

John Abromett and Matthias Benzer have published two detailed and highly informative monographs, the one on Max Horkheimer ‘paradigmatic for the movement as a whole’ (W. Adorno 1903-1969). The two books are written in styles that hardly could differ more: Abromett’s is a primarily historical presentation that engages in exegesis of key texts mostly in chronological order, covering the period from Horkheimer’s birth in 1895 to 1941, whereas Benzer’s presentation rarely references historical context and draws in each of its chapters on the entire range of Adorno’s writings insofar as they make explicit or implicit statements about society; Adorno’s position is shown not in its gradual emergence but from the perspective of its most developed stage, Negative Dialectic being one of the most often quoted works. Furthermore, while Benzer almost completely disappears behind his subject matter, which he presents in a detached but faithful manner, Abromett frames his argument within an evaluative, historical narrative that presents the Horkheimer of the 1930s as the most genuine representative of Critical Theory, whereas the Horkheimer of 1941ff is suggested to represent a lesser version. Abromett chose the year 1941 as cut-off point because in that year Horkheimer reduced to a minimum the activities of the Institute for Social Research in New York, ended the publication of the Institute’s journal Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung and moved to Los Angeles to concentrate on theoretical work with Adorno. Abromett also emphasises that Erich Fromm had departed from the Institute in 1939, around the time Adorno became a member.

Key to Abromett’s narrative is his view that Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s co-authored Dialectic of Enlightenment (first published in 1944) fits seamlessly into the larger trajectory of Adorno’s work, but represents a break with Horkheimer’s early Critical Theory (Abromett 2011:4). The decisive point is here the interpretation of the Enlightenment: Abromett applauds the early Horkheimer for having emphasised ‘the critical and sensualist currents of the French Enlightenment as “paradigmatic” for the movement as a whole’ (A11) rather than following ‘the tired, yet remarkably stubborn myth that the Enlightenment was the apotheosis of abstract reason’. Abromett identifies the latter tendency not only with ‘recent Heideggerian- and poststructuralist-inspired interpretations’ of the Enlightenment which emphasize its truth-and-power-seeking character, but also with ‘the more pessimistic interpretation Horkheimer and Adorno themselves put forth in the 1940s, which viewed the historical Enlightenment primarily as an episode in a much larger process of the progressive domination of internal and external nature by instrumental reason’. This statement, first made on the introductory pages of the book and restated several times, points to Abromett’s principal evaluative perspective, and also to the only weakness of his book’s conception: although he proposes to interpret the Enlightenment as expressive of the ‘dialectic of bourgeois society’, namely a dialectic of emancipation and the simultaneous creation of new forms of intense and brutal domination (which is, I would argue, nothing other than the perspective developed in Dialectic of Enlightenment), he applauds the early Horkheimer’s championing the Enlightenment’s critical, anti-authoritarian and emancipatory strand as ‘paradigmatic for the movement as a whole’. This highlights a contradiction in Abromett’s perspective: how could in a dialectical force-field one side of the dialectic be ‘paradigmatic’ for the whole? The early Horkheimer’s sometimes more unequivocal remarks on the Enlightenment would rather seem a weakness of the early Horkheimer’s perspective than a strength to be celebrated. A consistently dialectical perspective on the Enlightenment must focus on the Enlightenment’s involvement in its own undoing, while recognizing that it still provides the conceptual basis for a movement that aims to drive the Enlightenment beyond its own limitations. This is exactly what Dialectic of Enlightenment and other texts of the 1940s that were shaped by the cooperation between Horkheimer and Adorno do, though. In other words, Abromett’s excellent and highly informative study of Horkheimer’s development until around 1941 leads to conclusions that undo his principal conceptual premise. Crucially, though, Abromett’s book (ending as it does in 1941) does not contain a discussion of Dialectic of Enlightenment: the latter’s interpretation as ‘pessimistic’ and dismissive of the historical Enlightenment is simply posited, reflecting what arguably is the predominant perception of this issue in the existing English-language literature.

As also Benzer’s book hardly deals with Dialectic of Enlightenment, and as space does not allow any meaningful engagement with this complex work, it will remain also in this review essay an absent centre. I will instead in the following pages try to show that Abromett’s presentation actually supports the opposite of the claim that frames his argument, and then use Benzer’s presentation of Adorno’s sociology – mostly formulated in the 1940s through 1960s – to show that Adorno, far from having spoiled genuine 1930s-style Critical Theory, does as well, and perhaps better, most of the things for which Abromett celebrates the early Horkheimer. While Abromett is right to emphasize that the ‘foundations of Critical Theory’ were laid by Horkheimer in the 1930s, Adorno climbed the summits, as it were, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, following through and fleshing out the conception Horkheimer developed. Rather than a decisive ‘break’ around 1941, the two books demonstrate in many ways the continuity of Critical Theory from at the latest 1931 (when both Horkheimer and Adorno gave their inaugural lectures at Frankfurt) to 1969 (Adorno’s death).

Abromett’s book begins with two biographical chapters on Horkheimer’s childhood, youth and student years, describes in the third chapter Horkheimer’s break with ‘consciousness philosophy’ (i.e. Kantian and neo-Kantian idealism) and his early work on the history of philosophy, and in chapter 4 his appropriation of Marxism in his first critiques of epistemology and the sociology of knowledge. Chapter 5 (completed by an Exкурсус following chapter 8) describes Horkheimer’s and Fromm’s crucial and pioneering adoption of psychoanalysis. These chapters cover thus two of the three main building blocks of Critical Theory (the third being the appropriation and development of the kind of em-
irical research methods that were then being pioneered in the USA). Chapters 6, 7 and 8 discuss three of the main concerns of Horkheimer’s writing in the 1930s, namely his concept of materialism, what he termed the ‘anthropology of the bourgeois epoch’ and his reworking of ‘dialectical logic’. A second ‘Excursus’, perhaps the most exciting part of the book, retraces Horkheimer’s relationship with Adorno, a discussion most decisive to understanding both writers’ work (and Abromeit’s perspective on it). The last chapter discusses Horkheimer’s writings from the first war years which for Abromeit signals the ending of Critical Theory’s most useful period.

The Young Horkheimer

Even for those suspicious of, or indifferent to biography, Abromeit’s first chapters should prove illuminating as they demonstrate that many aspects of what later became Critical Theory were already present in the thinking of the young Horkheimer. Horkheimer was born to Jewish parents. His father was in 1895 still in the beginnings of his career as a textile industrialist but by the eve of WWI had become a millionaire (A19-20). Of modest formal education, he was an ardent German patriot, a left-liberal (which at the time meant a free-market, minimal state liberal) and very much anti-Social Democracy. ‘If Horkheimer’s father embodied liberal economic rationality, to which necessarily belonged bourgeois coldness, as Horkheimer would argue later, his mother embodied the warmth of selless love.’ (A21). Aged 15, Horkheimer left school (a technical Realschule) to work in his father’s firm (A22). 16-year-old Horkheimer invited Pollock, the son of a leather industrialist, to take part in a social dancing class, which Pollock, after attending once, preferred not to do. Horkheimer was impressed by ‘Pollock’s willingness to flout social convention’, revealed to him that he too detested respectable society’s role-playing expectations and ‘implored’ him to be his friend. After due deliberation, Pollock accepted Horkheimer’s advances and the two industrialists’ sons set up in writing and signed a ‘friendship contract’ detailing their commitment to each other and creating a more humane world (A23). They honoured this contract until Pollock’s death sixty years later. Both were preparing to become industrialists. Pollock being more practically oriented, Horkheimer more the ‘sensitive child’, they referred to each other as ‘ministre de l’interieur’ and ‘ministre de l’exterieur’ (home secretary and foreign secretary), nicknames that prefugured the division of labour in the Institute. Pollock had been a grammar school boy and was the better read; he introduced Horkheimer to many works of classical literature, including importantly, Schopenhauer (A24). In 1913 the two friends lived together in Brussels where they did internships in factories and learned French, as well as pursuing their intellectual interests. Staying abroad allowed them to ‘escape the rigid and stifling bourgeois lifestyle of Wilhelmine Germany’ that they felt they suffered from – early indications of an exile life. Abromeit tells well the wonderful story of their stay in England in 1914 (another step in their entrepreneurial training programme) where Horkheimer’s girlfriend joined them, apparently without parental consent (A26). The days of their small London commune of three where ‘interior life’ in the intellectual as well as emotional sense flourished were cut short, though, by the rapid intervention of the reality principle in the form of the young woman’s father having Scotland Yard arrest Pollock. In an autobiographical account of the episode, Horkheimer noted that his girlfriend’s last words to him were, ‘Je n’ai plus d’interieur, ’I no longer have any interior’ – a statement that seems to resonate with the idea of alienation of Interior life that later had a place in the critical theory of the bourgeois character. Horkheimer commented: ‘She had found her way back to reality perfectly, she no longer understood that which had been, she herself and both of us had suddenly become foreign to her.’

In his account, Horkheimer describes the relationship between the three of them as ‘an act of resistance against alienation’ (A27). In terms of philosophical references, his worldview at the time was Nietzschean and Schopenhauerian: ‘I feel compassion for the living, but not with their folly, for that is precisely what pains and makes suffer the part of me that I share with them.’ While Horkheimer wrote this, WWI had begun which Horkheimer unequivocally rejected from the beginning (A28). In this period Horkheimer mostly studied literature (while working in his father’s factory, which initially prevented him from studying) and wrote several novelas (A29). In 1916 he was drafted but in spring 1918 discharged for illness whereupon he stayed in a sanatorium near Munich (A33). There he wrote a short play titled Peace on the antisemitic murder committed by a revolutionary soldier whose hypocrisy Horkheimer depicts (A34). In his writings from 1917, numerous references to antisemitism can be found (A35), probably triggered by experiences in the army. During the war years Horkheimer also developed a ‘deep distrust of party politics’ that remained ‘at his heart’ (A36). This included a distrust of socialists, triggered by his disappointment with the Social Democratic support of the war in 1914. In a letter from 1917 titled ‘Avowal of My Politics’ he wrote – again prefiguring an aspect that would reappear in his Critical Theory many years later – that in party politics ‘[s]purious reasons, and the clever embellishment of one’s own interests with the law and moral purity are transformed into finished products that can be easily consumed by large groups of followers, run like a religion, and believed like a religion’ (A36-7). Later in 1918, Horkheimer became editor of the critical Monthly of the photographer Germaine Krull that was also frequented by the likes of Kurt Eisner, Ernst Toller, Stefan Zweig and Rainer Maria Rilke (A41). Horkheimer presented his literary work there and sees us seems to have made a strong impression in political discussions as a supporter of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. Horkheimer and Pollock were sympathetic to, but highly sceptical about the council republic of April 1919 (A44). After this turbulent period, they moved to Frankfurt to study.

Horkheimer’s most important intellectual influence in this period was Schopenhauer’s notion of ‘the world as a living hell’ (A47). He concurred with Schopenhauer’s criticisms of metaphysical systems or philosophies of history, such as that of Leibniz or Hegel, that justified superstitions as desirably, rational, or necessary, though, ‘follow Schopenhauer in hyposatising the negativity of the world by granting it the status of a metaphysical principle.’ He embraced (contra Nietzsche) the ethic of compassion, but rejected ‘fliration with Buddhism’. Also against Schopenhauer he asserted a strong faith in steadfast love and stable relationships not destabilised by narcissistic or utilitarian concerns (A48) – again, a premonition of some aspects of critical theory. Although there is evidence that he subscribed to the hope for international community through his thought of revolution, he recognised that a moment of all revolutionary leaders counter-revolution in the form of the Social-Democratic government had remained victorious. Abromeit emphasises that the decision to study at this point was not driven by an interest in an academic career (A52). Horkheimer read psychology, philosophy and economics at the newly founded, privately funded university in Frankfurt. He maintained for a long time a Schopenhauerian contempt for academia, displayed an attitude of ‘audacious confidence and scepticism of authority’ (A53) and – for exactly that reason – appointed the young philosopher Hans Cornelius whose assistant he became in 1923. This was the beginning of Horkheimer’s academic career (A54).

Crucially for the future Institute, in 1919 Horkheimer met in Frankfurt (through the son of Clara Zetkin) Felix Weil, the son of a ‘spectacularly wealthy grain merchant who had served as a political advisor to Kaiser Wilhelm II during the war and who would soon finance the Institute for Social Research’ (A55). Felix Weil had been radicalised by his friendship with Clara Zetkin and Karl Korsch and had participated in a workers’ and soldiers’ council in Frankfurt at the end of 1918 (A56). From the fall of 1920, Horkheimer and Pollock studied for one year in Freiburg. Horkheimer studied with Husserl (A57). They also attended Heidegger’s lectures, but differently from some other commentators, Abromeit emphasises that there is little reason to as-
sume Horkheimer was particularly impressed by Heidegger beyond the anti-academic habitus (A58). Instead, this was when Horkheimer started studying Marxist literature systematically (A59); as well as Schopenhauer, while also winning the support of Husserl. Pollock meanwhile wrote his dissertation on Marx’s theory of money. (A60) Abromeit states for this period:

‘Max Horkheimer was careful to avoid any overt expressions of his political convictions, which might have jeopardized the support of his father or the trust of his professors. Horkheimer had learned long before to cultivate a rich interiority in which he could safely pursue his genuine concerns. The ambivalent legacy of bourgeois interiority, which the Institute would carefully analyze later, continued to play a crucial role in his life.’

Back in Frankfurt, Horkheimer ‘continued to lead a double life’: with Pollock and Weil he led the discussions on Marxist theory that would result in the formation of the Institute for Social Research in 1923, while his academic studies – he completed his dissertation in 1922 – focused on Kant’s Critique of Judgment and were related to Horkheimer’s political interests at best in only a highly mediated way (A61). Horkheimer was actively involved in the very first stages of the founding of the Institute, but (unlike Pollock) he was not directly involved in it under the initial directorship of Grunberg (A62). Horkheimer did not take part in the famous ‘Marxist Working Week’ that Weil organised in May 1923 involving amongst others Karl Korsch, Georg Lukács, Karl August Wittfogel and Julian Guemperle. Horkheimer and Pollock also met Adorno in the same period but were not especially close to him (A64).

Horkheimer received his PhD in January 1923 and was immediately employed by Cornelius as his assistant (A66) whom he began to take as a ‘role model of sorts and a friend’, especially due to his very wide range of interests and knowledge (A68). Apart from philosophy and psychology, Cornelius was well read in the sciences and the arts and inspired Horkheimer also in the areas of drawing, composition and architecture: he was a ‘Renaissance man’ (A69). Cornelius had been opposed to the war and upon retirement in 1929 emigrated to Sweden. Abromeit quotes Horkheimer saying later that ‘already at that time, he, like myself, saw National Socialism coming.’ In his 1925 habilitation, Horkheimer disputes Kant’s distinction between theoretical and practical reason (A78); at the time he also began studying Hegel (A79).

Abromeit argues that Horkheimer retained from his student years three elements that fed into the conception of Critical Theory: an interest in empirical research and the notion that comprehensive and wide-ranging knowledge is the precondition of theoretical and philosophical thinking; a commitment to interdisciplinarity; and a concept of totality that Horkheimer borrowed from Gestalt psychology (a strong and unique presence at Frankfurt University) and used in his academic work at the time. Gestalt psychology argues that one perceives the totality of a phenomenon first and then analyses it in its elements, not necessarily the other way round as Kant would have posited (A80-81). Abromeit puts particular emphasis on the fact that Horkheimer did not appropriate the concept of totality from Lukács, and different from the latter did not apply it to history or society as such (A82). ‘Following Hegel, Horkheimer focused on the abstract, ahistorical character of Kant’s concept of practical reason and his failure adequately to mediate it with external reality’ and developed with Hegel, ‘a new concept of theory based on interdisciplinary research and dedicated to the concrete realization of human rationality and freedom’ (A83). In this respect Horkheimer’s critique of Kant’s distinction between practical and theoretical reason fed via his appropriation of Hegel into the subsequent formulation of Critical Theory for ‘Horkheimer had concluded in his Habilitationsschrift that external reality was by no means inherently rational, but that it was not so ipso hostile to the realization of rational human aims either.’

Horkheimer 1925-1931

Abromeit writes that Horkheimer developed the ‘basic contours’ of Critical Theory between 1925, when he broke with ‘consciousness philosophy’ (the philosophical concern with the constitution of reality in the consciousness) and turned to the study of history and society, and 1931 when he became director of the Institute (A85). Following Hegel’s critique of Kant, Horkheimer argued that ‘subjective consciousness can only be understood in relation to the dynamic historical context out of which it has emerged’ (A86), while he also criticizes Hegel for not carrying out the process of de-transcendentalization to its end, rehabilitating metaphysics through the concept of absolute knowledge. Horkheimer was not, though, part of the contemporary Hegel-renaissance: he argued that whereas in the early nineteenth century Hegel’s philosophy ‘represented a mediated expression of the vital efforts of the German bourgeoisie to unify and emancipate itself’, the contemporary Hegel renaissance was ‘part of a frantic search for foundations, which was ultimately the product of the social contradictions of contemporary capitalism and which (Kantian and neo-Kantian) “consciousness philosophy” failed to satisfy (A89). From this historically specific interpretation, Horkheimer went on to develop over the following years ‘a nuanced materialist interpretation of the history of modern philosophy’, viewing it ‘as the mediated expression of the rise and subsequent transformation of bourgeois society.’ Abromeit points out that Horkheimer worked in this period on two levels, one ‘exoteric’ level of academic research, and an ‘esoteric’ level of analyses of the contemporary ‘bourgeois society’ using an anti-systematic, and more authentic form of expression’. Some of the latter writings were published later (in 1934) under a pseudonym as Dämmerng: Notizen aus Deutschland (Twilight: Notes from Germany; Dämmerung can mean dawn as well as dusk) (A90). Horkheimer’s interpretation of the history of modern philosophy can be read off lectures given in the second half of the 1920s and especially a long essay first published in 1930, ‘Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History’ that drew on these lectures.

Abromeit’s discussion of these materials demonstrates the remarkable breadth of the efforts by the young scholar – then still in his early thirties – to disentangle and confront to each other empiricism, positivism, rationalism, enlightenment and idealism in the period from Machiavelli to Hegel. Horkheimer sees in Hobbes for example the maturity and strength of the English bourgeoisie (A95), finds ‘the cold calculations of Machiavelli and Hobbes ... objectively more progressive than the utopians’ fantasies of a just society’ because they were firmly grounded in the ‘objective tendencies of the time’ (A97); continental rationalism’s ahistorical, non-pragmatic and non-experiential concept of knowledge appears to him as a continuation of the scholastic tradition (A96), whereas the French Enlightenment, ‘the political movement of the French bourgeoisie’ (A104), was antimeetaphysical, discovered the study of society and history and was ‘mercilessly antinomian’ (A105).

Abromeit’s detailed exposition of Horkheimer’s understanding of modern intellectual history is very helpful and interesting, but it falls short of supporting convincingly enough that Horkheimer’s pre-1943 writings offer a better grip on the ‘Dialectic of Enlightenment’ than the more famous book of that name. In order to argue this case convincingly Abromeit would have needed to confront Horkheimer’s ‘materialist’ historical theory of modern philosophy directly with the text corpus of this philosophy itself as well as the over eighty years’ worth of scholarship that others have dedicated to it in the meantime (which would of course be a book of its own). This lacking, the materials discussed in this section are primarily interesting for illuminating the intellectual development of their author, but not so much their validity vis-à-vis their subject matter: we learn how the study of Hobbes and others fed into Horkheimer’s Critical Theory, but we do not confront here the question whether Horkheimer got Hobbes right. Furthermore, some of the French Enlightenment ideas that Horkheimer celebrates at this point are contrary to the conception of Critical Theory.
Horkheimer notes for example that Helvetius and others amongst the _philosophes_ inherited from Montaigne and La Rochefoucauld the notion of the 'fundamentally interest-driven nature of human motivation and behavior' (A107).

Horkheimer writes:

'The point of this French theory, that _amour-propre_ forms the basis of human actions, is essentially the rejection of the rationalist theory that moral principles of reason, coming from above, could be the decisive impulse for any conduct. For these psychologists it is, on the contrary, always a drive-based interest alone that can motivate action.'

'Rational justification', especially if it is 'considered commendable and noble', is always 'façade' behind which stands a 'real interest'. This, however, the French Enlightenment critique of ideology, is fundamentally different from that developed by Horkheimer and his collaborators in the 1930s, which aims to explain individual's behavior that works against the interests of the acting individuals (as Abromeit develops further down in the book). Likewise, the French Enlightenment discovery that 'the material relations, one's position within society as a whole, particularly one's economic standing, determine the actions and so-called character of men' is not the position of Critical Theory as developed by Horkheimer in his critique of the sociology of knowledge only a few years later.

Abromeit's own presentation of Horkheimer's emerging critical theory, especially his understanding of Kant and Hegel's critique of Kant, can be read more profitably if the idea of the 'decisive break' of 1941 is discarded. Horkheimer's position here points already beyond the opposition of rationalism and empiricism that Abromeit argues Horkheimer upheld in his discussion of the French Enlightenment. As Abromeit points out, 'Horkheimer singles out Kant's distinction between theoretical and practical reason as his most important means of rescuing rationalism and metaphysics' (A112), and if Abromeit's reading is correct, the Horkheimer of the 1920s sees such rescue as treason of the Enlightenment attack on metaphysics. Horkheimer and Abromeit know well, however, that Kant does so because he is not able to derive from experience the concept of freedom (along with God and immortality of the soul, but it is freedom that critical theorists are interested in): freedom as the regulative idea for practical reason must come from elsewhere, then, and ought to have primacy over theoretical reason that constructs 'our world as we experience it (and that is ruled by causality, mechanical physics, etc., i.e. not free). Practical reason, especially the idea of freedom, is unconditional, though, neither derived from nor caused by anything and is in this sense metaphysical. This is why Kant posits the non-identity of theoretical and practical reason, and this is also why subsequently, in the 1930s, Horkheimer's position even more pronouncedly, and defended (this particular dimension of metaphysics against its positivistic elimination.

An important point made by Abromeit in contradistinction to the widespread interpretation of Critical Theory as fundamentally Lukácsian is that Horkheimer criticized in an unpublished manuscript from the same period Lukács' neo-Hegelian interpretation of the proletariat as the subject-object of history. Horkheimer holds against Lukács that he 'retains identity as the condition of the possibility of "truth" and, at the same time, posits this supra-individual unified entity as the bearer of knowledge and agent of history'. As against idealist neo-Hegelianism, Horkheimer celebrates Hegel as a 'great empiricist' (A121). Importantly, Horkheimer's appeal to Hegel's 'empiricism' does not mean appealing positivism, though: Horkheimer writes 'the positivist movement's part of the conservative turn taken by the continental bourgeoisie after 1848' (A126); Abromeit correctly observes here correctly (contradicting his own thesis of the 1941 break): 'In what can certainly be seen as an anticipation of one of the central arguments from _Dialectic of Enlightenment_, Horkheimer demonstrates how the positivist hyponatization of a truncated version of Enlightenment reason terminated in the recrudescence of metaphysics and myth.'

Abromeit writes that in 1928 it became clear that Horkheimer 'would most likely become the next director' of the Institute for Social Research, and he worked out the conception for a sociological analysis of contemporary society with which he intended to replace the Institute's then current focus on the history of thinkers' movement (A141). In the winter of 1928/9 he drafted a critique of Lenin's _Materialism and Empiriocriticism_ that remained unpublished (A142); his 1930 publication of 'A new concept of Ideology?' was Horkheimer's first publication that related directly to Marx, containing a defence of Marx's concept of ideology against Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge. Abromeit emphasizes that Horkheimer did not defend Lukács, though, against whom Mannheim's conception was directed. Next to these texts, Abromeit writes that the explanation of Horkheimer's appropriation of Marxism is his collection of aphorisms written between 1926 and 1931, published under a pseudonym in 1934, when Horkheimer was already exiled, as _Dämmern: Notizen aus Deutschland_.

Using aphorisms, anecdotes and metaphors, Horkheimer attempts in _Dämmern_ 'to demystify the mechanisms of social domination in capitalism by describing the social and psychological "laws" that govern its operation' (A159). Abromeit underlines that Horkheimer's arguments in _Dämmern_ were influenced by not only Marx and the French Enlightenment but also, and perhaps even primarily, by Schopenhauer. Abromeit points to a passage from the second volume of Schopenhauer's _The World as Will and Representation_ that is the basis for Horkheimer's argument that 'the psychological energies invested in sex - what Schopenhauer calls "metaphysical needs" - are thoroughly malleable and can be placed in the service of many different ends.' It is not difficult to see in this an anticipation of an argument crucial to Critical Theory that Horkheimer, Fromm and Adorno in particular subsequently would develop from reading Freud. Horkheimer rejects in _Dämmern_ the idea that Europe in the nineteenth century had undergone a secularisation process; 'the psychological energies that had previously been invested in religion have, according to Horkheimer, now found other forms of articulation: in the ideologies of unlimited economic and scientific progress or nationalism, for example' (A165). Abromeit points out that Horkheimer's observation that 'the transcendental moment in religion' had virtually disappeared, leaving religion as 'a conformist and affirmative ideology' is one of the points Adorno documented later in _The Authoritarian Personality_ (A166).

Perhaps the strongest effect of Horkheimer's growing influence at the Institute from 1928 onwards is the beginning integration of psychoanalysis into what was in the process of becoming Critical Theory. The key figure who helped Horkheimer in this process was Erich Fromm, a teenage friend of Leo Löwenthal both of whom had studied in Heidelberg (A186); Fromm held a PhD in sociology supervised by Alfred Weber. Löwenthal, his wife and Fromm underwent analysis with a friend of Löwenthal's wife, Frieda Reichmann in Heidelberg. Upon completion of therapy, Fromm married her and then underwent training with Karl Landauer in Frankfurt (A188). Landauer had been trained by Freud, was a full member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society and had opened a practice in Frankfurt in 1923 (A189). Also Horkheimer underwent analysis with Landauer. From ca. 1928 a regular working group formed that included Horkheimer, Fromm and Reichmann. In 1929 the Frankfurt Psychoanalytic Institute was founded with Horkheimer's active support, under the leadership of Landauer, housed in the same building as the Institute. (Landauer died in Bergen-Belsen in 1945) (A191). The group around Horkheimer was thus 'the first group to bring psychoanalysis into contact with a German university'.

In a talk of 1929 on 'Psychoanalysis and Sociology', Fromm argued that the rationale behind their integration was that sociology had not yet adequately addressed the concrete individual as the genuine foundation of society (A203), quoting from Marx's _German Ideology_ that 'history does not do anything. It does not possess massive wealth, it does not fight any battles. It is instead human beings, real, living human
being that do everything, possess and fight' (A204). A study of German workers' political attitudes 'on the eve of the Third Reich' begun under Fromm's directorship in 1929 was the first empirical study undertaken by the Institute, and also a first effect of the increasingly influential role Horkheimer played already then.

Crucial to Fromm's and Horkheimer's appropriation of psychoanalysis was the distinction between self-preservation, or ego-drives, and libidinal drives in Freud's early drive theory. Fromm wrote:

'The sex drives up to a certain and not insignificant point, permit a gratification in fantasies and with one's own body; they are therefore much more independent of external reality than are the ego drives. ... This flexibility and versatility within the sexual drives are the basis for the extraordinary variability of the psychic structure' (as quoted in A208).

As Abromeit aptly paraphrases: 'When one is hungry, one must eat, but the need for love and protection can also be satisfied in imaginary ways: through membership in an imagined community, for example, or belief in a loving God.' Although Horkheimer subsequently opposed its publication, the 1929 study of workers' attitudes 'embodied the principle tenets of Horkheimer's Critical Theory at the time' (A212). Its revelation of unconscious authoritarian attitudes amongst even politically radical workers confirmed their pessimistic outlook on the immediate future; Pollock said later in an interview they found 'no trace of resistance': the workers 'listened to the speeches on the first of May, about the general strike and socialism, but, on the other hand, they had petty bourgeois ideals, while the Nazis were demonstrating genuine resolve to seize power.' Abromeit writes that 'the psychoanalytic techniques used in the construction and evaluation of the questionnaires was unprecedented, but the use of advanced sociological techniques of empirical field research was also highly innovative within the context of German sociology in the 1920s' (A214). Although on the one hand Horkheimer and Fromm adopted American models such as Robert and Helen Merrel Lynd's Middletown, on the other hand the guiding question, whether the workers would 'offer substantial resistance, as demanded by their political ideals', or whether they would 'capitulate once again' led to the abandonment of 'French interest psychology' as the question now was why, people acted in ways that contradicted their own interests, and also the manifest content of the political ideas they subscribed to (A219):

'Only with the psychoanalytic categories provided to him by Fromm was Horkheimer able to move beyond both Mannheim's sociology of knowledge and his own micrological analysis of ideology in Dämmerung to offer concrete explanations of why certain groups of individuals were the bearers of certain ideologies, even if they did not express their own best interests, or if they existed unconsciously and contradicted the person's pro-fessed political ideals.' (A220)

According to Fromm's conception, 'life experiences ... help form relatively homogeneous and stable character structures that were rooted emotionally in their libidinal drives'. What the study found (based on 1,100 completed sixteen-page questionnaires of which 3,300 had been sent out) was that there was 'much less overlap than expected between leftist party affiliation and "leftist" personality types.' (A223). Fromm argued that 'psychic change proceeds more slowly than economic change' and concluded that therefore 'it may be only the most advanced elements who exhibit the psychic structure in a relatively pure form, toward which the class as a whole slowly tends.' Fromm's assumption that the working class slowly 'tends' towards an emancipatory 'psychic structure' (albeit many individuals still lack behind) seems rather naive and (in a bad way) Idealistic (i.e. Mannheimian-Lukacsian, in a way). Abromeit points out that Fromm failed to 'make any sustained efforts to identify the historical events that had led to the formation of authoritarian personality types among the German working class' (A224):

'torically grounded analysis might have shown that authoritarianism was less a subjective lacking behind an objective tendency towards emancipation but rather a new and indeed up to date development resulting from concrete, contemporary events and developments. This methodological-theoreti-cal deficit in historical grounding was addressed in Horkheimer's subsequent empirical work of the Institute: 'In its next major empirical project, the 1936 Studies on Authority and Family, the Institute would devote more time to historical analysis' (A225).

Horkheimer since 1931

Abromeit writes that one of the key categories of Horkheimer's theorising in the 1930s was the concept of materialism. Abromeit paraphrases Horkheimer's concept of materialism thus:

'All forms of metaphysics share the assumption that it is possible to deduce positive practical guidelines based on knowledge of timeless entities such as the idea of the good, God, axioms of reason, the kingdom of moral ends, absolute spirit, or the meaning of Being. Materialism, on the other hand, denies the existence of such timeless entities and thus negates the possibility of acting based on knowledge of them. ... materialism rests on the necessarily limited character of human knowledge ... [it] never attains the form of a closed system, because it is historical to the core. It views history as an open-ended process'. (A229).

Abromeit suggests that the early Horkheimer's taking sides with empiricism rather than rationalism was mostly motivated by his perception that the Nazi ascent to power was helped along by a broad attack on positivism in Germany in the 1920s that had based itself on the metaphysical, rationalist and idealist traditions (A232). Abromeit points out that this is only 'seemingly paradoxical' as rationalism and idealism tended 'to abstract from concrete socio-historical problems, to search for stability and authority in systems that make absolute claims to truth, and to provide "spiritual" compensation for real suffering'. Again, against Abromeit's notion of the 1941 break, this critique of metaphysics remains central to post-1941 Critical Theory from Dialectic of Enlightenment to Negative Dialectic, whereas Critical Theory in its developed form also recognised that empiricism and positivism are as much guilty of having prepared the way for Hitler as idealism is; and indeed, this is just the argument - as Abromeit himself shows well - that Horkheimer goes on to develop in the course of the 1930s: 'one of the most striking developments of Horkheimer's thought in the 1930s ... was his increasing skepticism about the empirical tradition and its contemporary embodiment in positivism[n]' (A233), such as in 1937 critique of logical positivism, 'The Latest Attack on Metaphysics'.

Psychoanalysis was one of the ways in which Horkheimer aimed to expand the empirical base of Critical Theory. In 'History and Psychology' (originally a talk given in 1930) Horkheimer suggests that Marx's 'psychological deficit' (inherited from the Enlightenment and Hegel) helped transform Marx's theory of history into a 'closed, dogmatic metaphysics' positing the inevitable unfolding of progress (A254). The failed revolutions in Central Europe and the rise of fascism had now discredited such metaphysical interpretations of Marx (A235). Horkheimer suggested on this basis that 'concrete investigations' be conducted, and that psychoanalysis be integrated into Marx's theory. In this context Horkheimer developed in the 1930s the second of his key concepts, that of 'the anthropology of the bourgeois epoch'. This concept refers to 'the psychology of human beings living in a definite historical epoch', without, though, presupposing (like Dilthey) 'the existence of uniform psychological structures among everyone existing during a certain historical epoch' (A256).
Abromeit underlines that the 'dialectical' concept of anthropology that Horkheimer and Adorno invoke in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* was worked out first in Horkheimer's 'Egoism' essay (A262). Abromeit's presentation makes impressively clear that this essay develops concepts that are crucial to the entire work of the Institute in the 1940s and 1950s, including its empirical research on prejudice and antisemitism.

Horkheimer starts out from Hegel's observation that bourgeois society, 'in contrast to the family and the state', is defined by 'the principle of self-assertion and self-interest', and that this principle may destroy 'the principle of subjective freedom that it originally ushered into the world' (A262). Hegel's own account of the development of this epoch. Horkheimer links the bourgeois character to 'a specific type of cruelty and repression of both self and others', discussing the cases of (fourteenth-century) Cola di Rienzo, (fifteenth-century) Savonarola, (sixteenth-century) Luther and Calvin and (eighteenth-century) Robespierre. Horkheimer 'shows how the social-psychological structures and mechanisms that are operative at the unconscious level during normal periods became particularly visible during periods of crisis and transformation', which is why the latter can provide a 'key' to understanding the former. The socio-historical premise of Horkheimer's argument is that the bourgeoisie during the early modern period 'had to mobilize the most desperate sections of the population in order to realize its goals' against the defenders of feudalism and absolutism (A264). It needed therefore to perform a rather complicated task, namely re-organising society according to its own class interests, while presenting these interests as universal interests that the lower classes could identify with: it needed to organise egoism while propagating the notion that egoism and pleasure were immoral and anti-social. The leader of the bourgeois freedom movement 'is just the magnified version of [the ascetic] type' who embodies the sacrifices that are demanded from the followers (A265). Horkheimer argues that the interests of bourgeoisie and 'masses' diverged from the start and 'traces the demagogic methods used by bourgeois leaders to manipulate the masses all the way back to Cola di Rienzo', arguing that they remained basically constant all the way to the present (which means Hitler). Key to the method used by bourgeois leaders was the ability to shape individuals: 'In light of the new economic tasks, the bourgeoisie had to raise its members to a completely different level of self-discipline, responsibility and zeal for work than they were accustomed to in the old times' (A266). This implied a morality and a 'transcendent rational moment' that was, so Horkheimer, historically progressive – needed for overcoming feudalism – in spite of being repressive. Horkheimer points to the 'anti-intellectualism' of the leaders of the bourgeois freedom movements, their use of bombastic symbols and of pagentry (A270). Although e.g. Calvin's teachings had 'anti-authoritarian implications', he saw 'obedience and suffering' as the 'duty and destiny of the masses'; Robespierre favoured the 'Festival of the Supreme Being' over the revolutionary 'Festival of Reason', as the latter ran contrary to positive religion, and also was critical of the Enlightenment and materialism. Horkheimer's account of 'bourgeois freedom movements' is here much darker and more dialectical – i.e., more like *Dialectic of Enlightenment* – than his earlier account that understood the French Enlightenment simply as 'the political movement of the French bourgeoisie' (A104). Horkheimer would not subscribe anymore to the straightforward statement that the values of the French Revolution – of which Robespierre is surely a key exponent – are 'more valid than ever' (A242-3). Rather than a dramatic break in 1941, there appears to have occurred a gradually emerging shift towards a darker, more subtle and more dialectical account of the Enlightenment.

Abromeit points out that throughout 'Egoism' Horkheimer challenges Max Weber's theory of rationalization and also offers 'an alternative materialist explanation of the phenomena of charisma' (A272): 'The endowment of the leader with magical qualities was a condition for his influence on the masses.' Horkheimer puts particular emphasis on the character of public speech in the 'bourgeois epoch' (A273) which he argues exerts 'psychological violence'. In the bourgeois epoch', public speech – from Savonarola to Hitler – attempted something that it had not attempted in antiquity, namely 'to change the listener's character'. The listener is 'not supposed simply to be convinced of something, he is supposed to "go into himself", improve himself, become someone else, become a new person.' The audience is invited to identify with the speaker, the idea being that he represents and relinquishes their own. The speaker convinces the masses of 'their own deeply sinful nature and worthlessness, which can be redeemed only through adherence to the doctrine of the leader' (A274).

In return for this obedience, the masses are compensated with the imaginary love of the leader and ... the permission to punish with a good conscience those whom he rejects, those who refuse to follow him, and/or those who are not willing or are simply perceived as unwilling to sacrifice themselves for him.'

Horkheimer writes that the French Revolutionary terror was meant not only to intimidate opponents, but also to satisfy followers: 'hatred of happiness' was connected with the 'morally mediated compulsion to asceticism'; those who embody pleasure should be extinguished just as the capacity for this pleasure had to be extinguished in oneself. 'Behind the hatred of the courtier, the contempt for aristocratic existence, the rage over Jewish immorality, over Epicureanism and materialism is hidden a deep erotic resentment which demands the death of their representatives' (A277). Abromeit describes the emancipatory implications of this adaption of Freudian theory thus:

> If the existence of cruelty and repression were squarely acknowledged as a normal component of human psychic life, they would lose their unconscious power to seize control of individuals' lives and also, even more ominously – to be instrumentalized in the name of dubious collective goals."

1936 saw the publication (in Paris) of the *Studies on Authority and Family*, the first published collective research project by the Institute (A282). Whereas the 1929 study had tried to establish a direct correlation between workers' social standing and their character structures (A289), the 1936 study – out of a reflection on the earlier study's shortcomings – put the emphasis on authority and family as mediating structures (A294). 'One of the foundations of the Institute's analysis of fascism at this time was that the conditions for its success had already been established by bourgeois society' (A285). Societal authority was internalized in the form of the superego and was formed within the family (which was understood not as a historical-natural but more as a psychological formation) (A283). Excessive external repression prevents the development of strong egos that can cope with the drives; weak egos tend to repress the drives instead of integrating and accommodating them (A286). 'In order to protect themselves from their own drives, oppressed groups often identify with the representatives of the social forces that make this surplus repression necessary in the first place.' According to Freud, repressed energy proliferates in the dark ... and takes on extreme forms of expression'. Horkheimer argues in the study that 'cultural factors played a decisive role in paralysing the resistance of the working class' (A290), crucially involving the specific form of the family. He observes that although the authoritarian state promotes 'a strong and authoritarian family life' (A291), its increasing intervention into the socialization of the young actually undermines what it propagates. Horkheimer argues that 'in the bourgeois golden age', by contrast, paternal authority had been based on the father's productive role and thus had some 'myths' (A292). Horkheimer also points out that Horkheimer follows in this 'quite closely Hegel's model in the *Philosophy of Right* where the family provides a sphere of protection from the "disintegrative forces of bourgeois society". The basic argument here is that mediation of social authority occurs by (relatively rational) paternal authority had allowed – at least potentially – strong egos to develop alongside society-confoming superegos, whereas society's direct rule in more developed bourgeois society produces weak egos under the tyranny of unimpeded superegos. The empirical basis of the
study's argument was data that showed that in France, Switzerland, Holland, and Belgium the bourgeois family seemed relatively intact, whereas in Germany after WW1 it was markedly weakened (A296). This weakening had had contradictory effects: on the one hand, it fed into the cultural opening of German society in the Weimar period; while, on the other hand, 'the disintegration of the bourgeois family also led to a troubling growth of conscious and unconscious authoritarian attitudes' that led to the backlash against the emancipatory tendencies in Weimar culture. These contradictory tendencies largely explained Horkheimer's increasing ambivalence about the disintegration of the bourgeois family' (296-7).

Abromeit describes as Horkheimer's third major concern in the 1930s that with dialectical logic. He argues that in the 1930s Horkheimer began 'unambiguous[ly] to identify 'both of the dominant traditions of early modern philosophy – rationalism and empiricism – with consciousness philosophy' (A304), describing the shared ground between them as 'Cartesian-empirical consciousness philosophy'. This shift in Horkheimer's argumentation first occurred in the 1934 essay 'The Rationalism Debate in Contemporary Philosophy' (A305). Horkheimer argues that 'a reified and absolute concept of the ego and a unified, static, and dualistic concept of knowledge' make out both traditions 'idealistic character'. The point of this new element of Horkheimer's critique is that also empiricists fail to challenge certain Cartesian assumptions (A307). Abromeit argues that in his earlier work on the history of philosophy Horkheimer had still emphasized the dichotomy between science and metaphysics and had argued that a period of apatheosis of science and concomitant rejection of metaphysics was followed by widespread skepticism about the sciences and a return of metaphysics that peaked in Germany in the 1920s, an objectionable development that overshadowed fascism (A308). In his essays in the 1930s, in contrast, Horkheimer showed how this battle between science and metaphysics had characterized bourgeois philosophy as a whole, indeed; how it existed in a more or less mediated way side by side within the work of its most important representatives. Abromeit correctly asserts in this way the increasingly complex and dialectical character of Horkheimer's evolving theory.

At the same time with emphasizing the intrinsic and constant dialectic at the heart of modern bourgeois thought, Horkheimer also describes historical shifts. In his critique of logical positivism he points out that it shared with earlier forms of positivism 'its elimination of the active, self-reflexive subject of knowledge, its rejection of the distinction between essence and appearance, and its abstract negation of universals'. It became more mathematical, thereby narrower, more abstract and more ahistorical than its predecessors. Indeed, logical empiricism signalled the 'fetishization of mathematical logic' (A316): against logical positivism, Horkheimer argues that formal mathematical logic always remains within the boundaries of the categories and organizational principles of the empirical sciences, whatever forms they happen to take any one time. The attempt to base science on abstractly and ahistorically conceived mathematics inverts and fetishizes the actual relationship between empirical science – which is part of, and embedded in, societal experience – and mathematical logic that is abstracted from it.

Key to Horkheimer's discussion of dialectics is the concept of subjectivity. Spinoza had used the concept of 'substance' in the context of his challenge to philosophical dualism by reducing Descartes' res cogitans (the thinking I) and res extensa (everything else that exists in space and time) to mere modi – modes of a unitary 'substance', which Hegel rearticulated as the 'dynamic, self-reflexive subject'. Horkheimer follows Marx in decoding this 'subject' as not a spiritual entity but as 'the material life process of society as a whole, which consists of concrete individuals whose interaction is mediated' (in bourgeois society only) 'by abstract labour'. In his programmatic 1937 essay, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', Horkheimer characterizes this collective subjectivity as blind: modern capitalist society is a subject 'only in an improper sense' (A318). As Abromeit points out, Horkheimer preserves Hegel's notion of subjectivity but transforms its 'idealist determination' as 'the progression of absolute spirit's consciousness of its freedom' into 'the material life process of society, which proceeds blindly under the reified social relations of modern capitalism.' Horkheimer rejects, though, what in his interpretation makes Hegel's dilemma 'as a closed circle, namely, that its object has a predetermined, immutable 'inner logic' that the philosopher only needs to discover; in Hegel, history is driven by this inner logic, a logic that resides outside history. In this sense, Hegel's thought is metaphysical and teleological; it provides what Horkheimer calls 'Verklärung', literally 'transfiguration', meaning spiritual compensation and consolation for suffering, the harmonization of societal oppositions and contradictions (A319). Horkheimer describes thus a contradiction in Hegel's thought: on the one hand, a critical element of Critical Theory, partly what Critical Theory needs to negate: on the one hand, Hegel recognizes conflict as the driving force of history and asserts that the progressive realization of freedom and rationality are its goal, on the other hand, though, the teleological assumption that the attainment of this goal is inevitable means that whatever force happens to have triumphed in any period of history (including the present) needs thereby automatically be seen as a step in the forward march of reason and freedom, even if to the less philosophical observer it might not look like an advance and freedom at all (A320). Abromeit concludes that in a conception that assumes the course of history to be predetermined 'the conceptual work of the philosopher is not determined by the desire to determine which forces have the potential to further the cause of human freedom and rationality in the present, but simply to explain how things have become the way they are.' The philosopher merely interprets the world and explains how everything (the spinning jenny; Napoleon; Hitler; Stalin) fits into the larger narrative of the progress of freedom and reason. This produces a positivist form of relativism: the philosophical interpreter can afford great tolerance towards all views that belong to the past and – quite like the Mannheimian sociologist who is similarly, as it were, a positivist-Hegelian figure – discuss in an objective manner 'what has conditioned them' or 'how they correspond with historical utilities'. The resulting positivist-Hegelian relativism, inherited from the skepticism of e.g. Montaigne, is therewith 'the friend of what exists at any given time'.

In a related argument, for Horkheimer, traditional and critical theory operate with 'two qualitatively different concepts of necessity': for the former, 'causation and necessity are mechanical; they proceed without the intervention of any conscious subjectivity' whereas the latter posits human agency as the subject of history, but asserts the tainted character of this subjectivity (A327). Horkheimer argues that the bourgeoisie remains deeply divided and 'largely blind', its principal form of mediation being 'the law of value, not consensual human will'. Society can therefore 'still be described to a certain extent in terms of natural causation, ...mechanistic necessity': to this extent, critical theory is right to construe 'the course of history as the necessary product of an economic mechanism', but it does so as 'a protest against this order of things'.

Abromeit stresses that Horkheimer's 1937 argument in 'Traditional and Critical Theory' was continued in Dialectic of Enlightenment (A328) and represented an important shift in emphasis in his thought from the early 1930s when he had emphasized (against the dominant tendency in Germany at the time) the similarities between sociology and the natural sciences. It was 'after his emigration to the United States and his confrontation with the logical empiricists and behavioural approaches in psychology and sociology' that Horkheimer 'began to place more emphasis on the active, potentially free, and potentially self-reflexive subjective dimensions not only of society, but also of dialectical logic and Critical Theory'. Horkheimer refers to Critical Theory as a 'transformative activity' and 'consciously critical conduct' that 'belongs to the development of society' (A328), being driven by an 'interest in the elimination of social injustice'. Against Lukács, Horkheimer argued it could no longer be assumed that the 'standpoint of the proletariat was ipso facto a universalist.
standpoint' (A329), and that therefore Critical Theory must be willing to criticize working class politics. Horkheimer also rejected the assumption, though, theory could fulfill the 'mes- sianic function' that Lukács had hoped the proletariat to ful-fill: theory holds no magic powers over reality. It proceeds from the 'existential judgement' that 'the basic form of the historically given commodity economy ... contains in itself the inexorability of destruction to which it gives rise in an increasngly heightened form', and that 'after a period of progress, development of human powers, and emancipation of the individual' it finally 'drives humanity into a new bar- barism'. Importantly, though, it also asserts that this 'need' not be so; man can change reality, and the necessary condi- tions for such change already exist' (A331). Abromeit empha- sises (against other commentators such as Martin Jay) that this aspect of Critical Theory was in 1937 merely a restate- ment of one of Horkheimer's earliest convictions: 'Probably due in large part to his early exposure to Schopenhauer, Horkheimer had always been critical of philosophies of his- tory that posited a rational, underlying plan, be it positive or negative.'

At the beginning of his first 'excursus' on 'The Theo- retical Foundations of Horkheimer's Split with Erich Fromm in the Late 1930s: Fromm's Critique of Freud's Drive Theory' Abromeit asserts that in the years after 1938 a 'rather dra- matic shift' occurred in Horkheimer's thought. Its 'three most important factors' were his break with Fromm, his 'increas- ingly close working relationship with Theodor Adorno' and 'his general acceptance of Friedrich Pollock's argument about the emergence in the 1930s of a new form of "state capital- ism" ' (A336). The first 'excursus' that examines the first of these aspects of Horkheimer's 'shift' provides an excel- lent discussion and critique of Fromm's work since circa 1935 in- creasingly distant from the Freudian conception that he had helped establish at the core of Critical Theory. In doing so, this excursion shows convincingly, though, that Fromm rather than Horkheimer changed his understanding of Freud, and not in a good way. Central to Fromm's shift is his re- placement of the concept of 'social character' for that of 'char- acter structure'. As Abromeit states, 'Fromm wanted to establish the absolute primacy of the social in the process of character formation', arriving at a much less dialectical and much more critical theory. Fromm's revisionist conception robs character structures of their two-dimensional qual- ity of being the products of society and history working on and reshaping pre-existing (libidinal) biological drives (A345). Abromeit comments perceptively that the question arises of the extent to which concepts such as repression, introver- sion, compensation, and even the unconscious are possible once libidio theory has been eliminated and observes that Fromm in his later work tried to reproduce the explanatory pattern of Freud's theory with a conceptual basis in li- bido theory, replacing libido with 'a vague concept of the "ex- pansiveness of life"'. Fromm writes for example in Escape from Freedom: 'The amount of destructiveness to be found in individuals is proportionate to the amount to which expan- siveness of life is curtailed.' The dynamism that in Freudian theory is rooted in the libidio (and can be redirected and cathected onto erset objects) is attributed in Fromm's de- sexualised new – and basically tautological – conception to life itself: 'Life has an inner dynamism of its own; it tends ... and ... to modern libidio theory, and displacement, though, it seems that if this tendency is thwarted the energy directed towards life undergoes a process of decomposition and changes into energies directed toward destruction.' Fromm's vague notion of the 'expansiveness of life' (whose vitalist-existentialist sound must have alarmed Horkheimer) has to do the same conceptual work here that the concept of the libido does in Freudian theory; Abromeit questions rightly whether it can actually do that work and links Horkheimer's and Adorno's criticisms of the revisionist psychology of Karen Horney and Harry Stack Sullivan to their critique of Fromm: they undermined 'Freud's insistence on the non-identity of society and individual and the impossibil- ity of their complete reconciliation.' By 'emphasizing the ab- solute primacy of society and socialization over individuals' pursuit of gratification', psychological revisionism became a one-dimensional theory that – as Adorno argued years later – expressed (and affirmed) the 'objective tendencies of monop- oly and state capitalism'. As Abromeit correctly observes, Freud's recourse to biological categories 'located the individu- als' right to the pursuit of happiness at a level that could never be completely subsumed by society. Methodologically speaking, revisionism is the destruction of a psychology and sociology, reducing the former to a mere function of the latter.'

The second key element of Abromeit's grand nar- rative of the 1941 break in Horkheimer's theorizing is his rela- tion to Adorno. To Adorno he has the highest respect. He appreciates Adorno's Fromm, 'Divergence, Estrangement, and Gradual Rapprochement. The Evolution of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's Theo- retical Relationship in the 1930s', which is perhaps the most exciting section of the book. Abromeit observes that in the mid-1920s both, Adorno and Horkheimer worked their way out of Hans Cornelius' Kantianism, but followed different paths:

'Whereas Horkheimer moved beyond consciousness philosophy through a materialist interpretation of the history of modern philosophy and an engagement with contemporary social theory, empirical social research, and psychoanalysis, Adorno established his own theo- retical position at this time primarily through an appropria- tion of Walter Benjamin's early works' (A350).

Adorno's method of 'discovering unintentional truth in mar- ginal passages' of, in the case of his Habituationsschrift, Riekegaard's work was inspired by Benjamin's notion of a 'negative philosophy of history' (A351). Abromeit argues that the theological undertones of these early works by Benjamin constituted the deepest level of the differences between Horkheimer and Adorno. At the time, especially the notion that careful interpretation of texts could open a perspective on 'the utopian potential of the original lost language' as posited by Jewish mystic theology in which signifiers and sig- nified had been in perfect harmony.

In 1931, Adorno gave his inaugural address at the Frankfurt University philosophy department, 'The Contempo- rary Relevance [Aktualität] of Philosophy', only a few months after Horkheimer gave his inaugural address as the new di- rector of the Institute for Social Research, 'The Present Situa- tion of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research' (A352). Abromeit states that it was 'clearly intended as a response to Horkheimer's remarks', especially concerning the relationship between philosophy and the sciences. He was, of course, associated with the influential radicalist, a systematist and positivist, form of critique of positivism. He ar- gued contemporary philosophy needed to integrate the sci- ences and place them 'within a larger self-reflexive theory of history and society' (A353). Adorno emphasised the opposite problem, namely that the sciences had 'annexed' epistemol- ogy and had 'set about the liquidation of philosophy'. Follow- ing Hegel's argument on the opening pages of Phenomenology of Spirit, Adorno defends here 'the epistemological primacy of philosophy over science' based on the former's 'self-reflexive recogition of the mediated character of all objects of knowl- edge' (A354). Abromeit's careful discussion and presentation of Horkheimer's 1930s writings on dialectical logic make it easy to see how much they chime with the concerns Adorno had expressed earlier. Following Benjamin, Adorno argued in his inaugural lecture for interpretation in the sense of the 'construction of figures, or images out of the isolated ele- ments of reality'. The various academic disciplines (Einzelswis- senschaften) merely deliver the materials for the interpretive activity of a philosophy whose primacy was the critical under- standing (Phänomenologie). This notion is related to Adorno's argument in a lecture course on aesthetics that the historical content of artistic works can be deciphered only through 'careful immers- ion in the works themselves', avoiding their reduction to mere representations of broader philosophical tendencies (A355). Abromeit emphasizes that this 'antihistoricist argument would remain at the center of his controversy with Horkheimer in the coming years' and concludes that whereas Horkheimer was making a concerted effort to work out the
proper place of the sciences. Adorno believed that only auto-
nomous art and theology could provide access to the trans-
scendental truths and redemptive power required to ground a
genuinely critical theory of science and society (A356).

Abromeit's engagement with some of Adorno's early
writings in this section of the 'exкурс' are extremely helpful
for the understanding of the Dialytic of Enlightenment. In his
1932 lecture 'The Idea of Natural History', Adorno 'refers to
nature and myth as spheres dominated by blind necessity,
fate, identity, and repetition of the same. History, in contrast,

is the sphere in which this blind necessity is broken and ';
which the blind must give way to transcendence'. Again,

by Benjamin, Adorno aims to overcome (aufheben) this
antithesis and does so through a critique of the concept of
'second nature' as developed in Lukács' Theory of the Novel.

Lukács had based his account of the 'transcendental home-
lessness' typical of modern capitalist society on the (Hegel-In-
spired) contrast between classical Greek epic; and the modern
novel, suggesting that in the former, in contrast to the latter,

was still meaning inherent in the social totality itself.

Lukács' argument (strongly influenced by Max Weber and
anticipating Lukács' own subsequent Marx-inflected argu-
ment on reification) was that modern subjects (as they are
depicted in novels) tried to constitute meaning subjectively
(whether or not as an act in the classical epic) but failed to
do so because modern society was — in spite of its claim to ra-

tionality — no less 'mythical', namely dominated by the blind
necessity of 'second nature', than pre-modern society. Adorno
had two Benjamin-inspired objections: one, that ancient
Greek society was not the 'integrated totality' that Lukács

(somewhat romantically) thought it had been, and two, that
this 'myth is an element of the historically dynamic, whose form
is dialectical. In all great myths as well as in the mythical
images that our consciousness still carries.' Adorno challenged

thus the very distinction between myth and modernity (that
is central to how the moderns tend to understand them-

selves: not only is there myth (quasi-nature) in (modern) his-

tory, but there also was history already in myth. This clearly
anticipates the argument developed later in the Dialytic of
Enlightenment that myth is already a form of enlightenment
(A357). Similar to his Oedipus, who poses the prototype of
modern bourgeois subjectivity, Adorno argued in 1932
that Plato's philosophy expressed a form of consciousness
that has 'already succumbed to the temptation of idealism:
spirit, banned from the world, alienated from history, be-

comes absolute at the cost of life.' (This idea is also central to
Adorno's 1950s key essay 'Cultural Critique and Society'.)

Also the second aspect of Adorno's critique of Lukács
is inspired by Benjamin: he rejects Lukács' overstated de-

spair of modernity. If for Lukács modern society is a totality
in which all meaning is completely lost and from which re-

demption is conceivable only through an equally complete es-

chatological break, Benjamin and Adorno insist that the
fragments of the lost, formerly meaningful (pre-lapsarian)
totality still carry meaning (if only in the negative, by bearing

weight in the present) through a more sophisticated tech-

nique of interpretative decipherment (A358). Although this tech-
nique — the immersion into the work of art or the text — is op-

posed to historicism, the meaning to be discovered is

historical: the cultural fragment reveals a truth about the
historical tendencies that brought it forth, but also — and cru-

cially — a protest against these tendencies, and thus points
beyond social domination within naturalized history. Inter-

pretation of fragments, especially aesthetic fragments, is thus
a privileged method of understanding society as well as the

exchange of its overcoming. Adorno offers this method as an
alternative, or at least an equally important complement, to
Horkheimer's emphasis on defending science against contem-

porary forms of irrationalism. Adorno contributed an ar-

ticle to the first edition of the Zeitschrift in 1932, but was not
invited to become a member of the Institute at this time. He

first published again in the Zeitschrift in 1936 (A360) and be-

came a member in 1938. The relationship between

Horkheimer and Adorno became increasingly close only in
the late 1930s (Abromeit writes of a 'rapprochement' al-

though they had never been very close in the first place [A

64]). If a theological undertone in Adorno's earliest writings
had stood between him and Horkheimer, then the trans-

ference of the 'utopian content of the concept of theology ... to
an idiosyncratic concept of metaphysics that was more secu-

lar and more historically grounded' was subsequently one
of the key factors in their getting closer to each other (A362).

In his late Philosophical Investigations, Horkheimer is by

Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant and Hegel to defend metaphysics in
the context of modern science and epistemology, clearly in
opposition to Horkheimer's initial denunciation of such at-
tempts as evidence of a bourgeois lack of appetite for bour-
geois revolution. In studies on Husserl that he undertook at
the time, Adorno agrees with Husserl's anti-empiricist asser-
tion that logical categories cannot be deduced from the em-

pirical givens of individual consciousnesses, but criticizes
(Georg) von Weissesack's back to the linguistic reduction
of rationalism that fails to recognize subjectivity (A372). Adorno
interprets this regressive aspect of Husserl's early philosophy as
expressive of the 'objectivity of social processes, to which the
individual is forced to submit but which at the same time re-
main opaque to him' (A373): the notion of an objective, extra-

subjective existence of logical categories is true if it is

deciphered as representing and expressing the societal total-

ity as it confronts the individual. Husserl's 1913 study Ideen
zu einer reinen Phänomenologie, which brings the 'subjective

concept of knowledge' in which the concept of Wettbewer-

schau, 'intuition of essences', tries to reinstate the dialectic
between the subjective intentionality of thinking and the ob-
jectivity of the object by positing that the objects have their

own intrinsic essences which can be grasped not by concep-
tual thinking but, contrariwise, by 'bracketing out' the medi-
ating concepts allowing singular 'intentional acts' of thinking
unnecessary access to the singularity and particularity of the
essences of the objects. Adorno rejects the 'phenomenological'
approach by pointing out that neither the individual and his or
her experience nor the object and its 'essence' can ever be
separate from society and history. The object minus its socia-

tal and historical context is passive and lifeless like still-life

photography produced in a photographer's studio. Phenome-
nology signifies a regression behind Kant and Hegel: 'With
phenomenology bourgeois thought undergoes its final trans-
formation into dissociated, fragmentary determinations,

posited one next to the other, and resigns itself to the mere

reproduction of what is' (A374). In this sense, as it were, phi-


nomenology is a naive form of anti-metaphysics, as much as

Husserl's early rationalism had been a pre-critical form of
metaphysics. Adorno (having studied Hegel intensely in the
1930s) thus came to a highly differentiated position on meta-

physics and the critique of metaphysics that dovetailed with

similar developments in Horkheimer: Adorno was delighted

about Horkheimer's critique of positivism in 'The latest attack

on Metaphysics' (A381). At the same time, Horkheimer was

becoming more receptive to Adorno's method of close read-

ings of cultural products and Adorno's point that art can at-

tain a form of knowledge that bourgeois science cannot attain

(A389). Abromeit points out that 'Adorno's interpretation of
ideals ... bore a greater affinity to Sohn-Rethel's insistence

on the essential continuity of the categories of bourgeois

thought from classical antiquity to the present, or Benjamin's

insistence on the mythical character of modern idealist reason'

than Horkheimer's (A387), and seems to deplore the fact

that Horkheimer gradually adopted elements of Adorno's

position. He interprets a remark by Horkheimer that 'in a cer-

tain sense not much has changed at all during the entire bour-

geois phase' as reflecting a dehistorization of his 'heter-

torical position', of which Abromeit clearly disapproves

(A393). An alternative evaluation would be to say, though,

that Horkheimer's adoption of some of Adorno's positions
adds a different level of argument to Horkheimer's and leads
to greater complexity and subtlety, allowing Horkheimer and

Adorno to theorize continuities as well as shifts and changes
in the history, pre-history and 'anthropology' of the bourgeois
eeight, and that this characterizes Critical Theory in its 'na-

ture' phase, that of the 1940s. Abromeit, however, sees Criti-

cal Theory proper entering terminal decline around 1940.
Horkheimer from 1938 to 1941

Abrometz writes that in Horkheimer’s changed perspective, in the period 1938-1941, “bourgeois ideals of any kind, from any period, could no longer provide a standpoint of critique” (A936), implying that Horkheimer previously had adopted ‘bourgeois ideals’ of some kind as a ‘standpoint of critique’. Horkheimer stopped defending the ‘critical content of early modern philosophical ideas as an expression of the revolutionary aspirations of the bourgeoisie’, whether Horkheimer ever meant the latter ought to provide the ‘standpoint of critique’ for Critical Theory seems rather dubious,” though: Horkheimer was at no point unequivocally positive about the philosophical expressions of bourgeois revolution, and certainly the ‘Egoism’ essay only one of the last assessments of the revolutionary bourgeoisie ever to have come from the left. At the same time Abrometz criticizes Horkheimer for now unduly romanticizing liberal (i.e. post-French Revolution) capitalism:

‘As late as “The Jews and Europe.”’ [of 1939]
Horkheimer’s attitude toward liberal capitalism was overwhelmingly critical; he sharply chastised those who romanticized liberal capitalism now that it had been destroyed. However, in “The End of Reason.” [of 1941] a much more positive picture emerges of liberal capitalism as a brief interlude in the much larger history of centralized domination. Horkheimer now sees the small and medium-sized property owners and entrepreneurs of nineteenth-century liberal capitalism, rather than the pre-revolutionary bourgeoisie, as the true social bearers of autonomous reason and critical judgement.

The relatively friendly words Horkheimer now finds for nineteenth-century middle class capitalists (like his own father) seem to contradict the larger narrative of a revolutionary eighteenth-century bourgeoisie turning into a nineteenth-century saturated, conservative class of enemies of Enlightenment that underlies some of Horkheimer’s earlier arguments and that Abrometz seems to be defending. This contradiction is one of reality, though, rather than inconsistent thinking: the societally victorious bourgeoisie became politically conservative and often left the job of governing to a (bourgeoisified, capitalist) aristocracy, but at the same time may have created the conditions for ‘autonomous reason and critical judgement’ in some select areas such as the spheres of the family and education, at least for some of their own. Horkheimer is empirically quite right in pointing to the [anyway limited] merits of liberal capitalism. At the same time, though, Horkheimer’s view of capitalism is hardly rosy: the main thrust of his argument is in this period that ‘the self-movement of the concept of the commodity leads to the concept of state capitalism’ (A404). State capitalism had ‘overcome the inherent contradictions of its liberal predecessor, while at the same time preserving relations of domination’ (A936) which Horkheimer describes as a necessary process, inherent in the ‘concept’ of the commodity (‘concept’ in the Hegelian sense, whereby – if read by a Marxist – ‘concept of the commodity’ basically stands for ‘the commodity form of social relations’).

‘Horkheimer’s first efforts to theorize the new tendency toward state-centric forms of capitalism and their social, political, and cultural consequences’ can be found in ‘The Jews and Europe’ of 1939 and ‘The Authoritarian State’ (that initially was meant to be titled ‘State Capitalism’) of 1940 (A403). State capitalism has dispensed with the market, the rule of law and the relative independence of money from state control (A404). The transition from liberal to monopoly capitalism was marked by ‘the decline of small and medium-sized entrepreneurs who owned their own firms, and their replacement by large corporations run by board of directors’. While the former had competed mainly on the domestic market, the latter competed internationally, for which purpose they tended to cooperate, form larger conglomerates or fix prices. At the same time, the state became increasingly involved regulating domestic production, including the regulation of the relations between large trade unions and employer associations. By way of such processes, monopoly capitalism assumed increasingly statist forms.

Horkheimer viewed this tendency toward the elimination of the domestic market – and, with it, the entire sphere of circulation – as the primary coordinator of economic activity, and its tendential replacement by state planning, the dominant, universal tendency of the age. Abrometz points out that Horkheimer invokes Engels and others in the Second International who also described this necessary process but emphasizes that the latter had seen this tendency positively, assuming that the workers’ movement could at some point simply take over ‘state capitalism’ and push it that extra bit into socialism. With this, Horkheimer strongly disagreed. ‘Horkheimer believed that state capitalism had succeeded in containing the destructive dynamic that had characterized liberal capitalism and had thereby eliminated the root causes of conflict and potential dissatisfaction’ (A405). Following Pollock, who presented his own theory of state capitalism in two essays in the last volumes of the Zeitschrift, Horkheimer argued that state capitalism represented a new ‘primacy of the political over the economic’. Domination ‘had become direct and concrete once again’. Abstract domination by the law of value as described by Marx was specific only to the ‘one hundred year intermezzo’ of liberal capitalism. Horkheimer thought that ‘economically, fascism as a world system could exist indefinitely’, implying that a successful challenge to fascism is to have to be grounded politically and could not rely on the dynamics of ‘the economy’ (a correct conclusion drawn from a flawed argument). Horkheimer points to three different types of ‘authoritarian statism’: Bolshevism or ‘integral statism’ or ‘state socialism’; reformism, referring to the Western democracies that introduced elements of statism; and fascism that constituted a ‘mixed form’ between these two. Although Horkheimer stated that ‘for individuals it is of course decisive, which form is finally established’, he emphasized that ‘the authoritarian state is reactionary in all its forms, and that in particular it prevents the emancipatory constitution of society’ by policing every aspect of social life down to its smallest cells’ (A406).

Nevertheless, as Abrometz points out, ‘Horkheimer also argues that the potential for the creation of genuine, emancipatory society is greater in the state socialist countries than in the reformist or fascist versions of state capitalism’ as the former ‘stands on the border of something better’, indicating that reforms in the Soviet Union were traditionally ‘traditional-Marxist’ belief in the Soviet Union for most Germans, who expected a way house towards socialism. Reformism and fascism shared the universal tendency of subordination of the economy to political, bureaucratic control (A407):

‘Horkheimer stresses, in particular, the role of large trade unions in keeping workers’ demands well within the framework of the established system... In both reformism and fascism, surplus value production is ten- dentially brought under state control but not eliminated.’

For Horkheimer, ‘in both reformism and fascism several different bureaucratic groups continue to compete with each other for a share of this value’, whereas the Bolsheviks had succeeded in eliminating such competition. By contrast to the Soviet Union, ‘Germany could dissolve overnight into a chaos of gangster struggles’, which is why the Nazis had to rely on creating social cohesion by way of ideology (the racialized version of national community, Volksgemeinschaft), with only mixed success according to Horkheimer: ‘Horkheimer did not believe that fanatical anti-Semitism and its secondary motivating factor for Germans gave them support from the Reich (A408). ‘Horkheimer makes it clear that he sees fascism as by far the most likely outcome’ of the developmental tendencies of contemporary capitalism and ‘refers to fascism as the form of capitalism most adequate to the present’, nothing less than ‘the truth of modern society’. He maintains that ‘liberal-democratic political principles were a mere façade behind which much more powerful economic and social-psychological forces existed that pushed well-nigh inexorably toward the current forms of authoritarian statism.’ He also thought — still in 1939 — that war between the fascist and the
reformist state capitalist states was unlikely because their shared interests were greater than their differences, while these remaining differences were about to disappear anyway. Abromeit points out that 'Horkheimer's newfound arguments about state capitalism reversed the arguments of the [Social Democratic] revisionists that capitalism had a natural tendency to develop into an emancipatory form of socialism'. As the rejection of evolutionary theories was one of the cornerstones of his thinking, though, 'Horkheimer continued to insist that state capitalism was not necessarily the end of history. However, he struggled mightily to justify this conviction.' Abromeit writes that 'at first, Horkheimer continued to try to find a historically specific answer to the question of how even state capitalism continued to possess an internal contradiction that could lead to its overcoming', and in one piece writing later that 'the existence of bureaucracies' limited the development of productivity. However, Horkheimer failed to develop this line of thought (A410).

One of the cornerstones of Abromeit's judgement that Critical Theory lost its bite around 1941 is his view that Horkheimer's adoption of the state capitalism argument led to a 'significantly broadening' but also an 'even more significant flattening out, or de-differentiation' of Horkheimer's thought (A395), by which he seems to mean that the object of critique now became liberal democracy as much as fascism and Soviet-style 'state socialism' (although Horkheimer then still had a soft spot for the latter). Although Horkheimer articulated his critique of liberal democracy more clearly in those middle years, it is less than clear that this constituted a fundamental change of his perspective.

Horkheimer's argument is based here on a (literally) apocalyptic reading of fascism: 'The new order of Fascism is Reason revealing itself as unreason' (A413). Western reason has in reality always already been instrumental reason. Self-assertion (a key category in Horkheimer's 'Egoism' essay) has 'become total'; the self-assertion of the total self turns against the self. Abromeit paraphrases: 'One asserts and preserves oneself by sacrificing oneself for socially imposed aims. What is rational is what is beneficial to society as a whole', which is irrational, though. Horkheimer writes:

'The individual has to do violence to himself and learn that the life of the whole is the necessary precondition of his own. Reason has to master rebellious feelings and instincts, the inhibition of which is supposed to make human cooperation possible. Inhibitions originally imposed from without have to become part and parcel of the individual's own consciousness — this principle already prevailed in the ancient world.'

Abromeit suggests that for Horkheimer, 'bourgeois ideals such as liberty, equality, and fraternity' are 'nothing more than instruments used in [the] cynical struggle for self-preservation' (A414). Abromeit writes:

'Essential distinctions between the function of reason in the early and late modern period and in premodern and modern capitalist societies disappear in the face of the basic continuity of instrumental reason. Distinctions between radically different thinkers in the same period — such as De Maistre and Robespierre — no longer seem as important either as their commonalities. The critical function of the Enlightenment in general and the French Enlightenment in particular, which was so crucial to Horkheimer's earlier thought, also disappears.' (A412)

Abromeit argues that Horkheimer now viewed capitalism as the 'logical result' of the unfolding of instrumental reason. Capitalism merely leads to the diffusion of instrumental reason throughout the system, as Abromeit seems to suggest, instrumental reason should be seen as a product of the capitalist period (A416). Abromeit interprets this position as an instance of the dehistorization of Horkheimer's thinking; the opposite seems true, though: it is historically correct to say that instrumental reason pre-exists capitalism, although it was in pre-capitalist societies limited to small sections of their populations. Horkheimer's position is therefore more historically acute than the simpler version defended by Abromeit. The further claim that in Horkheimer the increasing generalization of instrumental reason throughout society is based on a Hegelian notion of 'unfolding of reason', as Abromeit claims, is dubious.

Apart from de-differentiation across history, Abromeit also diagnoses in Horkheimer a de-differentiation within the modern period itself. An example he uses is Horkheimer's claim that the conception of reason adopted by some of the French revolutionaries is not altogether different from Joseph de Maistre's position that 'the primary need of man is that his growing reason ... be lost in the national reason so that it may change his individual existence into another, common, existence'. Horkheimer does indeed state that 'the basic unity of the period obliterates differences of opinion' but this does not necessarily need to be understood to amount to de-differentiation; a more benign reading would understand Horkheimer to say that (especially in crisis situations such as revolutions) a particular form of reason tends to establish itself dialectically by informing either side of an antagonism.

The core of Abromeit's objection to the 1941 version of Horkheimer's thinking is perhaps best captured in this statement: 'The Enlightenment ideals [of freedom, equality and justice] that once seemed like the best defense against the Nazi moloch, were now themselves implicated in a much larger process, of which the Nazis were only the terminal end point' (A417). What Abromeit seems to perceive as Horkheimer's treason of the tenets of the Enlightenment seems to me rather the overcoming of a rather naive belief in what are basically liberal ideals by a more dialectical, complex and critical perspective — indeed articulated now under the influence of Adorno, but implicit already in Horkheimer's own earlier work. Adorno's influence helped Horkheimer to come into his own, as it were, and shed some of the remaining traces of traditional Leftism such as the belief in the magical powers of the ideas of 'freedom, equality and justice'. (Did anyone say metaphysics?)

Against an allegedly 'highly idealized notion of liberal capitalism' that for the later Horkheimer 'became the source of the few redeeming qualities of modern society', Abromeit defends what he understands had earlier been Horkheimer's 'model of a dialectic of bourgeois society', which rested on the assumption that the ideals articulated by the bourgeoisie in their ascent to power provided the foundation for a Critical Theory of society — at least insofar as those ideals were developed and applied to concrete social relations, as Marx had done in his immanent critique of political economy and bourgeois society. According to this model, the triumph of liberal capitalism in the nineteenth century represented the phase in which the emancipatory ideals of the bourgeoisie were abandoned and no longer taken seriously.' (ibid.)

This rendering of the 'dialectic of bourgeois society' is not very dialectical, though: it translates a dialectic that is operative at any point of modern history as its intrinsic dynamism into a historicist scheme in which a heroic revolutionary period was followed by treason and abandonment of the bourgeois ideals that critical theorists only need to defend, develop and apply as the basis of an immanent critique of that society. Abromeit is in this respect, perhaps unintentionally, closer to the early Habermas's idealization of bourgeois radicalism than to Horkheimer's and Adorno's Critical Theory. Also Abromeit's dismissal of the notion articulated in 'The End of Reason' that the small-scale entrepreneurs of nineteenth-century liberal capitalism (such as Horkheimer's and Adorno's fathers) formed a milieu in which 'autonomous reason and critical judgement' could flourish is unconvincing: recent historical scholarship on e.g. nineteenth-century German liberalism has thoroughly critiqued the grand (liberal) narrative of the 'bourgeois treason' in that period; I guess I would have preferred growing up with Moritz Horkheimer or Oskar Alexander Wiesengrund as my father rather than
Rienzi, Savonarola or Robespierre (or Lenin or Stalin, for that matter; even Rousseau was anything but a model father). Furthermore, Horkheimer gives a clear indication as to what prompted his strengthened defence of the ‘traditional family’ in a passage Abromeit quotes: Horkheimer writes that ‘[d]uring the heyday of the family the father represented the authority of society to the child’ whereas today ‘the child stands face to face with society as such’. Horkheimer illustrates this general point with an observation from German Nazi society where ‘the child, not the father; stands for reality. The awe which the Hitler youth enjoys from his parent’s is but the pointed political expression of a universal state of affairs’ (A149). Abromeit fails to pick up the reality-content of Horkheimer’s astute and highly significant observation and instead uses the text as an occasion for a rare and rather ill-advised piece of psychologizing, stating that Horkheimer’s theoretical shift constituted ‘amongst other things, a reconciliation with Horkheimer’s own father’. Abromeit argues that ‘Horkheimer’s own life experiences informed his claims’; which is certainly true, but he seems to suggest that Horkheimer’s desire for reconciliation determined his views on the patriarchal family. Against that, it would seem much more plausible that the experience of the anti-bourgeois, anti-family and ‘youth-movement’ aspects of German National Socialism made him perceive more clearly the relatively positive aspects of the traditional family and the benefits of having an authoritarian, patriarchal father against whom one can rebel provocatively. This is, however, another important aspect of a dialectical view of the ‘traditional bourgeois family’ as it would continue to inform the sociological work of the Institute after WW2.4

In the ‘Epilogue’ of his book, Abromeit states that ‘[i]nsofar as it rests upon a translational notion of the domination of nature and not on a nuanced theory of the development of modern bourgeois society – such as one finds in Horkheimer’s writings in the late 1920s and 1930s – Dialectic of Enlightenment fails to satisfy one of the necessary conditions of dialectical thinking: historical mediation’ (A427). Abromeit does not actually deal with Dialectic of Enlightenment, and makes mainly ‘The End of Reason’ stand in for the much more complex and developed subsequent work, but I would like to suggest against Abromeit that a nuanced theory of the development of modern bourgeois society presupposes an examination of which aspects of the relationship of ‘man and nature’ are specific to the modern period and which are not, and this requires theorizing on several different time scales (not, though, ‘transhistorical’ theorizing, but this is not what I find in Dialectic of Enlightenment). If one discovers in pre-modern contexts (such as a Homeric epic) elements of ‘instrumental rationality’ and forms of subjectivity that bear similarities to modern subjectivity, then these need to be theorized in order to be able to arrive at ‘a nuanced theory of the development of modern bourgeois society’. Such a theory must acknowledge that some of the characteristics of modernity such as ‘instrumental rationality’ are not as such modern inventions. On a more general level, Abromeit’s assessment that ‘Horkheimer and Adorno’s most dire fears about the postwar world did not come true’ (A429) seems to deserve more nuanced discussion; his point that Habermas’ The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere is particularly close to Horkheimer’s early works is pertinent, but whether that reflects well on Habermas or not depends on how one reads Habermas. Abromeit suggests that a ‘new model of Critical Theory would need to preserve the traditions of historical materialism and psychoanalysis along with the best aspects of the liberal-democratic political tradition’, which would probably require ridding the former of those aspects that make them critiques of the latter (A430). Abromeit explains that those ‘best aspects’ include

‘minimally, the division of powers, the rule of law, and the preservation and expansion of subjective rights. These rights need not include unlimited property rights, but they would not only preserve basic civil rights (including the right ‘to be different without fear’ as Adorno once put it), but also create new social rights, such as the right to adequate housing, health care, and education.’

Adorno would be rather displeased if he knew that his injunction ‘to think the better state of things as the one where one can be different without fear’ (Adorno 1978:103; Adorno 1994:131) is now transformed into a ‘right’ to such a state of things – ‘right’ being a category of modern bourgeois, liberal thought (like so many, with roots in antiquity) that he would have looked at as fundamentally ambiguous and dialectical. Abromeit’s aversion to Dialectic of Enlightenment and to the unhelpful influence Adorno supposedly exerted on Horkheimer might be motivated by the sense that this in the best sense strange book cannot possibly be assimilated to a Habermasian, left-liberal discourse.

Adorno’s sociology of society

Reading Benzer’s book on Adorno in tandem with Abromeit’s book on Horkheimer is particularly interesting as for Benzer, Critical Theory seems to come into its own only in Adorno’s increasingly complex and almost artistic writings of the 1950s and 1960s, a perspective that contrasts sharply with the tale of decline that frames Abromeit’s account of the early Horkheimer. If Horkheimer’s pre-WW2 work are the ‘foundations’ of Critical Theory, as Abromeit writes, then these foundations surely want to be built upon. Even those who agree with Abromeit that Horkheimer’s writings since 1938 and Dialectic of Enlightenment are lesser examples of Critical Theory will be pleased to find with Benzer that Critical Theory subsequently recovered from pessimism and ‘state capitalism theory and scaled new heights.

Benzer describes Adorno’s sociology as a ‘sociology of society’ (B2); for Adorno, the concept of society is central to sociology (B3), and although it resists definition, sociology cannot examine anything without it. Sociology is not ‘about’ society, though; rather, it involves ‘reflection upon social moments within any given area of social matter’. Adorno consistently emphasizes the double character of sociology, responding to a solidified capitalist society, seemingly operating above the level of historical changes, which ‘means that nobody but these humans’ (B5). A dialectical reality produces its dialectical sociology. In his first chapter, ‘Nothing under the sun’ (...escapes society), Benzer discusses the concept of all-encompassing society that is central to Adorno’s work in ‘three key aspects ... — social estrangement, social dependence and social integration — and their interconnections’ (B15). ‘Nothing under the sun’ is a most useful introduction right into the heart of Adorno’s Critical Theory – the concept of society — and particularly remarkable for recognizing and taking seriously the centrality of its Marxist elements.

The truly determining factor of social reality is the organisation, or the relations, of production. The social relations presently governing society are commodity exchange relations (B16). Adorno characterizes contemporary society as capitalist society, “commodity society” or Tauschgesellschaft: “exchange society”. Benzer begins his discussion of Adorno with the concept of exchange. Adorno writes that exchange, if it is actually ‘fair and equal’ is a conservative principle that obstructs change: ‘Exchange is the rational form of mythical ever-sameness’ because ‘in the like-for-like of every act of exchange, the one act revokes the other; the balance of accounts is null. If the exchange was just, then ... everything stays the same’. By implication, this means that ‘equal exchange’ or ‘fair trade’ are socially conservative ideas that would support a static form of society. In capitalism, though, fair exchange does not take place. In particular ‘the exchange of living labour against the wage’ is based on exploitation in the form of the appropriation of surplus value, as the capitalist only compensates the reproduction of the labour power being sold, not the much larger quantity of value that is produced by putting this labour-power to work (B17). Through this injustice, something new occurs in the exchange: unlike other forms of exchange commodity exchange is dynamic rather than static. (The fact that in spite of making such distinctions Adorno often uses the vague term ‘Tauschgeschellschaft’, exchange society, does not help comprehension.

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This vague choice of word might have been motivated by Adorno’s effort in those Cold War years not to sound too Marxist.

For commodity exchange to function, qualitatively distinct products must be made comparable. Adorno considers, following from this, that ‘the basic principle of bourgeois society’ is ‘the abstraction from the specific use values, the specific qualities which things develop in themselves and through humans dealing with them, in favour of their universal form of equivalence.’ This requires their reduction to a common property: their being products of human labour. Further, the different forms of labour that crafted these things must be made commensurable. To this end, distinct modes of labour are reduced to their common attribute: the pure expense of effort. Orthodox enough, Adorno writes, in Benzer’s paraphrase: ‘Exchange value, through which commodities are compared, is measured as the average amount of abstract social labour time consumed by their fabrication.’ Adorno takes this fundamental Marxian point further by relating it to the question of forms of thought:

‘Adorno emphasises that capitalist exchange relations require the exchanging parties to adopt a specific mode of thinking: the principle of identification or identity thinking. The exchange and identity principles are said to be irreversibly, originally akin to one another. Identification is “schooled in exchange”’ (B14).

Identity thinking has two distinguishing features: firstly, in ‘the intellectual act of classification or categorisation’ distinct, particular objects are ‘translated into examples of a general kind or species and thus made equivalent with one another’. Secondly, ‘identification takes categories produced by humans in society as describing intrinsic, natural properties of objects.’ Adorno develops here of course Marx’s concept of fetishization: ‘in capitalism, exchange value – a category generated by, and expressing relations between, humans in their productive activity – is accepted as describing natural properties of objects.’

Adorno appreciated Durkheim’s demand sociology examine society as so many thing-like faits sociaux, social facts which are external to, coercive upon, and independent from the individual for ‘instructively registrering [the] problem of social estrangement’. Society confronts individuals as a strange, autonomous object: impenetrable, inscrutable, overwhelming, obscure, irresistible. However, Durkheim’s sociology ‘misrepresents people’s estranged, misguided perspective as congruent with social reality.’ Durkheimian objectivity obscures the fact that society is neither invariant nor autonomous from humans and their interrelations. Against objectivism (which is itself a form of fetishized thinking), Adorno insists that what appears as fate could be turned around by humans’ (B20). Benzer takes care to be specific about Adorno’s use of the term ‘estrangement’ (or ‘alienation’): ‘Adorno understand estrangement rigorously as social estrangement, as estrangement from society’ which refers to ‘experiencing a human, historical reality as a thing’. He rejects, though, the notion of ‘self-estrangement’ since this falsely implies that humans once were everything they could be.

Sociologists face, according to Adorno, the double task of acknowledging ‘estrangement’ without taking it at face value (B21); society must remain both, incomprehensible (as it actually is non-transparent) and comprehensible (as it is human-made). Sociology has to deal with the fact that ‘false consciousness is simultaneously right consciousness’, and therefore cannot arrive at a conclusive definition of what society ‘actually’ is. Estrangement manifests itself as the individual’s confrontation with historical reality ‘as nature’, as Adorno put it in his 1932 lecture on ‘The Idea of Natural History’: what ‘actually’ is historically constituted society appears as ‘second nature’, as if-nature, but such appearance is not just a matter of ‘false consciousness’ – it is really the way society must appear, and sociology must take this false-but-real appearance seriously. ‘Second nature’ is a Hegelian concept that can be found in Lukács’s early, pre-Marxist work and again in History and Class Consciousness (B22). Adorno seems to have appropriated the concept initially in the form Walter Benjamin used it in his book on German baroque drama. Reflecting a strong trend towards secularization after the Thirty Years’ War, the tragic drama then was the first time used history rather than myth as its material, but it used history as if it was myth, or as if it was a natural process. Interestingly, ‘natural’ in this context did not mean eternal sameness but ‘eternal transience’ and decay: the historical protagonists of history decay and ‘shrive’ like plants. This particular form of drama presented history as the history of passion and suffering. Benjamin and Adorno were fascinated by this literature because it had softened the boundary between the concepts of history and nature. Later in his essay ‘History and Freedom’ Adorno intends to interpret means ‘to erase out of the phenomena, out of second nature ... their having-become [Gewordensein]’ (B23). Like actual nature, second nature is transient.

Another dimension of Adorno’s use of the category of ‘estrangement’ is the experience of dependence. One’s survival in (modern) society depends on paid work: work will be paid only if it is seen as purposeful (B24), i.e. ‘if it meets a function which society acknowledges as legitimate’. This legitimacy is generally measured in terms of profitability. Estrangement means dependence means exploitation: although workers do not necessarily perceive themselves as exploited, the exchange of labour for wages between workers and capitalists who thereby acquire surplus product reproduces the class divide. Adorno likens the role of the trade unions that make a small part of the surplus product pass back to workers to ‘a kind of charity’ that keeps society from exploding (B25). The dependency is based on an imbalance of power: the worker must sell his or her labour-power at once or perish, when the entrepreneur will still be a long way from ruin. Therefore, the worker must consent to his or her own exploitation (B26). Those ‘cooked into ... society’ feel ‘constantly ... threatened’ by it; one depends on institutions that are alien and whose workings are incomprehensible. Even what or how much one earns seems arbitrarily granted by a distant authority, which may withdraw what it grants at any time.

“The double task that sociology faces, so Adorno, demands that it must neither belittle the terrifying experience of dependence and estrangement, nor hypostatize it. Adorno rejects Hegel’s sublimation of labour in terms of spirit (Geist) (B27) as much as the labour movement’s glorification of labour. Benzer points out that for Adorno social dependence is ‘dependence of all individuals on the totality which they form’ and which they therefore are able to abolish. Not to little the reality of social estrangement means, however, not to be naïve about the difficulty of the task: the social web has been spun even more tightly, there are even fewer areas ... that are not ... more or less seized by society.’ Social integration allows the exchange principle – the ‘medium of the universality’ – to govern all productive activities. Production, through exchange bound to the goal of profit generation, encompasses all living activity, including spare-time activities that increasingly become means to recreate labour power. Increasingly, all human activity is mobilised for commodity exchange (B28). Capitalist society ‘inexcusantly demand[s] of the individual adaptation so that ‘not much more of the so-called individual ... remains ... than its ideology’ (B29). Although commodity exchanging society produces, and presupposes, ‘identity-thinking’, it also leads to the erosion of identity: when ‘everything that exists’ is only a ‘being for something else’, everything must be equivalent and fungible. Self-identity – identity of the particular with itself – gives way to universal exchangeability and sameness. ‘The individual ... can only survive by relinquishing its individuality, blurring the boundary between itself and its surroundings’ (B33). In ‘large sectors of society’ an ego in the Freudian sense as the instance that mediates between super-ego and id does not exist anymore. Unmediated by the ego, the social constraint internalised as super ego is unconscious and solidifies ‘into a quasi-irresistible instance’. Human history has become ‘nature-like’ even to the extent that it is all about ‘eating and
being eaten’, violence and suffering, just like ‘first nature’ is. Nevertheless, again, sociology must emphasize that it is only nature-like: it is still maintained day by day only by humans, who are, like their products, nature and non-nature at the same time.

Adorno interprets Weber’s emphasis on the fact that actors mutually attach meaning to their actions as indicating that the socialisation process has adapted every agent’s subjective thinking to the same socially established thought patterns (B36). Likewise, when Durkheim asserts that society, in the form of mythology, reason and truth, thinks ‘through individual minds’, he reacts to the same fact. Also Hegel’s idea, that individual consciousness is constituted by reason which in turn strives to unify the individual will with the will of the universal, amounts to roughly the same thing: they all speak ‘the negative truth about consciousness in capitalism’ (B37). What they fail to say is that the coincidence of the individual with the universal is neither harmonious nor reasonable.

Benzer writes that Adorno takes Marx’s argument about the fetishistic mental process that is involved in commodity exchange ‘a crucial step further’: ‘Identity thinking does not guide people’s conception of products alone, but their conceptions of all objects and living beings’. Even ideas that are apparently (and, to an extent, actually) contrary such as racial classification and the notion of universal human equality ‘demonstrate the current prevalence of the identity principle’: ‘making the dissimilar comparable’ by reducing it to abstract, generic categories, be that abstract race or abstract humanity. (Both ‘abstract race’ and ‘abstract humanity’ are partly mythically and partly descriptive concepts: racists believe that all members of what they perceive as ‘races’ are in fact identical, but still must be made identical by excising imperfections of all sorts, while those who believe in ‘humanity’ similarly presuppose universal human sameness to be a fundamental fact as much as a normative idea or a goal that an actually very unequal humanity must strive towards. Humanism is morally superior to its nasty sibling, racism, only to the extent that it acknowledges the hellish complexities that mark the journey from bad diversity towards universal-but-diverse equality, the opposite of the kind of equalization that comes from machine-guns and gas ovens.) Benzer emphasises that for Adorno, the ‘socialisation of thinking’ goes (in commodity-exchanging society) beyond what is normally meant by the concept of ‘ideology’ (as ordinary ideologies are presumably located somewhere in the superstructure, secondary to the more fundamental societal processes and they allow individual subjects either to subscribe to them or not, because the exchange process itself depends on a particular and projecting the processes: Ideology ‘sustains the entire mechanism’ (B39). In order to engage in uninterrupted, smooth chains of commodity exchanges, people must think of society as a natural fact that is unalterable, and they must customarily think of qualitatively different things as examples of general kinds. In capitalist society, though, one cannot unsubscribe from identity-thinking.

Benzer shows that Adorno’s critique of sociologists like Weber and Durkheim is paralleled by his critique of Husserl, too (B40). Adorno rejected several key ideas of Husserl’s phenomenology, including the non-sensuous ‘intuitive act’ and ‘absolute consciousness’ independent of the empirical world. Nevertheless, Adorno argues that phenomenology inadvertently offers ‘a diagnosis of capitalist society’. Adorno argues that the Husserlian notion that subjective thought is regulated by ‘absolute essences’ is a worthwhile recognition that even what appears to be ‘free thinking’ depends on a dominating instance (‘essence’) that would better be described as ‘society’, though. For Adorno, as opposed to Husserl, the authority that determines thought is not absolute but temporal (B41). Likewise, Adorno describes as phenomenology’s ‘element of truth’ that in conditions of social integration, every detail of reality seems determined by an absolute essence; what appears to be essence (Wesen), the organisation of the world (B43). Every individual phenomenon in society indeed contains in itself that object that Husserl addressed as ‘essence’, but it is nothing other than society, which in turn is ‘nothing other than history stored up in the phenomenon.’

The remaining five chapters of Benzer’s book are organised conceptually, dealing with key aspects of how Adorno did sociology: chapter two ‘Sociological material’ deals with the empirical base on which Adorno develops his analyses; the third chapter, ‘Sociological reflection’ discusses what ‘theorizing’ actually means in Adorno’s case – i.e. what the role of theory is and what it ‘does’ in relation to the empirical materials. Chapter four, ‘The socio-critical dimension’ explores what drives Adorno’s sociology, how social critique modifies and shapes research and in what relation research stands to ‘praxis’. Chapter five, ‘The sociological text’ deals with how Adorno writes, or rather, composes texts, and it is worth keeping in mind that he was trained as a composer; Adorno’s writing is (increasingly) musical indeed. The last chapter, ‘Sociology and the non-social’ connects back to the first chapter that discusses the concept of the social. Benzer’s discussion of what in Adorno is ‘the non-social’ is a discussion of what remains outside of the increasingly closed totality of society that the first chapter has described, chiefly including the critique and meta-critique of metaphysics.

Adorno was an ‘empiricist’ in the same sense that Hegel had been one: sociological reflection without factual content to reflect upon is ‘empty’ (B52), as the only way to ‘the universal’ is ‘through the facts’. The sociologist must be able to go out of his/her specific phenomena themselves. Adorno seems to use the word ‘empirical’ in its broad Kantian sense, though, describing an ‘intuition ... related to the object through sensation’. Any experience or observation can therefore produce empirical material, which means that for Adorno, empirical research need not necessarily mean ‘method-guided research’. Indeed research must beware of being ‘guided’ by its methods too much, lest the tail wag the dog: ‘the application of methods threatens to reduce the horizon of observation to that predetermined scope’, especially when the methods are too rigid and schematized (B54), ‘Even the assimilated, homogenised individuals of capitalism’, Adorno and his co-authors of Group Experiment point out, ‘still have ‘vague’, “differentiated”, “fluctuating”, “ambivalent[!]” and “contradictory” opinions on some issues’ which it is crucial to discern and pick up. Methodologically rigid social research might exclude phenomena from examination which cannot be treated by exact methods, but the phenomena that resist-the methods might still be the most interesting and important ones. Benzer remarks that accelerated comments that ‘the methods’ failed to anticipate interested Adorno most. Adorno applaudated Siegfried Krausche’s 1930 study of white-collar workers for having been done in a ‘planned but unsystematic way’ by conducting non-standardised interviews in which Krausche ‘flexibly nested up to the conversational situation’ (B57). Similarly, Adorno’s stance was related to Benjamin’s early methodological demand (referring to philosophical rather than sociological writing) to ‘decrypt empirical phenomena from within’ instead of approaching them with measures from without: Adorno commented that Benjamin sought ‘bodily touch with the materials’, pointing to the somatic element of perception. Society is ‘immediately perceivable where it hurts’, and that is also where the empirical material is found.

In the 1930s Adorno’s work relied on two types of empirical sources, musical content analyses and personal encounters with daily life. In the late 1930s, when he joined the Institute, Adorno began to advocate more formalized empirical methods for gathering data. Benzer fails to mention the Labour Study but discusses Adorno’s role in the design of The Authoritarian Personality in the late 1940s that was based on a rich combination of mutually independent research methods. The study aimed to test individuals’ susceptibility to anti-democratic and racist beliefs, which required insights into pre-existing prejudgments that particular groups produce without appearing to have this aim (B65). Subjects were asked to evaluate statements that did not contain explicitly fascist or racist ideas; for example, agreement with the statement ‘Familiarity breeds contempt’ was interpreted as expressive of an attitude of generalized hostility for which the individual did not feel
accountable, and a 'destructive/cynical disposition'. After his return to Germany after WW2, Adorno became one of the country's main advocates of method-guided research that should counter-balance Germany's unempirical tradition.

Most famously, Adorno was involved in the Institute's early 1950s 'Group Experiment' that employed focus groups with 1800 participants in order to achieve 'qualitative richness of material contra reduction to as few categories as possible', as Adorno noted then. The participants discussed a stimulus text critical of the German population; moderation was limited to stimulus questions. 'Adorno's interpretation of the responses examined the trans-subjectively available stock of categories and arguments' that shaped participants' reactions to questions concerning concentration camps, the extermination of the Jews, the war and the Nazi terror (B67). In the 1950s and 1960s, studies of product awareness emerged, by which he meant 'breaking a document down into its distinct items and dealing with its entire scope, including the items' configurations and minute details', an entirely different approach from the method (following Lasswell) of coding, classifying and quantifying textual motifs (B68). Benzer writes that Adorno's later comments on methodology became increasingly 'supercilious' (B73); Adorno now tended to ridicule the 'fascination with method'. He instructed his students to 'feel or get under your skin in your living immediate experience before you can...call society' (B77); in Minima Moralia especially Adorno 'tackles social life as it befalls him personally' (B78), in particular 'painful encounters' (B80). In Minima Moralia, 'each encounter is immediately subject to far-reaching theoretical interpretations, for which the observations provide only the raw material' (B81) and without which they would be empty. 'From the 1950s onwards, personal accounts of daily life became a frequent feature' of Adorno's texts. Factual data, though, constitute for Adorno but untrustworthy representations of the world (B87). There are two reasons for his distrust: one, the 'process of reconstructing reality from sense traces inherent in all subjective perception operates under society's regulation', as Benzer writes (B88); two, as 'nothing under the sun' is now 'left outside' society, including nature, even the phenomena themselves are now mediated by society (B89). Society enters and hides in the 'dispersed facts'; hence the sociologist needs to sniff out the 'traces of reality' within the - socially shaped subjective reconstructions of reality that are what we call perceptions (B90). Only its own reflection on how it is limited by societal objectivity gives (social) science an extent of scientific objectivity. As Benzer writes, 'grasping social phenomena correctly depends on recognising their mediation by the social whole.' Direct intuition cannot discern 'what migrated into the object as its law of movement', its social content. Facts 'build a solid wall in front of what is actually taking place'. Facts should therefore not have the last word (B91): 'only speculation which...show[s] what really..., lies behind the...facticity can...do justice to reality' (B92).

Theoretical analysis involves self-reflection: theory examines cognition to distinguish the subject's reconstruction of reality from traces of reality itself. This must involve an analysis of the social 'conditionedness' of the cognitive faculty itself. These two processes taken together, examination of the constitution of the object and of the cognising subject, constitute 'enlightenment' as 'demythologisation'.

Adorno had described Horkheimer's The Latest Attack on Metaphysics as the first formulation of 'our position' on sociological positivism. Benzer emphasises that in this key essay, Horkheimer applauds the early empiricists, like Locke and Hume, for still having 'raised the question of the knowing subject's involvement in science', which more recent currents like Vienna logical positivism abandoned. 'A quarter-century later', Adorno restated this position in his response to a talk by Horkheimer in 1935 and added his own version of 'positivist dispute' (B94). Adorno attacks as 'positivist' Popper's demand solutions to social or sociological problems must be 'accessible to factual [sachlichen] criticism'. Benzer points out that for Adorno the problem was in the term 'sachlichen' which 'resonates with "empirical", "factual" and "objective". Adorno hears mainly empirical undertones. Although this is not entirely clear, Popper seems to grant the empirical 'fact' the status of falsifier which Adorno thinks it does not deserve' as a fact is already the product of cognitive, i.e. interpretative processes. Adorno maintains that the negation of problematic theoretical statements must proceed instead through immanent critique, the exposure of flaws within a theoretical framework. Adorno's 'self-conceals that sociological material can falsify theorems, although empirical material surely is needed to facilitate the theoretical reflection that can do so. The fact that a "fact" contradicts a theory does not in itself falsify that theory, but it can be the starting point for such falsification. Falsification itself, though, must be theoretical. The life of "thought" can set on fire, or illuminate, what the (empirical) material hides' (B95) by 'accentuating the material's social dimension'.

One of the 'most problematic consequences' of Adorno's sociology, so Benzer writes, is its arguing that 'the more unrelentingly socialization seizes all moments of human and interpersonal immediacy, the more impossible to remember the having-become (das Gewordensein) of the web; the more irresistible the semblance of nature.' (B96). This is a 'problem', though, not so much of Adorno's sociology but rather a problem most central to modern society, and a central problem of the discipline of sociology: the more society is society the less it is recognisable as society. This central contradiction forces sociology, in Benzer's words, to hold 'conflicting notions of society as invariant object and human, historical process in suspense.' Beyond that, the increasingly opaque character of society - the fact that the more it is in your face the more invisible it is - makes empiricism less and less viable; the task of sociology is to "unearth the face" of society (B98). Benzer sums it up nicely: 'Sociology is neither conclusive theory nor grounded in facts and figures. It is relentless demythologisation.' This produces 'consciousness of non-identity', reflecting that concept and thing 'are not one'. Rather than positive, useful knowledge, this process may cause 'vertergo'.

Unsurprisingly, Adorno's anti-positivist perspective on 'the facts' negatively affected what we would now call his 'employability'. When on arrival in the USA Adorno secured a job in a research project in 'radio research', he was expected to contribute some conceptual framing that could help in gathering and elucidating data from questionnaires. What Adorno produced apparently failed to meet the Principal Investigator's expectations: Adorno emphasised analysis of the musical material itself, rather than collecting listeners' views and argued a critical theoretical perspective ought to allow sociologists 'to understand (listeners) better than they understand themselves' (B102). Adorno argued that commodified music on the radio is met by automated reactions and 'commodity listening', based on consumption of highlights rather than intellectually active experiences of integrated artistic wholes. To ensure that even standardised music is not forgotten immediately when it is heard a lot of secondary 'pseudo-expert' discourses need to be constructed around it, which Adorno refers to as 'pseudo-individualisation' (B103).

The best known examples of Adorno's empirically based works are probably his various contributions to understanding fascist mentalities, which are likewise based on strong interrelation of detailed analysis of text (including textual and musical material) and theoretical analysis, and often merely providing some kind of 'framework' for an analysis that seems to take place after 'the theory is sorted out'. Adorno's theorizing in this context blends sociological and psychoanalytic elements: the appeal of fascist demagogues can be understood in terms of their self-portrayal as 'great little', namely moneyless, men; very poor people could find it gratifying that 'even grand personalities' experience financial hardship, so that they could feel they were able to support 'someone significant', a great personality of the time (B103). A psychoanalytic version of the argument suggests that in crisis conditions the subject finds it hard to live up to his or her own 'ego demands' to the effect that the ego refuses to love the subject (in other words, the subject fails to self-love) and needs to find love elsewhere. But love is hard to find; if libidinal energy is displaced on to the 'idealised leader', onto whom also aspects of the ego-ideal are projected, a satisfying narcissis-
sistic love-relationship can be established. For this to happen, the demagogue must be both lovable (a great personality) and similar enough to the subject (a little man) to allow the latter to love him-or herself (narcissistically) in the idealised leader (the great little man). In turn, the leader's followers identify with each other because they are all (narcissistically) in love with the same leader/ego-ideal (B104). Adorno also emphasises that fascist agitators tend to present 'opaque, isolated ... images of facts' rather than 'coherent and consistent thinking' based on 'autonomous logical processes' that could be the basis for challenging them. Benzer writes that this observation applies for Adorno that the 'critical scrutiny of empirical immediacy' (that is also demanded of the sociologist) supports people's resistance to fascist propaganda'. In the most famous study in this area, The Authoritarian Personality, those are found to be most immune to fascist seduction who 'tend to reject labels and reflect on their personal perceptions of the world' (B105). 'Stereotypical thinking' is explained by the study with reference to the 'industrial standardization of innumerable phenomena of modern life' (B108); transforming the potentially fascist personality, the authors of The Authoritarian Personality conclude, hinges therefore on 'changing ... the total organization of society'.

In a content analysis of astrology columns conducted in 1952-3 Adorno argues that readers project 'the fateful social system onto the stars' which lends the social system 'dignity and justification', while 'the idea that the stars, if one only reads them correctly, offer some advice, mitigates the ... fear of the inexorability of social processes'. To the narcissistic reader, 'astrology, just as other irrational creeds like racism, provides a short cut by bringing the complex to a handy formula and offering ... the pleasant gratification that he who feels ... excluded from educational privileges nevertheless belongs to the minority of those ... "in the know"'.

The advice offered by 'the stars' is entirely premised on the notion that the individual's misfortunes result from that individual's behaviour, and comes down to encouraging readers to 'adapt and to integrate' (B107). As Benzer emphasises, the astrology study, Adorno's last sociological work in the USA, closes with a highly original and 'intensely provocative' twist: Adorno likens belief in astrology not only to racism and other 'irrational creeds' but also to 'extreme empiricism', as both teach 'absolute obedience of the mind to given data' lacking any principle such as the concept of reason. In both, a 'mentality' develops that is 'often no longer able to resist mythological temptations'. These remarks underline that for Adorno, the belief in 'empirical facts' was as naive and oblivious of the societal dimension as the belief in 'astral facts' (B108).

Benzer argues that the reciprocal character of theory and empty demanded by Adorno is more characteristic of his late sociological works than those of the exile period (B112); his discussion of Adorno's late sociological works (especially those collected in Critical Models) that are less accessible in the Anglophone world is particularly compelling. An example of this group of texts is the 1965 essay 'On the Question: "What is German?''. Adorno replies not by answering but by 'mercilessly problematising' the question: 'Adorno treats the question ... as empirical material demanding investigation.' The essay is a dizzying succession of tentative assertions of distinctly German traits of individuals, culture or history (Kant; Goethe; fascism), and their instant negation or at least strong qualification. It then moves to the self-reflexive question, 'Why did I return?', and starts an examination of the beginning. The essay does not conclude anything that could be summed up as a résumé, but does instead a lot of questioning and negating. Similarly, in his 1969 essay 'Free Time' Adorno reflects on the question 'What is your hobby?' by demolishing the question (B114). He begins from his personal perspective, stating that his 'work, philosophical and sociological production and university teaching, ... has been so blissful to me that I am unable to express it within ... opposition to free time', whereas reading and music are 'integral' to his existence and defy the label 'hobby'. However, as Benzer points out, Adorno immediately 'concedes that such perceptions are untrustworthy and calls for reflection on the conditions shaping them': the distinction between work and spare time is so humanly very real and important for most people who enjoy a lesser degree of workplace autonomy. This assertion of the meaningfulness of the distinction is instantly negated, though, by pointing out that for most people also 'free time' is full of activities that resemble work and serve the reproduction of working power to an extent that humans treat themselves like things after work: in sunbathing 'merely for the sake of the tan', for example, people 'become fetishes to themselves'. Furthermore, some leisure activities 'bore their participants as much as work does.' Adorno's American sociologist, chiefly intended the reciprocity between theory and empty, 'the texts here realise it' (B117; italics added). Benzer argues that there is a distinct rhythm in Adorno's Critical Models in particular, produced by the succession of passages representing the empirical and those representing the theoretical dimension of Adorno's investigations. Adorno 'constantly shifts back and forth between those two dimensions', sustaining their reciprocal relation. The empirical passages are usually short and rapid, the analytical passages long and elaborate. Significantly, though, and in contrast with Adorno's American texts, the longer reflections regularly come to an abrupt halt, often even remaining in conflict, signalling that 'the phenomena in their social media are not fully decoded'. The reflections highlight 'each others' inconclusiveness' (B118):

'The different theoretical perspectives challenge each other without resolution, as well as relentlessly negating every empirical observation's claim to truth. Theoretical conclusions and trustworthy facts being unavailable, the studies do not offer much by way of positive results. ... For Adorno, a presentation of the failed world in the failed world will ultimately fail'.

Cognition takes place 'in a network of prejudices, intuitions, innervations, self-corrections, presuppositions and exaggerations' (B119). This way, the writing itself expresses the experience of estrangement.

It is difficult to determine whether in Adorno the drive towards resisting society has a more cognitive-intellectual root -- basically, some notion of the better state of things -- or whether it is entirely commanded by 'the wretched body', the experience of suffering. Benzer argues that the latter predominates in Adorno, although they coexist with traces of the former. Benzer quotes a passage from Negative Dialectics where Adorno states that 'through the achieved identity between the particular and its concept, the particular would come into itself'; for instance, humanity 'must ... achieve identity with its concept' (B135). Most often, though, Adorno finds conceptions of what society should be like as little trustworthy as present conceptions of what society is: 'today, all dreams of a better life [are] pale, powerless -- or kitsch ... Utopia is strictly, exclusively only in determinate negation. The rest is ... Ché Guevara' (B136). It is most impressive, and says a lot about Adorno's acute political judgement, that he decoded the cult about Ché Guevara as kitsch already in the 1960s. Nevertheless, as Benzer acknowledges, one of the main judgements bear at least 'some truthful utopian elements or normative truth content faithfully indicative of what a better society would look like': Adorno alerts against dismissing the truth content of the ideals of humanity, freedom and justice, for example. According to Cook, Adorno suggests 'wielding the more emphatic content of concepts against ... existing conditions.' She does not deny though, as Benzer points out, 'that in emphatic normative concepts', including humanity, freedom, justice, 'elements of socially generated false normative society have also sedimented'. A concept's 'false utopian notions' are shaped by society's falsehood, while its genuine utopian notions are shaped ex negativo through opposition to the false society: the task of separating the one from the other is therefore entirely dependent on making the concept's social dimensions fully transparent. Even an apparently innocent category such as
'human need' is 'a social category', so that the distinction 'between true needs and false ones' can only be made on the basis of 'insight into the structure of society as a whole' (B137).

Benzer emphasises that the motive of 'opposition to suffering' is a less precarious basis for the critique of society: it is 'not dependent on specific intellectual categories' (B138) as society is the 'hellish, coercive ... whole, under which we all suffer' (B127), whether we 'know it' (cognitively) or not. Our bodies know it. Such a motive does not require the 'pronouncements of intellectuals', who cannot claim to be 'in control of cognition that suffering should not be', which is why 'the specifically materialistic ... converges with ... the critical'. According to Adorno (in an uncharacteristically optimistic moment), nobody can dispute 'sentences like: there should be no torture ... no concentration camps' (B138-9). 'The critique of suffering condemns society for the presence of agony and advocates its abolition. It neither condemns society for the absence of a preconceived "humanity, freedom, justice" nor does it demand the implementation of such conceptions.' (B139) But Benzer points out that Adorno still offers some 'rare, elusive hints at the "right" conditions': for example Adorno writes that 'sensual happiness is the "condition for a right life"; materialism yearns for the "resurrection of the flesh"; the good society will be one that has replaced 'process, doing, fulfilling' with 'lying on the water and looking peacefully at the sky' because in it no-one 'goes hungry anymore' (B140). These small images are truly utopian, as opposed to the kitsch mentioned before (Ché Guevara).

Benzer points out that 'numerous texts' in Adorno's 'late sociology, especially Critical Models', highlight and discuss possibilities of social change. He takes as an example Adorno's 1963 essay on 'Sexual Taboos and Law Today' that is supportive of liberal reform, but frames the argument in favour of specific reforms in a way that anticipates critiques by Foucault and others: 'the general acceptance and apparent liberation of sex demands scrutiny in relation to the social whole' (B141). Acceptance signals the integration, rather than the liberation of sex: only 'brided, it is tolerated'. 'Whereas sexuality has been integrated, that which cannot be integrated, the actual sexual aroma, continues to be tested by society.' The liberalisation of sexuality has resulted in narrow genitality purified of alleged perversion. Adorno argues for reform 'worthy of the name' (B144) that would need to 'emancipate itself from the spirit of the Volk' and the "faits sociaux". Adorno's support for specific liberal reforms is based in this way on a critique of the general drift of liberalisation in society, rather than the liberal narrative of gradually progressing humanization of society.

Nevertheless, Benzer concludes that Adorno draws 'a narrow portrayal of the potential of human to change society.' In a 1966 interview, Adorno challenged an 'increasing aversion to praxis, in contradiction to my own theoretical positions'. Adorno warns against 'pseudo-activity' that channels energy into 'meaningless activity with the guileful signs of seriousness and significance' (B146), thereby serving the reproduction of the status quo. Even 'radical activists' are aligned with 'refined consciousness', they prioritise means over ends and treat their opponents 'as things.' Activists feign control over reality and assume the lie; activism makes them feel better about themselves and society to the extent that their pseudo-praxis undermines the argument for change. Benzer points to a crucial dialectic in Adorno's thinking on political praxis: 'Adorno's view of the Holocaust intensified his opposition to the 1960s student movement's collective radicalism, but it also made him back specific political interventions in the postwar decades.' (B145) Both sides of this dialectic are grounded in what Adorno called the 'new critical impulse' that Hitler has forced 'upon us' on the state of their unfreedom; to arrange their thinking and acting so that Auschwitz will not repeat itself, that nothing similar will happen' (B148). Adorno engaged with the students' call for university reforms from the 1950s onwards, 'albeit never uncritically': in the mid-1960s, he expressed solidarity with the antifascist faction concerning Vietnam. 'In 1967, Adorno condemned the events surrounding the killing of a protester at a Berlin rally during the Persian Shah's state visit and promptly subscribed to the students' demands for a rigorous, open investigation into the police officer's acquittal and lack of remorse. Adorno warned, showed that the victim, like the Jews under National Socialism, was treated as the de-individualised example of a student species.' The fact that Adorno uses a Holocaust analogy to denounce the killing of Benno Ohnesorg shows he could not have felt more strongly about the issue. (To be sure, the analogy is not between the events themselves but between the mentalities of the respective perpetrators.) Adorno also protested against the passing of 'state of emergency' legislation in 1968 as it reminded him of an article in the Weimar constitution that had served the Nazis, and publicly denounced the 1968 invasion of the CSSR: 'Adorno backed activities which he saw as directed specifically against developments foreshadowing a potential renewal of totalitarianism and its cruelties' (B143).

When he saw such foreshadowings in such activities himself, he denounced them in equally strong terms: he found activists lacked 'introspection', followed 'standardized slogans ... distributed by leaders' demanding personal 'sacrifice'. Worst perhaps, Adorno discerned a tendency to subordinate the individual to the collective: 'When a student's room was smashed because he preferred to work rather than join in actions, on his wall was scrawled: whoever occupies himself with theory, without acting practically, is a traitor to socialism ... The concept of the traitor comes from the eternal stock of collective repression, whatever its coloration' (B150).

Benzer points out that Adorno, different from Zygmunt Bauman, for example, ultimately holds 'commodity exchange relations' responsible for the susceptibility to authoritarianism and fascism as they develop the pressure that drives people to accepting dangerous collective thought patterns'. Adorno states that 'since the possibility of changing the ... social and political conditions breeding such events is extremely limited today, attempts against the latter are necessarily restricted to the subjective dimension' (B157). He argues on this basis for 'the pragmatism ... which demands ... to prioritise a cognition ... that aims to prevent such events' (B152). Adorno recommends a focus on reforming education, especially that of small children. Adorno's long-term perspective is basically a programme for anti-authoritarian education, whereas he also advocated immediate measures against the existing authoritarian characters' assertions of antisemitic and crypto-fascist attitudes that are explicitly authoritarian, including calling the police, as authoritarian characters are impressed by authority only, not weakness, fear, hesitation or thoughtfulness (B158). Benzer says here basically that one needs to know one's enemy and will not want to waste time on having discussions with fascists. The foundation of Adorno's perspective is here that 'politically mature is the person who speaks for himself, because he has thought for himself and is not merely repeating someone else.' The 'single genuine power ... against the principle of Auschwitz, is, in the spirit of the Völker' of all the 'victims of determination, of not cooperating' (B159) against the brute predominance of all collectives' (B160). Adorno concedes, though, that the abolition of the fascist danger, created by society, is beyond the reach of education (B161).

Benzer dedicates the fifth chapter of his book to the question of how Adorno — in what could be called the mature period of his work — writes and composes texts. Writing, for a writer, is of course a crucial aspect of praxis, and this is why Adorno pays as much attention to the question of how to write as to other questions of praxis. The key term in this area is 'configuration' or 'constellation' (B162). A configuration coordinates concepts instead of subordinating them, so that concepts in configurations are equal in rank to one another. 'Each is articulated respectively through the configurations with others' (B163), 'one segment through another'. By doing so, 'constellations express key aspects of so-
cial reality': it is the 'tendency of integration of the capitalist system' that 'necessitates the search for constellations' (B164). The mode of writing mimics in this sense the reality it aims to describe and understand: in the (increasingly totally) integrated society, causality has become problematic as 'everything is equally close to the centre'. As Benzer puts it, 'sociology must investigate all the causal sequences intersecting in every situation', it must by means of a multitude of concepts 'discuss a phenomenon in relation to others', in order to release it from the spell of its self-sufficiency. Thereby, 'constellations express what identifying concepts... "cut away"' (B167). This conception is characterised by a strong element of modesty, as this statement on philosophy (arguably also valid concerning sociology and other related disciplines) shows: 'The freedom of philosophy is nothing other than the capacity of helping its unfreedom gain a voice. If the moment of expression tries to be more than that, it degenerates into a world-view'... The writer serves the cause of liberation by expressing unfreedom, not by preaching liberty. Likewise, as Benzer comments: 'A text's limitations to clarity can convey social reality's resistance to clarification' (B168); although one needs to try to 'clarify' as much as possible, there are limits, and the text should rather show these limits than paper them over with over-confident conceptual bragging. Adorno's texts are surely designed to involve suffering and corporeality: 'Adorno's readers can physically experience social estrangement, pausing, raising their puzzled head, stretching out their arms and reaching for the car door' (B191). One example for Adorno's notoriously 'difficult' or 'unclear' style that Benzer discusses is the regular use of litotes, 'double negative' or the 'denial of the contrary'. Adorno does not only not eschew litotes, but does not even avoid making a habit of double litotes, as in the following sentence: 'praxis does not proceed independently of theory, nor theory independently of praxis' (B192). To say that 'praxis is dependent on theory' (which would be the 'translation' into straight language of this statement in analogy to Popper's famous polemic in the Positivum Dispute) would be just that decisive little bit too affirmative; Adorno's style reflects the fact that language does not operate in terms of scientific logic.

Returning to the concern of the first chapter, Benzer begins the last one with a close look at Adorno's statement (in his late lectures Introduction to Sociology) that society 'constitutes a certain kind of intertwinenment which, as it were [gewissermaßen], leaves nothing out' (B197). Importantly, Benzer points out that in the English edition (Adorno 2000:30), the word 'gewissermaßen' ('as it were') was omitted. Gewissermaßen makes a big difference, though: maybe some things have been left out of the 'intertwinenment' that is society, after all. These things would be the non-social.

Questions of transcendence and the concern with an order of higher truths or essences and the world's final purpose, metaphysics in the traditional sense, used to be discussed in isolation from inner-worldly, historical reality, which is not anymore possible since Auschwitz; Auschwitz has (gewissermaßen) destroyed metaphysics (B199): not quite, though: 'Adorno also negates... the nihilist avowal that the world is inherently meaningless, that subjects must refer from thinking about transcendence tout court and settle with immanence' (B200). The positivist rejection of metaphysics falsely accepts the present limitations of experience as immutable (B201), whereas metaphysics is right to reject empirically given immanence as the truth. The (gewissermaßen empirical) basis for this claim is, again, 'despair': Consciousness could not despair over the grey at all, if it did not cherish the concept of a different colour' (B202). The selflessness phenomenon of grey (capitalist) reality, though, and proves thereby -- negatively -- the existence -- in absence of colour, life, (communist) utopia. In the grey, 'negative whole', there is 'a scattered trace' of the missing colours. In everyday life there are 'fulfilled moments' and ruptures which 'give the lie to identity'.

Adorno rejects, though, the notion of 'originary experiences', Erlebnisse, 'i.e. attempts to reach beyond imma-

ience by employing supposedly pure categories', such as religious experiences which are only 'supposedly originary' (B203). Instead, Adorno finds metaphysical experience in 'Proustian moments' -- but these are directed at the irreducible individual, not the universal: for the child, for example, only in Otterbach (the name of a village) the kind of happiness that is specific to Otterbach can be found anywhere else. Transcendence is in the particular, the non-fungible, the non-exchangeable, not in the universal (as in the 'experience' of a universal God) (B204). In Benzer's words: 'What is left of metaphysical experience is now concentrated in individuating encounters of colourful traces' (B205). The absolute' that metaphysics is after 'would be the non-identical, which would step forward only after the identity compulsion dwindles' (B208), which in turn can only be expected to happen after the ending of commodity producing society.

Abromeit's book on Horkheimer makes a very strong case for the need to study the early Horkheimer, not least in order to fully appreciate the more 'classical' writings of the members of the Institute, including Dialectic of Enlightenment. The book whose reach is limited to the period ending in 1941 achieves this goal superbly. His further claim that Horkheimer's early Critical Theory could serve as a more promising point of departure for a renewal of Critical Theory today than Dialectic of Enlightenment (A18) is not convincing if only because his book does not engage with the latter and therefore measures the early Horkheimer against what is not much more than a vague and unoriginal opinion about Dialectic of Enlightenment. Benzer's book does for Adorno's post-WW2 sociology what Abromeit's book does for the pre-WW2 Horkheimer. Most impressively, Benzer goes against the mainstream reading of Adorno as a merely 'aesthetically or cultural philosopher and puts the social-critical, especially Marxian core of Adorno's sociology centre stage. Although Benzer does not himself call for a 'renewal' of Critical Theory, his book shows powerfully that such a renewal ought to come from Adorno's mature work as much as from Horkheimer's early work. Recognition of these two crucial bodies of work and the fact that Critical Theory did not terminally decline from 1941 onwards might in turn tempt others to (re-)open the question of how to read that book that sits, dangerous and mysterious, in the unkept space in between: Dialectic of Enlightenment.

1 In the following, I will refer to Abromeit 2011 as 'AAoo' and to Benzer 2011 as 'Doxx'.
2 Abromeit's use of two 'excrescuses' might constitute an unconscious form of mimicry of the paternal or master text, condemned in absentia, the Dialectic of Enlightenment.
3 Abromeit points to the study by Wolfgang Schreiber, Three New Deals: Reflections of Roosevelt's America, Massolit's Italy, and Hitler's Germany, 1933-1939, New York, Metropolitan Books, 2006, that shows that Horkheimer's perception was at the time much less outright than it might seem to us (A440).
4 As an important anti-argue, Abromeit states against Mosthe Postone's argument that Horkheimer's position had from the beginning entailed a transhistorical concept of labor as the 'metabolic interaction' of humans and nature, that a transhistorical concept of labor would entail... a static philo-sophical anthropology, which Horkheimer rejected. Abromeit points out that unlike Marcuse, who tried to develop such an anthropological critique based on the discussion of species being in the Paris Manuscripts, Horkheimer rejected any such attempt to posit a transhistorical determination of 'human nature' or 'human labor'. (A421). Horkheimer's interpretation of the evolutionary theories as a historically specific expression of the underlying dyna-mic of capitalism itself seems... very close to Postone's own position. (A422). Abromeit concedes to Postone, though, that Horkheimer's early theory demonstrated some traces of what Postone calls 'traditional Marxism', such as occasionally seeming to believe that planning was a sufficient condition for overcoming capitalism (A424).
6 As Benzer uses it parallel a large number of texts by Adorno, I mostly do not use the text by Adorno he is referring to at any given moment; I will reference only Benzer's book where the reader will be able to locate the references to Adorno's texts.
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This issue of Datacide is released on 12 October 2013, one year after the publication of Datacide 12. Our new strategy is to publish Datacide yearly. That gives the editors and writers time to focus on new publication projects directly connected to the critiques and interventionist counter-cultural strategies articulated in Datacide. Datacide 13 opens with the political news section (pgs. 4-6) focusing on the issues of Infiltration and Agent Provocateurs, Vision Tech, Endless War, Surveillance, Control and Repression. An update on the National Socialist Underground criminal trial in Germany and the active strategy of various state and federal agencies to deflect culpability for failing to stop the neo-nazi murderous multi-year rampage is analyzed. This is followed by a roundup of UK anti-fascist activities. The news section concludes with a strong critique of the crisis in the SWP. The features section starts with the in-depth article “Confessions of an Accidental Activist” by David Cecil, which gives his personal, critical account of how their group theater performance triggered, and was part of, a larger, serious public debate about the instrumentalization of the intersections between homophobia, nationalism and public law in Uganda and the ensuing international media responses (pg 9). Mark Harrison gives a detailed, historical grounded interview about the origins, actions and impacts of Spiral Tribe within various UK and European counter-cultural networks, and also discusses SP23’s present activities (pg. 22). Following from the repression meted out by the British government against teknivals, the article “Revolt of the Ravers” by Neil Transpontine documents the history of the protest movement from 1993-95 against the Criminal Justice Act (pg. 26). Split Horizon contributes a thought-provoking piece “What is this Future?” about the present possibilities for action that deal head on with the dystopic developments of new technology, social and environmental transformation (pg. 29). In the article “Wikipedia-A Vernacular Encyclopedia”, Fabian Tompsett argues for an alternative reading of the development of the open source platform (pg. 32). The fiction and poetry section (pgs. 34-42) has several contributions by Howard Slater as well as by Dan Hekate. The extensive print review section highlights important texts recommended to datacide readers. New contributor Marcel Stoetzler has a long article assessing the historical and critical readings of two new books about Horkheimer and Adorno (pg. 43). Nemeton analyzes a new book about surveillance and repression in the U.S. called “Life During Wartime: Resisting Counterinsurgency” (pg. 61). Christoph Fringeli looks at the most recent book assessing the issue of murder or suicide of the RAF prisoners in Stammheim (pg. 62), and also discusses the new compendium of articles articulating an anti-fascist critique of various European white power music scenes (pg. 63). On page 70 you will find a number of reviews of radical periodicals. Nomex is interviewed by John Eden about his radical projects and performances, and the transformative potential of noise in art and life (pg. 64). This is followed by record reviews from Zombiesfleshter, Nemeton and Kovert (pgs 68-70). Alexis Wolton discusses “Vinyl Meltdown, Pt. 1” (pg. 71). Matthieu Bourel designed the radical collage “Rioter” for the centerfold of the magazine. Sansculturle contributed the sarcastic comic “Overdosed”(pg. 75), and the continued (mis-)adventures of Bloor Schleppy are revealed (pg 73). Check out the DJ charts, as well as new graphic art on the front and back covers. We will say it again: This is the most voluminous issue of Datacide!

Other projects:
We are about to publish a magazine reprint of datacide 9, which online has received the most hits and contains some of the most read articles of any datacide issue. After many years of underground interventions with the magazine format, we are traversing other print media with a publication of a book containing the complete issues of datacide 1-10.

For datacide 13, due to the continued increase in the size and scope of the magazine, we are raising the cover price from 4 euro to 5.00, and the price for subscriptions from 10.00 to 12.00 euro for 3 issues (including worldwide shipping). Please support datacide with a subscription! Paypal and contact email: datacide@08.com
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