Critical Theory's Philosophy

Fabian Freyenhagen (University of Essex)

Critical Theory has an uneasy relationship to philosophy, and it is a complex question whether it constitutes a philosophical position at all: it both aims to leave philosophy behind and insists on the need for it.

On the one hand, Critical Theory stands in the tradition of Marx (and Engels), who famously wrote in *The German Ideology* that '[w]e know only a single science, the science of history' (MECW 5: 28 / MEW 3:18);[1] in the tradition of Kierkegaard and others who are suspicious of the success of and need for certain discursive grounding; and in the tradition of Hegel, who insisted on philosophy as always coming second to practical innovations and historical developments; in the tradition of Nietzsche, with his attack on many forms of philosophy as well as in the tradition of Freud, with his calling into question some of the most fundamental notions of modern philosophy (such as the self and its autonomy). At the very least, this results in a commitment to a truly interdisciplinary approach, and in some authors (such as Adorno) it even leads to a certain anti-philosophical stance, where partisanship is not philosophically grounded and the very idea of a philosophical system is seen as anathema.

---

[1] There is some controversy around attributing this claim to Marx and Engels insofar as this passage is crossed out in the manuscript – it is an open and contestable issue whether this reflects that they dropped the claim on reflection or merely decided against bringing it in at this particular point in the text.

On the other hand, the very same authors (including notably Adorno) insist on the continued need for philosophy and require critique of philosophical positions to be, in important senses, internal to philosophy, explicitly rejecting criticisms of these positions simply in terms of the interests and social positions of their adherents. The relentless self-reflexivity mandated by Critical Theory also pushes its proponents in the direction of what has traditionally been described as philosophy – conceptual investigation into conditions of possibility. Similarly, while traditional metaphysics and logical positivism are rejected unanimously among proponents of Critical Theory, when it comes to Kantian transcendental philosophy and fundamental ontology these proponents take different, sometimes opposing views (as they do in relation to religion and metaphysics). One further complication is that some of the proponents change their view of philosophy across time – for example, Habermas thinks of philosophy in 1971 mainly in terms of a critique of scientism, but by 1983 it has become a programme of justification.[2]

In this Chapter, I will investigate Critical Theory's uneasy relationship with philosophy. I will do so mostly by way of a case study (of Adorno's Critical Theory). I adopt the case study approach for a number of reasons, notably two related ones: a more in-depth focus is better suited to illuminate the complexity of this uneasy relationship, and there already exist a number of overview accounts (whether thematic or chronological),[3] such that there is no pressing need for another one.

---

[2] 'Does Philosophy Still Have a Purpose [1971]' in (Habermas 1981a: 15-37); and 'Discourse Ethics – Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification [*Begründungsprogramm*]' in (Habermas 1983: 53-125).

[3] See, notably, (Honneth 2008) and (Wiggershaus 1994).

Still, as a starting point, it is necessary to take more of a bird's eye view. When asking about the (meta)philosophical stance of Critical Theory, an initial difficulty that one encounters is *typological*: what characterises Critical Theory and who should be counted among its proponents?

A sort of litmus test here is whether Foucault's work is counted in or out. On the one hand, one could be easily excused for thinking that Foucault stands clearly outside of this tradition – the fierce criticisms of his work by Habermas and those influenced by Habermas (such as Fraser and McCarthy) would suggest as much.[4] And often Critical Theory is defined narrowly in terms of 'the German tradition of interdisciplinary social theory, inaugurated in Frankfurt in the 1930s' (Allen 2016: *xi*). This 'Frankfurt School' tradition is then understood in family terms along generations:[5] with Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse as key figures of the first generation; Habermas as the leading figure of the second generation; and Honneth as the most prominent member of the third, which, however, now has expanded beyond Germany, with McCarthy, Fraser, and Benhabib as overseas 'children' of Habermas. In line with family analogy, the generations would continue: just as Habermas was assistant to Adorno and Honneth to Habermas, some of the assistants and doctoral students of third-generation thinkers (such as Allen and Jaeggi) would then make up the fourth generation, and so on.

On the other hand, if one takes a broad view, such that Critical Theory is 'any politically inflected form of cultural, social or political theory that has critical, progressive, or emancipatory aims,' (Allen 2016: *xi*) then Foucault certainly counts as

---

[4] See (Habermas 1985: Lectures IX-X); (Fraser 1989: Part 1); and (McCarthy 1990).
[5] See, for example, (Anderson 2011).

one of its proponents. Indeed, in a late interview he said that he wished he had read the work of Frankfurt School theorists (presumably he has here particularly the works of the first generation in mind) as this would have saved him a lot of work. (Foucault 1994: 117) Also, Foucault contests that he is an anti-Enlightenment thinker, and, contrary to Habermas' criticism and much more like the Frankfurt School, places himself in its tradition of critically interrogating the present.[6] And at least from Honneth onwards, there has been a much less confrontational relation to Foucault's work among Frankfurt School theorists. Moreover, a narrow, institutional understanding of Critical Theory can come apart from its broader notion, such that at least some of the successors theorists might no longer be doing critical theory – despite what the institutional stalwarts say, one could argue that Foucault is more of a core case of Critical Theory than Habermas or Honneth.[7]

Perhaps this typological question does not allow for a conclusive answer – at least not in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. Some views and theorists will be core examples; many will subscribe to some shared elements (such as a commitment to emancipation or a Hegelian notion of reason), but even so the differences in how they interpret these elements will often be more important; some theorists and approaches will seem more peripheral; others still will clearly fall outside; and there will be hard cases (perhaps Foucault is one). Just as in a morphing sequence, a number of (often small) changes can cumulatively lead to configurations that are fundamentally different – such that Adorno, who rejected discursive grounding, stands at one end and Forst, who combines Habermas and Rawls in such

---

[6] Notably (Foucault 1994); see also (Kelly 1994).
[7] This seems to be the (implicit) upshot of (Allen 2016).

a way as to make discursive grounding the centrepiece of any Critical Theory, at the other.[8]

A clear core case – indeed, in many ways, setting the agenda – is Horkheimer's 1937 text 'Traditional and Critical Theory' (and its 'Postscript' published a few months later).[9] According to Horkheimer, the traditional conception of theory – not just in philosophy, but in all of the academic disciplines – abstracts from the social functions and preconditions of theorising as well as its actual processes. In the pursuit of objectivity and impartiality, these matters seem of secondary importance – at best, they can be ignored altogether and, at worst, they are obstacles to be negotiated or conditions to be optimised, but even then, ultimately, they leave the core of theorising untouched. Similarly, the ideal is a transhistorical notion of truth – historical contexts might prevent people from seeing it, but this does not change the fact that truth itself is non-historical in nature and theory aims to track it. Moreover, on the traditional conception of theory, there is a social division of labour between academic, scientific work and politics, whereby the former either is value-free or takes the existing value orientations as external givens. Critical Theory, as Horkheimer introduces it, differs along all three of these dimensions: its proponents deny that the social function of theorising can be neatly distinguished from its content and nature, requiring us to take a self-reflective stance on the process of theorising and its social preconditions (Horkheimer 1972: 197, 205-6, 209, 216-7 and 244);[10] they conceive of Critical Theory and of truth as

---

[8] See, notably, (Adorno 1966: 358) / (Adorno 1973 365); and (Forst 2015). (There are no reliable translations of *Negative Dialektik*. I refer first to the German original and then to the most commonly used translation.)
[9] Both reprinted and translated in (Horkheimer 1972: 188-252).
[10] See also (Marcuse 2009: 115).

deeply historical (Horkheimer 1972: 240);[11] and they reject the notions of value-free science and are 'suspicious of the very categories of better, useful, appropriate, productive, and valuable, as these are understood in the present order,' refusing 'to take them as non-scientific presuppositions about which [Critical Theory] can do nothing' (*Ibid*.: 207).

Horkheimer in this takes his orientation from two earlier notions of critique: Kant's 'critical philosophy' and Marx's 'critique of political economy.' Like the former, he thinks that the object and the subject of cognition are pre-constituted in a certain way; but, unlike Kant, he thinks that this pre-constitution is socio-historical:

> It is not only in clothing and appearance, in outward form and emotional make-up that human beings are the product of history. Even the way they see and hear is inseparable from the social life-process as it has evolved over the millennia. The facts which our senses present to us are socially preformed in two ways: through the historical character of the object perceived and through the historical character of the perceiving organ. (*Ibid*.: 200)[12]

If anything the debts to Marx are bigger still – indeed, Horkheimer remarks that calling the theorising he has in mind 'critical' is meant 'less in the sense it has in the idealist critique of pure reason than in the sense it has in the dialectical critique of political economy' (*Ibid*.: 206n14). We can begin to see this, if we consider how the distinguishing features of Critical Theory mentioned above are united in a slogan from Marx (contained in a published letter to Ruge): the '[. . .] task for the world and

---

[11] Not all proponents of Critical Theory reject a transhistorical notion of truth. Indeed, some commentators would probably even deny that Horkheimer rejects such a notion in his seminal text, for example (Forst 2015).
[12] Translation amended. This kind of historicising of Kant's transcendental philosophy is also what Foucault, at least on some interpretations – see, notably, (Han-Pile 2002) – aims to do.

us' is '[. . .] the self-clarification (critical philosophy) of the struggles and wishes of the age' (MECW 5: 15 / MEW 3: 7) Here theorising is not conceived independently from political struggle, but integral to it; theorising also has a clear function, which is explicitly articulated and presumably something that itself is subject to theoretical reflection; and there is a clear historical index.

At this point, the question arises in which way, if any, Critical Theory, so conceived, is still philosophy or employs philosophical methods. Marx famously noted, in the 11th Feuerbach Thesis, that '[t]he philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it' and if Critical Theory is understood as self-clarification of the struggle to effect this change, then this seems to put it into contrast with philosophy. There has been much debate about Marx's attempt to leave philosophy behind,[13] but, whatever is the case with Marx, Horkheimer in 1937 clearly does not want to suggest that Critical Theory is completely discontinuous with philosophy.

This becomes clearer as a consequence of Marcuse's 'Philosophy and Critical Theory', written in response to Horkheimer's initial piece. Marcuse picks up and expands on one point contained in it: Horkheimer suggests that philosophy labours under a mistaken self-image of theorising as self-sufficient and independent, but that, nonetheless, it also contains a 'camouflaged utopia' in its 'hypostatization of Logos' insofar as 'reason should actually determine the course of events in a future society' (Horkheimer 1972: 198).[14] In the same vein, Marcuse argues that idealist philosophy is both ideological and utopian: it is ideological in individualising the

---

[13] See, notably, (Brudney 1998).
[14] Translation amended.

quest of realising reason and freedom and in suggesting that they have been (fully)

realised in the social world; but it also has an utopian and critical element in

insulating itself from this world, and thereby pointing beyond it – 'abstractness saves

its truth' (Marcuse 2009: 112). Critical Theory here is not conceived as philosophy,

but as social theory, and yet it draws on the 'truth content' of idealist philosophy:

Critical Theory makes use of its notion of reason, which as general points beyond any

specific contexts and the interests predominant in them; Critical Theory can even

rely on the individualised notion of freedom to criticise notions and practices of

'false collectives' (Marcuse is presumably thinking of the Soviet Union here); and it

inherits philosophy's 'obstinacy [*Eigensinn*]' and fantasy, both of which are crucial

for a critical stance (*Ibid.*: 103, 104, 106, 109, 113).[15] Crucially, in all this, Critical

Theory, according to Marcuse, does not commit itself to eternal truths: it accepts

that philosophy can help us to think beyond the socially given, but this transcending

does not equate to or require universal truths (*Ibid*.: 112).

Horkheimer and Marcuse do not just present Critical Theory as heir to

philosophy in the medium of social theory. Rather, as critique of political economy,

Critical Theory also continues as 'a philosophical discipline':

> For its content is the transformation of the concepts which dominate the economy in its
>
> opposites: fair exchange into a deepening of social injustice, a free economy into
>
> monopolistic control, productive work into rigid relationships which hinder production.
>
> (Horkheimer 1972: 247)

---

[15] Horkheimer also mentions obstinacy and fantasy (indeed fantasy's obstinacy) as something critical theorists must have (Horkheimer 1972: 220).

The idea here is that social processes (like the commodity exchanges at the heart of the capitalist economy) cannot be neatly separated from their conceptualisation – the latter are not merely brought externally to the subject matter, but are, in a sense, in them: the social processes in questions are 'real abstractions' – concepts, like 'commodity', play a role in how they function insofar as these processes, while happening in one sense behind the back of the participants (insofar as the participants do not adequately understand or control them), are also in another sense mediated by the conceptual grasp of these participants. When we, say, buy bread at our local bakery, we are – and cannot but be – operating (implicitly) with the categories of political economy. Otherwise what we would do would not be a business transaction. As a consequence, if the concepts governing social processes turn into their opposites (and it is such dialectical inversions that Horkheimer above suggests Critical Theory should investigate), then this does not leave the practices untouched, but signifies that they misfire too. This need not imply idealism – i.e., the thesis is not that the misfiring of the concepts *causes* the misfiring of the practices. The point is rather that the analysis of the concepts in question can reveal something that is indicative of social tendencies. Accordingly, conceptual analysis here is understood as always implying social analysis – it is both deeply philosophical (in that conceptual work is traditionally seen as the *metier* of philosophy) and gives up on philosophy as an autonomous domain. Indeed, in Horkheimer's 1931 address as the new Director of the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, it is this latter aspect that he highlights: following Hegel, social processes should be studied as historical manifestation of reason, but, contrary to Hegel, philosophy does not settle the decisive problems and is not immune to revision on the basis of the insights of

the empirical disciplines – philosophical analysis and empirical insight have to work in tandem.

The entwinement of philosophical and empirical analysis with a view towards the 'self-clarification of the struggles and wishes of the age' has then taken different twists and turns in the hands of different proponents and 'generations' of Critical Theory. From Habermas onwards, the dominant strand in Frankfurt has understood this task mainly in terms of a *reconstructive* methodology: the rational potential of social practices is meant to be reconstructed, such that its participants can become aware of the grammar of these practices, be it – as in Habermas – along a split into lifeworld and system (and communicative and instrumental action) or – as in Honneth – in terms of spheres of recognition. In this, historical and social analysis dominates, although conceptual work still has its place (notably by way of conceptual innovation, such as Habermas' adapting the distinction between lifeworld and system). Still, reconstruction is not meant to stand on its own – the moral validity of the reconstructive normative contents has to be secured too, according to Habermas and Honneth. Here elements more traditionally associated with philosophy come to the fore: while traditional metaphysics is rejected, accounts of truth and validity take on importance (notably in Habermas' project of securing what Kant's *Groundwork*, at least on some interpretations, tried but failed to provide: a non-moral ground for morality); philosophical anthropology is revived (by Habermas and Honneth); philosophy of history is resurrected, supposedly along non-metaphysical lines (as in Honneth's more recent work); or (metaethical) constructivism is added to the picture (in Forst's attempt to radicalise Rawls, O'Neill and Scanlon, such that a right to justification becomes the recursive ground of the

normative contents of Critical Theory). In a number of ways, these various projects depart from Horkheimer's (and Marcuse's) original proposal – be it in their separation between scientist and citizen (which, as mentioned, Horkheimer sees as one of the hallmarks of Traditional Theory), in integrating system theory (Habermas 1981b),[16] in broadening the causes of the present distress beyond capitalism (Habermas 1981b; Honneth 2011), or in narrowing of the normative vocabulary to moral terms, most importantly justice.[17]

Instead of tracing these twists and turns, I will now move to a case study of Adorno's work. After being central to the revival of Critical Theory in post-WWII Germany, it came increasingly under fire from the late 1960s onwards and then was largely side-lined, but recently experienced something of a renaissance. Even irrespective of this ebb and flow, Adorno's case is particularly illuminating for the complex relationship between Critical Theory and philosophy, including because – as already suggested at the beginning – he seems to go furthest in an anti-philosophical direction. (My emphasis will be particularly on the influence of Hegel and Marx, but this is not to deny that the works of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Freud also play into this.)

Adorno (1903-1969) fully enters the (German) academic scene with his inaugural lecture of 1931. Its theme is whether philosophy is still a suitable, topical endeavour (whether it has 'actuality [*Aktualität*]'). It begins with a sobering statement:

---

[16] See also (McCarthy 1985); (Fraser 1989: Ch. 6).

[17] Honneth was, for a certain period, an outlier, but recently he has reconfigured his critique of accounts of justice in such a way that he is no longer emphasising 'the other of justice,' but rather a wider, non-procedural conception of justice. See, notably, (Honneth 2011).

> Whoever chooses philosophy as a profession today must first reject the illusion that earlier
>
> philosophical enterprises began with: that the power of thought is sufficient to grasp the
>
> totality of the real. (Adorno 1977: 120)

Adorno claims that the history of philosophy itself bears witness to this being an

illusion: this history is littered with failed attempts of showing that thought can grasp

'the totality of the real,' and this reveals the doomed nature of the very enterprise.

In this lecture, he concentrates not so much on the historical attempts – we find

such discussion in later works on Husserl, Hegel, Kant, and (mainly in his lectures)

Plato and Aristotle. Rather, he criticises the dominant philosophical schools of his

day: Neo-Kantianism, Positivism, and Phenomenology (especially Heidegger's

version thereof). This reflects his view that 'one of the first and most actual tasks' is

'the radical criticism of the ruling philosophic thinking' (*Ibid*.: 130).

The nature of this radical criticism is such that one might think Adorno wants

to liquidate philosophy. He admits that this is how it will seem:

> For the strict exclusion of all ontological questions in the traditional sense, the avoidance of
>
> invariant general concepts (including, for instance, the concept of human being), the
>
> exclusion of every conception of a self-sufficient totality of mind [*Geist*], or of a self-
>
> contained 'history of mind'; the concentration of philosophical questions on concrete inner-
>
> historical complexes from which they are not to be detached – these postulates indeed
>
> become extremely similar to a dissolution of that which has long been called philosophy.
>
> (*Ibid.*: 130)[18]

Adorno operates here with a certain picture of traditional philosophy – as concerned

with essences, which are conceived as invariant and eternal and expressible in

---

[18] Translation amended.

conceptual frameworks with universal, timeless validity, and as the activity of philosophy as an autonomous expression of a *res cogitans* that unfolds over time. The thought is not that all traditional philosophers explicitly sign up to all elements of such picture, but rather that each subscribes to some of such elements, whether explicitly and knowingly or not. And in contrast to this picture of what philosophy is, what he proposes would seem to abandon philosophy. His alternative seems to make good on Marx and Engels' claim that the only science is history with its emphasis on 'concrete inner-historical complexes' (such as the events for which the name 'Auschwitz' stands, from which, Adorno thinks, ethical questions cannot and should not be detached). In that sense, he could have added that it would also seem he liquidates philosophy by thinking of it not as an autonomous discipline, but as deeply intertwined with other subjects, especially history and sociology (but also aesthetics).

However, in an important sense, the impression that Adorno wants to leave philosophy behind is mistaken. For all his debts to Marx and sociology, Adorno rejects – already in the inaugural lecture but also throughout the career that followed – attempts to reduce the criticism of philosophy to sociology of knowledge, that is, to (often debunking) accounts of works in terms of their historical, social, and biographical context. It might well be true that, for example, the fact that Kant was a bourgeois, male individual with a Pietistic background might have explanatory value in accounting for the particular contents and approach of his works. Yet, for Adorno such explanations play, at most, a supplementary ('metacritical') role: they can contribute to explaining why certain (philosophical) errors, despite the intelligence

and good intentions of those who commit them, occur.[19] They supplement

philosophical critique, 'for the truth content of a problem is in principle different

from the historical and psychological conditions out of which it grows' (*Ibid*.: 128).

We will return to the distinctively philosophical nature of the critique of

(philosophical) systems below. For now, I want to note two aspects of how Adorno

delineates philosophy, while denying its complete autonomy vis-à-vis the natural

and social sciences. First, Adorno thinks that philosophy differs from the sciences not

in the objects and problems of study, but in virtue of how it approaches them.

While, 'the separate sciences accept their findings, at least their final and deepest

findings, as indestructible and static', this is not so in philosophy, which instead

'must proceed interpretively without ever possessing a sure key to interpretation'

(*Ibid*.: 126).[20] The answers to philosophical problems are not already given, merely

needing to be discovered; and the correctness criteria for its answers are also not

independent of the enquiry itself, but depend on the 'interpretation [*Deutung*]'

adopted, without thereby (Adorno would claim) being merely arbitrary and

subjective either. Second, and relatedly, this also means that philosophy cannot

simply take the categories of the sciences – such as, notably, sociology – as givens.

Prefiguring what Horkheimer and Marcuse would write six years later, Adorno

suggests that the specific philosophical contribution to unravelling the problems

presented by our social world (taken up in the social sciences and philosophy) is by

way of 'exact fantasy' in the construction and combination of concepts. (Exact in

that it 'abides strictly within the material which the sciences present to it' and

---

[19] On Adorno's notion of metacritique, see (Jarvis 1998). Within texts, the metacritical elements can precede the philosophical critique. I return below briefly to Adorno's thoughts on the construction of texts.
[20] Translation amended.

fantasy in that it 'reaches beyond them only in the smallest aspects of their arrangement: aspects, granted, which fantasy itself must originally generate' (*Ibid*.: 131).[21]) He speaks of such combination of concepts (following Benjamin) in terms of 'constellations' (*Ibid*.: 127).[22] He emphasises the trial character of such attempts and that there is not (as the sciences presuppose) an already existing answer to be found, but a construction of an answer by way of a transformation of social reality – somewhat like the night sky, where the stars, while existing independently of us, form constellations only as a result of a successful interpretation.

This task of transforming (social) reality is not something that philosophy can accomplish on its own (*Ibid*.: 129). Here we see another of the elements highlighted by Horkheimer: the way philosophy is not completely separate from political praxis, but could only be realised by way of it. Adorno remains committed to this thought, but there is less optimism associated with it than there is in 1931. The 'Introduction' of what is widely regarded as Adorno's magnum opus, *Negative Dialektik* [1966], begins as follows:

> Philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, keeps itself alive because the moment of its realisation was missed. The summary judgement that it had merely interpreted the world, that resignation in the face of reality had crippled it in itself, becomes a defeatism of reason after the transformation of the world miscarried. (Adorno 1966: 15 / 1973: 3)[23]

---

[21] 'Fantasy' refers her to a use of the imagination that need not be tainted, contrary to what the word, in English, nowadays suggest, i.e. delusions, mere wishful thinking, etc. (in German, the latter would be '*Phantasterei*' not '*Phantasie*').

[22] On Adorno's relationship to Benjamin, see the seminal study by Buck-Morss 1977.

[23] Translation amended. See also Adorno 1998: 13-4.

Adorno still accepts that philosophy is something that could be realised and perhaps thereby come to an end in some sense. But he now thinks the opportunity for such a realisation has passed – in part because '[p]erhaps the interpretation which promised the transition did not suffice' (*Ibid.*).[24] And, as a result – contrary to Marx's dictum – there still is a role for philosophy, for interpreting the world.

As in 1931, Adorno reserves a central role for philosophy 'ruthlessly to criticize itself' (*Ibid.*).[25] This is not meant as a navel-gazing exercise, but is in the service of trying to break the hold certain conceptual structures have on us (and thereby the hold on us of social practices in part constituted by these conceptual structures). The relationship to the praxis of changing the world is, thus, complex: Adorno insists both on not subordinating philosophy to political struggle (such subordination tends to be to the detriment of that struggle itself because it tends to involve silencing critical voices which could provide checks on misdevelopments);[26] and on philosophy's remaining orientated by that struggle and ultimately depending on the political struggle's success for its own success. In a nutshell, Adorno's proposal is that philosophy should contribute in its own domain and with its own weapons to this struggle.

Adorno tends to speak of 'dialectic' to denote the tracing and unfolding of problems internal to philosophical theories:

> Dialectic is not a third standpoint [in addition to positivism and fundamental ontology] but
>
> rather the attempt, by means of an immanent critique, to develop philosophical standpoints

---

[24] Redmond's online translation used.

[25] Adorno 1966: 15/Ashton: 3

[26] That is why, for Adorno, not to undertake philosophy is 'practically criminal [*praktischer Frevel*]' (Adorno 1966: 243 / 1973: 245). See also (Freyenhagen 2014).

beyond themselves and beyond the despotism of a thinking based on standpoints. (Adorno 1998: 12)

The first aspect here is the notion of dialectic as 'immanent critique': demonstrating that theories fail by their own ambitions and standards. For instance, he argues not just that Kant's examples reflect a bourgeois stance, but also that there is a central tension in Kant between downplaying the role of examples for justifying his theory (which is meant to have *a priori* validity) and the weight they then end up having (but failing) to bear.[27] (Consider, for instance, how the famous gallows example in the *Critique of Practical Reason* is pivotal in Kant's argument, but how telling it is that it centrally involves compulsion to demonstrate freedom and how unconvincing it is to claim that no desire can be so strong that one would want it to be satisfied, even at the price of being executed immediately afterwards.)

The second aspect – the claim that dialectic is beyond standpoints – is more puzzling, but one thing he means is that dialectic is not a method that can be separated from its object. Generally, Adorno is highly critical of those philosophical theories which separate method and substance, or form and content. He does not deny that we can make local distinctions between these two purported poles. Rather, his point is that we should be highly suspicious when such distinctions are absolutized – that form is separable from specific content in a particular context does neither imply that it is separable from that specific content in all contexts, nor that it is separable from all content.

One index of the fact that Adorno does not think of dialectic as a self-standing method is that he presents it as historically indexed: dialectic is not apt in

---

[27] See, notably, (Adorno 1966: 222-5 / 1973: 223-6).

all historical contexts. Rather, it is apt specifically in our context because that context

is one in which not only philosophical theories present themselves as systems which

are, in fact, riddled with contradictions, but because our social world also is such a

system.[28] In that sense, 'dialectics is the ontology of the wrong state of things'; and

'[T]he right one would be emancipated from it, as little system as contradiction'

(Adorno 1966: 22 / 1973: 11).[29]

Here we also begin to see the difference to Hegel, whose work exerted a

decisive influence on Adorno's. The historical index of dialectic to our modern world

already breaks with Hegel's notion of dialectic (as something that involves historical

unfolding but is not restricted to one historical epoch). A related, but perhaps even

more important, break is that Adorno eschews both the *telos* of absolute identity of

mind and world and the trust in progress that he sees as essential to Hegel's

dialectic. That is why Adorno speaks of '*negative* dialectic' (Adorno 1966: 145, 398 /

1973: 141, 406) – nothing in the dialectic process guarantees a positive resolution of

contradictions, especially not a culmination in 'absolute knowledge'; and the existing

totality of which dialectic is the ontology stands forth not as reconciled state, but as

'triumphant calamity' (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002: 1), and this ought to cure us of

any attempts to squeeze positive meaning out of history (Adorno 1966: 354 / 1973:

361).[30] For all the benefits modern civilisation brings, it is – according to Adorno – a

'triumphant calamity' because it is characterised by a decoupling (or even inversion)

of means and ends that is most clearly exemplified in the death camps of Auschwitz

---

[28] Despite important changes since his death (including the fall of the Soviet block), Adorno, if he were alive, would view today's existing context as fundamentally continuous with the one he described in his works.

[29] Translation amended.

[30] For a detailed discussion of progress and Critical Theory, see (Allen 2016).

and the creation of the atom bomb, but also inherent in its general structures and tendencies. (I return below to the decoupling of means and ends.)

Hegel, according to Adorno, breaks with his own idea of dialectic by smuggling in (however inadvertently) external criteria by which to orientate the dialectical process. However, here one might object that even if this were right about Hegel, how can Adorno avoid doing the same? Wouldn't ruthless self-criticism of philosophy otherwise become too fragmented and disjointed, resulting in a whole raft of immanent critiques, which all point in different directions? Moreover, isn't immanent critique too limited an approach? Even if one succeeds in demonstrating how a theory falls short of its standards, this does not yet tell us whether the theory should be modified so that it meets its standards or modified by abandoning them. Nor does it tell us how, all things considered, we should proceed (perhaps a theory that falls some distance short of its own standards is still the least bad option available).

Intriguingly, Adorno himself notes the limitations of immanent critique:

What is immanently argumentative is legitimate where it registers the integrated reality become system, in order to oppose it with its own strength. What is on the other hand free in thought represents the authority which is already aware of what is emphatically untrue of that context. Without this knowledge it would not come to the breakout, without the appropriation of the power of the system the breakout would fail. (Adorno 1966: 40 / 1973: 30)[31]

---

[31] Redmond's online translation used and amended. See also (Adorno 1966: 183 / 1973: 181-2).

We encounter here again the idea that immanent critique (and hence dialectic) is appropriate ('legitimate') because of the particular historical situation we are in (characterised as 'integrated reality'). This situation is one of untruth – untruth not in the sense that we face a world of delusion created by a Cartesian evil demon. Just the opposite: the problem is that the social world is factually existent – it genuinely shapes and dominates us. Untrue, rather, in the sense that the social world is a system of domination when it need not be and in the sense that it gives rise to false consciousness about its nature and constitution (following broadly Marx's idea of ideology). Yet the latter also means that immanent critique cannot stand on its own – it presupposes and needs to be oriented by knowledge of this untruth.

This raises at least two questions: whereby do we gain such knowledge? And how does Adorno fare better than Hegel whom he accuses of importing something external into the dialectical unfolding of immanent critique? In answer to the first of these questions, Adorno answers that negative experiences, particularly suffering, acquaint us with untruth. Such experiences range from physical pain inflicted directly as part social domination or socially caused ills (such as anti-Semitic or racist violence) to experiences of negativity resulting from highly intellectual engagement with art and metaphysical ideas.[32] While such experiences will often be mediated by a complex theoretical apparatus, their validity is not a matter of ultimate justification at the level of theorising. Indeed, Adorno is highly critical of such 'discursive grounding' – viewing it as unnecessary (we do not need theorising to

---

[32] On metaphysical experience, see (Skirke 2012) and (Hulatt forthcoming). To say that negative experiences play a pivotal role in Adorno's theory is not to say that Adorno understands them as encountering theory-independent facts that could be appealed to in order to arbitrate between different theories. This would be to slip into the kind of foundationalist framework that Adorno urges us to avoid – along with what he sees as the crude empiricism of Logical Positivism or the appeal to pure immediacy in Heidegger.

know that domination is an evil, even if we might need theorising in order to recognise, analyse, explain and overcome instances of it). He even claims that attempting to provide such grounding can be an 'outrage [*Frevel*]' – for it wrongly implies, for example, that events associated with the name 'Auschwitz' are not paradigms of evil and could only be legitimately judged to be evils if something else held true which grounds this judgement (say Kant's original categorical imperative or that the very act of engaging in communication ineluctably but appropriately commits one to certain norms). Moreover, it also wrongly implies that these events might not be negative – depending on whether *or not* that something else that is said to be required as a ground could legitimate them as evils. The mere fact that most grounds are intended to legitimate them as such and would do so on reasonable interpretations is not sufficient here – for one can get the appropriate outcome for the wrong reasons (just as the mere fact that Utilitarianism might not actually license the killing of innocent people in a particular situation does not suffice to defend it). Leaving open certain possibilities – even if only theoretically – is a sign of bad character or theory.

At this point, it may seem as if Adorno is just importing a negative orientation into his dialectic where Hegel (according to Adorno) imported a positive one, and neither is more justified in doing so than the other – Hegel's discursive grounding fails according to Adorno (in a nutshell because it begs the question by assuming from the beginning what is meant to be proven), but by rejecting such grounding, it seems as if Adorno cannot really offer anything more. The question is whether anything else might be said in favour of Adorno's negative dialectic over Hegel's positive one. One point Adorno makes is that there is a closer link between negative

experiences and philosophy, indeed thinking at all, than with positive experiences.

He claims that pain and negativity are 'the motor of dialectical thought' (Adorno

1966: 202 / 1973: 202).[33] To cut a long story short, Adorno subscribes to a 'natural-

historical' account of how conceptual thought and reason emerged: with the human

animal exposed to an often hostile natural environment, they emerged out of

physical impulses and drives – most generally put, the drive for self-preservation – in

the face of negative experiences.[34] Moreover, while genesis and validity cannot

simply be equated, Adorno thinks that something from any genesis remains

inscribed in and structures to a certain extent what has emerged – indeed, (practical)

reason becomes irrational when it leaves behind its mooring in 'naked physical fear,

and the sense of solidarity with what Brecht called 'tormentable bodies'.' (Adorno

1966: 281 / 1973: 286) (This is the key to Adorno's rejection of discursive

grounding.)[35]

Such (on the face of it implausible) claims would deserve careful and detailed

discussion. Here I can only offer a high-altitude sketch. Adorno highlights particularly

three elements: (a) instrumental rationality; (b) capitalism; and (c) 'identity thinking

[*Identitätsdenken*].' The first is familiar enough, and it is fairly clear how it fits into

the kind of naturalist story hinted at above: reasoning over what means are required

to achieve an end is a powerful tool for human beings to navigate the challenges

they face in surviving; its emergence plausibly is linked with various impulses and

---

[33] Redmond's online translation used.

[34] See notably (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002). Adorno's notion of 'natural history' is meant to denote the intertwining of nature and history –see, for example, (Cook 2011). Such natural history cannot be decoded simply by way of the natural sciences, though it is broadly compatible with them. Nietzsche's idea of genealogy and Freudian psychoanalysis as well as (particularly the early) Marx play a background role here.

[35] See (Freyenhagen 2013: Ch. 5 and especially Ch.7).

drives, which it both channels and keeps in check (typically taking means for ends involves postponing satisfying our immediate impulses in the service of more long-term satisfaction of these impulses or drives that go beyond them).

Capitalism – as a way of organising production and society – is (for Adorno) one particular manifestation of our drive for self-preservation and instrumental rationality. It is a very sophisticated 'tool' humans developed (not by some conscious, plan-directed collective effort on our part, but as the consequence of human history understood on the secular model of natural growth – purposeful, but without conscious design or control). Adorno harbours no illusion of a pre-capitalist golden past and recognises that there are material and other advances this 'tool' has enabled us to secure. However, Adorno also thinks that – as in Goethe's well-known ballad '*Der Zauberlehrling* [The Sorcerer's Apprentice]' (and the even better known Disney adaption of this featuring Mickey Mouse) – this tool no longer serves us, but has come to overwhelm, even dominate us. A means-end reversal has happened of the sort often envisaged in dystopian science-fiction stories, whereby the machines meant to serve us have taken over and we serve them (perhaps without realising it).

Finally, 'identity thinking' is another such tool. Adorno suggests that all conceptual thinking is identifying – trying to grasp a particular as falling under a concept (or set of concepts). And such identifying is powerful – it allows us to shape the world in such a way that it becomes more manageable to us (allowing us to impose patterns on it, to try out different solutions to what can be identified as recurring problems, and the like).[36] Yet, once again, Adorno thinks that this tool has

---

[36] This is a *shaping* of the world, not simply taking it in as it is. Otherwise, it would be mysterious why 'identity thinking' is (for Adorno) both a useful tool *and* – as we will see shortly – getting the world terribly wrong.

come to dominate us, and the point where this happened is when mere thinking in terms of identity became 'identity thinking,' where this shaping of the world became forgetful of the fact that there is something lost in merely saying what a particular falls under (even if what it falls under is not simply one concept, but a whole conceptual scheme) and that imposing patterns, schemas and systems on particulars distorts them, which – in the case of sentient beings – also causes suffering. Thus, even if all conceptual thought involves identifying, not all such thought need be identity thinking. Negative dialectic does not (and cannot) escape operating by way of conceptual identification, but is different from identity thinking in not ossifying this operation. It is mindful of what is not identical to the conceptual schemes we impose, and tries to recover it and make amends inasmuch as our conceptual tools allow us to do so.

Again much more would need to be said to unpack and defend this set of claims, but the important point for our context is that Adorno presents all of the three elements as already connected to negative experiences, such that bringing the latter into the critique of the former is, in one sense, not to import something external into the dialectical process, though in another sense it is. Adorno is not simply applying the standards inherent in identity thinking, but bringing to this endeavour negative experiences of the 'untrue whole' – in this sense, his critique is not simply immanent. Still, implicit in the very logic of what he criticises are negative experiences – identity thinking and instrumental rationality are not simply manna from heaven, but historically developed and developing responses to the pain, loss and terror humans felt (and continue to feel) in navigating their world. Indeed, if Adorno is correct, implicit in the very logic of both capitalism and identity thinking

(and, by extension, theories manifesting their logic) is their own demand for something else: capitalism constitutively aims for – in the words of Adam Smith – 'a well-governed society,' in which 'universal opulence [. . .] extends itself to the lowest ranks of the people,'[37] so that if it cannot deliver this (whether it be, say, because of its inherent tendencies towards immiseration or because it leads to the destruction of the environmental conditions for human flourishing), then it calls for a different organisation of production and social life. Similarly, identity thinking constitutively aims at grasping fully what is being identified, and insofar as it cannot achieve this, it also calls for being transcended.

Tracing and revealing such contradictions requires a particular mode of presentation. Adorno suggests that we should write in such a way that each sentence is equidistant to the centre of the subject matter under discussion Adorno 1951: §44), and he often seems to come close to this ideal. As a consequence, one finds little argument that is developed along one continuous, linear path – if anything such a procedure is rejected as inadequate,[38] not least because the object of enquiry (the modern social world and its thought forms) is itself antagonistic and as such resists 'continuous presentation' (Adorno 1984: 163-4).

Often, it seems as if arguments are lacking altogether and we are just faced with striking and suggestive conclusions, leaving it to the reader to construct arguments in support of them – the text is meant as a trigger for reflection, not as reporting about reflection that has taken place. Adorno's approach is one of '*disclosing critique*,' meant to make us see the particular phenomena and the social

---

[37] (Smith 1993 [5th ed. 1789]: Vol. I, Bk. I. Ch. 1, para. 10).
[38] See, for example, (Adorno 1966: 44 / 1973: 33).

world of which they are part in a new way. The use of exaggeration is not accidental to it – as Adorno puts it memorably in *Minima Moralia*: 'The splinter in your eye is the best magnifying glass' (Adorno 1951: §29).

Engaging in immanent critique also complicates the task of presentation (and interpretation). What Adorno says in the course of an immanent critique need not represent his own views at all, but merely serves the purpose of this critique. Moreover, he often uses the complex terminology and ideas of the authors he discusses (such as Kant, Hegel, or Heidegger), which then require their own decoding, a task made more difficult by the fact that Adorno transfigures the terms and ideas in the course of the discussion. In general, Adorno denies that philosophical ideas can be captured in neat definitions that provide necessary and sufficient conclusions.[39]

Adorno also eschews examples whenever they remain completely external or inconsequential to what they are meant to illustrate – whenever they are *mere illustrations*. Instead he advocates what he calls 'models': working through an issue in the particular way it appears in a paradigm case (say freedom in Kant's philosophy in the 'first model' of *Negative Dialektik*). Similarly, his anti-systematic stance is also reflected in his use of aphorisms (especially *Minima Moralia*) and, most importantly of all, the use of the essay form. He adopts the latter both for its openness as literary form and for signalling (by way of its French root of '*un essai*') the fallibility of philosophical endeavours (in contrast to the certainty which (some) traditional philosophy claims for itself).

---

[39] See, for example, (Adorno 1984: 159–60).

It is, however, a mistake to understand Adorno's anti-system as anti-logical – as so caught up in presenting contradictions and *aporias* that it ends up flouting the rules of logic, infinitely deconstructing and erasing every step as soon as it is taken. As he puts it in relation to the essay form:

> For the essay is not situated in simple opposition to discursive procedure. It is not unlogical; rather it obeys logical criteria in so far as the totality of its sentences must fit together coherently. Mere contradictions may not remain, unless they are grounded in the object itself. It is just that the essay develops thoughts differently from discursive logic. The essay neither makes deductions from a principle nor does it draw conclusions from coherent individual observations. It co-ordinates elements, rather than subordinating them; and only the essence of its content, not the manner of its presentation, is commensurable with logical criteria. (Adorno 1984: 169)

Just because one rejects discursive grounding and the idea that the world can be captured in top-down deductively organised conceptual frameworks, does not mean one foregoes stringency, exactness, clarity, structure, or even bindingness. Adorno denies that these qualities can be had only within (and thereby at the cost of) a system. Just as (musical) composition has its own stringency and logic without thereby having to be a deductive system or algorithm, so does thinking, even where it turns against its own tendencies to petrify the world and our experiences into rigid systems.

So far this case study of Adorno's theory has been an exploration that neither entered into scholarly debates around interpretation nor provided much by way of critical scrutiny. I will conclude by highlighting one crucial critical junction. There is a

fundamental interpretative question as to whether Adorno's negative dialectic contains, however implicitly, a positive core; and a fundamental philosophical question as to whether it should contain it, such that if it were missing, this would undermine, even invalidate his theory. The literature is divided along both questions, but the majority of interpretations involve ascribing a positive core of some sort to Adorno's theory.[40] Perhaps in good part this is because it is widely accepted that a positive core is required. However, this widespread commitment is, in fact, problematic – or so I have argued elsewhere.[41] In particular, it overlooks the plausibility and cogency of 'metaethical negativism' – the view that the bad or wrong has normative force of its own, which can be recognised without reference to the good and the right, and which at least on occasion is sufficient for us to come to all-things-considered judgements about what to do and refrain from doing (recall how Auschwitz functions as a negative paradigm for Adorno). Also, it mistakenly assumes that every form of criticism has to be constructive in the sense of providing a positive alternative or substitute – while it might well be desirable that critique can point to such an alternative, it is not a requirement, neither in philosophy (flicking through any philosophy journal would provide illustration for that), nor outside of it (would we really require of Jean Améry that he provides his torturers with a positive alternative in order for him to be permitted to criticise what they subject them to?). If this is correct, then Adorno's negative dialectic could do without a positive core, and Adorno is right not to be afraid of 'the reproach of unfruitful negativity' (Adorno 1977: 130).

---

[40] See, for example, (Finlayson 2002) and (Seel 2004).
[41] See (Freyenhagen 2013: Ch. 8).

However, if this is mistaken, and if – as many of his successors within the Critical Theory tradition also think – Adorno's theory lacks the resources to provide a positive core of the right kind, then subsequent developments within this tradition would be vindicated in taking a different approach. Crucially, these developments thereby also change the conception of and relation to philosophy – making Critical Theory dependent on universal pragmatics or normative reconstructions of our social spheres and a reconfigured philosophy of history or constructivist accounts of justification. As noted from the outset, this Chapter does not aim to trace the morphing sequences that Critical Theory's (relationship to) philosophy has undergone, but provides a case study of one of its exemplifications – a 'model' in Adorno's sense.[42]

Where does this leave Critical Theory's uneasy relationship with Philosophy? In the model case I focused on – Adorno's work – the relationship is one where critique of philosophy is combined with insistence on the need for it. Adorno's critique is directed against philosophy in the sense of theory that is committed to some combination of the following elements: the possibility of capturing the world fully in our conceptual schemes; timeless essence(s); philosophy's having to be a system; the requirement for and possibility of ultimate grounding (including of our ethical judgements); a stark division between method and substance; and the separation of philosophy from other disciplines. Adorno insists on the need for self-critical reflection about these elements (or the works of authors which exemplify their combination). Such critique of philosophy should, thus, be in a sense internal

---

(rather than, for example, a sociology of knowledge or a neuroscientific account that presents these thought constructions as epiphenomena). It also operates by way of conceptual innovation and rearrangement – and thereby is an heir to traditional philosophy. The need for self-critical reflection arises because Adorno thinks our existing conceptual schemes reflect and even mediate our (social) reality and thereby contribute to its wrongness, such that criticising them has to be part of social critique. In a word, he advocates philosophising with and because of a bad conscience – including, crucially, a bad conscience about the nature and function of philosophy itself.

Bibliography

Adorno, T.W. 1951. *Minima Moralia*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp. [trans. E.F.N. Jephcott. London: NLB, 1974].

Adorno, T.W. 1966. *Negative Dialektik*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp. [Translated as *Negative Dialectics*, by E. B. Ashton, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973. Alternative translation, by Dennis Redmond, available online: http://www.efn.org/~dredmond/ndtrans.html; last accessed 22/08/2011 at 12.22h.

Adorno, T.W. 1977. 'The Actuality of Philosophy' [1931], *Telos* 10.1: 120-33.

Adorno, T.W. 1984. 'Essay as Form', trans. by B. Hullot-Kentor and F. Will, *New German Critique* 32: 151-71.

Adorno, T.W. 1998. 'Why Still Philosophy' ['Wozu noch Philosophie', 1963], 'Why Still Philosophy' trans. by H.W. Pickford in *Critical Models*. New York: Columbia University Press, 5-17.

Anderson, J. 2011. 'Situating Axel Honneth in the Frankfurt School Tradition', In *Axel Honneth: Critical Essays*, ed. D. Petherbridge. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers.

Allen, A. 2016. *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Brudney, D. 1998. *Marx's Attempt to Leave Philosophy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Buck-Morss, S. 1977. *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt School*. Hassocks: Harvester Press.

Cook, D. 2011. *Adorno on Nature*. Durham: Acumen.

Finlayson, J.G. 2002. 'Adorno on the Ethical and the Ineffable', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 10, (1), 1-25.

Freyenhagen, F. 2013. *Adorno's Practical Philosophy: Living Less Wrongly*. Cambridge University Press.

Freyenhagen, F. 2014. 'Adorno's Politics: Theory and Praxis in Germany's 1960s', *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 40 (9), 867-93.

Forst, R. 2015. *Normativität und Macht. Zur Analyse sozialer Rechtfertigungsordnungen*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Foucault, M. 1994. 'What Is Enlightenment?' [1984] in P. Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader*, ed. P. Rabinow. New York: Pantheon, pp. 32-50.

Fraser, N. 1989. *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Habermas, J. 1981a. *Philosophisch-politische* Profile. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M., extended edition. Translated as *Philosophical-Political Profiles* by F.G. Lawrence, Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1983.

Habermas, J. 1981b. *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns.* Vol. 1: *Handlungsrationalität und gesellschaftliche Rationalisierung.* Vol. 2: *Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft.* Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp. [Translated as *The Theory of Communicative Action.* Vol. I: *Reason and the Rationalization of Society* Vol. II: *Lifeworld and System* by T. McCarthy, Boston: Beacon 1984, 1987].

Habermas, J. 1983. *Moralbewußtsein und kommunikatives Handeln*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a. M. [Translated as *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* by C. Lenhardt and S. Weber Nicholsen, Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990].

Habermas, J. 1985. *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne: Zwölf Vorlesungen*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a. M. [Translated as *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* by F. Lawrence, Cambridge MA.: MIT Press, 1987].

Han-Pile, B. 2002. *Foucault's Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical.* Stanford University Press.

Honneth, A. 2008. 'Critical Theory', Ch. 18 in *The Routledge Companion to Twentieth Century Philosophy*, Ed. D. Moran. London and New York: Routledge.

Honneth, A. 2011. *Das Recht der Freiheit: Grundriß einer demokratischen Sittlichkeit*. Berlin: Suhrkamp. Translation as *Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life* by J. Ganahl. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014.

Horkheimer, M. 1972. *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. M. J. O'Connell. New York: Herder and Herder.

Horkheimer, M. and Adorno, T.W. 2002. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* [1944, 1947] trans. E. Jephcott, New York: Herder & Herder.

Hulatt, O. (forthcoming). *Adorno's Theory of Aesthetic and Philosophical Truth: Texture and Performance*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Jarvis, S. 1998, *Adorno – A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity.

Kelly, M. (ed.) 1994. *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*. Cambridge MA.: MIT Press.

McCarthy, T. 1990. 'The Critique of Impure Reason: Foucault and the Frankfurt School'. *Political Theory*, 18(3), 437-69.

McCarthy, T. 1985. 'Complexity and Democracy, or the Seducements of Systems Theory', *New German Critique*, 35, 27-53.

Marcuse, H. 2009. 'Philosophie und Kritische Theorie' [1937], in *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory*, trans. J.J. Shapiro. London: MayFlyBooks, Ch. 4.

Marx, K and F. Engels. 1956-1990. *Marx Engels Werke* [MEW]. Berlin: Dietz Verlag.

Marx, K. and F. Engels. 1975-2005. *Marx Engels Collected Works* [MECW]. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Seel, M. 2004. *Adornos Philosophie der Kontemplation*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.

Skirke, C. 2012. 'Metaphysical Experience and Constitutive Error in Adorno's ''Meditations on Metaphysics''', *Inquiry*, 55 (3), 307-28.

Smith, A. 1993. *The Wealth of Nations*. [First published 1776; 5th edition 1789]. Oxford University Press.

Wiggershaus, R. 1994. *The Frankfurt School: its history, theories and political significance* [1986], trans. M. Robertson. Cambridge: Polity.