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IVORY TOWER AND BARRICADES: MARCUSE AND ADORNO ON THE SEPARATION OF THEORY AND PRAXIS

ABSTRACT
The events of 1968/69 initiated a dispute between Adorno and Marcuse over the (alleged) separation of theory and praxis. While Marcuse "stood at the barricades" Adorno sought recluse in the "ivory tower". Marcuse and German students perceived Adorno's move as departure from fundamental postulates of critical theory as laid down in Horkheimer's 1937 essay. Adorno died amidst the process of clarifying his differences with Marcuse and thus the "unlimited discussions" between the two remain unfinished. This paper sets to examine how both Marcuse and Adorno remained dedicated to the unity of theory and praxis, albeit in different ways. I argue that Adorno did not separate theory and praxis; instead, he perceived the gap between critical theory and concrete historical situation. Adorno rejected simple and unreflective translation of theory into praxis. Hence his attempt to recalibrate critical theory. Marcuse's and Adorno's differences lie in their different evaluation of the student movement and this (mis)evaluation was context related. My second argument is that Marcuse/Adorno disagreement is partly caused by the absence of the two from the concrete historical context.

KEYWORDS
Marcuse, Adorno, Horkheimer, Krahl, correspondence, critical theory, praxis, actionism, 1968, 1969, student movements, Frankfurt School

Introduction[1]

Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse were among the prominent representatives of the Institute for Social Research (commonly referred to as the Frankfurt School). The trio closely collaborated on the project called critical theory. They influenced each other to the point where Horkheimer couldn't distinguish his own thoughts from Adorno's (and vice versa) and Marcuse gave them carte blanche to sign his name to whatever the Institute publishes. They seemed to be inseparable just like theory and *praxis*. However, one should avoid any idealization of their personal and professional relationship. Besides philosophical disagreement over theory and *praxis* there existed a dose of personal tension. Adorno tried to "win over" Horkheimer and in doing so seemed to be sometimes jealous of Marcuse (Sünker 2007: 130). Perhaps the germs of Adorno/Marcuse disagreement could already have been found as early as 1935 when Adorno

1 I thank Professor Heinz Sünker from Bergische Universität Wuppertal for suggesting me to write a paper on this topic.

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wrote about Marcuse's fascist proclivities: "He is motivated by the prospect of a placement at the Institute for Social Research: (...) and it shouldn't come as any surprise to you that it saddens me that you are philosophically allied to a man whom I would consider a fascist were it not for his Jewish background. For he could neither have any illusions about Heidegger, to whom, according to the preface of his book on Hegel, he is indebted, nor could he have any illusions about his publisher, Mr. Klostermann..." (letter to Horkheimer dated May 15th 1935, p. 65 quoted in Sünker 2007: 130). Their philosophical and perhaps personal tensions would never be – to use a dialectical term – sublated. Teddy eventually succeeded in "winning" Horkheimer over. They returned to Germany while Marcuse remained in immigration for the rest of his life.

The events of 1968/69 started the whole question over the unity and separation of theory and *praxis*. If one has to depict students' perception of Adorno and Marcuse, the two slogans come to mind: "Marx, Mao, Marcuse" and "Adorno as institution is dead". While Marcuse remained committed to the revolution and supported students, Adorno was perceived as having resigned from *praxis* in favor of theory. This paper sets to examine whether this perception is justified. Has Adorno abandoned the partisanship of theory and *praxis* which according to Horkheimer was the *differentia specifica* between traditional and critical theory? Was Marcuse the only member of the Frankfurt School who remained loyal to radical *praxis* and critical theory?

I argue that Adorno didn't resign on *praxis* or separate it from theory. Rather he perceived that the social circumstances have decisively changed and that reinterpretation is necessary before proceeding to *praxis*. Hence, Adorno attempted to re-calibrate critical theory so that it can reflect more accurately on the (pseudo)praxis of late modernity. The cause of the mutual disagreement evident in Marcuse/Adorno correspondence was primarily due to Marcuse's and Adorno's absence from respective societal context. This is not to say that it was solely post-war "German context" that conditioned Adorno's skepticism towards praxis. This would go against Adorno's own argument that *praxis* should not (decisively!) guide theory. Rather, it was the mixture of Adorno's fundamental theoretical premises (firstly outlined in the *Negative Dialectics*, a work co-written with Horkheimer during their stay in the United States) coupled with Germany's social and political peculiarities of that time. Adorno (justifiably) feared the undiminished restorative charge present in Adenauer's Germany. Christian Democratic Activists from the Association of Christian Democratic Students (RCDS) were perhaps "lesser known" (at least to Marcuse) 1968ers who rose in opposition to Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (SDS). Streets of Germany filled with student protesters, exuded what part of West Berliners felt like a fascist atmosphere. This was a concrete and crucial difference between German and American context that is relevant for the two theorists' different views on theory and praxis. And to a certain extent this is what partly contributed to their mutual disagreement. A critical theorist by definition has to be actively engaged in the struggles, but this engagement is always engagement in the concrete historical situation. Being an ocean apart Marcuse couldn't relate

(the way a critical theorist has to relate) to the situation in post-war Germany. Furthermore he informed himself through media reports that were often biased. Thus besides differences in theoretical premises, Adorno and Marcuse had different, context related, views on the methods of radical *praxis*. Or to put it differently: Marcuse's and Adorno's different (theoretical) views on the relation of praxis to theory were more contexts related than context dependent. Regardless of differences, both Marcuse's and Adorno's standpoints were in line with the programmatic task of critical theory. Hence, to support my argument I'm discussing Horkheimer's, Marcuse's and Adorno's conception of critical theory. In the second part I'm focusing on the Marcuse/Adorno correspondence.

Horkheimer: What is Critical Theory?

In the essay *Traditional and Critical Theory* (1937) Horkheimer embarks on rethinking the direction towards which various theories were moving and at the same time on defining and positioning critical theory by making it distinguishable in the theoretical landscape. The *differentia specifica* of critical theory is its subversiveness towards established reality. Horkheimer uses the word "traditional" as an umbrella term for theories that are favorable to reality or whose task is to systematize and organize facts and knowledge into an existing paradigm. It should be mentioned, as Macdonald points out, that Horkheimer and Marcuse were not against traditional theory's empirical commitment, but rather for "... a critical empiricism which is guided by the commitment to radical transformation, and which assumes it performs a role in that very transformation itself. In opposition to critical theory, traditional theory ultimately performs a radical distinction between the subject and object, value and fact, and thereby initiates a stance of passivity toward the unfolding of the social and political world" (Macdonald 2017: 8). In the "traditional" form of theorizing a theorist is alienated from the "product of his/her labor" and the consequence is that the theorist is alienated from the world of political struggles. As Horkheimer proclaims: "This alienation, which finds expression in philosophical terminology as the separation of value and research, knowledge and action, and other polarities, protects the savant from the tensions we have indicated and provides an assured framework for his activity" (Horkheimer 2002 [1937], 208–209). Horkheimer's project was influenced by Marxian philosophy and hence every activity (including solitary activity such as theorizing in one's own library) is at the same time a social activity that takes place in the medium of the social being and, for that matter, for the benefit of social being.

What was required was a clear demarcation between "traditional theory" driven by "value neutrality" and critical theory; between the "savant"[2] and critical theorist. Horkheimer (2002 [1937]) sharpens the distinction between critical and "traditional" theory by stating how critical theory runs counter to dominant habits of thought, how it has no material accomplishments and

2 Term "savant" refers to theorists and scientists of traditional theory.

finally how in spite of being opposed to mainstream thought and having no material evidence to offer, it nevertheless urges the transformation of society by the intensification of struggle.

Horkheimer's project of formulating and positioning critical theory can be divided into the following topics: who are critical theorists; their task and relation to society, what is critical thinking and who the subject of critical theory is. The relation between critical theorist and society is marked by tension that necessitates sublation. A critical theorist uses economic categories (e.g. labor) in the same manner as commonly used. However, in the interpretation of those categories critical theorist applies the dialectical method by searching for internal contradictions and the necessity of sublation.[3] As Horkheimer argues: "The identification (...) of men of critical mind with their society is marked by tension, and the tension characterizes all the concepts of the critical way of thinking. Thus, such thinkers interpret the economic categories of work, value, and productivity exactly as they are interpreted in the existing order, and they regard any other interpretation as pure idealism. But at the same time they consider it rank dishonesty simply to accept the interpretation; the critical acceptance of the categories which rule social life contains simultaneously their condemnation" (Horkheimer 2002 [1937]: 208). Thus, critical thinking becomes specific mode of activity that is in inseparable connection with social being. It becomes radical transformative *praxis* hostile to the established reality. Horkheimer captures the transformative character of the critical theory: "Critical thinking (...) is motivated (...) by the effort really to transcend the tension and to abolish the opposition between the individual's purposefulness, spontaneity, and rationality, and those work-process relationships on which society is built. Critical thought has a concept of man as in conflict with himself until this opposition is removed (...) Its subject is rather a definite individual in his real relation to other individuals and groups, in his conflict with a particular class, and, finally, in the resultant web of relationships with the social totality and with nature" (Horkheimer 2002 [1937]: 210–211).

The dedication of critical theory to a radical transformative *praxis* is further enhanced by its commitment to a revolutionary subject of emancipation. With the diminishing of the proletariat as a revolutionary force, critical theory embarks on a constant quest of finding the revolutionary subject: "Even to the proletariat the world superficially seems quite different than it really is. Even an outlook which could grasp that no opposition really exists between the proletariat's own true interests and those of society as a whole, and would therefore derive its principles of action from the thoughts and feelings of the masses, would fall into slavish dependence on the status quo" (Horkheimer 2002 [1937]: 214). The subject of critical theory is a definite individual in his totality and in his concrete historical existence.

3 On this topic Marcuse's 1933 essay *On the Philosophical Foundations of the Concept of Labor* is very instructive. Marcuse intends to construct a new concept of labor that will be central in his critical theory.

Marcuse: Concrete Philosophy and Critical Theory

In the same year and following Horkheimer's two pieces[4] Marcuse published his essay *Philosophy and Critical Theory (P&CT)*. Marcuse supports and further enhances much of Horkheimer's arguments and shares a similar theoretical position.[5] Marcuse joins in the critique of positivism shared by Horkheimer and Adorno. Four years after *P&CT* Marcuse's second book on Hegel was published. In *Reason and Revolution (R&R)* Marcuse (1986) remains critical to positivism and dedicates a whole chapter to the minute discussion and criticism of positivism from Saint-Simon to Lorenz von Stein: "Positive philosophy was going to affirm the existing order against those who asserted the need for 'negating'" (Marcuse 1986: 327). Positivism is, in Marcuse's view, counterrevolutionary because it channeled social antagonisms into means to achieve harmony. Due to its affirmative relation to the established reality positivism represents a theory of the ruling class. For Marcuse (1986) it means the neutralization of the dialectical method. It warned, even more importantly, that critical theory can lose its fundamental premise of the tension between essence and appearance whose sublation has the character of necessity.[6] Marcuse's book (and especially the chapter on *Phenomenology of Spirit*) received criticism, but surprisingly the most vocal criticism came from his colleagues with whom he shared a

4 *Traditional and Critical Theory* and *Postscript*.

5 As Jay points out: "Once Marcuse joined the Institut, the influence of Horkheimer on his work became pronounced (...) Even so, Marcuse never engaged in the type of empirical work that the Institut strove to combine with its theorizing. Of all the figures in the Frankfurt School he remained most exclusively concerned with theoretical issues (...) In discussing the function of the concept of essence in various Philosophical systems, Marcuse followed Horkheimer in situating each doctrine in its historical setting..." (Jay 1973: 76).

But there never publicly existed a (nurtured) perception of "Horkheimer Adorno and Marcuse" as was "Horkheimer and Adorno". In the *Eclipse of Reason* Horkheimer affirms that Adorno's and his is one shared philosophy: "These lectures were designed to present in epitome some aspects of a comprehensive philosophical theory developed by the writer during the last few years in association with Theodore W. Adorno" (Horkheimer 2004: vi).

Sünker notes: "In contrast to the first volume of the correspondence, some changes surface here. They deal with Adorno's exile in the US and consequently with the personal closeness to Horkheimer; an intimacy that made letters concerning common theoretical work almost redundant. They incidentally allude to the plan of a book on dialectics, from which the Dialectic of Enlightenment would come into being" (Sünker 2007: 132).

Hence, I argue that Marcuse remained an outsider; he certainly didn't belong intimately to the inner circle of Adorno and Horheimer. This becomes strikingly evident after Horkheimer's and Adorno's return to Germany and after the incident with students.

6 Cf. Marcuse's essay *The Concept of Essence*. Marcuse attempted to preserve the meaning of revolution precisely on this tension which determines the historical image of reality in the shape of universal social contradiction (Marcuse 1936: 48).

theoretical platform.[7] Hence, the differences between the three of them that will culminate in 1968-69 have already emerged in 1941: "...[*R&R*] fails adequately to highlight the unique features of Marcuse's Hegelian Marxism, which had a somewhat different orientation than Adorno's and Horkheimer's both to the dialectic and to politics; this difference already was visible in 1941. Marcuse's Hegelian Marxism of 1941 helps us to anticipate one aspect of his work in the 1960s as well: his public return to a variant of the left revolutionary politics that his Frankfurt School colleagues Adorno and Horkheimer abandoned after the early 1940s" (Anderson 1993: 256–257).

Even though Marcuse's essay is written as a companion to Horkheimer's piece, it certainly isn't a simple reiteration of Horkheimer's arguments or Marcuse's first commentary on critical theory and *praxis* (Višić 2017). It is already in *On Concrete Philosophy (OCP)*, an essay from Marcuse's phenomenological-Marxism phase, that he formulated the key ideas that will echo throughout his complete works as well[8] (Višić 2017). "Concrete philosophy" is grounded on historical materialism and its task is to care for being and being's actualization of the possibility to have a happier existence in a more humane world. Economic relations are at the center of critical theory and only a shift in economic relations can lead to a more just society (ibid). Hence, in *OCP* Marcuse sketches the task of practical philosophy that later serves as the programmatic task of critical theory (although after joining the Institute Marcuse would lose Heidegger's terminology): "Concrete philosophy can thus only approach existence if it seeks out Dasein in the sphere in which its existence is based: as it acts in its world in accordance with its historical situation. In becoming historical, concrete philosophy, by taking the real fate of Dasein upon itself, also becomes public. (...) Concrete philosophy will exist in the public realm, because only by so doing can it truly approach existence (...) In such cases the

7 In the preface to Negt's book Horkheimer and Adorno strikingly accuse Marcuse of latent positivism in *R&R*: "'the latent positivism implicit in the Hegelian construction of social reality, something which one would not expect because of Hegel's own hostility to positivism'" (Negt [1963] 1974: 8 quoted in Anderson 1933: 255).

In the Introduction to *ODM* Kellner offers an explanation that: "... in the 1940s there were two tendencies within Critical Theory: (1) the philosophical-cultural analysis of the trends of Western civilization being developed by Horkheimer and Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, and (2) the more practical-political development of Critical Theory as a theory of social change proposed by Marcuse and Neumann. For Marcuse and Neumann, Critical Theory would be developed as a theory of social change that would connect philosophy, social theory, and radical politics— precisely the project of 1930s Critical Theory that Horkheimer and Adorno were abandoning in the early 1940s in their turn toward philosophical and cultural criticism divorced from social theory and radical politics. Marcuse and Neumann, by contrast, were focusing precisely on the issue that Horkheimer and Adorno had neglected: the theory of social change" (Kellner 1964: xxii-xxiii).

8 In her recent book *Per una filosofia concreta: Alle radici del pensiero di Marcuse* Bascelli (2018) successfully argues that the necessity for a concrete philosophy is present in Marcuse's work from the early writings up to later ones.

individual is no longer the point of departure, but rather the goal of philosophy, because individuality itself must first be made possible again." (Marcuse 1929: 47–51). This position, although in different terminology, is also voiced in Marcuse's designation of critical theory: "This situation compels theory anew to a sharper emphasis on its concern with the potentialities of man and with the individual's freedom, happiness, and rights contained in all of its analyses. For the theory, these are exclusively potentialities of the concrete social situation. They become relevant only as economic and political questions and as such bear on human relations in the productive process, the distribution of the product of social labor, and men's active participation in the economic and political administration of the whole" (Marcuse 1937: 105).

What distinguishes critical theory from philosophy,[9] according to Marcuse, is the fact that philosophy delegated freedom to the spiritual realm while leaving intact the realm of material production and reproduction: "For here, unlike in philosophical systems, human freedom is no phantom or arbitrary inwardness that leaves everything in the external world as it was. Rather, freedom here means a real potentiality, a social relationship on whose realization human destiny depends (...) Like philosophy, it opposes making reality into a criterion in the manner of complacent positivism. But unlike philosophy, it always derives its goals only from present tendencies of the social process (...) The obstinacy that comes from adhering to truth against all appearances has given way in contemporary philosophy to whimsy and uninhibited opportunism. Critical theory preserves obstinacy as a genuine quality of philosophical thought" (*ibid*: 105–106). Critical theory builds criticism on the analysis of economic relations that determine social consciousness. However this doesn't put critical theory in line with political economy. Critical theory goes rather beyond mere economy: "From the beginning the critique of political economy established the difference by criticizing the entirety of social existence. In a society whose totality was determined by economic relations to the extent that the uncontrolled economy controlled all human relations, even the noneconomic was contained in the economy. It appears that, if and when this control is removed, the rational organization of society toward which critical theory is oriented is more than a new form of economic regulation. The difference lies in the decisive factor, precisely the one that makes the society rational – the subordination of the economy to the individuals' needs" (ibid: 106).

Confronted with the disappearance of the proletariat as the revolutionary agent[10], Marcuse reflects on new challenges that critical theory and radical

9 Marcuse rejects idealism on the basis that this philosophy is more driven by justifying the established order of things. This is revealed in its conception of subject whose autonomy and freedom are possible only by referring to the subject alone, as an individual isolated from the society (ibid: 102).

10 Throughout his life Marcuse will continue to seek revolutionary agents. Hence, the New Left, student movements, Women's Liberation Movement appeared to Marcuse as potentially new "revolutionary" subjects. For more information about Marcuse's engagement, his advising of *Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)* and to what extent

praxis faces: "At its origins in the first half of the nineteenth century, when it elaborated the first concepts of the alternatives, the critique of industrial society attained concreteness in a historical mediation between theory and practice, values and facts, needs and goals (...) In the capitalist world, they are still the basic classes [the bourgeoisie and the proletariat]. However, the capitalist development has altered the structure and function of these two classes in such a way that they no longer appear to be agents of historical transformation (...) In the absence of demonstrable agents and agencies of social change, the critique is thus thrown back to a high level of abstraction. There is no ground on which theory and practice, thought and action meet. Even the most empirical analysis of historical alternatives appears to be unrealistic speculation, and commitment to them a matter of personal (or group) preference" (Marcuse 1964: xlii–xliii).

Adorno: Resignation from *Praxis* and Fidelity to Theory?

Reflecting on the historical situation of the day,[11] Adorno writes in the intro to *Negative Dialectics* (1966): "Philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, lives on because the moment to realize it was missed. The summary judgment that it had merely interpreted the world, that resignation in the face of reality had crippled it in itself, becomes a defeatism of reason after the attempt to change the world miscarried (...) Having broken its pledge to be as one with reality or at the point of realization, philosophy is obliged ruthlessly to criticize itself" (Adorno 1973: 3). Hence, Adorno claims that *praxis*[12] is delayed for the time being. The new situation that Adorno succinctly summarized poses an insurmountable (if not even foundational) problem for the Frankfurt School whose whole theoretical effort and program revolved around revolutionary *praxis*.[13] In other words, almost thirty years after Horkheimer's inaugural essay, the question what is critical theory rises again. As Adorno notes: "The liquidation of theory by dogmatization and thought taboos contributed to the bad practice; the recovery of theory's independence lies in the interest of practice itself (...)

Marcuse's works have influenced movements of the time see chapter "Marcuse's Mentors: The American Counterculture and the Guru of the New Left" in Wheatland 2009.

11 Namely to the failed proletariat's revolution which remained in servitude precisely on the basis of its integration into the affluent society.

However this suggests that Adorno was convinced that revolution had its chance: "... he is thinking here of the period from the Russian Revolution and the later stages of the First World War to fascism taking power in Italy, Germany and Spain and the show trial in Moscow" (Freyenhagen 2014: 4).

12 *Praxis* has at least six meanings in Adorno's writings: 1) as activity (*Tätigkeit*); 2) as productive labor; 3) as revolutionary activity; 4) as resistance and not joining in (*Widerstand* und *Nicht-Mitmachen*); 5) as *Aktionismus* and 6) as activity in a liberated society (Freyenhagen 2014: 6).

13 Hence Adorno called for revisiting Marxian theory: "The remaining theoretical inadequacies in Hegel and Marx became part of historical practice and can thus be newly reflected upon in theory, instead of thought bowing irrationally to the primacy of practice. Practice itself was an eminently theoretical concept" (Adorno 1973: 144).

with theory paralyzed and disparaged by the all-governing bustle, its mere existence, however impotent, bears witness against the bustle. This is why theory is legitimate and why it is hated; without it, there would be no changing the practice that constantly calls for change. Those who chide theory anachronistic obey the *topos* of dismissing (...) and the target is theoretically missed" (ibid: 143).

According to Adorno (1989) the reasons for theory falling behind bad practice is that Marx's emiseration thesis[14] proved to be wrong. The proletariat, whose historical task was to bring up the revolution, integrated into mass society and culture[15] thus leaving a void to be filled by "other" revolutionary agents. Finally socialism in the USSR, China and Asia presented a barrier to liberation. Hence, everything fits perfectly into the equation for the failure of critical theory as revolutionary theory: practical misgivings of Marx's theory, disappearance of the class that represented the immanent negation and contradiction and the defeat of the actually existing socialism as a desirable alternative to capitalism.

Being aware of the social and material conditions of late modernity, Adorno advocates the idea of right living and ethics of resistance.[16] Adorno proposes that one should adopt a defensive stance of resistance against the bad forms of life that late modernity structurally produces.[17] Although Adorno abandons revolutionary ethics, his idea of right living contains transformative potential that can be exerted through a democratic process: "We might even say that the quest for the good life is the quest for the right form of politics, if indeed such a right form of politics lies within the realm of what can be achieved today" (Adorno 2001: 176). However, Adorno is aware that even resistance is not completely harmless and that it can be turned easily into its opposite despite the noble cause of those involved: "A minimum is sufficient to turn the resistance to repression repressively against those who, as little as they wish to glorify their individual being, nonetheless do not renounce what they have become. The much invoked unity of theory and praxis has the tendency of slipping into the predominance of praxis" (Adorno 1998: 290). Adorno warns that even if resistance doesn't involve repression it can still provoke it.[18] Adorno clarifies this in the letter to Marcuse: "I would have to deny everything that

14 Marx (1995 [1867]) derives the emiseration thesis from an undertaken analysis of the economic development of capitalism. See section *The General Law of Capitalistic Accumulation* on p. 480.

15 Marcuse oriented himself to criticism of technology arguing that the integration into society was possible precisely on technological basis. Adorno (2002b [1947]) was, contrary to Marcuse, more concerned with "culture industry" that functioned as an integrative force.

16 "Wrong life cannot be lived rightly" (Adorno 2005, aphorism no. 18).

17 But it also refers to the experience of fascism: "Concrete possibilities of resistance nonetheless must be shown. For instance, one should investigate the history of euthanasia murders, which in Germany, (...), was not perpetrated to the full extent planned by the National Socialists (...) All political instruction finally should be centered upon the idea that Auschwitz should never happen again" (Adorno 1998: 203).

18 E.g. the shooting of Benno Ohnesorg. The police officer who shot him was acquitted of charges!

I think and know about the objective tendency if I wanted to believe that the student protest movement in Germany had even the tiniest prospect of effecting a social intervention. Because (...) it cannot do that its effect is questionable in two respects. Firstly, inasmuch as it inflames an undiminished fascist potential in Germany, without even caring about it. Secondly, insofar as it breeds in itself tendencies which (...) directly converge with fascism" (Adorno 1969: 131).

Although such a conclusion might be drawn, Adorno doesn't advocate withdrawal from the public sphere into the private nor is he a proponent of subjective inwardness. On the contrary, subjective inwardness makes one complicit in pseudo *praxis*: "Whatever an individual or a group may undertake against the totality they are part of is infected by the evil of that totality; and no less infected is he who does nothing at all (...) The individual who dreams of moral certainty is bound to fail, bound to incur guilt because, being harnessed to the social order, he has virtually no power over the conditions whose cry for change appeals to the moral *ingenium* (...) Without recourse to the material, no ought could issue from reason; yet once compelled to acknowledge its material in the abstract, as a condition of its own possibility, reason must not cut off its reflection on the specific material" (Adorno 1973: 243).

Critical theory suffers also from the same "illness" as (pseudo) *praxis*. And this "illness" revealed immanent problems in critical theory. Its theoretical assumptions are challenged and put to risk. Adorno is aware of this: "There is much to indicate that a knowledge crippled temporarily, at least, in its possible relation to practical change is not a blessing in itself either. Practice is put off and cannot wait; this is what ails even theory. But when a man can do nothing that will not threaten to turn out for the worst even if meant for the best, he will be bound to start thinking..." (ibid: 245). To respond to problems that critical theory is facing, Adorno gives precedence to theory over *praxis*,[19] and, thus, separates the unity of theory and *praxis* that was an emblematic feature of critical theory: "The Archimedian point—how might a nonrepressive praxis be possible, how might one steer between the alternatives of spontaneity and organization—this point, if it exists at all, cannot be found other than through theory" (Adorno 1998, 274). Actually, Adorno on numerous occasions rejected the idea that theory should directly inform *praxis*.[20] In *The New Manifesto*: "We

19 Adorno argues that this is the case with Marx as well: "Marx's *Theses on* Feuerbach cannot be correctly understood in abstraction from the historical (and societal) dimension but rather only in the context of the expectation of the revolution. Once this failed to realize, Marx retreated himself to a study (Adorno 2000 [1993]: 150).

20 Although Adorno and Marcuse share similar views about unmediated translation of theory into *praxis*, this, however, becomes a point of dispute in their *Correspondence*.

In the letter written to Adorno on April 5th Marcuse is explicit on this matter: "You know me well enough to know that I reject the unmediated translation of theory into praxis just as emphatically as you do" (Marcuse 1969: 125). However, Marcuse continues in disagreement: "I do believe that there are situations, moments, in which theory is pushed on further by praxis—situations and moments in which theory that is kept separate from praxis becomes untrue to itself. We cannot abolish from the world the

are not proposing any particular course of action" (Adorno & Horkheimer 2010, 46). Then again in an interview given to *Der Spiegel* on May 5th 1969 Adorno says: "In my writings, I have never offered a model for any kind of action or for some specific campaign (...) my thinking always has stood in a rather indirect relationship to praxis (...) I believe that a theory is much more 'capable of having practical consequences owing to the strength of its own objectivity than if it had subjected itself to praxis from the start. Today's unfortunate relationship between theory and praxis consists precisely in the fact that theory is subjected to a practical pre-censorship (...) I still believe that one should hold on to theory, precisely under the general coercion toward praxis in a functional and pragmatized world" (Adorno 2002a: 15–16).

Another reason why Adorno advocates the primacy of theory is its capability to reflect upon itself. While *praxis* may be blind, unreflective, (actionism that "devours its children"), theory has a unique feature of reflecting on itself. In a case of blocked revolutionary praxis precedence of theory over *praxis* is justified because: "If I have the concept of reflection, the concept of practice implicitly postulates that of theory (...) What makes theory more than a mere instrument of practice is the fact that it reflects on itself, and in so doing it rescinds itself as mere theory. It can achieve that only by targeting true practice" (Adorno and Horkheimer 2010: 57–58). This, of course, puts theory on a distance from violence[21]: "Only those who unreflectingly vented their hate and aggression upon them are guilty. One must labor against this lack of reflection, must dissuade people from striking outward without reflecting upon themselves. The only education that has any sense at all is an education toward critical self-reflection" (Adorno 1998: 193). Hence, a theorist who engages into critical examinations of given facts becomes part of resistance: "By contrast the uncompromisingly critical thinker, who neither signs over his consciousness nor lets himself be terrorized into action, is in truth the one who does not give in" (ibid: 292). What role does a theorist play in the resistance movement? In Adorno's view, a theorist becomes a scholarly activist, a public intellectual, who uses the means of mass media to reach wider audiences.[22] And hence a theorist acts more educationally and pedagogically rather than revolutionarily. [23] This puts Adorno at odds with Marcuse who would rather be among

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fact that these students are influenced by us (...) I am proud of that and am willing to come to terms with patricide, even though it hurts sometimes" (ibid: 125).

Adorno replied on May 5th asking for further discussion on this topic: "I know that we are quite close on the question of the relation between theory and practice, although we really do need to discuss this relationship thoroughly some time..." (Adorno 1969: 127).

21 However, Adorno permits violence aimed at combating fascist regimes.

22 Adorno's scholarly activism (as form of resistance) in Germany included frequent appearances on radio and television, examination of future teachers, etc.

23 One should remember that according to Marcuse (1929: 48) the philosopher's true nature is exemplified in Kierkegaards stepping out into the public sphere. In contrast to Marcuse, Adorno "...kept his ruthless critique of all things existing to the confines of the classroom and was quite uncomfortable with the idea of standing at the barricades,

students than on television and/or radio[24]: "On the other hand, it is certainly not at all superfluous to fortify this group with enlightened instruction against the non-public opinion. On the contrary, one could easily imagine that from this group something like cadres could develop, whose influence in the most diverse contexts would then finally reach the whole of society (...) the work of enlightenment will not be limited to these groups (...) it would be necessary to educate the educators themselves (...) It is absolutely imperative that universities strengthen a sociology (...) pedagogy should set itself the task *re-education*..." (Adorno 1998: 100).

Hence, the task of the "new" critical theory, as Adorno conceives it, is to create a new subjectivity[25], to liberate subjects from their immersion into *pseudo-praxis* and to enable a change in the consciousness of the agents: "Pseudo-reality is conjoined with, as its subjective attitude, pseudo-activity: action that overdoes and aggravates itself for the sake of its own publicity, without admitting to itself to what extent it serves as a substitute satisfaction, elevating itself into an end in itself. People locked in desperately want to get out. In such situations one doesn't think anymore, or does so only under fictive premises. Within absolutized praxis only reaction is possible and therefore false. Only thinking could find an exit (...) The situation can be changed, if at all, by undiminished insight. The leap into praxis does not cure thought of resignation as long as it is paid for with the secret knowledge that that really isn't the right way to go" (ibid: 291).

Although Adorno "divorced" the theory/*praxis* couplet by giving precedence to the former, he still holds that both don't stand at opposite ends. In Adorno's

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even as a public intellectual. One could say that Adorno was amiss in this personal shortcoming, in terms of pressing critical theory beyond the ivory tower (...) In many ways, Marcuse *acted on critical theory* in ways that Adorno never wanted to and never could" (Macdonald 2018: 534–535).

24 This signals, as *Der Spiegel* observed, an unnatural move by critical theory, a return to the ivory tower to which Adorno replied: "I am not at all afraid of the term 'ivory tower.' (Adorno 2002a [1969]: 15).

Adorno's statement could be explained from the fact that he maintained that division of labor yields better results. Hence, revolutionists and theorists should stick to their own specialties. Adorno offers an example: "The theory that is not conceived as an instruction for its realization should have the most hope for realization, analogous to what occurred in the natural sciences between atomic theory and nuclear fission; what they had in common, the backtracking to a possible praxis, lay in the technologically oriented reason in-itself, not in any thoughts about application" (Adorno 1998: 277).

25 Adorno notes the collectivization of subjectivity in consumerist society: "The concept of personality cannot be saved. In the age of its liquidation, however, something in it should be preserved: the strength of the individual not to entrust himself to what blindly sweeps down upon him, likewise not to blindly make himself resemble it (...) The force of the 'I', which formerly was contained in the ideal of personality (...) and now threatens to vanish, is the force of consciousness, of rationality. It is essentially responsible for reality-testing (...) Only if the individual incorporates objectivity within himself and in a certain sense, namely consciously, adjusts to it, can he develop the resistance to it" (ibid: 165).

view the common denominator that binds both together is that both are a form of activity: "A consciousness of theory and praxis must be produced that neither divides the two such that theory becomes powerless and praxis becomes arbitrary (...) Thinking is a doing, theory a form of praxis (...) Thinking has a double character: it is immanently determined and rigorous, and yet an inalienably real mode of behavior in the midst of reality" (ibid: 8, 261). The point of dispute between Marcuse and Adorno was precisely the relation between theory and *praxis*. Marcuse and Adorno's students accused him of betraying his own theory, of closing himself off into the ivory tower. However, this accusation is not completely founded. Adorno can't be reproached for abandonment or deviation from the fundamental postulates of critical theory. Adorno was aware that both theory and *praxis* must be and act in unity. For the transition to occur from pseudo reality into reality one has first to analyze and interpret the social order. Adorno was against blind and unenlightened actionism[26]: "The neediness of the object is mediated via the total societal system; for that reason it can be determined critically only by theory. Praxis without theory, lagging behind the most advanced state of cognition, cannot but fail, and praxis, in keeping with its own concept, would like to succeed. False praxis is no praxis. Desperation that, because it finds the exits blocked, blindly leaps into praxis, with the purest of intentions joins forces with catastrophe. The hostility to theory in the spirit of the times, the by no means coincidental withering away of theory, its banishment by an impatience that wants to change the world without having to interpret it..." (ibid: 265).

The End of Utopia and the Return to the Old Institute

In the first part of the paper I have attempted to outline Horkheimer's, Marcuse's and Adorno's conception of critical theory and *praxis*. I have, then, proceeded to demonstrate how both Marcuse and Adorno remained, in different ways, dedicated to their common project. Adorno noticed that changed historical circumstances required adjustment of critical theory. Hence Adorno's efforts were directed to preserving critical theory by keeping it in constant check with reality. Marcuse undertook an identical effort with the same goal in his philosophical inquiry into Freud. Although the causes of disagreement should be sought in crucial differences (if there were any) between Adorno's and Marcuse's understanding of theory and *praxis*, the necessary complement to this endeavor is offered in the letter exchange between the two. Here one can see how besides their different paths in developing critical theory, context related content added to their mutual disagreement. Commenting on the publication of the correspondence between Adorno and Horkheimer, Sünker explaines how revealing the letters are for better understanding critical theory:

26 An example of blind and unmediated actionism was the importing of guerilla tactics into Western democracies: "Models that do not prove themselves even in the Bolivian bush cannot be exported" (ibid: 269–270).

"Publication of the first two volumes of the correspondence between Adorno and Horkheimer in the years between 1927 and 1944 is a significant contribution to the history of the early development of critical theory (...) The editors' commentary offers important insights into historical and theoretical contexts as well as into the personalities of the people who feature in these letters" (Sünker 2007: 129). Hence, in this part of the paper the focus switches to the Marcuse/Adorno correspondence.

The period in which Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse collaborated and "co-signed" publications came to an end.[27] Around 1950 Horkheimer and Adorno returned to West Germany where they formally reestablished the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, while Marcuse remained in the U.S. One might argue that this topographical (and more importantly contextual) separation of the trio ignited the whole (wrongly perceived) "controversy" over the separation of theory and *praxis*. From this point on the two will part in the understanding of critical theory and its relation to *praxis*. However, as I have attempted to argue, their positions on critical theory were not on opposite poles. The disagreement between them was partly the result of contextual abstraction. Should *praxis* push forward theory or should it be postponed – the question that shaped the letter exchange - was to a certain extent context related.[28] In the letter to Marcuse dated May 5th Adorno emphasizes the importance of knowing the context in order to form an opinion: "It seems to me that it is virtually impossible to form an opinion about the affair from six thousand miles away..." (Adorno 1969: 126). The (historical) situation in Germany could not be translated unmediatedly into the U.S. or vice versa. Hence, critical theory needed to be revised. It should be mentioned that Marcuse still harbored the hope of the three of them reuniting in Germany.[29] However, Marcuse would remain in exile for the rest of his life, and probably, as he felt it, in exile from their "Old Institute". After Adorno and Horkheimer's homecoming and Marcuse's stay in exile, tensions started to build slowly. First they had a mild disagreement about the Cold War that took a more serious tone in the case of the Vietnam War. However, what marked a turning point in the Marcuse-Adorno relationship were the events with the student's movements in Germany.

Students were convinced that critical theorists had become critical only on paper while remaining largely conformist in *praxis*.[30] Leslie notes: "Students

27 In the 1960 Marcuse said that he considers everything written by Horkheimer as co-signed by him (Siegel 2012: 407).

28 It should be mentioned that in their works Marcuse and Adorno use context-transcendent concepts. It was not only the experience of the Holocaust or World War II that affected Adorno's position on theory and praxis but also the level of sophistication of social domination in late capitalism.

29 Marcuse expressed his wish to return in numerous letters to Horkheimer. And this wish grew stronger after Marcuse lost his wife (Siegel 2012: 400).

30 A leaflet distributed by sociology students in December stated: "Frankfurt Schülers, 'left idiots of the authoritarian state', had become 'critical in theory, conformist in practice' (...) and it quoted Horkheimer's *Dämmerung* from 1934: 'A revolutionary career

versed in critical theory were demanding that theoretical critique turn into practical political action. Theory was a brake on the movement, alleged some, as they denounced fellow students—mocked as Adornites and Habermice—for promoting theory for theory's sake and disregarding their professors' function as a left alibi for bourgeois society" (ibid: 119).

Marcuse was heralded as the official prophet of the student movement. He was proclaimed to be the father (and sometimes called grandfather) of the New Left. It was to be expected that across the ocean Adorno would assume a similar position at the forefront of the students' movements enjoying the same god-like status as Marcuse. Yet, while Marcuse was celebrated, Adorno has fallen from grace. He became the target of a series of attacks (on a personal and institutional level) and was subjected to students' criticism by performative actionism.[31] Adorno's obituary was written on leaflets distributed by a radical wing of sociology students: "Adorno as institution is dead [Adorno als Institution ist tot]" (Kraushaar 1998: 418). The campaign even went further to accuse Adorno of being a supporter of capitalism which, of course, was perceived as betrayal of the programmatic orientation of critical theory: "Whoever gives dear Adorno control will preserve capitalism for the rest of the life [Wer nur den lieben Adorno läßt walten, der wird den Kapitalismus sein Leben lang bewalten]" (Kraushaar 1998). Hence, the magazine *Konkret* declared Marcuse to be "the only remaining member of the Frankfurt School who supports those who want to realize the goals of critical theory..." (ibid: 432).

Surprisingly Adorno received the most voiceful and ardent criticism from his PhD student and member of SDS Hans-Jürgen Krahl. In the paper *The Political Contradiction in Adorno's Critical Theory* Krahl accused Adorno of deviating from the foundations of critical theory and of separating theory and *praxis*: "But his critical option, that any philosophy if it is to be true, must be immanently oriented towards the practical transformation of social reality, loses its binding force if it is not as well capable of defining itself in organizational categories. Adorno's dialectical concept of negation moved more and more away from the historical necessity of the partisanship of theory, which had once been part of Horkheimer's specific differentiation between critical and conventional theory, when he postulated the 'dynamic unity' between the theoretician and the oppressed class" (Krahl 1975: 832).

On January 31st 1969 Adorno called the police who arrested 76 students in an attempt of occupying the Institute.[32] Marcuse saw this as siding with the oppressive apparatus. In the letter dated April 5th 1969 he writes to Adorno:

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does not lead to banquets and honorary titles, interesting research and professorial wages. It leads to misery, disgrace, ingratitude, prison and into the unknown, illuminated by only an almost superhuman belief" (Leslie 1999: 119).

31 E.g. Adorno's lectures were interrupted by a performance of female students who exposed their naked breasts to him and forcefully tried to kiss him.

32 This was in line with Dutschke's and Krahl's views on the changed function of the university that could act as the urban guerilla shelter for the Außerparlamentarische Opposition, ApO (Leslie 1999: 120).

"To put it brutally: if the alternative is the police or left-wing students, then I am with the students..." (Marcuse 1969: 125). That event and subsequent repercussions became the focal point of Adorno's and Marcuse's disagreement on theory, *praxis* and the use of violence. In the letter to Adorno dated April 5th Marcuse stresses how significantly things have changed for him: "Since my last letter, the situation has changed decisively for me: for the first time, I have read more detailed reports about the events in Frankfurt, and I have also received a face-to-face report from a Frankfurt student who 'was there'" (*ibid*). Albeit, the discussion (that otherwise could have yielded fruitful ideas on rethinking critical theory in changed social circumstances) took place in letters and thus were completely devoid of any context related peculiarities such as two opposing students' movements in Germany: the RCDS and the SDS. Marcuse experienced happenings in Germany only through writings and he was lacking first hand experiencing the atmosphere that surrounded students' movements. Hence, the cause of disagreement between the two rests - to use Marx's term – in the alienation from social beings (Marcuse's from Germany and Adorno's from U.S.).[33]

Marcuse had a pending invitation to come to Frankfurt and to give a lecture. However he insisted on speaking with students as well, to which Adorno objected claiming that he has to put the Institute's interests first (adding the emphatic reminder "old"). In the letter dated May 5th 1969 Adorno writes: "...I have to look out for the interests of the Institute—our old Institute, Herbert—and these interests would be directly endangered by such a circus, believe me..." (Adorno 1969: 126–127). Marcuse was certain (and perhaps this certainty came from the fact that he was offended by not joining Horkheimer and Adorno in Germany and resuming work on their common project) that the "old Institute" doesn't exist anymore, that there is a significant difference compared to the Institute of the 1930s. Marcuse writes in the letter dated June 4th 1969: "No Teddy, it is not our old Institute, into which the students have infiltrated. You know as well as I how essential the work in present-day Germany is" (Marcuse 1969: 128–129). According to Marcuse the essential difference in the work of the Institute is abstinence from taking concrete political positions. Marcuse explains this in the same letter: "You know that we are united in the rejection of any unmediated politicization of theory. But our (old) theory has an internal political content, an internal political dynamic, that today, more than ever before, compels us to concrete political positions (...) in order to still be our 'old Institute', we have to write and act differently today than in the thirties" (ibid: 129). If one has to extract one main reason of Adorno/Marcuse disagreement, then this issue certainly is the leading cause. In other words, this has to do with the unity of theory and *praxis*.

As I have already mentioned in the first part of the paper, Adorno didn't bluntly separate theory and *praxis*. Adorno (rightly) thought that *praxis* was blocked for the time being and that there wasn't any (true) revolutionary agent.

33 With whom critical theory was always inseparably connected and to whom critical theory was dedicated.

Marcuse firmly believed the opposite.[34] In the letter to Adorno dated July 21st 1969 Marcuse was adamant in his conviction: "I certainly do believe that the student movement does have the prospect of 'effecting a social intervention'. I am thinking here mainly of the United States, but also France (my stay in Paris reinforced that once again) and South America" (ibid: 133).

One can note that throughout the Adorno/Marcuse correspondence Marcuse cited examples from the U.S. to support his claim that the revolution is possible while Adorno was more preoccupied with the situation in Germany. In this fact rests the error: the two contexts can't be compared. And neither can an unmediated and simple translation of methods from one into the another be expected. As Jeffries wittingly writes: "While Marcuse dreamed of utopia in America, Adorno despaired in Europe" (Jeffries 2016: 286). Adorno indeed had a justified reason for desperation. He was constantly vigilant for the return of fascism. Hence, Adorno's public appearances, his defense of liberal democracy (to which Marcuse had objections), his insistence on education and critical pedagogy, his views on the students' movements; all this should be understood as an effort to prevent the return of fascism onto the European soil. Even Krahl was aware that the experience of fascism shaped Adorno (and I may add Marcuse as well[35]): "The fascist terror (...) also injures the subjectivity of the theoretician and reinforces the class barriers to his ability of theoretical perception (...) He shared the ambivalence of the political consciousness of many critical intellectuals in Germany who imagine that socialist action from the left is actually arousing the potential fascist terror from the right against which it is fighting" (Krahl 1975: 831–832). Yet Krahl's comment should not be taken lightly or taken against Adorno as Krahl did. Adorno was a dialectician and he witnessed too many times: "...the indifference of each individual life that is the direction of history. Even in his formal freedom, the individual is as fungible and replaceable as he will be under the liquidators' boots" (Adorno 1973: 362).

As a dialectician Adorno was aware that every movement can turn into its opposite. In the letter to Marcuse dated May 5th 1969 Adorno comments on Habermas' expression "left fascism" and voices his fears about German student movements: "...might not a movement, by the force of its immanent antinomies, transform itself into its opposite?" (Adorno 1969: 128).[36] But not only can a movement end in its opposite, it can also provoke a counter-movement. This was the case in Germany. Hence, Adorno's fears, arguments and theoretical

34 And this is perfectly in line with Marcuse's constant search for the revolutionary subject and his constant dream of revolution (Višić 2017).

However, both Marcuse and Adorno have agreed that the situation is far from a revolutionary one. In the letter dated 5th April 1969 Marcuse writes: "We know (and [students] know) that the situation is not a revolutionary one, not even a prerevolutionary one" (Marcuse 1969: 125).

35 E.g. Marcuse's 1965 essay *Repressive* Tolerance should be understood in light of suppressing movements with fascistic tendencies.

36 And Marcuse replied in the letter dated June 4th 1969 that not every contradiction is dialectical.

positions were justified.[37] Note how Marcuse mentions only left students while being completely unaware of other 1968ers (namely RCDS[38]). The main reason for Marcuse's unawareness was biased media reports. Immediately after writing report to Marcuse about the incident with the police, Adorno warns him that: "The propaganda is presenting things entirely back to front, as if it were we who grasped at repressive measures, and not the students who yelled at us that we should shut our traps and say nothing about what happened. This is just to put you in the picture, in case rumors and rather colorful accounts should filter through to you" (Adorno 1969: 124). However, the media's one-sided reporting wasn't limited only to the incident in Frankfurt. Rather it seems to have been the general media policy. As Goltz argues: "Most accounts portray the events in West Berlin as having been characterized by confrontations between the leftist student movement, on the one hand, and a conservative press and generally hostile, older, urban population, on the other" (Goltz 2017: 8). RCDS rose in opposition to SDS: "Instead of expressing gratitude to their American protectors, radical students now routinely criticized and defied the United States, whose forces still occupied the city (...) Christian Democratic students (...) had a drastically different sense of what political commitment ought to entail in a city encircled by a socialist dictatorship" (Goltz 2017: 91). It wasn't only Adorno (1969: 131) who thought that the left student movement can ignite the fascist potential in Germany without giving it a second thought. Rather, the view that SDS failed to notice totalitarian similarities between fascism and communism was shared by RCDS as well: "Instead of recognizing the parallels between Nazism and Communism, which were so clearly apparent to him [Wohlrabe], they were focused on political repression in far-flung places and no longer cared about the fate of Germans to the east of the Iron Curtain" (Goltz 2017: 96).

Instead of Conclusion: weitermachen!

What was first intended to be an "unlimited discussion" ended without an epilogue. Marcuse and Adorno never got a chance to discuss their differences in person. Adorno died on the same day that he sent his last letter to Marcuse.

37 There was a real sense of fascism returning to the streets of Germany: "Thousands of left-wing activists from across the globe came together to voice their opposition to the war in Vietnam, which had reached its bloody zenith with the beginning of the Tet Offensive the previous month. At a protest march following the event, thousands of young activists marched through the city's streets to animated shouts of "Ho- Ho-Ho Chi Minh"—a new and provocative display of direct action that many ordinary West Berliners perceived as menacing and reminiscent of the 1930s" (Goltz 2017: 106).

38 Goltz argues: "Christian Democratic activists are portrayed in most histories of the student movement as marginal—and often simplistic—characters that enter the scene sporadically to express their 'reactionary' views" (ibid: 90). This may also be the case with media coverage. According to Goltz student movement from the right was underestimated. In 1967 SDS had 2500 members and RCDS only 200 members less (ibid: 91). Perhaps Adorno knew better (from his experience) not to underestimate them.

Davis (2005) said that the important lesson she got from Marcuse is that being an activist and a scholar doesn't necessarily preclude each other. In its most exceptional and radical form activism meant, for Marcuse, being at the barricades and allowing theory to be further pushed by *praxis*. Adorno thought that theorizing in the ivory tower is also a form of activity. However, this would be a crude oversimplification. Accusations raised against Adorno have no merit. Adorno didn't separate theory and *praxis* and thus detached himself from Horkheimer's conception of the critical theory. Adorno perceived that *praxis* was currently blocked and that theory needs to be recalibrated and adjusted to fit more precisely to the context in Germany.[39] Furthermore Adorno feared that the student movement could end in its opposite or that it can provoke more violence. Marcuse, however, remained dedicated to the radical *praxis* of liberation. However, he was unaware of the countermovement in Germany which had different views on *praxis* than their left counterpart. The whole Marcuse/Adorno debate over the separation of theory and *praxis* is defined by contextual abstraction. If Marcuse had managed to come to Germany as planned and to be engaged in the context, he might have changed his mind and perhaps resumed working on revisiting the critical theory alongside Adorno and Horkheimer.

Since the definite closure on the Adorno/Marcuse debate is missing, one can only "carry on". Today one continues to witness the re-emergence of radical social movements that refuse that which negates "us". Hence, Marcuse's thought and his activist version of critical theory seems to be relevant to the renewal of a radical *praxis* and "great refusal". The *praxis* of resistance carried by the "great refusal" is directed against the system of a total domination that negates the human being. However, in the context of the *praxis* of (blindly) refusing everything,[40] it would be worthwhile to remember Adorno's suggestion that the world must first be (re)interpreted before it can be refused and negated in *praxis*. Theory can reflect on itself while *praxis* lacks this capability and it can often be driven by instincts rather than by reason. This is perhaps the most important lesson from Adorno. Otherwise there is a danger of falling into a blind and unmediated actionism that, instead of refusing pseudo reality, contributes more to the preservation of the established "reality principle". It is in the tradition and legacy of Adorno and Marcuse that contemporary radical *praxis* and critical theory should "weitermachen!" until such a thing as a "society of aesthetic ethos" becomes a new "reality principle".

39 It should be pointed out that although Adorno's letters to Marcuse might display a particular dose of sensitivity for "the German context", Adorno's later works do not attach importance to particular nation-state context – they deal with capitalism as a global and "totalizing" phenomenon. One can argue that Adorno seems to operate on two different levels of abstraction: a higher one in his works and a lower one evident in the correspondence.

Even in his letters to Marcuse, Adorno's perspective is significantly shaped by his later works that, broadly speaking, could be understood as elaboration of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

40 That would be undialectical.

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Maroje Višić

Kula od slonovače i barikade: Markuze i Adorno o razdvajanju teorije od prakse

Apstrakt

Događaji iz 1968/69. su inicirali raspravu između Adorna i Markuzea oko (navodnog) odvajanja teorije od prakse. Dok je Markuze „stajao na barikadama" Adorno je težio da se osami u „kuli od slonovače". Markuze i nemački studenti su Adornov potez videli kao odstupanje od osnovnih postulata kritičke teorije kako ih je Horkhajmer postavio 1937. godine u svom eseju. Adorno je preminuo tokom procesa razjašnjavanja svojih neslaganja sa Markuzeom, te je „neprestana diskusija" između njih ostala nedovršena. Ovaj rad teži da ispita kako su Markuze i Adorno ostali posvećeni jedinstvu teorije i prakse ali na drugačiji način. Tvrdiću da Adorno nije odvajao teoriju od prakse. Umesto toga on je video jaz između kritičke teorije i konkretne istorijske situacije. Adorno je odbacivao jednostavno i nerefleksivno prevođenje teorije u praksu. Dakle, Adorno je pokušao da rekalibrira kritičku teoriju. Razlike između Markuzea i Adorna leže u njihovim različitim procenjivanjima studentskog pokreta, a to (pogrešno) procenjivanje je vezano za kontekst. Moj drugi argument će biti da je rasprava između Markuzea i Adorna delimično uslovljena njihovim odsustvom iz konkretnog istorijskog konteksta.

Ključne reči: Markuze, Adorno, Horkhajmer, prepiska, kritička teorija, praksa, akcionizam, 1968, 1969, studentski pokret, Frankfurtska škola