face of adversity seem rather uneven. This is where an alternative or subterranean history of philosophy can gain traction. It would augur the return of the repressed precisely in the expression of feeling (and 'structures of feeling', to use Raymond Williams's suggestive phrase). It would also reanimate notions

of the social and of totality, which are conspicuously absent from prevailing accounts that not only treat political subjects as atomized, rational agents seeking to maximize their self-interest, but also replicate the political-economic framing of neoliberal capital. Of course, theorists and activists on the left, while usually maintaining a better grasp on the broader social conditions that shape experience, have also all too often neglected the vital role of affect. In response to new and unique historical situations, the more traditional, 'organizational' left frequently resorts to well-worn practices of the past – mantras, sloganeering, pamphleteering, marching, meeting (interminably), sit-ins, bombarding people with statistics, information, lengthy reading lists, and so on.

Something important is missing from these accounts. It may be summed up as follows: the transition from *interest* to *knowledge* to *action* is not straightforwardly 'rational'. That is to say, people will not (necessarily) be moved to act differently simply by the acquisition of more or correct knowledge. They must *feel compelled* to act.²⁰ They must be *affected* in some way. Even an arch-rationalist like Spinoza acknowledges the inexorable part played by the passions in the founding of a political state when he notes that since people 'are led more by passion than by reason, it naturally follows that a people will unite and consent to be guided as if by one mind not at reason's prompting but through some common emotion, such as a common hope, or common fear, or desire to avenge some common injury'.²¹ In lieu of an ordinary affective connection or striving, then, there can be no development of a reasonable political state. Similarly, there can be no defeating an absolute and unreasonable state without the passion and drive to do so. Broadening out the point, we might say that perpetual deferral of action on the grounds that one can always await more precise planning, or more detailed or reasoned analysis, can easily become a recipe for acquiescence or *attentisme*. To break through the rationalist's infinite recourse to reason,²² it is my claim that contemporary leftist thought needs to better understand and (re)activate passion, desire, feeling, and affect. This does not mean surrendering thought to blind impulse; rather it means recognizing that no political theory or praxis is reasonable through and through.

With this in mind, then, there is surely a need for an effective and affective counter-history of philosophy. What is more, this would certainly have to include the early Frankfurt School as a major part of its remit. This book, then, aims to contribute to just such a counter-history, by retrieving the affective core of critical theory with an eye towards contemporary political concerns and theoretical developments. Critically engaging with some of the recent investigations into affect, I want to draw out and draw upon the *politics of affect*, and the *affect of politics*, in the hope that others might take up the theme in their own research.

Outline of the book

The chapters that follow will aim to revisit early critical theory in the light of emerging theories around affect. Given the breadth and diversity of the work and theorists associated with the Frankfurt School (in itself a rather loose affiliation with porous borders), this book will be suggestive rather than exhaustive, seeking out useful, timely, or speculative interventions that can provoke further research and debate. The chapters will selectively draw out and evaluate certain themes, concepts, and arguments from within the rich archive of critical theory, particularly those of its so-called 'first generation', in order to highlight the latter's hitherto underappreciated concern with the affective, emotional, and sensate aspects of experience.

Chapter 1 sets out the theoretical terrain on which the wider project is based. I begin by revisiting some of the founding tenets of critical theory in the context of the establishment of the Institute for Social Research in the early twentieth century. I then discuss some of the contemporary theories of affect that have emerged in the past couple of decades as part of the so-called 'new materialisms'. Taking on board some of the key findings of this recent work on affect, I also highlight the potential political deficiencies that accompany such accounts, particularly within a growing 'post-critical' context. The chapter closes with suggestions as to how early critical theory – read through an affective lens – might provide the social and political grounding that affect theory often lacks, while at the same time noting how contemporary theories of affect are invaluable in shedding light on the efficacy of the pre- or extra-rational, so often sacrificed on the altar of political philosophy.

Chapter 2 focuses on feelings of melancholy and unhappiness. Historical accounts, both medical and cultural, have traditionally defined and diagnosed such feelings as negative, unhealthy, and undesirable. Despite cultural recognition of the double-sided character of melancholia – as potentially enabling as well as debilitating – the sense in which melancholy has been understood since Freud's seminal essay of 1917 is pejorative. After charting the history of melancholy, the chapter then turns to the work of Walter Benjamin, whose varied engagements with the subject of melancholia prove to be far more mobile and complex than traditional accounts. Benjamin attempts to mine new readings of melancholic experience (and criticism) that show the latter to be profoundly social, political, and productive. This places his work at odds with the prevailing consensus, which characterizes melancholia as a personal psychological failing that is thoroughly stifling, passive, and anti-social. Developing this theme further, the chapter closes with a section on what I term 'conscious unhappiness'. Drawing on the critical theory of Theodor Adorno, this section affirms the importance and connectedness of affective

and political refusal. Rather than seeking to avoid or relieve dysphoric feelings by way of psychic adjustment, conscious unhappiness amplifies the unmet needs, giving voice to the suffering that arises from a social world in need of wholesale transformation. As part of its revolutionary critique of capitalist social relations, critical theory refuses to privatize the notion of happiness and in so doing aligns itself with the (negative) truth-content of unhappiness – the bad that cannot be made good.

Chapter 3 looks at how an affective politics underpins critical theory's engagement with the world of objects. The chapter begins by outlining the recent upsurge in theoretical writing on objects/things, especially within the much-touted field of 'object-oriented ontology' or 'speculative realism'. After drawing attention to the major social and political deficiencies of these contemporary approaches to objects, the chapter offers an account of early critical theory that draws out what I take to be a more philosophically viable and socially engaged orientation towards the object world. To make the case, I seek to recover elements of Siegfried Kracauer's materialist film theory, before exploring two complementary concepts from Adorno's work: namely, the preponderance of the object, and mimesis. The chapter considers critical theory's emphasis on a political and affective aesthetics as playing a crucial part in how we conceptualize and experience objects. As a result, a key distinction is drawn between today's avowedly post-critical, non-humanist ontologists on one side, and the critical proto-humanism that motivates the early Frankfurt School on the other.

Chapter 4 explores the affective politics of hope. I begin by surveying the ways in which historical events and their narrativization – both on the right and on the left – have (re)produced certain ideological positions and affective dispositions. The post-Cold War triumphalism of many on the right, accompanied by claims of the 'end of history', created a sense of fearlessness, righteousness, and unfettered optimism. At the same time, much of the left appeared to internalize the position of honourable defeat, licking its political wounds, and bemoaning the insurmountable nature of capital as vehemently as any of the latter's most faithful handmaidens. The end of history is also said to signal the end of utopia, as all speculation as to possible alternatives to capitalism is condemned as unrealistic, idealistic, and unreasonable. I note how political realism has become the dominant paradigm, banishing utopian impulses and diminishing political hopes to the most myopic of visions. After plotting the familiar narrative of decline, and showing how an affective structure (and affecting narrative) can constrain a certain brand of politics while enabling others to flourish, the remainder of the chapter analyses the critical potential of hope as a political affect, especially as it finds expression in the work of Ernst Bloch.

Notes

- 1 Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (London: Verso, 2005), 123.
- 2 Martha Nussbaum is probably the best-known advocate of such a rationalist view of emotion working today. See, for example, Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), and *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014). Other arguments for the rational content of emotions can be found in Robert C. Solomon, *True to Our Feelings: What Our Emotions Are Really Telling Us* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), Patricia Greenspan, *Emotions and Reasons: An Inquiry into Emotional Justification* (New York: Routledge, 1988), and Ronald de Sousa, *The Rationality of Emotion* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987).
- 3 Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995).
- 4 Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 2–3. See also Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (New York: Autonomedia, 2004).
- 5 Alberto Toscano notes the two main responses to ‘fanaticism’, understood in the Hegelian sense of ‘enthusiasm for the abstract’: ‘Philosophically, the response to fanaticism is broadly divided between thinkers who regard it as the outside of reason, the persistent threat of pathological partisanship or clerical irrationality, and those who instead perceive some unconditional and unyielding abstract passion as intrinsic to a universalizing rationality and an emancipatory politics’; Toscano, *Fanaticism: On the Uses of an Idea* (London: Verso, 2010), xviii.
- 6 Writing of the ineludible influence of Kant on both defenders and detractors alike, Jacques Derrida notes that ‘the authority of Kantian discourse has inscribed its virtues of legitimation to such a depth in our philosophical training, culture, and constitution that we have difficulty performing the imaginary variation that would allow us to “figure” a different one. Better, the “relation to Kant” signals the very idea of training, culture, constitution, and especially “legitimation”’; Derrida, *Who’s Afraid of Philosophy? Right to Philosophy 1*, trans. Jan Plug (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 49.
- 7 Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, ed. Robert B. Louden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 132.
- 8 Kant, *Anthropology*, 152.
- 9 Here again there are obvious parallels between Kant’s views and contemporaneous dismissals of ‘sentimentality’ in literature and culture more broadly, which often take gendered and sexist forms. Some valiant efforts have been made to construct a Kantian moral theory that is not wholly allergic to emotionality; see, for example, Nancy Sherman’s ‘The Place of Emotions in Kantian Morality’, in *Identity, Character, and Morality: Essays in Moral Psychology*, ed. Owen Flanagan and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 149–70, as well as her book *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- 10 David Hume is often cited as an important counterpoint to such hard-line rationalism, particularly in his famous statement: ‘Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions.’ But Hume ultimately ends up reinstating the exceptionality and priority of philosophical reason over pre- or non-philosophical passions, even while attempting to delineate reason’s limitations; for a useful summary, see the following piece: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/emotions-17th18th/LD8Hume.html>.

- 11 Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (London: Verso, 1997), 94.
- 12 Sade, *Juliette*, Vol. 4, cited in Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 95.
- 13 Sade, *Juliette*, Vol. 2, cited in Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 101.
- 14 Theodor W. Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 31.
- 15 Details of the 'Stoic Week' experiment can be found at www.blogs.exeter.ac.uk/stoicismtoday/.
- 16 Carrie Sheffield, 'Want An Unconquerable Mind? Try Stoic Philosophy', *Forbes* (1 December 2013), www.forbes.com/sites/carriesheffield/2013/12/01/want-an-unconquerable-mind-try-stoic-philosophy/.
- 17 Philip Mirowski charts the historical development of neoliberalism and its strategic response to the most recent 'crisis' of 2007/8; see Mirowski, *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste: How Neoliberalism Survived the Financial Meltdown* (London: Verso, 2013). For a more theoretical analysis of neoliberalism, see Christian Laval and Pierre Dardot, *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society* (London: Verso, 2014). In 2013, Lord Young, the UK prime minister's advisor on enterprise at the time, made much of the fact that recessions are good times for businesses to expand their market share, given the downward pressure on wage levels and the availability of cheap labour: www.theguardian.com/business/2013/may/11/young-recession-cheap-labour.
- 18 The phrase 'learned helplessness' was originally formulated by the psychologist Martin Seligman in 1975; see Martin Seligman, *Helplessness: On Depression, Development, and Death* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1975). Coincidentally, in July 2011, it was Seligman who encouraged David Cameron to consider wellbeing as a supplementary indicator of national prosperity.
- 19 Examples abound of these neo-stoic norms in action. I will cite just two of the most notable of recent times. The failure to indict Darren Wilson (the police officer who murdered Mike Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014) sparked a series of riots and shutdown actions in cities across the United States. In response, Barack Obama stated: 'I know the events of the past few days have prompted strong passions, but as details unfold I urge everyone ... to remember this young man through reflection and understanding.' In a similar vein, in October 2015, David Cameron described how best to respond to the ongoing refugee crisis, drawing particular attention to the widely publicized photograph of Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old boy from Syria who had drowned in the Mediterranean Sea. Cameron said: 'Like most people, I found it almost impossible to get the image of that poor Syrian boy, Aylan [*sic*] Kurdi, out of my mind. We know in our hearts our responsibilities to help those fleeing for their lives. But we know too that we must keep our heads.' The Kiplingian euphemism of keeping one's head, in both cases, rehearses the anti-emotionality that undergirds so much of the dominant cultural, political, and legal frameworks.
- 20 Towards the end of their controversial chapter on the culture industry, 'Enlightenment as Mass Deception', from the mid-1940s, Adorno and Horkheimer qualify their otherwise unrelenting critique of the 'culture industry' with a telling admission, namely, that the real triumph of advertising is that 'consumers feel compelled to buy and use its products even though they see through them'. In other words, consumers are not straightforwardly 'duped' at the level of cognition and ideology. Rather, they must *feel compelled* to act and consume in particular ways; Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 167.