

the parts and ends up in a crude form of structuralism. This, of course, is fully consonant with his inability to totalize or seek a totalizing science. "At this point, an 'empirical' theory of the kind described . . . becomes almost indistinguishable from a myth. In order to realize this, we need only consider that because of its all-pervasive character, a myth such as the myth of witchcraft and of demonic possession would possess a high degree of confirmation on the basis of observation."⁸ Hence, empiricism of the variety of Gouldner's theory has never solved the Humean problem of the possibility of science, *i.e.*, it invariably leads to skepticism. For those radicals (in Marx's sense of the word) who are concerned with the possibility of knowledge, the direction must be towards a dialectical phenomenological Marxism where all previous "sciences" are sublated (*Aufgehoben*): "It is a specification of what the science of man involves if it is to be grasped as an *encompassing totality* which is therefore 'encyclic' and self-reflective on all levels, and not a whole linearly constructed out of a set of separately constituted elements and reflections that is brought together by an unaccounted for activity or 'agent' seen as imposing an external form to an *already given and determined content*. 'Man-in the world' is a singular non-linear experience, and the subject of such an experience must regard the subject-object relation as strictly co-relative on all dimensions."⁹

Cyril Levitt

T.W. Adorno, *Aufsätze zur Gesellschaftstheorie und Methodologie* (Frankfurt a/M, 1970).

To characterize this new collection of essays by Adorno, published separately over a number of years, would be to falsify it. In going for its character it would go by its essence; it would abbreviate what Adorno works to write out and articulate in full – dialectical thought. Marx's concept of capitalism, Marcuse once wrote, is nothing short of all the volumes of *Capital*. And Adorno's thought is nothing short of its complete content. It is dialectical not in name or reputation, not by label or rumor, but in essence. It is unexpurgated reality, pornographic to connoisseurs of clean categories and approved logic. Adorno seeks to uncover the covered, to find the moment of negation promising the liberation that he and Horkheimer once wrote inheres in the image of "das Essen von Blumen" (the eating of flowers).¹ Adorno tells the secret. What he once wrote of Spengler – that his affinity for domination gave him profound insight whenever it was a question of its possibilities – reversed can be said of himself; Adorno's affinity for liberation, for the non-identical, the nuance provided him with a profound insight whenever it was a question of its existence, its survival, its hope, or its denial.

Adorno's thought is more than intransigence before reification in being

⁸P.K. Feyerabend, "Problems of Empiricism", *Beyond the Edge of Certainty*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967), p. 178.

⁹M. Kosok, "Dialectics of Nature", in *Telos*, No. 6, Fall 1970.

¹M. Horkheimer, T.W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Amsterdam, 1947), p. 81.

exactly that; he executes what others mouth. Reification has become a pass word for reification; under the brand of authenticity, more of the same is retailed. The lesson is instructive: no critical concept is immune to depletion. As the concept is fetishized to escape reification is cursed to repeat it. The fetishized concept, like the utopian community, succumbs, both presupposing a degree of autonomy that is obsolete. The concept of ideology is an example of a concept that, once isolated, was tamed enough not to frighten the most timid of sociologists paid to neutralize thought, not evaluate it. The concept of ideology is today ideological.² The same is in store for reification. Adorno writes here, "reified consciousness does not end there where the concept of reification has a place of honor." (p. 152).

Adorno breaks the spell of reification by spelling it out. Reification is not dissolved by naming it or fleeing it, but by penetrating it, and finally undoing it. In *Negative Dialektik* he wrote, "Thought is easily comforted in imagining the dissolution of reification . . . But reification itself is a form of reflection of false objectivity. The theory which centers on it as a form of consciousness makes critical theory in an idealist form acceptable to the prevailing consciousness and collective unconscious. The present preference for the early writings of Marx, as opposed to *Capital*, is due to that . . . The evil lies in the conditions, not primarily in the men and the manner the conditions appear to them . . ."³ The 'orthodoxy' seems a surprise, as if Adorno remembers he is a Marxist after all, and it is the conditions that hurt, not consciousness of those conditions. But the surprise is only for those who have lost contact with Adorno's thought, and whose categories are grooved to fit the groovy, not the dialectical. Adorno's orthodoxy is heretical to the orthodox who, having given up thought for texts, are suspicious of those who have not. But Adorno remains true to Marx, not by repetition, but by articulation. He is orthodox against the orthodox, and revisionist against the revisionists. In an essay in this collection "Late Capitalism or Industrial Society?" Adorno insists on the relevance of the concept of capitalism as well as that of class. "That one cannot speak of a proletariat class consciousness in the leading capitalist lands does not refute in itself, in contradiction to common opinion, the existence of classes: classes are determined by the position in relation to the means of production, not through consciousness of its members." (p. 153).

Another essay "Sociology and Psychology" in part examines Freudian revisionism, and in common with other Frankfurt School critiques,⁴ the revisionists, here Anna Freud, are presented as blunting once critical concepts. With the intention of updating and socializing Freudian concepts they have streamlined and synchronized them: the revised is recast so as to better fit. Yet it is not a question of choosing Freud or the revisionists, orthodoxy or

²Mannheim was decisive in this development. See the early critiques of Horkheimer and Marcuse. Horkheimer, "Ein neuer Ideologiebegriff?" (1930) reprinted in *Ideologie*, ed. K. Lenk (Neuwied, 1964) and Marcuse, "Zur Wahrheitsproblematik der soziologischen Methode," *Die Gesellschaft* (1929), p. 356f.

³T.W. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt a/Main, 1966), p. 189.

⁴See Adorno's "Die revidierte Psychoanalyse," *Sociologica II* (Frankfurt, 1962) and Marcuse's "Neo-Freudian Revisionism," in *Eros and Civilization*.

revisionism. Revisionism implies conformity, and orthodoxy, despite Lukács' efforts in "What is orthodox Marxism?", implies repressive dogma. Adorno practices neither. But he practices something, and the recent writings of Jürgen Habermas and Albrecht Wellmer, consciously engaged in redefining and reorientating critical theory, raises the question as to what. The final and most recent essays in this collection are critiques of Popper, and positivist philosophy and sociology. While in this debate there was a 'united front' with Habermas and Wellmer along with Adorno defending dialectical thought, perhaps here one can find elements that distinguish Adorno's thought from their current efforts.

A nodal point of Adorno's critique of Popper, et al, here, and in general of the Frankfurt School's critique of positivism, is that of clarity. Adorno cites Wittgenstein's famous sentence that all that can be thought, can be clearly thought. Since Descartes this main line of bourgeois thought has not changed; it assumes a non-contradictory reality, a harmony between subject and object. Adorno notes that "clarity is a moment in the process of cognition, not its one and all." (p. 228). The hypostatization of clarity forms a central unconscious dialectic of bourgeois thought that drives it into regression. "Cognition resigns to repetitive duplication. It grows impoverished like life under the work ethic." (p. 233).

The fury with which pursuers of clear and non-contradictory logic denounce speculative or dialectical thought as poetry or art point to other than mere theoretical differences.⁵ Rather 'enlightened' thought is inextricably committed to the realm of physical fear and uncertainty that it hoped to leave by mastering: in mastering it was mastered. The instinctual roots are outlined by Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. "Enlightenment is radical sedimented mythic Angst . . . It must leave nothing outside because the mere conception of outside is the authentic source of Angst."⁶ In its flight from Angst and the brutality and uncertainty of outside reality, positivism offers absolute security and reassurance in the form of clarity. Adorno writes here "the longing to live in a world without Angst, satisfies itself with the pure self equality of thought." (p. 235). Positivism is a numbers game for those who, too fearful of losing, beat the system by turning runners for it. The non-identical, the allogical succumbs or is extirpated. The non-defined is defined or proscribed. The unsayable is said or forbidden. All is here and now, or nowhere and never. Either/or reads either – or else.

Against this capitulation to the conformity of security, dialectical thought takes chances – chances to go beyond the facts in comprehending them as well as to be wrong by the facts. Hegel wrote in the *Phenomenology* that the "position which, while calling itself fear of error, makes itself known rather as fear of the truth." And he asks why rather than fearing error "we should not take care lest the fear of error is not just the initial error."⁷ The divisions and departments that certainty and security construct to defend themselves –

⁵See Adorno's long footnote (p. 221) on the "positivist use of the concept of art" that concludes that opposition to art is identical with opposition to theory "Kunst-und Theorie-feindschaft sind im Kern identisch."

⁶*Dialektik der Aufklärung*, p. 27.

⁷Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind* (New York, 1964), p. 132-3.

between science and art, true and false, individual and society – are resisted, but not wished away by dialectical thought; they are recognized and mediated. The departmentalization of phantasy, or its mere defamation, writes Adorno, is a “primal form of the regression of bourgeois Geist.” (p. 227). It is no accident that the French surrealists, such as Breton, were drawn to Hegel and dialectical thought, or that Marcuse has been drawn to the surrealists.

The relation of dialectical and positivist thought to phantasy and facts, risk and security, transcendence and conformity coalesce in their relation to the ideal of science. And it is here – at least provisionally – in the relation of dialectical thought to science that distinguishes Adorno from the recent writings of Wellmer and Habermas. Since Marx the concept has changed decisively. “The traditional ideal of science which once helped philosophy to free itself from the fetters of theology, has itself meanwhile become a fetter which forbids thought to think,” Adorno wrote elsewhere.⁸ In his critique of Popper, Adorno notes the “intertwining of conformism and the self-enthronement of science.” (p. 180).

Wellmer’s book *Kritische Gesellschaftstheorie und Positivismus*⁹, which presents itself as an interpretation of Habermas’s work, argues for reorientation of some of the main tenants of the Frankfurt School. It is in part an argument for ‘scientization’ or making scientific (“Verwissenschaftlichung”) the Frankfurt School’s critique. This though is not simply valued for itself; rather it is to aid in breaking out of the “double isolation” that, according to Wellmer, critical theory suffers from, “in the context of science *and* in the context of politics.” For critical theory, following Wellmer, originated as a protest against the objective, technological moment in Marx that seemed to guarantee revolution regardless of the subjective participation. Its emphasis on the subjective was a radicalization of Marx, but over the course of years the bond that existed in Marx between the critique of political economy – a critique of consciousness – and a theory of revolution tended to dissolve. Critical theory became a critique of ideology, of instrumental reason, distant from praxis. The “Verwissenschaftlichung” of critical theory is then to regain praxis. The direction that this “Verwissenschaftlichung” takes is informed by two propositions: that the Marxist concept of class has lost much content, and that science has become a decisive productive force. That means that the interest in emancipation is to be awakened within, as it were, science itself, which entails a “critical coming to terms with contemporary scientific theory.”

The specific content of the “Verwissenschaftlichung” is more important than mere concern to advance it. And here it would seem that not unlike the Freudian revisionists, there is a tendency to blunt the sting of the concepts, to find neutral equivalents for nonneutral concepts, to use current sociological terms, mere descriptive ones, for philosophical. For Habermas¹⁰ the relation

⁸T. W. Adorno, *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie* (Stuttgart, 1956), p. 51-2.

⁹Frankfurt a/Main, 1969.

¹⁰This reading of Habermas is essentially based on the Suhrkamp collection *Technik und Wissenschaft als 'Ideologie'* (Frankfurt, 1968), and in particular the main essay which is a critique of Marcuse’s interpretation of Weber, English translation published in *Negations* (Boston, 1968). It should be noted that while here Habermas and Wellmer are treated as

between productive forces and the mode of production are diluted to that of work and interaction, and those again to "purposive action" and "communicative action" or symbolic interaction. Liberation is redefined as "unrestricted and domination-free discussion."

To Wellmer and Habermas, Marx is guilty of a determinism that objectively links two spheres, work and revolution or purposive action and interaction. But this tendentious reading of Marx¹¹ is followed by an analysis that replaces an alleged determinism with a real one, one insisting the two realms are distinct and the former unchangeable.¹² The science of purposive actions is cleanly severed from that of interaction or technical rules from social norms. Marcuse's calling for a new science and a new technology is to Habermas mystical in origin, confusing what cannot be changed, the reason of science, with what can be, the reason of interaction. The contradictions that Horkheimer long ago indicated in science itself as part of and distinct from a contradictory reality, in "Bermerkung ueber Wissenschaft und Krise"¹³ dissolve into a dynamic, and the goal is not to liberate science, but confine it to its sphere, and open up distortion-free communication. The dialectic of class and consciousness, productive forces and means of production, subject and object, disappear, exchanged, as it were, for a communication that replaces revolution with a committee on national priorities. While some would burden science and technology with all the ills of mankind, and ignore the decisive social relations, Habermas absolves them in extracting them from the social relations which are then reduced to symbolic interaction. Neither is correct. The subjective moment that was to be sustained – and that the early Frankfurt School did rescue – is adulterated to a bad subjectivity which was the illness to be cured. Theory in the name of science is cleansed of the remnants of utopia in the name of a new praxis. The new praxis, freed from the negativity of aesthetic, philosophical and cultural critiques, forgets the way in showing the way.

The orthodox form of critical theory is not to be defended mindlessly against any and all revisions. Rather the revisions themselves recognize the truth that dialectical thought if it is to remain dialectical must change. The dualism of orthodoxy and revisionism is itself part of the orthodoxy which is not to be identical, the differences are important, and perhaps decisive. Crucial is that the "Verwissenschaftlichung" that Wellmer argues for includes a concrete social and economic analysis of the reproduction mechanism of capitalism – a concern that Habermas has so far passed by.

¹¹Cf. Lukács' review of Bucharin's *Theory of Historical Materialism*, in *New Left Review*, 39(Sept-Oct, 1966). Lukács wrote, "Bucharin attributes to technology a far too determinant position which completely misses the *spirit* of dialectical materialism. (It is undeniable that quotations from Marx and Engels can be found, which *it is possible* to interpret in this way) . . ." Lukács traces Bucharin's misinterpretation to his positivist concept of science.

¹²This is most evident in a recent interpretation and extension of Habermas; see J. Shapiro, "One-Dimensionality: The Universal Semiotic of Technological Experience," in *Critical Interruptions: New Left Perspectives on Herbert Marcuse*, ed. P. Breines (N.Y., 1970). What to Marcuse is a quality of late capitalism, but is not identical with it, and hence is a qualifying adjective – one dimensional society, thought, etc., becomes here a noun, a thing itself, an unchangeable state: one-dimensionality.

¹³Reprinted in *Kritische Theorie der Gesellschaft*, Band I (Frankfurt, 1968).

revised, but re-thought. But whether the "Verwissenschaftlichung" has sharpened the critical edge is to be questioned. That critical theory has lost its relation with praxis may be true, but it may not be true that that can be regained by being less critical – by being more scientific. If science gives the security of an improved and neutral vocabulary, so it may give conformity of praxis. The speculative moment, the element of risk is inseparable from the spontaneity of the dialectical moment. It is no accident that Lukács closes his first formulation of "What is orthodox Marxism?" in *Taktik und Ethik* with a quote from Fichte: "So much worse for the facts."⁴⁴ Nor that Adorno's sentence "Whosoever follows the maxim safety-first, stands in danger of losing everything" (p. 227) is written in relation to the Vietnamese guerrilla struggle against the American bureaucratic war machine. If, as Horkheimer once wrote, pragmatism is the trade unionism of philosophy, so must be asked, whether these revisions are not the economism of critical theory.

Russell Jacoby

ALASDAIR MACINTYRE, *Marcuse: An Exposition and Polemic* (New York: Viking Press, 1970) 114 pps.*

The Fontana "Modern Masters" series seems to have been designed to blast out of the water the armada of subversive ideas that have recently invaded the fetid waters of British academic culture. If *Marcuse* by Alasdair MacIntyre, is anything to go by, the threatened barrage will only be a pop-gun salvo. From an interview with Frank Kermode, editor of the series, it emerges that this is intended to be "the first, and last, book about Marcuse". Fortunately it is neither—just as it is neither the first nor the last display of the virulent philistinism of its author and of the culture of which he is a chosen, it lowly, custodian.

The formula for the series is a perfect example of what the situationists mean by recuperation. Potentially dangerous subjects are to be handled by reliable authors: George Lichtheim on Lukács, Philip Rahv on Trotsky. Potentially dangerous authors are restricted to safe subjects: Conor Cruse O'Brien on Camus, Raymond Williams on Orwell (Let's hope a miscalculation has been made here). A makeweight biography of Che Guevara, gushing with trivial romanticism, tops off the menu. Need one add that the architect of the series is a former staff worker for *Encounter*, presently rejoicing in the title of Lord Northcliffe Professor of English Literature at University College, London.

MacIntyre has for a long time specialized in doing hatchet-jobs on such figures as Isaac Deutscher, C. Wright Mills, Georg Lukács and Herbert Marcuse, as well as purveying slanders on the Cuban, Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions. His reputation as a leftist makes him most useful in projects of this type, witness his frequent contributions to publications supported by the Congress for Cultural Freedom. His "left" reputation has derived from the tolerance extended to him, over the years, by various left groups, and not from his writings or

¹⁴"Taktik und Ethik," Lukács, *Frühschriften II* (Neuwied and Berlin, 1968), p. 69.

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