Non-Conceptual Negativity: Damaged Reflections on Turkey
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According to Adorno and Horkheimer,

Book XII of the Odyssey tells of the encounter with the Sirens. Their allure is that of losing oneself in the past. [...] But the Sirens’ song has not yet been rendered powerless by reduction to the condition of art. [...] Even though the Sirens know all that has happened, they demand the future as the price of that knowledge, and the promise of the happy return is the deception with which the past ensnares the one who longs for it. [...] He knows only two possible ways to escape. One of them he prescribes for his men. He plugs their ears with wax, and they must row with all their strength. [...] The other is the possibility Odysseus, the seigneur who allows the others to labour for themselves, reserves for himself. He listens, but while bound impotently to the mast; the greater the temptation, the more he has his bonds tightened.¹

While foregrounding the ancients’ horror in front of the immediacy of art in the form of possible results that resound from times prehistorical, the Sirens’ song also underlines the dangers of the unmediated, or rather, as that very popular term today would have it, the “terror” of the unmediated. In other words, the Sirens’ song founds artwork on an ontology of danger and fear; to hear that which precedes art as form comes as a result of a primordial passage. At the origin of all myths there is such a passage from the unformed to the formed: a passage from the

cosmic cloud of the “-dividual” to the organizational force of the “in-dividual.” Beneath the unquestionable ontology based on the division of labor of the dialectics of the oppressor and the oppressed lurks the terror of the reversal of this passage.

Art thus becomes what it is by leaving behind the fear, the terror which originally lies at its foundation; form thus transforms deferment into pleasure by means of becoming a mediator to art and by welcoming the terror of destruction to the waiting lounge of fantasy.

The bonds with which he has irremediably tied himself to practice, also keep the Sirens away from practice: their temptation is neutralized and becomes a mere object of contemplation — becomes art. The prisoner is present at a concert, an inactive eavesdropper like later concertgoers, and his spirited call for liberation fades like applause. Thus the enjoyment of art and manual labour break apart as the world of prehistory is left behind.²

From then on, with a desire to overcome its hopelessness, art must console itself with Aesthetics. In spite of the fact that Onto-terrorism is the Artaudesque theatre of violence of the artist and the art-lover, “[t]hey must doggedly sublimate in additional effort the drive that impels to diversion. And so they become practical.”³

² Ibid., 34.
³ Ibid.