

The Shortcomings of Max Horkheimer's Understanding of Positivism, and Theodor W. Adorno's Deficits—Revisited

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Abstract In retrospect, what German sociologists have called the positivism dispute since the early 1960s is something like a storm in a teacup, but it has had a cognitive blocking effect on many members of the following generations of philosophers, and sociologists. The starting point for the concept of positivism is Horkheimer's *Kritik der instrumentellen Vernunft* (German edition 1967, *Eclipse of Reason* 1947). The reason for discussing Horkheimer's incomprehension of positivism once again is that, for example, the 100 years of sociology at the Goethe University Frankfurt am Main (Germany), celebrated in 2019, motivates this, and in the so-called critical theory, the blind spot of observation is the failure to acknowledge the shortcomings of Horkheimer's critique of positivism. When we confront it, we counteract a Babylonian confusion of languages. Two references to sociology, and philosophy in Germany since the 1950s help contrast Horkheimer's concept of positivism, and its history of influence. The aim of this small study is to identify the false premises of Horkheimer's critique of instrumental reason, and Adorno's deficits. If they are recognized, this can certainly have a philosophical-therapeutic effect on the reader.

Keywords Frankfurt school, Heidelberg school, Vienna Circle, Critical theory

There cannot be a false consciousness. Every consciousness of a mental state fulfills itself.

1. Introduction

This small study addresses fundamental infirmities of the critique of positivism, the philosophy, and sociology of Horkheimer, and Adorno. It may seem antiquated to many, but we observe recourse to this position again, and again among philosophers, and sociologists.

In professional German philosophy, and sociology, Horkheimer, and Adorno play no role. However, both certainly resonate with certain groups of journalists, and radio editors in Germany. It is then appropriate to take a fundamental stand, and, for that purpose, it is advisable to take a look at German sociology of the 1950s. This should be orienting for further investigations.

In 2019, we marked 100 years of sociology at Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main. This may be a memorable event in the disciplinary history of German sociology, which also motivated cross-local retrospectives. It is therefore advisable to be aware of the initial situation of German sociology after the Second World War. This is instructive because we can recognize the fractures that triggered the

positivism debate in German sociology (1.). It is helpful to briefly outline the history of Horkheimer's work in order to situate his critique of positivism in his research program at the Institute for Social Research (Frankfurt a. M.). In doing so, a very fundamental problem of the *critical theory* of the 1930s is highlighted. Once this mistake has been made, it cannot be corrected. We thus have a framework for taking a closer look at his critique of positivism, and its infirmities (2.). This starting point leads to the false premises of Horkheimer's positivism critique, and the basic issue that Horkheimer, but also, in the progress, Adorno, had no access to the logical, and scientific-theoretical questions of the Vienna Circle, and the history of its restructuring (3.). A reference to philosophy in Germany, in, and after the 1950s is helpful, since we can see, from it, that Horkheimer, and Adorno did not occupy a central position in German philosophy (4.). It is especially noticeable that Horkheimer misrepresented the ethical, and political-philosophical assumptions of logical empiricism (5.). This insight leads to further infirmities of the philosophy of Horkheimer, and Adorno. (6.) It is too rarely addressed in retrospect that Adorno lacked access to Weber's sociology. In this respect, his critique of Weber, his philosophy, aesthetics, as well as his societal-theoretical claim, have to be addressed¹ (7.).

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¹ The sociological lexicon entries for *social* and *societal* are to be distinguished. In the German language - and also terminologically in sociology - we do not translate societal theory into social theory. This refers to the problem reference of the conceptualization of the components of social (membership) systems. The subject area of sociology cannot be systematized independently of observation.

Finally, a look at the problem of philosophical (scientific) schools, a remark on the problem of immanent, and transcendent critique as well as on genesis, and validity, and a relativization of seriousness, and fun lead to a rather humorous farewell to what is considered to be critical theory (8.).

Adorno's Husserl, Kant, and Hegel's interpretations as well as *Negative Dialectics* (1966) are not discussed in detail by the author. In the philosophical main seminar in 1967, Adorno had his Husserl's critique lectured in his *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie* (1956a). This was not encouraging. The author gave a paper on Husserl with two fellow students in Schnädelbach's two-semester seminar 1970-1971 on the concept of reflection in modern philosophy. Adorno's Husserl's book was not helpful for this, but the opposite was the case. Whoever uses the book as a guide does not find access to Husserl's phenomenology. He is put on a wrong track. Hegelianism is revived again, and again, also by the American philosophers McDowell, and Brandom. The author cannot understand the interest of McDowell, and Brandom in Hegel. Hegelianism has no philosophical merit, and confuses thought. This is easily demonstrated by linguistic criticism of meaning, which is one of the methods of philosophy, and the application of standard logic. The logic of Hegel is not taught at the philosophical institutes worldwide.² It is not necessary to elaborate further on all of them with regard to the issue addressed by the author.

If we recognize the infirmities of Horkheimer's critique of positivism, and Adorno's deficits, this can trigger a learning step in the reader. They identify the conditions under which errors are passed on from generation to generation. Above all, this would be recommended to the representatives of critical theory.

2. German Sociology after the Second War

1. Positivism controversy, 2. Frankfurter infirmities, and deficiencies

1. *Positivism controversy*. In 2019, we marked 100 years of sociology at Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main. This may be a memorable event in the disciplinary history of German sociology, which also motivated cross-local retrospectives. Tempered colleagues pointed at different traditions, and currents of sociology at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main. Other colleagues were more inclined to a

laconic *Tempi passati*. However, it may be advisable to read up on the *positivism controversy*, which has stirred the minds of the discipline presenters over, and over, and given rise to the creation of sociological legends. It should be emphasized that, in the historiography of German sociology after the Second World War, the positivism controversy is too highly valued. Was there a positivism controversy at all? Dahrendorf commented on it to the extension of making the participants talk when passing each other.

As a prelude to the positivism controversy in the history of German sociology, it is worth noting Popitz's (2006, p. 208) description of the situation. The initial situation since the beginning of the 1950s is determined by a lack of contact between the antipodes of the representatives of the discipline, for example, Schelsky, Plessner, König, Adorno, and Horkheimer. In the end of the 1950s, the chairman of the German Sociological Association invited a small group of sociologists, including Adorno, Gehlen, Schelsky, and René König, and, from the younger generations, Dahrendorf, and Popitz, to a remote hotel (near Assmanshausen, Germany) for a personal, and professional exchange. Popitz cannot remember the exact date. Gehlen, and Adorno were the main participants in the conversation. René König did not join the conversation. Political topics were not addressed. Popitz notes, for example, "Consequently, the conversation led nowhere. Apart from a later brief note by Dahrendorf, it remained secret. It could not come together" (Popitz 2006, p. 208, author's translation). Popitz emphasizes that the generation of sociologists at the time found it difficult to come to terms with the basic sociological concepts that had been handed down, especially when American sociology is considered, and that the seniors of the discipline of sociology were not *learned sociologists*. This is true for Plessner, Adorno, and Gehlen even when they worked on sociological topics (Popitz 2006, p. 208). It should be mentioned that, for the professional institutionalization of sociology, Schelsky deserves special merits. He habilitated most sociologists during his teaching career³ (Popitz, 2006, p. 208, "On the Re-emergence of Sociology in Germany after the War" is recommended, Popitz 2008, pp. 205-210).

It is necessary to mention that the analysis of the emergence of positivism controversy is like a document that has not yet been evaluated by the authors who deal with it. On March 1st, 1957, a meeting was held that addressed the issue "Zum Verhältnis von Soziologie und empirischer Sozialforschung" ("On the relationship between sociology, and empirical social research," author's translation) (Zyklos 2015, pp. 319-346)⁴. It was attended by Adorno,

In this respect, very different theorists agree, Baecker, Luhmann, Münch, Searle, and Willke. This has to be mentioned, but it does not need to be deepened in the study.

2 As for Brandom, the critique by Fodor, Lepore (2002) is especially recommended. The study of this text protects against false orientations in philosophy, but also in the philosophy of language. The so-called *new pragmatics* pursues a wrong question. See, also Preyer ed. (2018a). The author has no doubt about inferentialism in philosophy of language (semantics) being false.

3 This is also true when taking into account the fact that Adorno was commissioned by the DGS Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie (German Society for Sociology) to work out a diploma course. Since 1956, it is possible to study sociology at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main at the *Faculty of Philosophy*, and at the *Faculty of Economics, and Social Sciences*.

4 The original version of the protocol can be found in the archives of the Institute for Social Research Frankfurt a. M. A PDF file of the protocol is available, through the author. Interested parties should contact him informally via e-mail.

Dahrendorf, von Friedeburg, Gunzert, Habermas, Lieber, Noelle-Neumann, Popitz, and Stammer. Schelsky was not invited. Adorno presented theses, which were then discussed. One can see very well from the discussion that, from the beginning, Adorno's understanding of sociology - *sociology as critique of society* - was a fracture in German sociology that could no longer be corrected. This also applies to the concept of theory, on which the participants in the discussion could not agree. It is obvious, however, that, until now, this question remains unanswered. Why sociology should be a critique of society? Such claims drift more, and more into the subaltern, and unprofessional. Adorno set the course for this.

In a more sociological view of knowledge, behind the positivism controversy in German sociology, stands the struggle for prestige of the different representatives of the discipline. In this respect, it is not of factual interest, but sociological. Since the mid-1950s, German sociology has been completely positioned. The politicization of the subject by representatives of the discipline after 1965 prevented its professionalization. The author likes to tell his students that a career aspiration for sociologists in the 1960s was to become a corporate sociologist. Today, one can no longer imagine that. Since the beginning of the 1970s, social pedagogues, and psychologists have outstripped sociologists in Germany. This is still one of the peculiarities of German sociology that cannot be found anywhere else. This is true even for South America. The author has a professional exchange with colleagues from São Paulo (Brazil). They are always surprised that the positions filled by social pedagogues, and psychologists are not available to sociologists.

An unbiased review finds several critical communications among subject representatives. For example, the two debates on control theory in the wake of the 1969 Grand Coalition, and, after 1989, the debate on the organization, and political control of the European Union (Luhmann, Mayntz, Scharpf). Luhmann, political sociologist, plays a special role here. For a review, (Lange 2002, pp. 131-147). It is also worth mentioning the overrated Luhmann-Habermas debate in the early 1970s, as well as the debate on differentiation theory Münch versus Luhmann-Habermas-Schluchter, and the criticism of the Bologna reform, by Münch, and others. A more fine-grained description might also mention the differences between René König, and the Institute for Social Research (*Institut für Sozialforschung*) over community sociology. As far as the positivism controversy is concerned, one has to agree with Dahrendorf's emphasis that this essentially involved talking past each other, and exhausting oneself in idle communication. Again, *ex post factum*, this is not all that surprising. In retrospect, one has the impression that the participants found themselves in a situation of Babylonian linguistic confusion that could not be countered, and that the politicization of sociology pursued by colleagues deepened the rifts (Scheffold 2017, pp. 229-245). It is recommended, on Frankfurt sociology, Herrschaft and Lichtblau, eds. 2010. The volume highlights the different research, and theoretical approaches in sociology at the Goethe University Frankfurt am Main since 1919, Franz

Oppenheimer, and Mannheim's, and includes accounts by contemporary witnesses.⁵

2. *Frankfurter infirmities, and deficiencies*. In the relevant reviews, the fundamental problems, and infirmities of the *Frankfurt position* are not instructive enough. This is true for those who celebrate the legend of the history of the Institute for Social Research, but it is also often true for its critics, because, rightly or wrongly, they do not want to confront it in the first place. In the secondary literature on Horkheimer, and Adorno, which has received repeated attention since the so-called *Positivism Controversy in German Sociology*, Horkheimer's run-up to the critique of positivism in *Kritik der instrumentellen Vernunft* (title of the German edition 1967, *Eclipse of Reason* 1947) has usually not been adequately addressed. Adorno's critique of positivism must be interpreted against this background. This should be emphasized, since the opposite thesis is repeatedly argued (Müller-Doohm 2003). In this context, one has the impression that, as far as the positive references to Horkheimer, and Adorno's critique of positivism are concerned, one dilettantism takes over from the other. Adorno, in particular, has insisted on a *unified concept* of positivism as a classificatory expression, but he could not deal with the problem adequately. If he had had the intension-extension technique at his disposal, it would have been apparent to him that the intension of the term positivism varies, such as sense data, phenomenal language, conventions, and therefore the extension is vague.⁶ Overall, Horkheimer, and Adorno's understanding of positivism triggered a blockage of cognition in many of their students.

What should be noted, with regard to the dissemination of Adorno's publications, is that, in the 1950s, and the first half of the 1960s, it was not uncommon, for students who began studying philosophy at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, to arrive at the university with Adorno's *Minima Moralia Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben* (1951) in their luggage. Notwithstanding, there were also students who carried Ernst Jünger's *Strahlungen* (1980) instead, and read it in the cafés where students frequented, or a book by Arno Schmidt, for example his, *Gelehrtenrepublik* (2006).

3. About the History of the Work

1. *Horkheimer's research program*. From 1930 to 1937, Horkheimer pursued a more materialistically motivated research program of an integrated social science. It positioned itself in contrast to the other humanities, and cultural studies disciplines, but also to the empirically oriented sociology of the 1920s in Germany. In 1931, Horkheimer was appointed director of the institute, giving it

⁵ For this <https://www.youtube.com/user/ProtoSociology>

In the past, Schelsky's sociological research program and contribution to sociological theory has not been adequately appreciated in German sociology. This has since been corrected by Krawietz (2017).

⁶ In this situation, Schnädelbach (1971) has given an analysis of what is to be understood by the *positive* of positivism.

a new research program that was no longer vulgar Marxist. He published the inaugural lecture, on the present state of social philosophy, and the tasks of the Institute of Social Research (Institute of Sozialforschung), in the first edition of the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*. From 1930 to 1937, Horkheimer presents a section of his work that is history-oriented to Marxist materialism. From 1937 to 1940, he formulates the research program of a critical theory.⁷ In 1940, he abandons this program, and turns to a critique of reason, culture, and general domination (Horkheimer 1942, 1967, Horkheimer/Adorno 1951).⁸ Some authors even speak of a "turn around" (Kehre) (Söllner 1976, p. 333, Rogler 1986, p. 91). It is especially important to point out a rarely addressed point of view in the writings of 1940-1945. Horkheimer takes up motifs from Gehlen's social organization principle of leadership lines in this period. Horkheimer (1942) speaks of the "leading lines" (*Führungslinien*) as a social organizing principle. It does not only concern National Socialism, but it is an organizing principle of social communication, not only of the labour movement, unions, associations; it is an evolutionary universal in Parsons' sense.⁹ Horkheimer, and Adorno did not go into this organizing principle after 1945. From 1947 to 1961, Horkheimer published articles on positivism, and on cultural criticism. For him, a reinterpretation in terms of an anthropological, naturalized Kantianism¹⁰, the function of religion, Schopenhauer's pessimism, and the "hope for the very other" (Adorno, the non-identical) are of particular relevance (Horkheimer 1961, 1970)¹¹. Since the 1950s, Adorno increasingly turns to aesthetics, the sociology of art, and, as he progressed, to negative dialectics.

2. *Problems of Horkheimer's approach.* The extensive ambiguities, and underdetermination of the relationship between genesis, and validity in Horkheimer's essays, in the 1930-1940 period, are rarely pointed out. The exceptions include Rogler (1986, p. 95). A note on this, for example, Rogler emphasizes that Horkheimer is not only concerned with a critique of Kant, but that his claim is to decipher

7 Habermas (1981) reinterpreted, and claimed to reactualize this program under changed theoretical conditions. With regard to research programs in German sociology, Schelsky should also be mentioned. He initiated a comparable interdisciplinary research program, and institutionalized it in the *Center for Interdisciplinary Research*, University of Bielefeld. The scientific collaborations that Luhmann carried out, with educationalists and theologians, can also be interpreted in this way. The research projects of Parson should also be mentioned.

8 It is surprising that Horkheimer, and Adorno were incomprehensible about Max Weber's sociology of domination (*Herrschaftssoziologie*), but perhaps this is not surprising after all, but typical. It could well be that the study of Max Weber's texts overwhelmed them.

9 Parsons (1967). Van Reijen (1984), p. 36. He is one of the few authors in whom this reference to the organizing principle of the leading lines (*Führungslinien*) of social communication can be found in the secondary literature on Horkheimer.

10 Rogler (1986), "Deciphering the Productive Imagination, and schematism as Proteus Also in criticism of the culture Industry," p. 95.

11 For a periodization of the history of Horkheimer's work, for example, van Reijen (1984), p. 30. This periodization is not controversial, and obvious. It is widespread among the historians of critical theory.

Kant's philosophy. For example, his transcendental analytics, in terms of a theory of society. The deciphering of the transcendental analytic is done through its reinterpretation as a kind of reflex of societal division of labour or praxis. Rogler emphasizes that the concept of praxis in Horkheimer is ambiguous. For example, "praxis in a comprehensive sense" of craft, and industrial labour or a "very indeterminate sense" as an activity. "When Horkheimer deciphers the unconscious, supra-individual activity of the transcendental subject as social activity under liberal capitalism, he is likely to be thinking primarily of economic labor" (Rogler 1986, p. 81, on what follows, pp. 81-87). Horkheimer's research program is incompatible with Kant's a priori epistemological foundations. Nor does he have access to what Kant calls synthetic a priori judgments. This is quite true whether or not we still share the distinction between analytic, and synthetic judgments (propositions) in the wake of Quine's critique of the distinction.¹²

The claim of Horkheimer's *critical theory* in contrast to *traditional theory* is thus to decipher *knowledge* as a social result. The enforcement of scientific theories is thus, from this point of view, a social selection mechanism. It is to be agreed with Rogler that Horkheimer did not redeem this research program, and it remained with analogizing.¹³ It is also surprising that Horkheimer ascribes to logical empiricism an "ideological entrenchment of existing conditions" (Horkheimer 1967, pp. 56, 85). This will be discussed later.¹⁴ It should be noted, regarding the interpretation of transcendental apperception, that this synthesis is not one of a "supra-individual subject" (Horkheimer 1968, pp. 152-153). Kant, however, presupposes a "general human reason" in his architecture of critiques of reason. We would not share this by now, as postmodernism deconstructed the assumption of a general human reason as human nature (Preyer, and Krause 2020, pp. 20-21). This poses the problem of the other-psychic in a pointed way, since there are no a priori guarantors of understanding others under these presuppositions.

What is striking about Horkheimer's reinterpretation strategy is that there is no access in Horkheimer to the consciousness-theoretical critique of cognition in the sense of the question of the origin, scope, and validity of cognition, and to the problematic of the debate over protocol sentences (Viennese Circle, Popper, basic sentences). It is also reported that, in the philosophical proseminar, Horkheimer informed Haag, "The transcendental apperception (Kant, d.V.) is a big

12 Quine introduces a substitute distinction in his history of works in such a way that he relativizes it to a language.

13 In the 1930s, the debate between Borkenau, and Grossmann should be mentioned. In this, Horkheimer sides with Grossmann; on Horkheimer and Sohn-Rethel's approach, Rogler (1986), pp. 83-84.

14 Rogler (1986), pp. 86-87. He points out that the independence of the problem of validity is present in Horkheimer's correspondence-theoretical theory of truth, which is conceived in terms of image theory, pp. 86-87. However, this is not explored further; it remains open in Horkheimer. For example, how the relation of correspondence is to be determined, and the relations are to be characterized. For example, in the linguistic framework of a phenomenal or a thing-event language.

factory". He participated in the proseminar again, and again after his retirement. This was repeated by Adorno, Haag, and Alfred Schmidt. What kind of factory would that have been! (On a relevant quotation of Horkheimer on "The Kantian pure mind resembles a machinery. It contains the forms which the subject imprints on the material, as it were boxes and tentacles for the raw material. ... The subject, however much Kant tries to grasp it purely from all content, resembles the working man, the citizen, who uses the apparatus, the machinery" (Rogler 1986, p. 101).

3. *Properties of self-reference.* In opposition to the sociologism cultivated in this tradition, the insights of the analytic philosophy of self-consciousness are to be cited. Castañeda has pointed us to the referential, the epistemic, and the ontological primacy of the first-person formulation. This is what the continuators of this tradition should confront. The referential primacy consists in the fact that it cannot fail with respect to the speaker's self-reference. Epistemic primacy states that *I* is not to be replaced by names, labels, and the indicators *here*, and *now*. For example, *I am in pain* is not *salve veritate* to be replaced by *Peter Müller is in pain*. For its part, ontological primacy assumes the existence of the entity of self-reference (Castañeda 1999, p. 47. For a survey of problem references in analytic philosophy of self-consciousness, see Frank 2012, pp. 74-190).

The basic problem reference here is that knowledge is to be systematized as propositional knowledge, but, in contrast, self-consciousness, and self-reference are not representational knowledge. Whether we accept propositions as truth-bearers in semantics can be left open for the moment. This is the Quine-Davidson problem. Since Horkheimer, and Adorno had no access to the epistemology of the last century - Adorno assumes the primacy of the object, they have no access to the non-objective knowledge reference. This becomes especially tangible in Adorno's Husserl's book.¹⁵ Horkheimer's (1974, p. 210) rehabilitation of the distinction between *Ding an sich*, and *Erscheinung* (Kant) in his texts since the 1950s does not change this much, since the relation between the naturalized, and anthropologized reinterpretation of transcendental philosophy, and the social-theoretical deciphering, which is again present in Horkheimer's late work, remains completely unexplained. The emphasis here is on *completely*.

The objection to take the distinction between thing-in-itself, and appearance (Kant), epistemologically, and ontologically, is that it breaks down, since we are ontologically direct realists in our object language. If this were not so, then we would not be able to orient ourselves in our everyday life. We probably wouldn't be able not even to leave home.

4. *Access to sociology.* With regard to Horkheimer's attitude, and relationship to German sociology of the 1920s, it is worth mentioning that Horkheimer did not recognize the

importance of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, but placed it under suspicion of ideology. He received some assistance in this regard from Herbert Marcuse. In the course of the 1950s, this was also a strategy of Adorno to discriminate against his opponents. It was an approach that had an extremely unfortunate effect on his students, since they used to imitate him. It is worth noting, in this context, that Horkheimer, and Adorno had no intellectual access to sociology prior to the Nazi seizure of power in Germany in 1933. This has continued in America with regard to American sociology. Horkheimer, and Adorno, in contrast to Thomas Mann, and Schoenberg, placed themselves in a position that was not only academically isolated, but ultimately socially isolated as well. Good evidence of this is the failed cooperation with Lazarsfeld, who brought substantial, theoretically informative, and also lasting contributions to the discipline of sociology, and cooperated with Merton. Lazarsfeld was also president of the American Sociological Association. Mann reports that Adorno was not invited to Schoenberg's meetings with friends, and emigrants in California. As is well known, Adorno's communication with Mann was fraught with problems as a result, which proved dramatic in the course of writing Mann's novel *Doktor Faustus* (Mann 1967).

Horkheimer's epistemological interest, and understanding of positivism after 1945 is motivated by contemporary history, processing the experiences of World War II, National Socialism, and Soviet Communism. This is done with the claim to analyse the catastrophes in the history of civilization from the point of view of how far the philosophical implications of the changes are informative for the upheavals experienced. In this respect, he discusses "some dominant schools of thought [as] certain aspects of civilization" (Horkheimer 1967).¹⁶ In his view, this primarily concerns positivism (Horkheimer 1967, pp. 13-14). It should be emphasized that, since this publication, the term positivism has been used polemically, rhetorically, and vaguely. Horkheimer has no philosophical-professional understanding of what he calls positivism.

4. False Premises

1. *Misclassification.* The whole approach of the *critique of instrumental reason* starts from false premises. According to Horkheimer, positivism is a "philosophy that does nothing else than classification, and formalization of scientific

¹⁵ Adorno (1956a). It is astonishing that Adorno did not find access to the critique of psychologism in logic/mathematics by Frege (critique of Mill's number theory), and subsequently by Husserl.

¹⁶ It should be noted that Horkheimer's account of the situational definition of the antinomies of modernity, and its anomalies should also be contrasted with other perspectives. This is also true of Adorno (1951). For example, Jünger, *Strahlungen* (1980, eight edition) were recommended after his appearance, especially by well-known German writer Andersch. It is also worth mentioning that Broch (1970) opens an alternative interpretation of the nevertheless very woodcut-like, and not always coherent problem references of Horkheimer, and Adorno's *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1947). It is reported by contemporary witnesses that a university colleague in the 1950s, presumably a classical philologist, once threw them across the lecture hall to communicate his disdain for the students.

methods" (Horkheimer 1967, pp. 76-78). Horkheimer's general characterization of positivism fluctuates between the characterization of non-Marxist philosophy, and different directions of modern philosophy. For example, Comte's positivism, Mach, and Avenarius' empirio-criticism, logical empiricism (Viennese Circle), and pragmatism. Pragmatism is examined by him in more detail, logical empiricism only marginally, and empirio-criticism as well as the logic of research (Popper), and Carnap's semantics are not treated.

These assignments are not tenable in this way. In contrast, the following distinctions of the classification of positivism are informative for the identification of the problem reference of the analysis of positivism,

1. a *descriptive* classification. Thus,
 - (a) an *immanent theoretical* classification,
 - (i) general features of positivism, and
 - (ii) common features, and differences of positivist philosophy,
 - (b) an *immanent practical*, i.e. ethical-political-philosophical, implication of positivism, and
 - (c) a *transcendent classification*, that is, intellectual-historical roots of positivism,

2. a *critical classification*,

- (a) criticism of the ethical, and political-philosophical consequences of positivism, and
- (b) critique as an expression of the historical-social conditions. For example, a sociological analysis of knowledge, as well as

3. a *transcendent-theoretical classification*, that is, contrasting it with Horkheimer's dialectical positions.¹⁷

2. *Superordinate approach*. Horkheimer's understanding of positivism can be summarized in his overarching view that assured knowledge consists in a correspondence between truth, and science. By science, he understands the science accepted at any time. In his context of argumentation, the natural sciences are the model. Accordingly, positivism is a philosophy that asserts that any knowledge that has substance is to be verified within a scientifically regulated practice. Accordingly,

1. only statements have truth value,
 2. only they can represent knowledge, and be the subject of a binding argumentation, and
 3. statements without a cognitive content are meaningless.
- According to Horkheimer, a positivist philosophy of science sets "1.", and "3." with the assertion that
4. only verifiable, and observable statements can claim a scientific knowledge equal. At first, this reads as a plausible interpretation that is still widely held. The obvious objection to this is that Horkheimer does not sufficiently distinguish between the positivist theory of meaning, and the various theories of truth (coherence, redundancy,

citation-elimination, pragmatic, consensus, and correspondence theories). Horkheimer's assertion that positivist epistemology states only statements that can be verified are meaningful cannot be considered to be so readily true.¹⁸ This is true even if one holds, as Wittgenstein did in the early 1930s, a verificationist theory of meaning. It translates into, "The meaning of a sentence is the method of its verification" (The first explicit formulation goes back to Waismann 1930/31, p. 229). Put simply, it is true of all positivist directions that the set of meaningful sentences contains both true, and false propositions. Whether a sentence is meaningful or not depends on whether it is possible to trace it back to one or more statements about empirical facts. Notwithstanding, even according to the logical empiricism of the Vienna Circle, sentences with expressions for abstract objects are not meaningless. For example, numbers. Horkheimer also does not take into account Popper's logic of research, and Popper's critique of the dilemma of verificationism, "Universal sentences are not verifiable, and existential sentences are not falsifiable" (Popper 1935).

3. *Pragmatism*. Horkheimer's description of pragmatism, which is, "The core of this philosophy is the opinion that an idea, a concept, or a theory is nothing but a scheme or plan for action, and therefore truth is nothing but the success of the idea" (Horkheimer 1947, pp. 48-49), is therefore inaccurate, since Peirce—unlike James, and Dewey—advocated a variant of the correspondence theory of truth. His theory of meaning can be classified as pragmatic, though. Pragmatism has had a surprising career in European philosophy, and different academic groups since the 1970s. Rorty, in particular, has contributed to this. The irony of the story is that Horkheimer's critique of pragmatism receives support from a very different direction in contemporary philosophy. Fodor (and Lepore) have rehabilitated Cartesianism in philosophy of mind, and epistemology. In their view Cartesianism is right, and pragmatism is wrong across the board.¹⁹

4. *Reflection Argument*. Horkheimer's immanent critique of positivism consists of a *reflection argument*. Its purpose is to show that positivism's concept of knowledge, and criterion of meaning cannot prove its own basic principle, or that these principles are meaningless. The verification principle commits a *circle* because it refuses to "verify its own principles" (Horkheimer 1967, p. 91). Notwithstanding, there is no circle, because, in empirical sentences, the criterion of justification is experience.

If, on the other hand, we ask for the justification of this criterion of justification, then it turns out that the criterion of justification is justified by the meaning of empirical sentences. This argument is an immanent one, and is quite independent of whether one accepts the proposition, "The

17 On the distinction between immanent, and transcendental criticism, 8. To the good end, in this text.

18 He did not abandon this conviction until the end of his life, and Adorno echoed it.

19 Fodor (2008). On Fodor's manifesto of rejection of pragmatism, and the detailed justification of this rejection, pp. 3-49; Preyer (2012a), pp. 11-19.

meaning of a sentence is the method of its verification" (Wittgenstein) or not.

It should be emphasized that the fundamentalism of the early Vienna Circle (Carnap, Schlick) was criticized by Reichenbach, and Popper. In this respect, there is no difference between Reichenbach, and Popper in their epistemology. The epistemological interest formulated by Horkheimer, of reconstructing facts in general as social facts, is simply meaningless, since we have experiences with objects, but assert facts. Facts may be wrongly selected for certain purposes, but they are, as true statements, not to be doubted. This is trivially true, since a fact is a true statement. Thus, a fact does not belong to the world, as Russell assumed.

One more curiosity, albeit with disastrous implications of Horkheimer, and Adorno's understanding of positivism, should be pointed out. They orient their critique to the debate on protocol sentences of the 1930s (Carnap, phenomenal language, thing-event language; Popper, basic sentences; Mill, physical object as "permanent possibility of sensations"; Schlick, affirmation (*Konstatierung*); and C. I. Lewis, reality sentences). However, they fail to recognize that a phenomenological, and verificationist interpretation of basic epistemological language was met with a far-reaching reservation, and even abandoned as early as the 1930s (Carnap, Hempel²⁰, Popper, and Waismann, porous concepts).²¹ Carnap, very quickly, under the influence of Neurath, carried out a turn towards physicalism (universality of thing-event language). He relativized the notions of *meaningful*, and *logical consequence* to a language system, and turned to semantics, and his version of inductive logic, and probability theory from the early 1940s. This was not even considered by Horkheimer, and Adorno because they were not familiar with the notions, and not interested in them.²² Above all, the uninformedness, and bias of Horkheimer, and, in continuation, of Adorno towards the state of research in the matter of 'splendour, and misery' of the criterion of meaning is striking.

5. *Problem reference of the verification principle.* Already Marhenke (1952) presented an analysis of the consequential problems of the criterion of meaning,

1. its logical form is an inductive generalization, therefore a generalization, or
2. the definition of a meaningful sentence. Pap adds to this

that

3. the question, what is a meaningful sentence, cannot be answered through 1. generalization, or 2. definition.

- (a) If we classify all sentences are verifiable as a generalization, then we already assume that we know what a meaningful sentences is. We then do not assume whether this sentence is verifiable or not.
- (b) It is not doubted that conceptual analyses of the meaningful sentences are not definitions. Definitions are not true or false; only determinations.

The problem reference Pap highlights is that it is not meaningful to speak of a conceptual analysis being true. In this respect, there are no adequacy principles; rather, conceptual analyses assume a pre-theoretical understanding of concepts. Terms are classification expressions. Pap concedes that one might therefore hold to the generalization claim. The problem with this is that we classify as meaningful even non-verifiable metaphysical sentences. The problem reference should be accessible enough. We need not pursue it further (Pap 1954, p. 21. For a review, of the empiricist criterion of meaning, see (Pap 1954, pp. 1-26), on Ewing claiming that from the truth of the criterion of meaning follows from its falsity, since the criterion of meaning cannot be justified as an analytic sentence. If one would proceed in this way, then one has to presuppose "meaningful sentence = verifiable sentence", and meaningful sentences would have to be classified as verifiable sentences (Pap 1954, pp. 22-23).

However, we encounter an ironic situation in Horkheimer's question about the reflexion argument. If we start from the Marhenke-Pap argument, the question "what is the meaning of the criterion of meaning?" (Marhenke 1952, Pap 1954) is not meaningless after all, since the verification argument of the foundation of the meaning of sentences justifies this question, and it cannot be answered immanently by the criterion of meaning. This is not a rehabilitation of Horkheimer's, and Adorno's understanding of positivism, and it proves that they did not have the logical means to systematize the argument.

The affect towards the representatives of logical positivism probably goes back to the 1930s, especially to the failed communication of Horkheimer, and Neurath (see, Dahms 1994). It throws light on the then (in consequence) low cognitive level of Adorno's teaching. It was part of the informal communication law of his teaching that one did not use logically symbolic representations. This could not be cognitively compensated by fine-grained text interpretations in his philosophical seminar.

6. *Metaphysics, and science.* Those who wish to gain insight into German philosophy of the 1950s should consult Stegmüller, *Metaphysik Wissenschaft, Skepsis* 1954, ders, *Das Wahrheitsproblem und die Idee der Semantik* 1957, and the aforementioned Pap, *Analytische Erkenntnistheorie* 1954. One may cherish the conviction that, in these investigations, historical approaches are negotiated from our present standpoint. This may also be the case, depending on the

20 Recommended here are the articles by Hempel (1936), pp. 339-369; 1950, pp. 41-93; (1951), pp. 61-77; Pap (1955), pp. 1-57; and Marhenke (1952), pp. 139-159.

21 On the protocol sentence debate, we also recommend, Reichenbach (1983). His analysis of observational sentences is rather neglected in epistemology, and philosophy of science. On the epistemic construction of worlds, Essler et al. (2000), pp. 191-223. It is fundamental for epistemology that the exemplification, and the hint definition are NOT a production relation, but a discovery relation. For both, the intension of expressions of basic concepts is not established, Essler et al. (2000), pp. 56-59. The theorists of science will certainly not deny that empirical statements are not needed for the formal representation of a theory.

22 For an informative treatment of Carnap's epistemology, and philosophy of science, Rogler (2012), pp. 217-235.

philosophical, and scientific-theoretical standpoint, but it is not the problem with regard to the infirmities of Horkheimer, and Adorno. We recognize a Frankfurt 'backwoodsness' on the restructuring of philosophy, and epistemology since the 1950s in the wake of logical empiricism. Stegmüller thematizes the problem of metaphysics, unlike Heidegger, "(have) all sciences a metaphysics basis", and are "on the contrary real science free of any metaphysics", and "the individual sciences are not based on metaphysics but are independent of it, but beside it metaphysics as science endures" (Stegmüller 1954, p. 7). He pursues the problem reference to uncover the boundary "where every conceivable theory is at an end with its wisdom, and the personal decision must begin" (Stegmüller 1954, p. 6, author's translation). This is a serious issue. It is often forgotten that Stegmüller (1957) made the move to semantics following Carnap, Tarski, and the analysis of semantic terms in what comes to logical syntax, truth antinomies, and the application of semantic terms to scientific subdisciplines, such as logic, epistemology, and metamathematics.²³ This does not need to be further elaborated at this point in time, but one should keep it in mind, otherwise one will make wrong situational definitions in matters such as philosophy in Germany after World War II.

This is instructive insofar as one is immunized against naively adopting Adorno's critique of positivism, motives, and reasons impress. This is, by no means, taken out of the air, since the author has experienced that over the last thirty years, that students of philosophy, and sociology are susceptible to it. It may be surprising, but apparently even those who are already trained in the subject are susceptible to the positivism critique, such as doctoral candidates in philosophy, and more experienced colleagues. It is not such a great insight. It always depends on who you study with. It is too often difficult to distance oneself from this socialization sequence.

7. *General characteristics.* According to Horkheimer, for positivism, "philosophy is nothing but the classification, and formalization of scientific methods," and even formal logic "is derived from empirical procedures" (Horkheimer 1967, pp. 76-78). Just the opposite is the case. The founders of symbolic logic, Frege, Russell, and Whitehead - Husserl joined them, motivated by Frege's criticism of his habilitation - who are of paradigmatic relevance to logical empiricism, reject precisely a psychological justification, and explanation of logic as psychologism.²⁴ Besides, the

23 Among the American philosophers of science, there is a colleague comparable to Stegmüller, who was also called the "Stegmüller of the Amerikanians", Nagel (1961). The book has several editions.

24 Dahms (1994), with regard to Horkheimer, and Adorno's claims about logic in the 1930s, emphasizes that, contrary to their objective vis-à-vis Russell to dialectize logic, they wisely held back, and thus avoided an expected embarrassment.

On Horkheimer, and Adorno's ill-fated connection to American philosophy, and sociology, and legends about the American scientific system, such as that it adopted the German organization in the second half of the 19th century, Fleck (2007).

claim that positivism is a self-description of science, stating that only knowledge may claim validity that is "merely derived (from empirical procedures), and then absolutized as truth on the basis of dogmatic criteria of scientific success," (Horkheimer 1967, p. 92) is simply inaccurate. Positivism, contrary to this view, applies a set of criteria to validate knowledge. For example, the criterion of meaning, logical consistency, and predictive validity. It assumes - within the given science - the distinction between paradigmatic, and pre-paradigmatic sciences (Kuhn) or the continuous self-correction of science (Popper), and research programs (Lakatos). Nobody will deny that good theories have to be empirically substantial. If this were not so, theories would only be syntactic constructions of sentences, and sentence classes.

8. *Miscues.* We should still address a point of Adorno's critique of positivism, to be placed in the wake of Horkheimer, which Adorno repeatedly emphasizes in both written works, and oral communications, such as lectures, seminars, and personal communications. The argument is, in the author's free formulation, the terms of the observational sentences are not to be taken from observation. There are no ontological, and epistemological ultimate constituents of cognition, so no evidential experiences, and world ontologies, so nothing of Russell's logical atoms. Adorno also repeatedly claimed, as mentioned earlier, that positivism was "theoryless". For a summary, consult (Adorno 1970a, pp. 167-245). The lecture given at the 1968 Sociologists' Day of the German Sociological Association received special attention, and people chafed at it. This may be difficult to understand. Habermas was rather reserved in his oral remarks in the main philosophical seminar, which they held on Saturdays from 10 - 12 am.

Let us assume that Adorno's criticism of the epistemological primacy of observational statements over secondary systematizations is correct. It is not without irony that Hempel argued that the distinction between meaningful, and meaningless sentences, and their logical relations cannot be defined with observation statements.

The principle of complete verification is therefore not convincing, but this also applies to complete falsification. Carnap, and Ayer abandoned full verification, and falsification.

Hempel then proposed, following Carnap, to define first the notion of empirical language. Provided this definition is available, meaningful sentences are then to be translated into this language. This is instructive, since Adorno does not recognize this problem. He just does not ask for the logic of reality sentences (Lewis 1991), and perception sentences, and Adorno also does not allow for an attenuated notion of perceptual evidence as an approach to the verification of perceptual statements, unlike Stegmüller (1954).

From this, we can see that not much is done by arguing that observational sentences cannot be fully verified, and that the distinction between meaningful, and meaningless sentences cannot be defined by observational sentences. This is true whether we are in the natural sciences, the humanities,

or the social sciences.

It is certainly not the case that Adorno's assertions, "contradictions are anathema to positivism", and he "wants to liquidate philosophy" (Adorno 1970 a, p. 172), are true. This is not true even of Carnap's logical construction of the world, and his text on the illusory problems at the end of the 1920s. The illusory problems are metaphysically critical, but philosophy as a therapeutic method is not rejected by Carnap. Antinomies are a research focus for analytic philosophers, such as Russell, and Tarski, and, having the 1960s in mind, one cannot speak of a liquidation of philosophy among analytic philosophers, not even among Popperians.

In this text, Adorno also turns against Popper's student. For Popper, the accusation of lack of theory is false. The opposite is the case. One does not even know how Adorno comes up with this. He did not study Popper's works, otherwise he would have known that, and silently dropped this one-handedness.

One also does not know how Adorno comes to the conclusion that, "Because the scientific truth wants to be the whole, it is not the whole" (Adorno 1970 a, p. 192, author's translation). With regard to this point, it should be noted that the opposite is the case. Scientific knowledge is understood as knowledge on demand, and that is not Aristotelian knowledge.

What physics we will have in 50 years from today, we cannot know. More especially, in the natural sciences, considering the innovations of the last century, they would not claim to have the philosopher's stone.

This is what the natural scientists of the 19th century believe. It is known that Popper considered Adorno's texts unreadable. This is not true for Popper's books, with them, you can understand every sentence. This is also the claim, "to understand every sentence", that Wolfgang Cramer conveyed to his students (personal communication). Wolfgang Cramer said this about Hegel, with whom, however, one also fails.

5. Philosophical Situation of the 1950s

1. Philosophy after the 1950s. If we look back on the 1950s in the scientific system, in the segment philosophy of the Federal Republic of Germany, it is advisable to distinguish between the colleagues who already taught before World War II, and the first generation after World War II, which we classify in retrospect as prominent (Henrich 2006, p. 57).

This is obvious because the first generation was not burdened with German history, and also took new paths. This is true whether or not they faced the problem of German history in their discipline, and to what extent. The currents of Heidegger-Gadamer, Husserl, and the reflection-theoretically oriented tradition, such as Hans Wagner's, ran more or less side by side.

To this first generation belong, for example, Blumenberg in Münster, Habermas in Heidelberg, and Frankfurt a. M.,

Lorenzen in Erlangen as well as Stegmüller in Munich. Henrich also belongs to this group.

Tugendhat (1979) introduced the expression *Heidelberg School*, besides Henrich as its founding figure, Konrad Cramer, and Pothast. It was to their credit that they had thought modern philosophy of consciousness through to the end, since "all attempts to make the structure of self-consciousness intelligible have led into paradoxes" (Tugendhat 1979, pp. 10-11). The Heidelberg School has meanwhile been continued, and resystematised by Manfred Frank. In the meantime, many American, but also Chinese colleagues confront it (see also, *Protosociology* vol. 36, 2019).

2. Problem references. In the problem-related description, the philosophical situation of the 1950s is to be circumnavigated by the analysis of reality sentences, the problem of truth, and probability, of causality, and regularity, and, related to them, the logic of explanation, the criticism of the complete disjunction between analytic, and synthetic sentences (judgments), Tarski semantics, and the problem of logical necessity, to highlight only the most important ones. Dealing with these problem references translates into considerable formal demands on adequate treatment, and is not easy to handle them intuitively.

Above all, Adorno, and his students' idiosyncratic remarks about Popper owe less to epistemology, and philosophy of science than to Popper's social philosophy, and his option for an "open society" vis-à-vis its enemies, which include communism, but also Plato, and Hegel (Popper 1945).

Again, this is not so completely absurd with regard to Hegel, since, according to him, we are to become a 'concrete concept', and the state, as the realization of the moral idea, appears systematically prior to society.

This may also be justified by the fact—from Hegel's point of view—that somehow order has to come into social communication. Notwithstanding, it is also true for Plato, and Popper's interpretation of Plato also found its critics, especially in what regards communism. Popper's philosophy of science, and philosophy have not adequately dealt with Adorno's Frankfurt critics.

6. Ethical, and Political-Philosophical Assumptions

1. Horkheimer's misconception. There is a contradiction, and a conflation in Horkheimer's account of the ethical, and political-philosophical views of logical empiricism. A contradiction exists because he attributes to logical empiricism two quite different metaethical views, that of noncognitivism, and naturalism. This attribution follows from the fact that he conflates the moral philosophical views of logical empiricism, and the understanding of moral science. Logical empiricism, and emotivism advocate metaethical noncognitivism, that is, it defends that ethical statements such as *theft is reprehensible* do not represent

facts. Therefore, they are not truthful, and cannot be proven or disproven.

In addition to prompts, ethical statements can express feelings. This is emotivism in metaethics. Accordingly, for logical positivism, there are the assertives and the expressives as two types of illocutionary acts. If they nevertheless assume that we can talk about ethical claims, it does not mean that they correct their metaethical view, but they hold that, in ethical arguments, the question of the way of realization of given values is thematic.²⁵

Accordingly, moral science has the task to investigate,

1. which values are shared by persons, and groups and
2. how these values can be realized, if necessary.

Horkheimer's comparison between the moral science of logical empiricism, and Socrates is not a fortunate one in that neither believes that science can predicate what is *good*, and *evil*. However, it can, given value attitudes, explain by what means they are or are not to be realized.²⁶ It should be noted, about the problem area, that logical empiricism held a unified view in metaethics, while this is not the case in American pragmatism. It was above all (also) social-pedagogically motivated, and engaged. This, too, is not adequately addressed by Horkheimer.

2. *Subjective Reason*. Horkheimer's critique of the ethical, and political-philosophical consequences of positivism concerns his critique of "subjective reason" as distinct from "objective reason" as a structure of being (Horkheimer 1967, pp. 34-36). It is determined, somewhat differently expressed, as the cognitive rationality of hypothesizing, reasoning, conceptualizing, and calculating facts (Hobbes, reason as calculation). It is supposed to be impossible for subjective reason to decide whether economically, and politically cruel and despotic social situations are less reasonable than others. Subjective reason rejects objective ends (Horkheimer 1967, p. 45). In this respect, Spinoza's *deus sive natura* applies.

Horkheimer, however, does not advocate the counter thesis of the truthfulness of ethical statements, i.e., that a rational choice of norms, and values is to be factually

justified, and defended against objections. His metaethical position cannot be inferred from his texts. The so-called positivists, contrary to Horkheimer's view, do not claim that a given fact cannot be judged, and criticized—morally or politically—but that this judgment, and criticism express nothing but attitudes or feelings in the person (the speaker) towards this fact (emotivism in metaethics). According to logical empiricism, relevant investigations of given moral attitudes, and political organizations can very well be carried out by investigating what follows from them for different life chances of members of social systems or by any other method. They do not deny the possibility of moral statements vis-à-vis actually prevailing against social norms, and value attitudes. Investigating, and evaluating the congruence / divergence of possible consequences of actions with norms, and value preferences generally prevail in a social system.

Let's briefly summarize. Horkheimer's critique is not directed against empirical-analytical science. He understands his reflection as a correction that goes towards addressing the presuppositions of a positivistic philosophy of science. Notwithstanding, this also belongs to Horkheimer's lifetime as normal science or, if one should have reservations about this term of Kuhn, to the "logic of research" (Popper 1935), since for them the distinction between normal science, and revolutionary situations in the scientific system does not exist.

7. Other Infirmities

1. *Loss of rational points of view*. In terms of philosophical history, Horkheimer assumes that there is a close connection between neo-empiricism, and the classical empiricism of Locke, Hume, and Berkeley. In the context of Enlightenment Philosophy, he credits it with "carrying the Enlightenment's struggle against mythology into the hallowed precincts of traditional logic" (Horkheimer 1967, p. 88). In the course of its further development, it loses its rationalist elements, and becomes an I-metaphysics. This assertion is particularly difficult to comprehend. As an alternative interpretation, it actually suggests that if we select the basic problem in epistemology as a reference, the opposite is true, since the history of empiricism can also be reinterpreted as a learning step about its own presuppositions. It should also be mentioned that the representatives of logical empiricism were not on the conservative political side. Carnap advocated scientific socialism, and Neurath was involved in the socialist camp.

It should also be noted that Adorno's objection, that positivism is theoryless, does not apply to Carnap's linguistic framework theory, and semantics or to Popper's basic epistemological theory. This, after all, is the joke of Popper's critique on the verificationism of logical empiricism. It should also be pointed out that Stegmüller's rejection of the criticism of Popper for not having overcome inductionism is to be supported (Stegmüller 1975, pp. 8-40). Stegmüller (1975, pp. 39-40) rejects "destructive criticisms" of Popper. He identifies the problematic nature of Popper's notion of

25 By now, the discussion about the structure of moral beliefs, and the different metaethics of prescriptivism, intuitivism, cognitivism, virtue ethics, and emotivism is elaborated enough to form a conviction about the problem references, for example, Rümelin (2002). Most importantly, the new problem of criticizing consequentialism has been added (Anscombe, Nida-Rümelin 2002). It is certainly experienced as somewhat unfair to compare Horkheimer's meagre reflections with the present's elaborated state of research. Notwithstanding, this does not change the criticism of his objections to the metaethics of logical empiricism. It should be noted that German practical philosophy, and political science have been dominated by a sharpened moralism since the 1980s. To contrast with this, Waldenfels (2006).

26 Horkheimer (1967), pp. 33-34, "The positivists, epigones of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, prove in their moral philosophy to be disciples of Socrates, who taught that knowledge necessarily produces virtue, and ignorance includes malice. Socrates sought to emancipate virtue from religion" (author's translation of, "Die Positivisten, Epigonen der Aufklärung des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts, erweisen sich in ihrer Moralphilosophie als Schüler des Sokrates, der lehrte, daß Wissen notwendig Tugend hervorbringt und Unwissenheit Bosheit einschließt. Sokrates versuchte, die Tugend von der Religion zu emanzipieren"), 98. Horkheimer, however, does not address the aporetic method of Plato's philosophy in his commentary on Plato's Socrates.

probation. Popper, as well as those who follow him, have not explained it, (Stegmüller (1975, p. 19); on Käsbauer's specification, p. 20. On Popper, and his defence of Kuhn, Preyer (2012b, pp. 199-216)).

Adorno has left no doubt -- also in the oral lecture in his course -- that the dogma "of the priority of method over matter" is the fall from grace in the methodology of social science. In modern philosophy, this concerns the departure from Descartes, who first formulated this version of epistemological criticism, and knowledge acquisition. For Descartes, this is generally true of epistemology. Every student of philosophy acknowledges that the assertion of the primacy of method over matter goes back to Descartes. One wonders, however, why this is actually such a big problem.

Adorno has described his method as "materialistic", and "dialectical." What this means, however, is impossible to comprehend, and falls flat as a breath of voice. The interpreters of Adorno's method take a reading which means seeing social communication determined not only from the economic point of view, but also not from an idealistic point of view, that is, not by the distinction between real, and ideal factors. However, Adorno himself did not think about this systematically, and left it for the talks about "society as something objective" (Adorno 1970, p. 125). This is close to Durkheim's discourse, but Adorno demarcates himself from Durkheim's social fact as positivism, and moralization. Adorno's moralization, as an objection to Durkheim's, is that society is not supposed to be a fact.²⁷

2. *Theory-less positivism.* One wonders how Adorno came to the conclusion that positivism was theory-less. Notwithstanding, he was clear-sighted enough not to call his way of doing philosophy, and sociology theory. It was rather something akin to the articulation of experience. However, that is not a unique selling point that he can claim. It is worth noting that, from the local Frankfurt's perspective, one of the innovations of Habermas's teaching, in the second half of the 1960s, was to have initiated a constructive turn in the reception of modern philosophy of language, and sociology. It is quite remarkable that, in his teaching at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, from 1964 to 1970, Habermas gave a different lecture every semester.

It should be mentioned that Henrich was acquainted, perhaps even friends, with Wolfgang Cramer. Henrich habilitated one of Cramer's students. Henrich (1958) positively reviewed Wolfgang Cramer's *Die Monade* (1954), and appreciated his independent philosophy - of the productive monad - as a contribution to the philosophy of subjectivity in German philosophy in the 1950s.²⁸ One can agree with this. However, he uses Wolfgang Cramer traditional - and not formal - means. This has made the reception among analytically minded philosophers more

difficult.

The content-related philosophies of Cramer, and Henrich do not have so much to do with each other. Henrich has no production theory of the monad, and would rather distance himself from such an approach from the point of view of his work history.

This does not preclude Henrich from having a monadological theory of consciousness, since consciousness is self-referentially closed for him as well. Cramer, and Henrich share a philosophical-epistemological interest that the problem relation of processing the subjectivity of cognition, and action, and its ontology is to be rediscovered. This is now the case, and an enduring philosophical merit of Henrich. This is true quite independently of how the Heidelberg School is to be continued.

We can also express this, perhaps somewhat pointedly, in such a way that it is a beginning, but not an end. Cramer, and Henrich share the insight that Cramer often communicated, "One life is not enough to conceive a philosophy of subjectivity" (personal communication)²⁹.

It should also be noted that, in the 1970s, Schnädelbach continued to pursue this turn to philosophy of language, and opened up new topics to students, for example social ontology, the labelling theory of Russell, Quine, as well as the critique of Strawson, on the enlightenment (innovation) of historicism, on the problem of value freedom, and on analytic action theory, as well as on Popper's logic of research. Kulenkampff turned to British empiricism, and Werner Becker worked on problems of political philosophy. Becker's critique of Rawls following Nozick (2011) deserves special mention.³⁰ Haag withdrew to the academically peripheral position of private scholar since 1970. As a student of Horkheimer, he distanced himself from Alfred Schmidt's interpretation of Marx's concept of nature.³¹

8. Adorno's Deficits

1. *Lack of understanding of Max Weber.* As for the sociological works of Adorno, it should be mentioned that he

27 This is close to the Durkheim's critique of Parsons 1937. Parsons, however, takes a turn toward Durkheim in the 1950s.

Adorno's articles on his substantive and methodological understanding of societal theory, and sociology are compiled in, Adorno (1970 a).

28 Henrich (2007, p. 372) has always communicated this identically in reviews of his intellectual biography.

29 We should not overstate the relationship between Cramer, and Henrich with regard to the themes of Henrich's work history. A common problem reference is that both reject the concept of reflection as fundamental in the analysis of self-consciousness. Cramer, however, did not completely detach himself from the concept of reflection. In the meantime, this has been corrected in the continuation of the Heidelberg School.

30 Nozick is also among the American philosophers who paid tribute to Henrich's renewal of the philosophy of self-consciousness, Nozick (1981), pp. 27-114.

31 Haag (2005), pp. 110-111, Fn 240, "Marx criticizes" - as Alfred Schmidt points out - "the old materialism by arguing idealistically, idealism by arguing materialistically", Schmidt (1962), p. 96). The double basis of his argumentation testifies to the insufficiently thought-out own theory (author's translation). It should be noted that this was not a derailment in Schmidt's really overrated dissertation, and he carried them on a tray in front of him his whole life, but he continued to disseminate the point of view he laid down there until his death. This Horkheimer's pupil was not one of those university teachers who were willing to innovate. However, the author does not wish to comment further on this for pietistic reasons.

had a misguided notion of social exchange, and the alleged reification that supposedly accompanied it. His concept of reification is not so far removed from Heidegger's concept of the reification of being. Adorno's friends will certainly not admit this.

From a sociological point of view, it is striking that Adorno's concept of exchange does not distinguish between general, and particular social exchange (Levi-Strauss, Eisenstadt). His Marxism prevented him from forming an adequate understanding of the modern acquisitive economy. It is also impossible to understand what the particular exchange in the market has to do with reification. This is probably an intellectual disorder that needs therapy, but this disorder is widespread among a certain type of leftist intellectuals, and politicians. They do not have access to the problem that Western democratic political liberties, and the electoral choices of market participants historically made emerge in parallel. Parsons has emphasized this over, and over again. Participating in the market also always means adopting a learning attitude.

The colleague Klaus Lichtblau mentioned, in a conversation, that Adorno knew the writings of Max Weber only from the lectures of his students. This seems quite plausible. Adorno's objections to Weber fall flat,

1. Weber has a subjective sociology;
2. the value-free nature of the sciences, and the claim that goes with it is false; and
3. there is a drifting apart of Weber's formal sociology of basic sociological concepts (*Kategorienlehre der soziologischen Grundbegriffe*), and his material analysis.

The objections are completely wrong, because

1. Weber's theory of action includes a societal theory of order. He has a micro-sociology, his theory of action, and methodology of understanding meaning, and a macro-sociology, his analysis of the powers of order, in his sociology of domination, law, and religion;
2. Adorno's rejection of the claim that the sciences are value-free does not distinguish between factual, object-language, and metalanguage valuations;³²
3. Weber also systematized social movements, and the supporting strata of social upheavals. In this respect, he also has a sociology of elites. This is evident in his sociology of religion; and

4. The material analyses of his understanding sociology cannot be separated from his sociological category analysis at all; without it, the so-called material analyses ultimately remain only a collection of individual tokens of information without a systematizing frame of reference. One only has access to his studies of content when one reads them from the point of view of his systematization of ideal types. This can also be seen in Weber's texts, and it is not to be read into his investigations from an external point of view.

It is also curious that the concept of the "disenchantment

of the world" appearing in the third sentence of Horkheimer's, and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947/51) goes back to Weber. For him is the program of the Enlightenment was the disenchantment of the world as a repression of the myths.³³ It is still worth mentioning that the deficits of Adorno's understanding of Durkheim, and Parsons were not less, but this does not need to be elaborated further. This becomes clear when one remembers Adorno's sentence about Parsons, "Society becomes a frame of reference"! What else can one say about this?

2. *Philosophy.* Those who participated in Adorno's philosophical seminar, which he held on Thursdays from 6 - 8 pm, and those who were in the acquaintances' circle of the participants of the seminar, will be familiar with the talk of the proton pseudos of European idealism, and the criticism of nominalism by Adorno, Horkheimer, and Haag. Nominalism was considered an epistemological advance also with regard to the freedom of the members of society through their self-reference (modern individualism). According to these authors, it should be, at the same time, the fall of man in modern philosophy. The metaphysically conceived entities did not exist in the things, but the individual things were not supposed to disappear. They were classified as *quanta discreta* as well as *continua* (Descartes, *res extensa*).³⁴

The problem reference was spelled out by Haag in his lectures. His theory of interpretation, probably motivated by Horkheimer, states that the history of European idealism is the history of the demythologization of its highest principle. This is motivated by Bultmann's demythologization thesis of the interpretation of the New Testament, and its concomitant understanding of being. The proton pseudos is the fallacy that *The One (das Eine)* of Parmenides differentiates into a multiplicity of entities. The problem reference was treated by Plato in Parmenides. Adorno varied this motif in the critique of philosophy of origins, and identity thinking. Adorno turns against the identity thinking of European idealism. This states that the identification of spatio-temporal objects, and presumably also of persons forcibly equates these entities. His counter-programme is negative dialectics. (Adorno 1966) Adorno epistemologically assumes the primacy of the object, which is not subjectively given by its appearance from him (consciousness contents, sense impressions, and views). The object consciousness is also not determined by actions (operations), and their result. These problems are not to be further elaborated in this text. They are not really worth the

33 Horkheimer, Adorno (1951), p. 13. The run-up stage of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is Hegel's critique of the Enlightenment in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. It is worth noting, in Weber's disenchantment thesis, that it is often presented in a one-sided way. Schluchter has pointed this out. Disenchantment does not only concern the repression of myths, and magic, but as the disenchantment of the administration of the sacraments by Catholic priests, disenchantment belongs to the antecedent conditions of ascetic Protestantism. It should be emphasized that only with Kosellek (1973) there is a progress in the socio-historical classification, especially of the French Enlightenment.

34 Haag was a student of Horkheimer. He was habilitated on *Recent Ontology* at the philosophical faculty of Goethe University in 1956. His reinterpretation of Horkheimer's materialism has not experienced philosophical resonance. It has certainly taken an independent position. Haag (2005).

32 This was the result of Schnädelbach's seminar on Weber's demand for value freedom in the summer semester of 1975. It is always noticeable that massive psychological defense mechanisms can be observed against this insight.

trouble, since one does not come to the end with the corrections, but at least obvious objections should be mentioned.

Let us start with the identity problem. Horkheimer, Adorno, Haag, and Alfred Schmidt do not distinguish between a numerical, qualitative, and Leibniz identity (*principium identitatis indiscernibilium*). Frege's concept of identity, and the distinction between sense, as the way of being given, and reference (*Frege-Bedeutung*), as the reference of an expression to an object, were unknown to them.

They are denied access to Quine's problem reference of the ontological standard. "Quine has quipped 'No entity without identity'" (Quine 1953) in support of the Fregean Thesis that we ought not to countenance entities unless we are prepared to make sense of sentences affirming, and denying identity of such entities. Notwithstanding, more obvious still is the motto, 'No identity without an entity', and its linguistic counterpart, 'No statement of identity without singular terms' and "Without identity, no entity" (Davidson 1980, p. 164). Accordingly, no cognition is possible without identity thinking, and its realization with its linguistic counterpart. Adorno's critique of identity thinking reaches into the void, and is not comprehensible.

The problematic aspect of Adorno's assertion of the primacy of the object is that talk of *object* presupposes the individuation of identity statements. Object (*Gegenstand*) is not an expression of classification (Tugendhat, Kamlah / Lorenzen 1967, pp. 39-44, object is not a predicator). With *x is an object*, we do not classify an entity. What then are we talking about? We recognize from this that, in philosophy, we are (also) confronted with different ways of thinking for which there is no *experimentum crucis*. Under certain circumstances, they reach into the sciences.

In having a benevolent attitude, however, we can meet Adorno's critique of original thought in one step. The reader will be surprised by this. If we consider the observation of an observer's distinctions that he exposes to observation in epistemology, then we are not asking questions of origin. The distinction between principium, and principiatum (origin/ground as the ground of being, and the originated) is the distinction of an observer, and nothing original. In this respect, we observe observers, and do not trace any happening of being. The problem reference is thereby the dissolution of the blockage by the observation of observers. We can leave that aside for the present problem pursuit. It also leads us to the knowledge-sociological question of "semantics, and social structure" (Luhmann 1993).

This comparison will be rejected by Adorno's followers, and the actualizers of critical theory as not fair or misguided. This is informative in that we can see from it that the chances of understanding between the critics, and the *Adornites*, as those who were enlightened by Adorno's texts were called, are not great.

3. *Aesthetics*. We do not need to pursue the list of Adorno, and Horkheimer's deficits further to exemplify them. Adorno's assertion, that, from the dominion over nature, it

follows the dominion over human beings; his epistemology of the non-identical, and the accompanying critique of classificatory thinking; his music theory, and sociology of music that admits only the Viennese School as the only way to modern music; and his complete lack of interest in jazz as "a timeless fashion" (Adorno 1992). This includes that he classifies "the jazz subject" as determined by a "castration ritual" using the example of playing the drums (Adorno 1992). We should not assume that Adorno was familiar with the reshuffling of jazz after the 1930s. Presumably his understanding of jazz was oriented towards the big bands of the 1930s. After 1945, however, their 'big time' was over.

By giving primacy to the Viennese School, Adorno closes off a largely unprejudiced approach to Bartok, and Hindemith. According to oral testimony, Bruckner also had access problems, and was a borderline case. Adorno withheld a harsh negative judgment with regard to Bruckner, as he did with regard to Bartok, and Hindemith, in written, and public communication. Presumably this was done with the strategic intention of not exposing himself to criticism.

Bruckner was not his cup of tea, as Adorno let slip in personal dealings. He occasionally said, about him, "a religious man, and musician" (personal communication). In doing so, he somewhat contorted his face as a comment. Bruckner was very religious, and had a great inferiority complex. He dedicated his ninth symphony "to the dear God" ("dem lieben Gott").

The author was not of this persuasion, since he considers Bruckner's Adagios to be perfect. It was not by chance that Bruckner became world-famous with the Adagio of the 7th symphony. The author does not wish to comment further on the problems of music theory/philosophy, and music sociology dealt with by Adorno, also on compositional technique, since he has concluded the subject in Adorno's intellectual biography.

It should be mentioned that, for Adorno, there was not only "the call of terror" (*Ruf des Schreckens*), in the history of music in modern times, there is a continuation in the Viennese School (Schönberg, Berg). His interpretation of one of Mahler's compositions has not been accepted by the Mahler Society, founded in 1955, since Adorno tends to classify Mahler as a precursor to "new music" (Adorno 1960). The 1920s were no longer innovative from Adorno's point of view. That is certainly not quite right either.

Adorno omits too much from the 1920s, also in what concerns literature, and painting. Notwithstanding, he correctly recognized that the New Music was becoming outdated in terms of social history. After the Second World War, the situation was quite different at the meetings of the Darmstadt Music Days, in which Adorno participated.

Adorno was not able to assimilate the shift that began in the 1950s. He had no access to Cage as an aesthetic medium of postmodernism, and its deconstructive ontology. In this context, we can disregard abstract expressionism, and pop art altogether. There is no need to go into this further, since, from our present point of view, the situation is once again quite different.

Of the conceptual strategy of Adorno's aesthetics, it should still be noted that he uses the basic concept of "the state of the material" (Adorno 1970) to systematize progress in art. From the beginning of his acquaintanceship with Adorno's approach, the author considered this conceptualization to be rather unfortunate. Can the compositional principles of the fugue be classified as material? The editors of the lecture on aesthetics in the winter semester 1967, and summer semester 1968 "Aesthetic Theory", are also not entirely successful (Adorno 1970 b). It is a stop gap for placing a mark in aesthetics. Presumably, Adorno would not have chosen this title. The choice of title is presumably motivated by the fact that Adorno is taking a general approach that applies not only to music, but also to visual art, and literature. However, one can also have justified doubts as to whether the enterprise *aesthetics* has been a promising project, from its start, in the 18th century.

Adorno's aesthetics contained no adequate knowledge of the art-philosophy of German Idealism, so of Jena's Romanticism, so Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, and Schelling's. The first "System Fragment of German Idealism" (Hegel, Hölderlin, Fichte 1797) must have been unknown to him. If he had had the relevant knowledge, he would not have written his aesthetics in the way he did.³⁵

On the whole, it should be noted that Adorno did not develop a systematic philosophy, and sociology. In this respect, he falls behind Leopold von Wiese in German sociology.³⁶ We find, in his writings, different strands of thought that are more or less considered interesting in the succession. Adorno also assumes that the work of art is a monad, and that every work of art has a claim to absoluteness. However, in the lacks, there is a worked through monadology.

It is also worth mentioning that Adorno did not have access to modern aesthetics, so also to decadent aesthetics, surrealism, abstract expressionism, and pop art. There is no known indication, in the secondary literature on Adorno, that there is any common ground with Jünger in matters of aesthetics. Adorno commented on Jünger in this way "The dog thinks my thoughts" (personal communication). That is quite astonishing.

There is one more point to be made about Adorno's attitude to art that is not mentioned in the secondary literature. Adorno characterized himself in personal communications,

35 The followers of Adorno's texts on aesthetics are advised to confront the aesthetics of Mann's *Doktor Faustus* (1967). The motifs of the dialectic of enlightenment can already be found in Mann's (1924), and Jaspers' (1931) discourse. This is true regardless of the particular problem Mann's literature carries. Bohrer (1978) is recommended as a contrast in terms of aesthetics. A serious interpretation is that the problem reference of the turn to universal poetry, philosophy of art, history, and nature in German Idealism is motivated by the "impotence of transcendental reason" and its disempowerment, Marquard (1963).

36 We recognize this, without being great experts on sociological theory after the 1950s, from the relevant publications of the Institute for Social Research. For example, Adorno, Horkheimer (1956b), and Von Wiese (1933). It should be mentioned that von Wiese also lectured at Goethe University after the establishment of the sociology program there.

and also in lectures in such a way that, although he turned to philosophy as a specialized science—whatever he took it to mean—and sociology as a social science, he was actually an "artist" (personal communication). This is informative in that we can see, from it, that, even from a perspective aligned with the 1960s', he had an antiquated concept for artist.

One could describe that, in a variation of Thomas Mann's "Tonio Kröger" (1973/1903), in this way, 'to the scientist I am an artist, and to the artist I am a scientist'. Thomas Mann related this to the citizen-artist problem. If we take the sociology of art of Prague's structuralism seriously, we also distance ourselves from a genial concept of the artist.

Adorno would have had a hard time with such approaches, despite their sociologically oriented field theory. This is probably also related to his concept of art. For him, the work of art is something "emergent" (Adorno 1970), and not only brings to light a non-reified society, but the inconsistencies that can be analyzed in it refers to the social conflicts, and the ongoing deformation of the members of social systems by the principle of exchange. Adorno always spoke out against Benjamin's reproducibility thesis. It should also be noted that Adorno's own compositions are imitations of Schönberg, which one does not need to hear.³⁷

4. *Theory of society.* Those who listened to Adorno's lectures - and this generation is starting to die out - are familiar with the sentence "That is societal mediated". This was a kind of magic formula, and the phrase registered a history among his followers, and was also heard at parties with academics (philosophers, sociologists, Germanists, and Anglicists). It should be noted that it belongs to the misleading sentences. Adorno has no really sustainable concept of society, and no theory of society.

A theory of society was first designed by Luhmann. Membership theory, and membership sociology has a meagre societal theory, but it accepts the sociological concept of the membership order on the actual state of the research program (for the sociology of membership, Preyer (2018b)). In German sociology, there is also a theory of society which is based on empirical research, and systematization in Richard Münch's work.

Habermas has been calling for a societal theory since the 1970s, but the author is rather not inclined to characterize his theory of communicative action as a societal theory. In it, there is no reference to the societal system (*Gesellschaftssystem*) as a type of a social membership order. The analysis of the problem reference falls into the theory of evolution (for the problem definitions of the societal theory, Münch (2004), to Habermas, Preyer (2018c).

37 For a critique of Adorno's claim, that montage is the microstructure typical of all post-impressionist art, Imdahl (1996), pp. 447-451. Imdahl's investigations into image theory, and his individual interpretations are unfortunately no longer familiar.

There is a fundamental problem in aesthetics, and art theory, that the self-description of artists, and writers is always taken as a starting point. This can lead astray. There is an innovation among German art theorists in Prange's (2005) analysis of the iconoclastic picture in Mondrian, as she distinguishes his self-description from the analysis of his images. This should be confronted.

Adorno claims a societal theory that is dialectical. It is a running gag in sociological theory that he explains it in terms of the Marxist distinction between relations of production, and productive forces (Adorno 1970 a, pp. 149-166). Thus, he claims that against a subjective sociology, and the systematization of the social structure by the social stratification of the academic sociology, that is, for him, society is something objective, and he did not deal with the sociological stratification theory also in the German version of Geiger.

If Adorno had not had such a troubled relationship with Durkheim, and Weber, he could have referred to Durkheim in this epistemological claim. Weber's understanding of sociology would certainly not contain a claim on social orders being subjective either. In the main philosophical seminar in which Adorno treated *Negative Dialectics* (1966) for two semesters, the already-graduated sociologist Werner Kriesel gave a paper on the chapter "Third Part II World Spirit, and Natural History Excursus on Hegel" ("Weltgeist und Naturgeschichte Exkurs zu Hegel"), in which he interpreted Durkheimian. He compared Hegel's objective spirit with Durkheim's social fact. This is quite an instructive interpretation, but it is not published as a text. In one session, Horkheimer was also present. Adorno, and Horkheimer rejected this interpretation, not exactly unkindly, presumably since they knew the speaker, and he was also a short-term staff member at the Institute for Social Research (*Institute for Sozialforschung*), but nevertheless consistently. Overall, it can be seen, from what Adorno understood by a societal theory that is dialectical, that he had no access to the problems, and research programs of sociological theory in the United States of America (Preyer 2011, pp. 15-22). Therefore, his often prayerful repetition of Marxist class theory proves to be more of a helplessness, and no insight into the social structure of post war Western society.

However, one can pursue a societal-theoretical problem reference, but not introduce one's own sociological theory as a societal theory. Münch points this out through the example involving Merton. The talk on "mediated by society", which was spread by the Adonites, is also misleading because the environment of social systems as membership systems is not society-mediated at the general level of analysis, and the general theory of membership-determined social systems is to be introduced before the societal theory. However, this does not exclude different self-descriptions of the system-environment relation from the perspective of social-structural semantics (Luhmann 1993). This does not need to be elaborated further in our context.

The assertion, "There is no theory of society ... that does not include political interests" (Horkheimer 1968, p. 171), is simply wrong. In this regard, the theory of society is interest-neutral but not theory-neutral about the notion of social integration as a central research program of sociological theory. Such a claim must also be rejected with respect to philosophy, and other disciplines.

Schnädelbach has correctly spoken of "Frankfurt sociologism", and argued that the critique of the

epistemology of mentalist reflection philosophy does not necessarily end in society (personal communication). It could also end at consciousness, and the analysis of its structure.

Horkheimer, and Adorno were dilettantes in philosophy, and sociology. The following applies, one may be a dilettante, but then one should be ingenious (Schlegel, ingenious dilettantism). Whether both were geniuses should be decided by their followers.

9. To the Good End

1. *Frankfurt am Main, and Heidelberg*. There is something else to be pointed out that is informative for the assessment of Adorno's reputation, and it relates to the other philosophical university teachings, those from the Goethe University. If someone from America, Asia, or Europe intended to study the philosophies of German Idealism, they would not go to Frankfurt a. M. They would study with Henrich in Heidelberg, and, after this Heidelberg period, in Munich, they would also confront the criticisms of German Idealism by Tugendhat.³⁸

This is also worth mentioning because the talks on a Heidelberg School make sense, but not the talks on a Frankfurt School. In the matter of the Heidelberg School, there is a research program that has been continued, and reinterpreted from the 1960s to contemporary philosophy by Manfred Frank, and, among others, Stefan Lang (2020 a, b).

This has experienced a resonance in the philosophy of the mental, also among American colleagues, reaching into sociology, and psychiatry. Thereby the reference problem of the analysis of pre-reflective consciousness is present, and the recognition of regress, and circularity in the philosophy of consciousness (Fichte 1797, pp.14-25). Meanwhile, this tradition is considerably elaborated, and branches out through American colleagues (Borner, Frank, and Williford 2018; Miguens, Preyer, Bravo 2016).

This cannot be presented in this way with respect to an imagined Frankfurt School. Schnädelbach (2010) has also denied that there was such a thing. In his view, there were professors of philosophy, and sociology at the Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main around whom students were grouped. Notwithstanding, there was also no research program involving dissertations. The dissertations written under the supervision of Adorno copy his thinking. Anyone can convince themselves of this without much effort. It is obvious that there was no scientific research program of Horkheimer, and Adorno that was continued over several generations of scholars, as it was with the Prague structuralism, the generative grammar theory of Chomsky, the systems theory of Parsons, or even the systems theory of Luhmann, to which one could still rather attribute the

³⁸ On the Heidelberg School, Borner, Frank, and Williford (2018), Frank (2018), pp. 36-78 (offering a critique of the higher order monitoring approach and self-representationalism).

academic school status.

It should also be mentioned that, after the *Eclipse of Reason* (1947), Horkheimer did not publish anything sociologically or philosophically relevant that confronted the philosophy, and sociology of the time. This is not meant as a reproach or a criticism, but we can observe this again, and again as the age of the university lecturers increases. The exceptions confirm the rule in this regard. For example, Henrich, at the age of ninety-three, publishes a second edition of *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* with an addition to Fichte's so-called "original insight".³⁹ It is also worth mentioning Habermas, who, at the age of ninety, presented the two-volume *Auch eine Geschichte der Philosophie* (2019; see author's review 2020).

Horkheimer's social-philosophical wisdoms, on the other hand, consist in statements such as "The more equality, the less freedom; the more freedom, the less equality" (Horkheimer television interview 1969). This can only be classified as half-baked. Moreover, the old Horkheimer tended towards pomposity. In Haag's proseminar, in which he occasionally participated, he claims, "We conduct an experiment, and wait for the effect, that is positivism." What else to comment on this! It is not a spectacular insight in terms of scientific theory that scientific theories are tested in experiments. Of course, this is no armchair thinking. Whether there is an *experimentum crucis*, we can leave undecided. Moreover, one should keep in mind that, since the second half of the 19th century, *theory* has taken precedence in the natural sciences.

2. *Again in Frankfurt am Main.* After his return from the United States of America in 1949, Horkheimer was one of the Frankfurt's academic dignitaries. He was a welcome guest at *Frankfurt's Römer* (Mayor's Office) with the Mayor Walter Kolb (1902-1956, Mayor from 1945 to 1956), he was awarded the Goethe Plaque of the City of Frankfurt in 1952, and the Honorary Citizenship of the City of Frankfurt am Main in 1960; he was rector of the Goethe University from 1951 to 1953, and, in these positions, with their prestige, and the exercise of their roles, he certainly promoted the development of the Goethe University in the 1950s. This will be accorded lasting merit in the history of the Goethe University.

Notwithstanding, the author does not feel called upon to assess this, and it is a subject for the historiography of the Goethe University. It should also be mentioned that the claim, widespread to the present day, that Horkheimer, and Adorno would have been without a political influence at the Goethe University, is certainly not accurate. Horkheimer, and Adorno favoured the 1959 appointment of Bruno Liebrucks, who was a member of the Nazi Party, and Adorno successfully engaged in preventing the appointment of Golo

Mann to the Goethe University. That is said *prima facie*.

3. *Immanent-transcendent criticism, genesis, and validity.* Astrophysicists report that, when an entity disappears in a black hole, a tremendous explosion occurs. It occasionally causes resonance in the environment. Is there resonance in Adorno's theories? The answer to that is yes. There are two problems that colleagues repeatedly raise, and that they consider worth mentioning in matters of Adorno. These are the distinction between immanent, and transcendent critique, and between genesis, and validity.

Immanent critique means immanent contradictions in a work of art or text, which refer to its background, being analyzed in terms of societal theory. A transcendent critique means a critique that is conducted from an external point of view. For example, the disaster of Adorno's texts consists in the fact that he did not participate in any course in elementary logic. The problem reference highlighted by Adorno is that the consequential problem of immanent critique is that immanent critique also presupposes a transcendent standpoint. In art criticism, this would be a societal theory. The relationship between the two ultimately remains unresolved in Adorno's texts.

Adorno emphasized that genesis, and validity are to be fundamentally distinguished. What is addressed here is the science-theoretical distinction between the discovery context, and the justification context. The question about the discovery context is, 'How did it come about?' In contrast, the justification question is 'What reasons are there for believing a claim to be true?'⁴⁰ Notwithstanding, even with respect to this question, which is worth working on, we do not get a clarifying analysis from Adorno. The problem reference is that the relation of discovery, and justification leads to the analysis of the relation between conclusion (infer), and argument (Salmon 1973, pp. 29-30). The analysis of argument as that of valid inference is not a matter of discovery, and thus of describing the discovery of anything.

4. *Seriousness, and fun.* Goffman has consistently argued that seriousness, and fun should not be mutually exclusive. So, something like *The Gay Science (Fröhliche Wissenschaft)*, not necessarily in Nietzsche's sense, is advisable. Let us distance ourselves from Nietzsche in this respect, and turn to the humour of Jean Paul. Horkheimer, and Adorno had no humour, and were really humourless. They had no access to the "logic of wit" (Gabriel 2013) as a research, and discovery strategy of the 18th century. To this end, an anecdote from the second half of the 1960s. "Cock-a-doodle-doo, meow, that's critical theory," people told each other among students in the second half of the 1960s. That's certainly a bit unkind.

The anecdote refers to the following event. In an advanced philosophy seminar in the early 1960s, Adorno, and Horkheimer were asked what mimesis was. In response,

39 Henrich (2019 a); to a work historical review and further systematisations, and a reinterpretation of Kant's concept of self-consciousness, Henrich (2019 b). On the Heidelberg School, Borner, Frank, and Williford (2018), Frank (2018), pp. 36-78; offering a critique of the higher order monitoring approach and self-representationalism).

40 On this problem, Salmon (1973), pp. 25-32. About a genetic fallacy, p. 28. Notwithstanding, we must mention that there is also a connection between the two. The logical rules can certainly not replace perspicacity, p. 31.

Horkheimer, and Adorno stood up. Horkheimer uttered, "Cock-a-doodle-doo, cock-a-doodle-doo", and Adorno answered, "Meow, meow." Part of the student generation of the second half of the 1960s laughed at this. The student generations that follow us have no obvious access to this joke. The author itself was too indifferent to the entertainment value of the anecdote to be motivated by it to do anything. In retrospect, it should be noted that anecdotes lose their plausibility in the succession of generations. In this sense, "Cock-a-doodle-doo, meow" I am the critical theory.

Two less entertaining anecdotes should also be mentioned. An evidence for the whole disaster of Horkheimer's, and Adorno's critique of positivism is a situation that appeared in Adorno's philosophical main seminar, which he always held on Thursdays between 6, and 8 pm.

The seminar was about Hegel's logic, mainly about a part of his *Begriffslogik* (logic of the concept). Kulenkampff objected to, Hegel's dialectization of the contradictory, contrary opposites that were false. No logician will deny this, and it can be well understood with our everyday intuitions without rising to the heights of. It is classical logic.⁴¹ Adorno could do nothing with this objection. He commented on Kulenkampff's criticism with a few ifs, and buts; his assistant at the time, Alfred Schmidt grimaced, and began to pontificate on Marx's dialectic of nature. The result was that the objection was passed over. The anecdote was still being handed down into the 1970s. The increasing distance from the source of the stimulus ran it to disappear the past, which was no longer accessible.

It would be interesting if a living insider collected the anecdotes about Horkheimer, Adorno, and their relationship to Alfred Schmidt. The author does not feel called to do so. The author puts aside the very unfriendly anecdotes circulating in the 1960s out of politeness. It is also not his style, and seems repulsive to him. One anecdote that sheds light on the situation of the philosophical seminar of the 1950s at the Goethe University with regard to Wolfgang Cramer, and Horkheimer is perhaps worth mentioning after all.

Wolfgang Cramer was not a full professor at the philosophical faculty, and his tenure was unclear. The following anecdote has survived. Cramer told Horkheimer that if he continued to harass him in this way, he would become a conductor on tram line 3. He would inform every student getting on and off at the *Bockenheimer Warte* university station what a nasty guy he was. This also sheds light on the glamour of critical theory. Horkheimer and Adorno also assured themselves -- somewhat ironically -- of Adorno's philosophy of the non-identical by harassing staff, and personnel, and often acted out their frustration towards them. Henrich was acquainted, perhaps even friends, with Wolfgang Cramer, and also habilitated one of Cramer's students. As is the case with complex personalities, Adorno

could also be very empathetic. From the author's side, there are no negative experiences at all. This is also true of Horkheimer.

5. *Merits.* The negative results of the author's confrontation with Horkheimer, and Adorno almost inevitably create motivation to ask whether there is not (also) something positive to be emphasized, and yes, there is such a thing. It is Adorno's special merit that, after his return from the United States of America, he immediately took up a front against Marxist aesthetics. In doing so, he also directed himself against the emigrants who had been courted by the SED, corrupt, and had taken posts in the SED regime.⁴² Heinrich Mann was unfortunately also susceptible in this regard because he accepted the invitation, and economic support from the SED. However, he died before his trip to East Berlin in 1949. It is certainly not a ponderous assumption that he would have disagreed with the SED dictator. After all, he would probably have left the DDR's sphere of rule quickly. Presumably, he would have gone to the "Federal Republic of Germany" (Bundesrepublik Deutschland, BRD) very quickly.

Adorno was no friend of the old Soviet Union. He characterized it as an "Asiatic despotism". (personal communication) With this characterization, he recognized something about its dictatorial membership order. The organization of its political system was not a modern state. It was a coercive order which overrode the other functional systems of economy, science, and kinship. It was not entirely accidental, and its collapse was a matter of time. This was predicted in the 1920s, but the war of the two "enemy brothers" of Nazism, and Bolshevism (Nolte 1997), and the victory of the Soviet Union, and the Western powers over National Socialism also stabilized the Soviet Union. It is not a ponderous consideration that the Soviet Union was stabilised in the Cold War through the accompanying confrontations before it collapsed in the 1980s.

From the author's point of view, Adorno was also not a politically engaged fellow citizen. His preference for aristocratic persons was well known in the university sphere, and he tended to communicate submissively to the representatives of higher social status functions. He was also not interested in university didactics. This contradicted his concept of academic freedom. This is quite independent of the fact that he gave many radio lectures, which were classified as socio-pedagogically narrow-minded.

In the end, Adorno was not interested in university politics either. It identified far too much with its academic full professor status. Nor was he a socialist, and he rejected utopias. He did speak of a "free society," but that was an imageless vision of something not to be imagined in any definite way. His is the statement, "The world is a prison of

41 On a justification of classical Logic, and the general application of the calculus of natural reasoning, Essler (2019). Essler's account is hard to dispute. Essler's approach is difficult to reject.

42 SED is the "Socialist Unity Party of Germany" (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands), which was the state party that founded the German Democratic Republic (Deutsche Demokratische Republik, DDR) in 1949. Sociologists speak of an SED society because the SED, as the state party, dominated the population in East Germany, which was subject to them.

pleasure, in which I prefer the solitary cell" (personal communication). This is worth mentioning because he thought of individual freedom, and self-determination as an aesthetic project, in which the autonomy of the individual is determined, and he comes to himself by immersing himself in Webern, Schoenberg, and Berg, the late piano concertos of Beethoven, almost dissolving his ego into what he hears. The life form of a topic of an aesthetic project, however, is something that is not so rare. This is also true for the aesthetic exploration of the world.

The merit of the rejection of Lukács' aesthetics, and of the work of all those who followed him, even in the Federal Republic of Germany, should be beyond any doubt. In this regard, Adorno was also not willing to make any compromises. He even sought active confrontation. Adorno commented on Lukács' *Zerstörung der Vernunft* (1954) through the statement, "Lukács thereby destroyed his own reason." This did not establish friendships on the side of the SED-theorists, and the socialist-minded citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany. All in all, Adorno was a counter-position to the sterile Marxism of the 1950s, but he did not represent a theoretical program with a political claim. He tended towards theoretical radicalism, but he himself can rather be classified as apolitical. He certainly felt comfortable in his status position and role as a German professor and had no experiences of alienation.

6. *Outlook.* One should credit Horkheimer, and Adorno for the research strategy that means philosophy, and sociology walk together. Notwithstanding, for sociologists, this also concerns the cooperation with academics from other disciplines. For example, economics, jurisprudence, and ethology. This is also present in the traditions of Durkheim, and Parsons.⁴³

To note something positive, worth mentioning, there is Adorno's often repeated sentence, "Only by forging one becomes a blacksmith" (personal communication). Notwithstanding, the author leaves no doubt, he has no sympathy for the terror of the street in the matter of Adorno's rejection of anti-intellectualism, and the "fury of disappearance" (Hegel 1807) of the student movement of the second half of the 1960s. Adorno, Habermas, and other university lecturers were affected by it.

With regard to these protests, Adorno's sentences, "No fear of the ivory tower", and "No shepherd, and a flock" have become well-known (personal communication). Adorno himself, however, did not pursue any serious higher education policy interest. Readers who are familiar with the so-called critical theory in the broadest sense will find the account very unkind, but we must remember, as Schnädelbach also has pointed out, that Adorno "was not petty in dishing it out" (personal communication). In this respect, whoever deals out also has something to take.

It is still necessary to point out a difference between

Horkheimer, and Adorno that has left no trace in the secondary literature. In the two seminars on *Negative Dialektik* (1966) that Adorno held, Adorno, and Horkheimer could not agree on the concepts of repression, and sublimation. According to Adorno, culture is the result of the repression of drives (Freud). In this regard, Adorno has an almost sexual-anarchist approach. He denies that there is such a thing as sublimation of drives, whereby the drive impulses experience a different quality. Both could not converge with regard to the problem reference *repression versus sublimation*. It should also be mentioned that Adorno, unlike Horkheimer, was not responsive to religious attitudes. Adorno was entirely on the side of the lumen natural, and inclined toward a traditional critique of religion in the style of Feuerbach, Marx, and Freud. For Freud, religion is a collective neurosis. He would classify a sociology of religion as an ideology. This is informative in that it is also evidence of the fractures present in Adorno, and Horkheimer's theories.

Horkheimer, and Adorno did not have access to the results of the discussion on problem references of the Vienna Circle, and they did not adequately deal with the debate on protocol sentences. Not to mention Carnap's semantics. They did not have access to the "constitution problem" (Carnap 1961, p. 28) of object consciousness treated there (Ayer 1936, Carnap 1961, and Russell 1950). It is also almost trivial that actions presuppose object consciousness, intentionality, and thought. In this respect, the still widespread talk of praxis in philosophy, and sociology is hollow, and meaningless.⁴⁴ That, in this tradition, no thought was given to the logical form of action, and their ontology is not surprising.

It should be noted, *last at all*, that Adorno also addressed an elitist need of some of his readers. Through reading his writings, one experiences oneself as belonging to the elite of the initiated vis-à-vis the masses, who were addicted to the culture industry, and the inauthentic as well. A sketchy review of German sociology, and philosophy have a special importance, as it orientates especially the non-German readers, on philosophy, and sociology in Germany since the 1950s. There are always very one-sided accounts of this, which are guided by certain philosophical standpoints. It should become clear that it is not possible to speak of a single mainstream in German philosophy, and sociology. In the view of contemporary philosophy, and sociology, one should assume a differentiation of approaches, and research programmes that can no longer be classified from a national standpoint. As far as sociology at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main is concerned, it cannot be repeated often enough that there has been a sociology at this university since 1919, but there is no "Frankfurt sociology". The supporters of what is left of critical theory might have us

43 This tradition can no longer be renewed. In this, we must agree. We need a completely different approach to this problem reference. On this, Preyer (2018a), pp. 81-86.

44 The members of the working group mentioned in Acknowledgements became increasingly aware of this, and it had an orienting effect on their epistemological studies. In retrospect, we observe again, and again that, from generation to generation, much is lost. In this respect, Hegel is to be supported, that one cannot learn anything from history, since, in his idiom, "the spirit always starts again from the beginning" (Hegel 1807).

believe this, but it is rhetoric that falls flat.

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1. Academic background, 2. Encouragement

1. *Academic background.* During the winter semester of 1976-77, the author was an academic tutor for Herbert Schnädelbach's seminar on the Dialectic of Enlightenment at the Institute of Philosophy at the Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main. He held a study group on Horkheimer's, Eclipse of Reason 1947. The hard core of the Horkheimer's critique presented here was formed by this working group. Several texts were produced on it, which pursued the problematic in different directions. The names of the participants are no longer in the author's memory. In this respect, the author can no longer thank them personally. Any member of that group would be able to make this presentation. In this respect, the author sees himself in this text more as a mouthpiece of this group than as an individual author. The tutorial based its studies on the problem reference of Schnädelbach's (1971) analysis of the different basic theory of what in academic parlance has been called positivism.

2. *Encouragement.* Manfred Frank (e-mail, 18.10.2020) agreed with the presented criticism of Horkheimer's, and Adorno's understanding of positivism. From his point of view, both lack "analytical expertise". One can casually agree with this. The author's colleagues, Professor Gerhard Wagner, and Professor Klaus Lichtblau, also encouraged the author to write down the text. Michael Rzepka has promoted the final version of the text with critical comments. During the final review, the exchange with Doctor Mathias Eichhorn led to the conclusion that Horkheimer, and Adorno not only lacked a factually adequate approach to the modern economy, and its institutional order, but they also lacked a concept of the political orders. Horkheimer, and Adorno have no theoretical access to the "ordering powers" (*Ordnungsmächte*) (Max Weber) of social communication of the members of social systems. One can also agree with this without compulsion. This explains Horkheimer, and Adorno's theoretical helplessness in the face of the modern fundamentalism of national socialism, fascism, and Bolshevism. Doctor Georg Peter, and Doctor Reuss-Markus Krausse have indirectly provided motivation to the author through their sympathetic communication, advising the author to "stay on the ball" on the subject, football-wise speaking.

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