

# The Frankfurt School and the Problem of Critique: A Reply to McCarney

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The question of the possibility, form, and validity of a 'critical' social science, of its relation to Marxism and to the ideas of dialectic and contradiction, received considerable attention on the pages of Radical Philosophy in the late 1970s, in a series of articles beginning with Roy Edgley's 'Reason as Dialectic: Science, Social Science and Socialist Science' (RP15, Autumn 1976) and ending, somewhat abruptly, with Joseph McCarney's 'The Trouble with Contradictions' (RP23, Winter, 1979) [1]. A striking feature of this debate, in retrospect, is the total absence of any reference to the work of the Frankfurt School - that group of thinkers who, as McCarney has recently pointed out ('What Makes Critical Theory "Critical"?', RP42, Winter/Spring 1986), have, more than anyone else, made the idea of a critical theory of society their own. McCarney's recent survey of this work is thus to be welcomed not only for its intrinsic interest, as a contribution to the literature on the School, but also for the way it fills what now appears to have been a serious gap in the earlier debate [2].

McCarney's recent article also seems to imply dissatisfaction with the basic terms of the earlier debate. In his previous piece, he argued the need for a theory of the conditions for the 'proper exercise' of practical reason, at the level of philosophical anthropology, as a basis for theorising the practical function of a dialectical social science. He now suggests that the very project of social critique as 'rational appraisal' not only lies 'outside the limits of what can be significantly designated as Marxist', but also represents a 'reversion to a pre-Marxist conception of how thought is to be radical in relation to society' (RP42, pp. 21-22; emphasis added).

The argument of 'What Makes Critical Theory "Critical"? is twofold. It provides an exposition and critique of a variety of models of critical social theory developed by members of the Frankfurt School. And it suggests an alternative view of the conceptual structure and practical function of a dialectical social science, which maintains a Hegelian-Marxist framework, 'while dropping the assumption that within it social theory must be conceived as criticism' (RP42, p. 20). The work of the Frankfurt School, the lesson, seems to be, has nothing positive to contribute to the development of this science since, despite its initial concern to form 'a dynamic unity with the oppressed class', it is constructed from a theoretical standpoint divorced from that of the revolutionary - or at least potentially revolutionary - subject: the proletariat. The problem with 'the familiar, and facile, verdict that the theory of the School is "Marxism without the proletariat"', McCarney argues, is

that 'it appears to assume that Marxism may be viewed as a simple aggregate of elements of which the proletariat is one. But the proletariat is not so loosely inserted into the original structure of thought as to make this assumption tenable' (RP42, p. 20).

McCarney's case against the Frankfurt School is a comprehensive one. It deploys a variety of arguments across a wide range of material to produce a critique which is both incisive and, purportedly, decisive. There is much in its argument that we have found both illuminating and challenging. However, in our view there are major problems in its presentation both of the work of the Frankfurt School, and of Marxism, which risk seriously misrepresenting the historical and theoretical significance of the Frankfurt School, on the one hand, and the general set of relationships between knowledge, critique and political practice in Marxism, on the other. The most important of these problems concern:

- (1) The interrelation of explanation and critique, in the Frankfurt School conception of a critical social theory;
- (2) The content and function of the Frankfurt School concept of ideology;
- (3) The supposed impasse of the 'Dialectic of Enlightenment';
- (4) The relation of Hegelian to materialist dialectics;
- (5) Marx's idea of the 'standpoint of the proletariat' and its relation to what McCarney calls the 'universalist rationalism' of the idea of critique;
- (6) The dialectic of class consciousness and the formation of political subjectivity.

The following response - organized with reference to these six issues - is offered as a preliminary exploration of these problems, with the intention not so much of providing a 'defence' of the Frankfurt School, as of reaffirming the continuing theoretical significance of their work, in the context of the prevailing theoretical and political blockage of classical Marxism. Whatever the problems of this work (and there are certainly many, if not of quite the character that McCarney suggests), it addresses a series of major difficulties which have been posed for Marxism by the course of European history over the last sixty years. To the extent that many of these remain unsolved, and indeed are in some ways being exacerbated by current social developments, aspects of the work of the Frankfurt School remain a valuable resource, although one which may require transplantation into a different theoretical context to be made effective. The idea of social critique, we would like to argue, is one such resource.

## 1. Explanation and Critique

It should be stated at the outset that McCarney's presentation of the Frankfurt School as concerned with the justification of a 'system of negative evaluation' seriously distorts the basic character of their project. Critique simply in the sense of 'criticism', or mere denunciation, was by no means a primary, or separable, preoccupation for the School. Rather, from the beginning of Horkheimer's directorship in 1930, until the early 1940s at least, the project of the Frankfurt School was to integrate the results of the specialized social sciences into a comprehensive account of the development of contemporary capitalist society. It is within this project that the idea of critique arises. The nature of the project, and the diagnosis of intellectual trends to which it formed a response, are clearly presented by Horkheimer in his Inaugural Lecture of January 1931. Horkheimer's fundamental aim was both to overcome that explanatory deficiency of the individual social sciences, which resulted from their very specialization (but was masked by a positivistic self-consciousness), and to correct the dogmatism of traditional philosophy by confronting it with the results of empirical research. The conception, Horkheimer argues,

according to which the specialized researcher can only consider philosophy as a perhaps beautiful, but scientifically fruitless, because uncontrolled exercise, while the philosopher liberates himself from the specialized researcher, because he believes his wide-ranging conclusions cannot wait for him, is currently being overcome through the thought of a continuous, dialectical interpenetration and development of philosophical theory and individual scientific practice [3].

The research programme which this conception implied was concretely embodied in the organizational structure of the Institute for Social Research. Economists, political scientists, social psychologists, critics of art and literature, collaborated on research activities coordinated, unified and animated by philosophy, conceived as 'a theoretical impulse aiming towards the universal and the "essential"' [4].

As Helmut Dubiel has pointed out, in his study of the early Frankfurt School, the initial name for this project was simply 'materialism' [4]. According to Horkheimer in the early thirties,

Materialism requires the unification of philosophy and science. Of course it recognizes technical differences between the more general research of philosophy and the more specialized research in the sciences, just as it recognizes differences of method between research and presentation but not between philosophy and science as such [6].

It was not until 1937, with the publication of Horkheimer's programmatic essay on 'Traditional and Critical Theory', that the term 'Critical Theory' came into currency to describe the distinctive intellectual activity of the Frankfurt School. It is with this essay that certain developments take place which foreshadow the apparent disintegration of the basis for immanent critique, and the retreat into utopian generalities, which McCarney describes. However, despite Horkheimer's sense of the increasing isolation of the oppositional intellectual, summarized in his argument that there is now no 'social class by whose acceptance of the theory one could be guided' [7], the basic model of a philosophical synthesis of empirical disciplines remains. The only significant difference here, at the epistemological level, is that Horkheimer now sees the desired collaboration of scientific and philosophical perspectives as already embodied in Marx's critique of political economy, where 'the conception of the interaction between nature and society ... the idea of a unified social epoch, of its self-maintenance, and so on, already derive from a

fundamental analysis of the historical process which is guided by an interest in the future' [8].

Given this historical background, it would seem that the problem of the relation between explanation and critique, which McCarney presents at the beginning of his article as the 'chief question of philosophical interest which arises in this area', can best be clarified by examining the logical structure of the empirical-philosophical synthesis which early Critical Theory was intended to be. For Horkheimer, the general model for the relation between scientific research and its philosophical integration is provided by Hegel, and by the contrast between 'research' (*Forschung*) and 'presentation' (*Darstellung*) which Marx derived from Hegel. Horkheimer liked to quote the following passage from Hegel's lectures on the history of philosophy:

Empirical science prepares the empirical material for the dialectical concept, so that the dialectical concept can receive it ready for use. The process of the origination of science is different from its process in itself when it is complete, just as the process of the history of philosophy differs from that of philosophy itself... The development of the empirical side has been ... the essential condition of the Idea, so that it can reach its full development and determination [9].



A materialist appropriation of this procedure clearly cannot dissolve the distinction between the a priori and the a posteriori in the Hegelian manner, but it must retain Hegel's central insight into the explanatory inadequacy of partial perspectives. This is how Horkheimer presents the matter in 'Traditional and Critical Theory':

The isolated observation of individual activities and branches of activity, along with their contents and objects, requires a concrete consciousness of its own limitedness in order to be true. One must pass over to a conception in which the one-sidedness, which is necessarily produced by the detachment of partial intellectual perspectives from the total social practice, is cancelled in its turn [10].

However, such an argument inevitably raises the problem of the philosophical status of the overall, integrating conception. Essentially this is the problem - to which we find ourselves returning throughout this essay - of the critical appropriation of Hegel by materialism.

The general attitude of the first generation Frankfurt School to Hegel emerges clearly from Horkheimer's 1935 essay 'On the Problem of Truth'. Horkheimer considers the Hegelian procedure of determinate negation to be the crucial philosophical advance which makes possible an overcoming of the oscillation of bourgeois thought between dogmatism and relativism. However, in Hegel's own thought, the vision which enables each partial standpoint to be revealed in its truth within an unfolding whole itself culminates in a particularly supine form of

relativism:

The dogmatic assertion that all the particular views which have ever entered the lists against one another in real historical combat, all the creeds of particular groups, all attempts at reform are now transcended and cancelled out, the notion of an all-embracing thought which is to apportion its partial rightness and final limitation to every point of view without consciously taking sides with anyone against the others and deciding between them - this is the very soul of bourgeois relativism [11].

For Horkheimer, the constitutive illusion of this position is expressed in Hegel's declaration that

It is ... simply lack of consciousness not to see that precisely the description of something as finite or limited contains proof of the real presence of the infinite and unlimited, that knowledge of boundaries is only possible insofar as the unbounded is here in one's consciousness [12].

From a materialist standpoint, which does not imply for the Frankfurt School any sort of metaphysical monism, but simply an insistence on the irreducible non-identity of thought and being, real constructions and conflicts cannot be overcome purely in thought. This means that philosophy must once more become partisan - not in the sense of adopting a particular metaphysical conception of reality, but in the sense of conceiving itself as a moment in the process of practical overcoming of limitation and conflict.

'To conceptualise a defect' Horkheimer argues, 'is ... not to transcend it'; rather, 'concepts and theories form an impulse to its removal, a prerequisite of the proper procedure, which as it progresses is constantly redefined, adapted and improved' [13].

For Horkheimer:

correspondence of cognition and its object ... is neither a simple datum, an immediate fact, as it appears in the doctrine of intuitive, immediate certainty and in mysticism, nor does it take its place in the pure sphere of spiritual immanence, as it seems to in Hegel's metaphysical legend. Rather it is always established by real events, by human activity [14].

It is thus in the course of attempts to produce a comprehensive synthesis of social theory that the need for a practical transformation of society is revealed. For the Frankfurt School, a theory which wishes to overcome the explanatory deficiency of the specialized sciences is necessarily forced into a critical stance, since an adequate theory of existing society must be internally linked to a consciousness of that society's inadequacy. In other words, it is not so much - as McCarney suggests - that the Frankfurt School critique is dialectical because only a relation of immanence can solve the problem of the normative foundations of critique, as that any post-Hegelian dialectic must be critical.

## 2. Ideology and Ideologiekritik

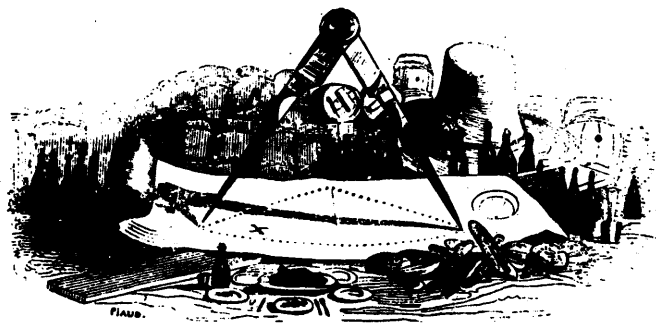
The second major issue is McCarney's criticism of the Frankfurt School concept of Ideologiekritik. He is undoubtedly correct to suggest that the concept of the criticism of ideology at work in the writings of the Critical Theorists is most closely derived from the work of the early, 'young Hegelian' Marx. He is also right to argue that, as Marx's thought developed, indeed as early as The German Ideology, he began to move away from this conception to one centred less on the notion of critique than that of positive science. To discuss the relative merits of these conceptions per se would carry us too far afield in the present context, and would involve us in a consideration of the Frankfurt School critique of the positivist strain in Marx's own work. For our present purposes, it is sufficient to make the following two points: (1) appeals to Marx's position at any particular period in his career cannot be sufficient to clinch an argument concerning the most appropriate concept of ideology for use in present circumstances (despite its evident weaknesses, there might be a 'rational kernel' to the young Marx's concept of Ideologiekritik which ought to be incorporated into any more fully rounded Marxist theory of ideology); (2) it is only because of a misunderstanding of the Frankfurt School concept of ideology that McCarney is able to accuse it of the failures which he does.

In McCarney's interpretation, the Frankfurt School model of ideological critique implies the use of the value-contents of bourgeois ideology as the basis for a denunciation of the injustices of capitalist society. It is for this reason that he suggests that the School's critique of ideology could be more appropriately described as an 'ideological critique of society'. This conclusion is only made possible by overlooking the specificity of the Frankfurt School concept of ideology and the complexity of the process of Ideologiekritik.

In his 'Beitrag zur Ideologienlehre' (Contribution to the Theory of Ideology) Adorno suggests that 'Ideology, as an objectively necessary and yet false consciousness, as an intertwining of the true and the untrue, which is as distinct from the full truth as it is from mere lies, belongs if not to the modern, then at least to a developed urban market economy. For ideology is justification' [15]. It is because of this argument that Adorno, in the same essay, refuses the title of ideology to fascist propaganda: in its cynical functionalism, in its failure even to raise a claim for autonomy and consistency, the discourse of fascism lacks any argumentative element with which a critique could come to grips. The only appropriate question in this context is: cui bono? [16]

In other words, for the Frankfurt School, ideology is essentially a transfigurative transcription of social reality, and both elements of this process contain a moment of falsehood and a moment of truth. Ideology is true to the extent that it transcribes the social, but false in the way in which it portrays it. Ideology is false to the extent that it believes a utopia could be realized in terms of the dominant understanding of concepts such as 'justice' and 'freedom', but true to the extent that - by virtue of its very possession of such concepts - it retains a utopian dimension which transcends the existing social order.

This brief sketch should be enough to make clear that, for the Frankfurt School, immanent critique can never be simply a matter of holding the values of ideology constant as a yardstick for the deficiencies of society. These values are themselves systematically ambiguous. Immanent critique focuses first of all on the internal incoherence of the ideological interpretation of fundamental concepts, which is seen as an expression of social antagonism. Social reality, of course, necessarily fails to match up to the utopian content of ideology - but the implications of this failure do not reflect simply on society, but also on ideology, which is unable to grasp



that its ideals could never be realized in the terms in which they are formulated. Ideology, in other words, expresses human desires and aspirations which are rational and legitimate in themselves, but which are rendered unrealizable by the very social system which the ideology justifies. Indeed, without some such assumption - for example, on McCarney's view that the function of bourgeois ideology is primary anti-cognitive - it is difficult to explain the tenacity of ideological consciousness. Raymond Geuss makes this point powerfully when he states that it is 'the particular insidiousness of ideology that it turns human desires and aspirations against themselves and uses them to fuel repression' [17].



Thus, for the Frankfurt School, it can never be simply a matter of criticizing social reality from the standpoint of the normative content of ideology, even given their assumption that this content implicitly bursts the bounds of those desires and aspirations which are currently recognized as legitimate. Rather, the target of Ideologiekritik is the entire system of 'socially necessary delusion' - the antagonism and irrationality betrayed by the fact that society is functionally obliged to generate such internally incoherent representations of itself. In consequence, McCarney's contrast between 'ideological' and 'moral' critique must be considered misleading.

All ideology-critique is ideological critique insofar as it reveals the objects of ideological thought to be inadequate to the implicit content of their own concepts. But it is also moral critique, insofar as it derives its own normative content - which is perhaps better captured by the concept of 'practical necessity' than that of moral value - by a process of retrieval from the distorted forms of ideology. It is perhaps also worth pointing out in this context that Ideologiekritik should not be equated - as McCarney seems to assume - with all the specialized enquiries which together constitute the critical theory of society. For example, Fromm's development of an analytical social psychology, or Pollock's theory of fascism, were not inherently ideology-critical. Rather, Ideologiekritik finds its particular application in the domain of culture, where it is a matter of rescuing the rational content of bourgeois traditions. However, the general critical theory will have an ideology-critical dimension, insofar as its task of developing an adequate knowledge of society is inseparable from the enlightening of its addressees about the true nature of the aspirations which are currently siphoned into ideological forms.

### 3. The 'Dialectic of Enlightenment' (I): History

We have already noted that the distinction between 'ideological critique' and 'moral critique', as a means of analysing phases in the development of the Frankfurt School, cannot be sustained in the form which McCarney proposes. Nevertheless, McCarney is correct to suggest that a decisive transformation of the original Frankfurt School project takes place some time between the late 1930s and the early 1940s. In McCarney's account,

In the era of liberal capitalism it was possible ... to confront reality with its own aspirations. But in the total, one-dimensional world of administered capitalism no such possibility appears. Ideological critique presupposes a gap between what thought projects and what it actually performs. But thought has now become a reflex of the established order and projects nothing beyond it: ideology in the original sense has evaporated (RP 42, p. 13).

McCarney is also correct to suggest that the disappearance of the transcendent dimension of ideology poses severe problems for the Frankfurt School. This is because there appears no longer to be any link at all between the utopian projections of Critical Theory and everyday consciousness. However, this development represents not so much a move from 'ideological' to 'moral' critique, as a problematization of the very concept of critique. Even the Critical Theory of the late 1930s, in what Marcuse terms the 'more intensive phase' which resulted from the eclipse of any apparent revolutionary agency, and which was therefore forced into a reliance on the emancipatory content of critically appropriated cultural traditions, was no longer possible by the early 1940s, in the face of a history which appeared to have lost even any semblance of rationality. It could be said that, from now on, the central problem for the first generation Frankfurt School - in the absence of any dialectical tension within the historical process itself - will be to show that there might still be some standpoint from which the state of society could be portrayed as irrational.

It is at this point that McCarney introduces his account of Adorno's distinctive version of immanent critique, suggesting that Adorno's position is closer to the original Hegelian model, in which dialectic may focus on the gap between both the object's self-image and its present existence, on the one hand, and 'the object as it is, in its concept and in truth; that is, in the fulfilment of its role in the development of rational-spirit' (RP 42, p. 15), on the other. In fact, as our earlier discussion will have already suggested, there is a false contrast at work in this account of two different versions of immanent critique. Frankfurt School Ideologiekritik implied from the very beginning a criticism of both the 'object' and its 'self-image' - it is an untrue society which generates the untruths of ideology. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which immanent critique, in the form of a dialectical confrontation of subject and object, attains a heightened importance in Adorno's work after 1941. Both Horkheimer and Adorno abandon any hope in an emancipatory dimension of traditional scientific knowledge. The former constructive and collaborative version of Critical Theory disintegrates.

In 'Traditional and Critical Theory' Horkheimer had admitted that conventional scientific activity is informed by 'the necessities and purposes, the experience and capacities, the habits and tendencies of the present form of human existence'. Nevertheless, he had then gone on to argue that 'In the same way as a material instrument of production, it represents - in terms of its possibilities - an element not only of the present, but also of a juster, more differentiated, more harmonious cultural whole' [18]. By the time that Dialectic of Enlightenment was completed in 1944, this belief that traditional theory could be integrated in Critical Theory had been shattered. In the Introduction to Dialectic of Enlightenment Horkheimer and Adorno write:

Even though we had known for many years that the great discoveries of applied science are paid for with an increasing diminution of theoretical awareness, we still thought that in regard to scientific activity our contribution could be restricted to the criticism of extension of specialist axioms ... However ... in the present collapse of bourgeois civilization, not only the pursuit but the meaning of science has become problematical ... [19]

It is only at this point that Critical Theory begins to approximate to that 'system of negative evaluation', albeit one underpinned by a substantive philosophy of history, which McCarney takes it to have been from the very beginning. It is at this point that immanent critique - in the Hegelian sense, which McCarney outlines - becomes the only possible form of 'true' knowledge, and the project of a collaboration between philosophy and empirical social science collapses.

As far as McCarney is concerned, however, this is a desperate and inadequate manoeuvre. In Hegel's case the ability to confront the object with the truth of its concept is dependent on a construal of the historical process as the rational unfolding of spirit. But in Adorno's case, history is conceived as precisely the inverse of this. For Adorno, the only unity of history is

that which cements the discontinuous, chaotically splintered moments and phases of history - the unity of the control of nature progressing to rule over men, and finally to that over men's inner nature. No universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb [20].

For Adorno, the world spirit - the continuity in discontinuity of the historical process - would have to be defined as 'permanent catastrophe'. On the basis of these remarks, McCarney believes it possible to argue that, given the ontology and the philosophy of history, 'critique may be either immanent or emancipatory, but not both' (RP 42, p. 16). Within the framework of Adorno's thought, 'the critical project cannot, it seems, be reconciled with the vision of history as universal domination. The dialectic of enlightenment annuls dialectical critique' (*ibid.*).

The problem with this argument is that it fails to make clear why Adorno's history of enlightenment should be described as dialectical at all. It is true that we cannot write a history of unequivocal progress, since - under the antagonistic conditions of class society - any technical advance increases the potentiality for repression and disaster. But this is not to say that, for Adorno, history is no more than an accelerating sequence of catastrophes. Adorno never denies that technical control over nature, and the scientific knowledge which makes such control possible, possess a moment of rationality. It is entirely rational for human beings to strive to overcome their subjection to the contingent forces of nature. Rather, what is irrational for Adorno is that, up till now, the development of technical control has been accompanied by the repression of that spontaneity of inner nature which is the core of the subjectivity which was to be preserved in the first place. As a result, the advancing control of outer nature has taken the form of a historical extension of precisely that natural compulsion which was to have been overcome. To criticize this compulsive aspect of the process, however, is not to denounce the development of the productive forces as such.

Adorno is only too aware that mockery of the idea of progress 'belongs in the treasure chamber of ideology' [21]. If the blind, compulsive character of human history is revealed in cyclical repetition (in that stasis of subjection to unalterable, recurrent natural forces which Adorno finds embodied in mythical thought), then the idea of progress, far from being an illusion, must be considered as the 'purely anti-mythological, breaking open the circle to which it belongs'. Progress means;

to step out of the spell, including that of progress, which is itself nature, through a process in which human beings become aware of the natural basis of their own existence and put a stop to the domination which they exercise over nature, and through which nature itself is continued [22].

Progress is no more to be ontologized, to be attributed unreflectively to being itself, than what admittedly pleases our modern philosophers more - disintegration [23].

Yet even though, for Adorno, history is precisely a dialectic of the rational and the irrational - albeit one whose overall contours are determined by the fundamental irrationality of the structure of domination itself - McCarney is justified in contending that Adorno has little substantive basis for assuming that its catastrophic momentum can be stopped. Here we enter a complex area, and it is by no means our intention to defend Adorno's philosophy of history *per se*. However, there are three points which are worth making. Firstly, to demonstrate that Adorno's conception of history tends to undermine the possibility of critique is not to annul the concept of critique as such. There is no reason to suppose that many of Adorno's insights could not be integrated into an account of the development of contemporary capitalist societies less overshadowed by the disastrous experience of the 1930s and 1940s. Secondly, even in the case of a text as extreme as Negative Dialectics, McCarney is wrong to argue - as he has done in another recent essay - that 'what is necessary to constitute the project [of critical enquiry] as rational is that the critic be rational: any rationality on the part of the object of criticism is redundant for the purpose [24]. On the contrary, Negative Dialectics revolves around the insight that a practical orientation can be derived neither from the description of a 'rational' state of reality, nor from a principle of pure practical reason. As Adorno puts it: 'Dialectics is in things, but would not be without consciousness, which reflects on them; any more than it can be evaporated into consciousness' [25]. Despite many obvious weaknesses of Adorno's position, his critical stance cannot be understood as simply subjectivist, since his emphasis on the subjective moment is itself the result of his understanding of the historical process. Finally, Adorno provides an indirect defence of the concept of critique, insofar as Negative Dialectics is centrally directed against what McCarney takes to be the only viable alternative: a more robustly objective and immanent form of dialectics. It is to the amplification of these last two points that we now turn.

#### 4. The 'Dialectic of Enlightenment' (II): Dialectics

The central problem of Adorno's later thought is how to preserve a consciousness of the irrationality of existing society, at a stage when ideology has lost any transcendent promissory dimension, and has been reduced to a mere reduplication of the status quo; a stage when - as Adorno liked to put it - reality has become its own ideology. Adorno's strategy in this situation is to argue that, even when any substantive utopia has been abandoned, the characteristic structure of ideology, the almost inextricable interweaving of promise and illusion, is preserved in the form of conceptual thought as such. From Nietzsche, Adorno derives the idea that the very success of objectifying thought in dominating nature - far from being a testimony to its truth - reveals its deceptiveness and violence. However, he departs from Nietzsche in suggesting that even the abstract universality of concepts, which betrays the particularity which they subsume in the enforced identity of subject and object, reveal an aspiration towards a non-antagonistic identity of thought and reality. In Adorno's view, the very experience of the inability of conceptual thought to reach its own aims opens the possibility of a 'second reflection' which will reveal the concept, not as the structuring principle

of all reality, but as a moment of the natural-historical process.

On occasions Adorno can even give this argument from the loss of transcendence an optimistic turn. At the end of his 'Beitrag zur Ideologienlehre', for example, he writes that 'Since the time when ideology hardly says more than that things are the way they are, its own untruth collapses into the meagre axiom that things could not be other than they are. While human beings bow down before this untruth, they also secretly see through it at the same time. The glorification of the power and irresistibility of mere being is at the same time the condition for its disenchantment [26].

It should be noted that this is not simply a matter of a conceptual dialectic. Whereas Hegel's phenomenological dialectic consists in the sublation of successive forms of reason into their concept, through a process of reflection on that concept, Adorno's dialectic of Enlightenment employs an account of the natural-historical genesis of conceptual thought in order to arraign the authority of theoretical and practical reason as such. Since for Adorno the primacy of the concept begins with the repression of nature, human suffering is the necessary complement of the domination of identity-thinking, whether in directly physical, or in veiled and psychically introverted forms. The theoretical development of critical consciousness is ultimately driven by that same impulse of suffering nature which is also the motor of practical attempts to overcome historically obsolete coercions and repressions. This is one of the primary senses in which Adorno's dialectic is a materialist rather than an idealist one.

Once this aspect of Adorno's thought is appreciated, McCarney's contention that Adorno is 'far from any outright rejection of Hegelian ontology and, in particular, its problematic of the subject' (RP 42, p. 15) becomes highly implausible. In fact, McCarney's interpretation of Adorno can be seen to derive from his misunderstanding of the basic structure of appropriate critique, which was outlined above. For Adorno, Hegel's philosophy is precisely a transfigurative transcription of the historical process: what Hegel celebrates - with a sadistically-tinged triumphalism which Adorno perceptively pinpoints - as the rationally-determined onward march of *Geist*, is in reality the as-yet-unbroken coercion which the social structure of domination exerts over human beings, a coercion which blocks that true realization of spirit which would be a community of free individuals. As Adorno



writes, in the Introduction to Negative Dialectics:

The untruth of the context of immanence itself ... is revealed in the overwhelming experience that the world, which is as systematically organized as if it were the world of actualized reason which Hegel glorifies, at the same time - in its ancient unreason - perpetuates the powerlessness of spirit, which appears to be all-powerful [27].

Furthermore, for Adorno this critique of Hegel follows directly from what he takes to be the core of Marx's materialism - an insistence on the non-identity of thought and being. What this insistence implies is that any attempt to portray the world as rationally transparent - whether idealist or materialist in ostensible intention - will conclude by instating a delusive primacy of thought:

[Marx's] line that consciousness depends on being was not a metaphysics in reverse; it was directed against the delusion that mind is in itself: that it lies beyond the total process in which it finds itself as a moment [28].

As already suggested, this argument of Adorno's casts severe doubt on McCarney's solution to the intractable difficulties which he believes to be posed by the concept of critique. In McCarney's view, these difficulties derive from the fact that 'in its essential meaning the critique of society is precisely a bringing of reason to bear on the object from the side of the subject' [29]. McCarney contrasts what he takes to be this hopelessly undialectical standpoint of critique with Hegel's view that:

dialectic is not an activity of subjective thinking applied to some matter externally, but is rather the matter's very soul putting forth its branches and fruit organically. This development of the Idea is the proper activity of its rationality... To consider a thing rationally means not to bring reason to bear on the object from the outside and so to tamper with it, but to find that the object is rational on its own account [30].

Accordingly, for McCarney, the central, still-to-be-completed task of a materialist dialectic is to find a functional substitute for the Hegelian Idea [31]. However, as we have already discovered, to set up the problem of the relation between critique and dialectics in this way is seriously misleading. Far from entrusting critique to the powers of subjective reason, the central, agonizing problem for the Frankfurt School is precisely that of whether there is any meaningful sense in which history can still be regarded as an objectively rational process. To assume, as McCarney does, that the task is simply one of finding a materialist substitute for Hegelian reason, is to foreclose an enquiry which is central to the Marxism (and to many of the anti-Marxisms) of the twentieth century. After the disasters of our era, which Adorno condenses emblematically in his discussions of Auschwitz, it seems difficult to believe that we can return to some version of Hegel's view that:

If the Objective is itself Rational, human insight and conviction must correspond with the Reason it embodies, and then we have the other essential element - subjective Freedom - also realized [32].

Adorno's argument here could be expressed in the following way: to understand dialectics as a purely immanent dialectics of the object is itself to set up an undialectical exclusion or claim to exhaustiveness. To avoid becoming undialectical, dialectics must transcend itself towards a subjective spontaneity which nevertheless draws its strength from the logical context of immanence with which it breaks. Adorno expresses the situation thus:

When idealism is criticized strictly from within, it has the handy defense of being thus sanctioned by the critic - of virtually having the criticism within itself, by the critic's use of its own premisses, and accordingly being superior to the criticism. Objections from without, on the other hand, will be dismissed by idealism as pre-dialectical, belonging to the philosophy of reflection. But there is no need for analysis to abdicate in view of these alternatives. Immanence is the totality of those positings of identity whose principle fails before immanent critique. As Marx puts it, idealism can be made to 'dance to its own tune'. The non-identity [of thought and being] which determines it from



within, in accordance with the criterion of identity, is at the same time the opposite of its principle, that which it vainly claims to be controlling. No immanent critique can serve its purpose wholly without outside knowledge, of course - without a moment of immediacy if you will, a bonus from the subjective thought that looks beyond the dialectical structure [33].

Because of his general philosophy of history, Adorno can theorize this escape from the compulsive context of immanence only in terms of subjective spontaneity. However, we would argue that when one rejects Adorno's historically over-determined conclusion that critical consciousness is thrown back entirely on the resources of the individual, the kernel of his critique of idealist dialectics remains. The space which Adorno opens up - and which McCarney appears to want to collapse again - can equally well be occupied, on different historical assumptions, by a form of reflection on political goals and strategies, which allows for both the detection of, and a building upon, the traces of reason in history, without commitment to the view that a political orientation can be directly derived from a hypostatized historical dialectic.

## 5. The Standpoint of the Proletariat

It was noted above that one of the main problems with McCarney's presentation of Critical Theory is its counterposition of the idea of critique as 'criticism' or 'negative evaluation' to the idea of explanation. This opposition is maintained and reinforced in the brief outline of an alternative conception of the practical function of Marxist theory that McCarney offers at the end of his article, in the section entitled 'Marx and Critique'. It is argued there that the object of critique in Marx's mature work is not bourgeois society as such, but only bourgeois ideology; in particular, its 'most intellectually formidable version' - political economy. The scientific critique of ideology, moreover, is not taken to be, even implicitly, a way of 'criticising' any particular form of social practice. Its practical effectivity is taken to be direct. Such critique is said to be practical by being directly transformative of the consciousness, 'and thereby the agency', of revolutionary subjects. This model of a direct transformation of knowledge into practice is presented as a materialist counter to the 'universalist rationalism of the critique idea'. The force of McCarney's arguments against the Frankfurt School is dependent, at least in part, upon the plausibility of this model.

The central issue here is how we are to conceive of the relation between social scientific knowledge and social transformation, or, as McCarney puts it rather more narrowly, between a 'revolutionary theory' and a 'revolutionary subject'. McCarney offers two alternatives: (1) the relation of a critique to its audience (as in the work of the Frankfurt School); (2) the relation of a mode of knowledge expressive of the standpoint of a revolutionary subject to that subject, which in the case of Marx's work is the proletariat. It is this latter model which McCarney adopts.

The problem with the former idea, it is argued, is that its abstract rationalism 'dissolves the specificity of the link between a class and its theory' (RP 42, p. 20). This link, it is suggested, is actually best understood as operating along the lines of the model of a dialectic of consciousness provided by Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, in which:

the general form of the contradictions is that of a conflict between the idea of the object by which the subject consciousness is initially possessed and the object as it is actually encountered in experience (RP 42, p. 21).

The concept of critique, McCarney maintains, is not required in order to theorize the practical effectivity of knowledge on this model, since the acquisition of

knowledge is not effected through negative evaluations of successive moments of consciousness, but solely by the discovery that these moments involve contradictions. This discovery, it is argued, 'is assumed to be directly practical for a subject consciousness meeting minimal conditions of rationality', since such a consciousness 'cannot rest in the awareness of its own contradictions but is necessarily driven beyond, towards their resolutions'. The difference between this scheme and its Marxist variant, in McCarney's view, is that 'the phenomenological subject becomes the social class and the dialectic of consciousness becomes a dialectic of class consciousness' (RP 42, p. 21; emphasis added). There are thus, according to McCarney, 'categorical distinctions of status between different groups' in relation to the procedures and findings of Marxist theory, and within these categorical distinctions it is the proletariat which is the privileged class. For Marx's work is not 'to be taken as addressed to the universe of rational beings as such. In its self-conception, it is formulated from, is expressive of, and, in turn, reflexively transforms the standpoint of the proletariat' (RP 42, p. 20). The connection between the theory and the class is 'internal', and it is the internal character of this relation, according to McCarney, that is the basis of the dialectical character of the theory.



There is of course, as McCarney acknowledges, a problem here with regard to the theorization of social class. Once one rejects (as McCarney does) the inherent idealism of an ontology of the proletariat as identical subject-object of history, which underlies Lukacs's direct appropriation of the phenomenological model in History and Class Consciousness, the need arises for an alternative account of historical agency. McCarney is undoubtedly correct both when he describes this as 'the chief problem bequeathed by History and Class Consciousness to Marxist theory' (RP 42, p. 21), and when he chastises the tradition of 'Western Marxism' for its failure fully to face this difficulty. His discussion, however, implies that the basic structure of the phenomenological model may be maintained, despite the idealism of the early Lukacs's employment of it. The only adjustment required for its successful utilization is 'a properly articulated account of the nature of the revolutionary subject which would render intelligible its role as the agent of a materialist dialectic of history' (RP 42, p. 21). The reformulation of the proletariat's historical agency, which McCarney admits to be necessary, is not taken to require any corresponding reformulation of the character of its internal relationship to Marxist theory. Indeed, it is precisely the directness of this relationship that is taken to indicate the materialism of the conception of the theory-practice relation which it involves.

The simplicity of this classical model is appealing. Its adequacy to reality, and to the theoretical insights of

Marx's own mature historical writings on the class, however, must be questioned; not least because of the extremely attenuated conception of politics, and of political possibility, that it implies. There are three main, closely-related, problems here. All three concern McCarney's conception of the 'specificity' of the link between Marxism and the proletariat ('a class and its theory'). And all three are relevant to his treatment of the Frankfurt School. First, there is the question of the sense in which the theory is 'expressive' of the standpoint of the class, to the exclusion of some more 'universalistic' perspective. Secondly, there is the question of its directly practical, non-'critical' force. And finally, there is the question of the sense in which the proletariat may be considered the revolutionary subject of capitalist societies. All three of these problems are central to current political debates on the left, both at a general theoretical level and at a strategic level, since they bear directly on both the disjuncture between class structures (defined at an economic level) and class formations (defined at a political level), and the necessity for, and limits and character of, alliances.

With regard to the first problem, the sense in which Marxist theory is expressive of the standpoint of the proletariat, there are, broadly speaking, two interpretations available. One identifies the standpoint of the theory with that of the class by virtue of the identification of the scientific universality of the former with the historical universality of the latter. The other identifies the two standpoints in a more particularistic, and ultimately irrationalistic, way, by maintaining the truth content of the theory simultaneously with its social particularism only on the basis of a pragmatic dissolution of the concept of truth. McCarney clearly holds the former position, for he argues that the standards required by Marx's theory are purely 'cognitive' (the values constitutive of inquiry in science and logic). Elsewhere he has addressed the issue directly: 'for Marx, to adopt the standpoint of the proletariat is precisely what it means to adopt the standpoint of the whole' [34]. But if this is so, how can the stark contrast between the class character of Marx's theory and the bogus 'universalism' of the idea of critique be maintained? Especially when, with the Frankfurt School, it is precisely the adoption of the standpoint of the whole that grounds the critical character of their work. Everything depends, of course, firstly upon the precise conceptualization of the proletariat's universality, and secondly upon the way in which the universalism of the idea of critique is understood to be vitiated by its abstractly rational character.

There are a number of distinct, if related, aspects to the idea of the universality of the proletariat in Marx's work. None are given an extended theoretical exposition by Marx, nor are the relations between them explored in any detail. Furthermore, his views on the topic clearly changed in line with the general development of his thought. Nonetheless, three aspects of the idea may be fairly uncontroversially identified as central to Marx's use of it. All concern the sense in which the proletariat may be said to be the potential agent of a 'universal' or 'human' emancipatory project. These are, in the order in which they first occur in Marx's work:

- (1) the universality of the proletariat's interest in emancipation;
- (2) the universality of the knowledge it must acquire in order to be able to carry out such an emancipation (both in the sense of the self-knowledge of the universality of its interest, and in the sense of knowledge of the total social process, necessary to provide it with an adequate account of the conditions for its emancipation);
- (3) the universality of its more general class capacity or power necessary to achieve its emancipation.

Each is an essential component of the classical Marxist conception of proletarian revolution, and each may be derived from Marx's conception of the proletariat as the collective subject of alienated labour, the collective capitalist worker.

Within this model, Marxian theory is 'expressive' of the standpoint of the proletariat in two closely related, but rarely adequately distinguished senses, corresponding to the primacy of labour within Marx's social ontology, on the one hand, and to its totalising perspective, on the other. It is expressive of the standpoint of the proletariat independently of the proletariat's status as the agent of universal emancipation (a status which is currently being questioned), insofar as it is constituted from the standpoint of the ontological primacy of labour in human life-activity. It is further expressive of the standpoint of the proletariat insofar as the theory's totalising perspective is that necessary for universal emancipation, and the proletariat is considered to be the agent of such an emancipation. The general theoretical framework of historical materialism is thus relatively independent of, because conceptually prior to, any particular solution to the problem of historical agency - although it is not, as we have seen, independent of the presumption of the possibility of and necessity for universal emancipation. Nor is it devoid of implications for, or structural limitations upon, the question of agency. There was thus nothing wrong, epistemologically, with the Frankfurt School's detachment of critical theory from the fate of the proletariat as an historical agency, so long as they continued to constitute their work from the standpoint of labour. One may, of course, disagree with the character of their judgment regarding the form of the transformation of the working class in advanced capitalist societies; or castigate them for their failure to address themselves with sufficient seriousness to the question of agency. But this is another matter.

To claim, as McCarney does, that Horkheimer suffered 'a complete failure of nerve' in 'Traditional and Critical Theory' when he failed to identify a revolutionary subject is to misrepresent the character of the problem. It is to present the key theoretical and political problem posed for classical Marxism by European history as a problem of individual psychology. To suggest that the characteristic fluctuations between optimism and pessimism in Marcuse's work simply represents 'an inability to make up one's mind' (RP 42, p. 18) is to do likewise.

Regarding the supposed rationalism of the idea of critique, that is, its supposedly essential abstract universalism, it has already been argued above that this is not an essential feature of the idea of critique as such, but solely the result of its connection to a particular set of historical assumptions (the total administration thesis) in the Frankfurt School's later work.

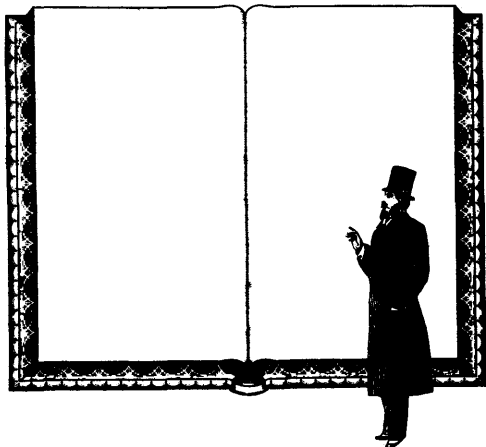
## 6. Phenomenology, Class Consciousness and Political Subjectivity

McCarney's account of a 'direct' transformation of knowledge into an impulse towards transformative practice runs together two rather different, if related, claims. The first concerns the normative character of the process - the claim that on a phenomenological model transitions between forms of consciousness do not require the concept of critique for their theorisation. The second concerns the directness, in the sense of the immediacy, of the impulse towards the resolution of contradictions which is said to arise once they have been experienced. The two claims are related within McCarney's account in that the redundancy of critique is seen to follow from the immediacy of the impulse toward the resolution of contradictions: in Hegelian phenomenology 'transitions are not effected through negative evaluations of the successive moments' (RP 42, p. 21, emphasis added). Such evaluations, McCarney argues, 'could only represent a



superfluous layer of mediation'.

Two points need to be made here. Firstly, that phenomenological transitions do not in general require the mediation of self-conscious reflective judgments does not imply that they can be adequately theorised without reference to the idea of evaluation. Nor, secondly, does the immediacy of the impulse to resolve contradictions mean that no 'critical' reflective judgments will be required in actually resolving them.



McCarney's position commits him to denying that the necessary impulse of a subject 'meeting minimal conditions of rationality' towards the resolution of contradictions within its consciousness can be understood as a form of negative evaluation of such contradictions by the subject. Yet if the idea of evaluation is really not required, even implicitly, for the comprehension of this process, in what sense can it be considered to be a rational process at all? What, in other words, distinguishes its necessity from that of any other kind of natural event? And how are we to understand the idea of 'minimal conditions of rationality', if it does not refer to the capacity of a subject to recognise contradiction as a form of deficiency? It seems that McCarney has fallen prey to the positivist delusion that all values are in some sense moral values, and that reason is value-free. For the attempt to eliminate the idea of evaluation from the theorisation of phenomenological transitions is based on a refusal to accept the normative content of strictly cognitive norms as 'evaluations' at all. This is a regressive move within the debate on the character of social scientific knowledge, since even Popper, like Weber before him, acknowledges that science has a normative component (even if he misidentifies its basis).

What McCarney has done is confuse the standpoint of a 'natural' consciousness within an Hegelian phenomenology with that of the 'observing' or narrative consciousness. Natural consciousness need not conceive of its impulse toward the resolution of contradictions as an 'evaluative' process, or even be aware of it at all, for it to be so. However, the whole point of Hegelian phenomenology, its educative intent, and the basis for using it as a model for political experience, is that it aims to 'raise' the natural consciousness of the actual subject (the reader) to the standard of the 'observing', narrative consciousness, and this is precisely the standpoint of self-conscious, reflective, 'critical' knowing. On the original Hegelian model, this is the only way in which natural consciousness can make the final transition to absolute knowing. On the Marxist model, or at least, on its Leninist, Lukacsian variant, proletarian revolution is to be similarly distinguished from all previous forms of revolution by the historical self-consciousness of its agency. Such self-consciousness, moreover, is taken to be a condition of historical agency, in the full sense.

McCarney's use of Hegelian phenomenology as a general model for theorising the practical effectivity of

Marxist theory is peculiar in another respect as well. For it locates the dialectical character of Marxist theory solely in its internal relation to a particular class subject, rather than in anything inherent in the form of knowledge that it produces. This was not Marx's own position. For Marx, it is rather the dialectical character of the knowledge itself that 'grounds its practical function. In its 'rational form', dialectic is 'in its essence critical and revolutionary',

because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking-up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it ... [35].

This is the result, as Lukacs was the first to point out [36], of the adoption of the standpoint of historical totalisation; a standpoint which, in its portrayal of reality in terms of the development of a series of structural contradictions between inherent developmental tendencies, depicts the present as pregnant with a determinate set of possible futures. It was, of course, Hegel's *Science of Logic*, not the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, that was the decisive influence on Marx's use of this model. The contradictions laid bare in *Capital* are not just those between the projections of political economy and reality, but those internal to the capitalist system of production itself. The potential political function of Marx's theory, moreover, crucially depends upon the real effects of these contradictions.

It is not just the revelation of contradictions per se that has a practical effectivity, but the revelation of specific contradictions that (1) engage the interests of the subjects in question (as McCarney himself pointed out elsewhere [38]), and (2) contain within their exposition as an objectively demonstrable potentiality a projection of their resolution in a new social form. This latter requirement, emphasised by McCarney himself in his discussion of Adorno, is decisive. Yet it cannot be theorised within the narrowly phenomenological model that McCarney espouses. The problem with this model is that it is tied, structurally, to an idealist ontology. The experience of contradiction to which it refers is directly practical because, as Marx points out: 'The only labour that Hegel knows and recognises is abstractly mental labour' [39]. It cannot be appropriated for Marxism without falling back into the errors of *History and Class Consciousness* in which, as McCarney himself notes, the relations between historical materialism, proletarian class consciousness and the revolutionary process are secured only at the cost of a systematic conflation of basic theoretical categories.

The Frankfurt School's development of the concept of critique was the result of their attempt to maintain the early Lukacs's basic project of theorising the practical effectivity of different kinds of knowledge without relying upon either the a priori identification of Marxist theory with the true 'imputed' class consciousness of the proletariat, or the reduction of the revolutionary process to the ideological maturation of the class. Its basis is the materialist critique of Hegel, which, in this context, may be equally effectively deployed against the early Lukacs. Its consequence is the necessary abandonment of the direct appropriation of the model of Hegelian phenomenology. 'Theory is practice,' McCarney writes, 'in being formative of the consciousness, and thereby the agency, of the subjects who make history. In being so, it is itself a form of historical change, not a device for securing a base for ratiocination about its desirability' (RP 42, p. 21), emphasis added). But changes in consciousness of the form he describes are not necessarily transformative of the subject's agency. Nor do they have a sufficiently concrete

content to determine the actual course of historical change. In this respect, although McCarney claims that his model has no need of the normative dimension attributed to all genuine knowledge by critical theory (because of the 'immediacy and immanence' of the relationship he posits between theory and practice), such a dimension can actually be seen to have smuggled its way back into his position. For his description of the immediate translation of theory into practice can only be understood as a description of what ought to happen, not what actually does happen. The divorce between theory and practice which McCarney mistakenly takes to be the 'constituting principle' of critical theory's 'category of historical understanding' is an historical fact. What the Frankfurt School did was attempt to theorise its determinants and implications, from the standpoint of a commitment to overcoming it - a standpoint which, like Hegel, but for different reasons, they found to be implicit in the very structure of consciousness itself. They were thus led to recognize a critical, utopian dimension in all forms of human experience, the demonstration of which became the task of critical theory.

The political implications of such a position are two-fold. In the first place, it suggests a considerable widening of the range of emancipatory politics in terms of both its potential participants and the kinds of activity to which it may be directed. Secondly, it provides a model of the formation of political subjectivity centred not upon the abstract rationality of a consciousness impelled to overcome contradiction, but upon the reflective recognition and articulation of hitherto distorted structures of interest the pursuit of which may be shown to conflict with the existing social form. This model, we would like to suggest, has much to contribute to current debates in Marxist political theory in Britain.

These debates - about the potentialities of 'popular-democratic' versus 'class' politics; of 'ideological' versus 'economic' struggles; and about the role of the state in the transition to socialism - have tended to polarise

around two positions, each of which derive in their current form from aspects of Althusser's work; and each of which, in their different ways, is equally untenable. On the one hand, the formation of political subjectivity is not problematised at all. Political subjects are assumed to be always already constituted, and waiting to be addressed. Politics is reduced to the transmission of explanatory theory to groups whose interest in social transformation is presupposed. No attempt is made to theorise the transition from theoretical to practical reason, or the manner in which theory becomes formative of agency. The main problem appears as the establishment of the cognitive adequacy or 'scientificity' of the theory to be transmitted. On the other hand, recognition of the practical inadequacy of this model, and of the active, subject-constitutive character of political activity, has led to the almost complete abandonment of explanatory theory in favour of a 'pure' politics of the discursive construction of subjectivity. An acceptance of 'the essential instability' of political spaces, in which the very identity of the forces in struggle is submitted to constant shifts, veers off into an assertion of the essential 'indeterminacy of the social' [40]. Suddenly, anything is possible. Every antagonism is a 'floating signifier', dependent for its political meaning upon an articulation with the rest of political discourse in which there are no fixed subject positions - no material basis the determinacy of which could provide a ground for the objective determination of political meanings [41].

The value of the concept of critique lies in the way in which it avoids both of these complementary reductions. Between a position that considers the revolutionary subject to be 'ready-made', and a position which assumes that more or less any form of political subjectivity can be conjured up by the appropriate interpellations, it insists that only a theory which is at once explanatory and critical can contribute to the formation of a political subjectivity adequate to the tasks of an emancipatory social transformation.

## Notes

- [1] Also see: Russell Keat, 'Comment', *RP* 16, Spring 1977; Peter Dews, 'Misadventures of the Dialectic', *RP* 18, Autumn 1977; Roy Edgley, 'Dialectic: A Reply to Keat and Dews', *RP* 21, Spring 1979; Russell Keat, 'Scientific Socialism: A Positivist Delusion?', *RP* 23, Winter 1979. Edgley's first piece is reprinted in R. Edgley and R. Osborne (eds.), *Radical Philosophy Reader*, Verso, London, 1985.
- [2] For a continuation of the debate that does draw upon some work of the Frankfurt School, however (notably that of Habermas), see Roy Bhaskar, 'Scientific Explanation and Human Emancipation', *RP* 26, Autumn 1980. Russell Keat subsequently addressed himself to Habermas's work in *The Politics of Social Theory*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1981.
- [3] Max Horkheimer, 'Die Gegenwärtige Lage der Sozialphilosophie und die Aufgaben eines Institut für Sozialforschung', in *Sozial-philosophische Studien*, Fischer, Frankfurt/Main, 1972, p. 40.
- [4] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- [5] See Helmut Dubiel, *Theory and Politics: Studies in the Development of Critical Theory*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1985, pp. 11-35.
- [6] Max Horkheimer, 'Materialism and Metaphysics', in *Critical Theory*, Herder & Herder, New York, 1972, p. 34.
- [7] Max Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory' in *ibid.*, p. 242.
- [8] *Ibid.*, p. 225.
- [9] G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. III, K. Paul, Trench, Truber, London, 1896, p. 176.
- [10] 'Traditional and Critical Theory', p. 199 (translation altered).
- [11] Max Horkheimer, 'On the Problem of Truth', in Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (eds.), *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1978, pp. 417-18.
- [12] G. W. F. Hegel, *Encyclopedia*, para. 60. Cited in 'On the Problem of Truth', p. 419.
- [13] *Ibid.*, p. 419.
- [14] *Ibid.*
- [15] Theodor W. Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* 8, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main, 1980, p. 465.
- [16] *Gesammelte Schriften* 8, p. 466.
- [17] Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of a Critical Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981, p. 88.
- [18] 'Traditional and Critical Theory', p. 205 (translation altered).
- [19] Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Verso, London, 1979, p. xi.
- [20] Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1973, p. 320.
- [21] Theodor W. Adorno, 'Fortschritt', in *Stichworte: Kritische Modelle* 2,

Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main, 1980, p. 41.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[24] Joseph McCarney, 'Recent Interpretations of Ideology', *Economy and Society*, Vol. 14, no. 1, February 1985, p. 92.

[25] *Gesammelte Schriften* 6, p. 205.

[26] *Gesammelte Schriften* 8, p. 477.

[27] *Negative Dialectics*, p. 30.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 200.

[29] 'Recent Interpretations of Ideology', p. 92.

[30] Cited from Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* in *ibid.*, p. 91.

[31] See *ibid.*, p. 92.

[32] G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, Dover, New York, 1956, p. 456.

[33] *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 181-82.

[34] 'Recent Interpretations of Ideology', p. 90.

[35] Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1954, p. 29. McCarney actually refers to this passage (viz. his note 94), immediately before going on to outline a phenomenological model of Marxian dialectics.

[36] Cf. Georg Lukacs, 'What is Orthodox Marxism?', in *History and Class Consciousness*, Merlin Press, London, 1971.

[37] Cf. Marx to Engels, 14 January 1858, in Marx/Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 93.

[38] Joseph McCarney, 'The Trouble with Contradictions', *RP* 23, Winter 1979.

[39] Karl Marx/Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3; Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1975, p. 333. The increasingly common retort to this argument, with reference to Hegel's discussion of labour in his *Jena Realphilosophie* and in the master-slave dialectic in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, that Hegel did indeed acknowledge the importance of material labour, does not invalidate Marx's point since these discussions take place within an idealist ontology for which nature is itself merely the externalisation of the Idea in its particularity. (Viz. Hegel's *Logic*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975, para. 244). For a recent attempt to lay the foundations of a new Left Hegelianism on the basis of a reading of the master-slave dialectic, see J. M. Bernstein, 'From Self-Consciousness to Community: Act and Recognition in the Master-Slave Relationship', in Z. A. Pelczynski (ed.), *The State and Civil Society: Studies in Hegel's Political Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985.

[40] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, trans. Winston Moore and Paul Cammack, Verso, London, 1985, pp. 151-52.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

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