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Critical theory and its controversies

Abstract. *The essay explicates the debates within the Critical School, including the major controversy between Habermas and Gadamer. While the debates are within the “inner circle” of this school, external questions enter concerning the status of sciences, technology, life world, values, language and the possibility of reflective emancipation. Thus, the question of scientific “neutrality” becomes relevant with respect to objective rationality, resulting in a debate whether reason is in a position to justify itself without becoming circular. The critical part of the essay consists of the demonstration that reflective reason offers another level of discursive practice, capable of adjudicating the issues in terms of primacy of experience – in a broadest sense of the term.*

Key words: *critical theory, Habermas, Gadamer, the Project of Enlightenment.*

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: *kritinė teorija, Habermas, Gadameris, Apšvietos projektas.*

Introduction

The vast and complex trend of the “Critical School” contains a variety of thinkers and their challenges not only to the “Project of Enlightenment”, but also to each other’s diverse positions. In addition, their involvement with the controversies that include Hegel, Marx, and their social/economic, liberation theories and technological progress, provide ample materials that can only be managed by deciphering the principles and limits on which they stand. This means that the essay will not depend so much on specific citations from specific texts (although the latter will be referred to), but mainly on the issues that the members of this school face. It is also the case that while the earlier members of this school, such as Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Benja-

min – and even Fromm – comprise efforts to overcome philosophy in favor of sociology and even psychology, Habermas will be the main focus, since his writings address all the issues confronting those earlier thinkers and also broader concerns relevant to challenges of phenomenology and even hermeneutics. The latter will be discussed in the context of the so called “hermeneutical debate” between Habermas and Gadamer. It is unavoidable to intertwine phenomenology in the controversies since arguments against transcendental awareness make its presence unavoidable; according to Apel, the condition for theoretical contestations is in fact transcendental argumentation. It is relevant to mention that the question of “life world” is preeminently relevant, since the trend toward

social theory and its unavoidable “socialization” of all explanations, leads to the positing of many life worlds. Indeed, he has participated in the debate with critical school precisely on the question of multiple life worlds and “to whom” such life worlds are given. While attempting to maintain rationality, all members of the critical school, including Habermas, keep appealing for some ground of reason, for some “practical conditions” that would legitimate its presence. This “ground” is deemed to be essential, because reason itself cannot be justified by reason. It is also the case that European philosophies have shifted their focus on all sorts of psychologizations and culturalisms, leaving no room for philosophical debates of the composition of the world. This is to say, the classical quest to understand the principles of reality has been replaced by human concerns about humans. It is also significant that Habermas is still engaged in European controversies concerning the question of EU constitution, similar to that of the United States. It is the task of this essay to push the various debates of the critical theory proponents to their limit and note their own breaking points.

Beginnings

Among the numerous efforts to offer a critique of philosophical reason and phenomenology, the critical school, inclusive of Horkheimer, Adorno, and Habermas, has led the way. Some indications of this critique should lend themselves to the interpretation of a general trend that has been prevalent since Vico, although in a more pronounced way since the nineteenth century: history as “made.” Yet the

critical school, beginning with Horkheimer and Adorno, wants to decipher the making of history scientifically. What is peculiar about the modern scientific theory is the notion of “application” of hypotheses and theories to the natural and historical processes for “prognosis, control, and management.” The controlling function of a scientific theory betrays its origin: it is a function of practical process of reproduction through which the human increases his mastery and control of the environment and history. This is the implicit conception of history in which the human, through his control of the environment, increases his self-liberation from the material threats and insecurities. Moreover, any scientific theory, which would want to claim purity, must realize that whatever objects it encounters, it finds them to have been mediated by work. Science in its traditional form, was blind to this side of history. In addition, Horkheimer and Adorno claim that the historical actors were not cognizant of their own achievements as producers of objectivity and controllers of nature. If a science claims that its source is the theorizing subject, the theory of history as made is at base social. This social-laboring process is accordingly engaged in the progressive controls and incrementations of power against nature: emancipatory progress. At the same time, this *praxis* of history constitutes a critique of scientific theories and their presumption of “pure objectivity.” Such *praxis* implies that any claim to philosophical exclusion from the practical world is untenable and any theory, worthy of its name, is the one that is designed not to interpret, but to change the world.

Yet precisely at this point that Adorno's and Horkheimer's critique lends itself to an ambiguity. How can they determine the social interconnections of praxis if their access to historical processes and social praxis becomes reduced to the activity of work alone? Their critical theory and the theory of praxis seem to rest on a much broader historical sense of civilizational process containing such notions that thinking is a means for the mastery of nature. Thus in the critical theory there seems to appear a moment of "knowledge" which goes beyond the limits of practical activity. This theory suggests that the process of praxis has a tendency toward maintenance, increase, and unfolding of human life toward some goal. The consciousness of this immanent direction of development seems to be the critical theory itself. This is to say, there is the assumption that the entire history is a process of increasing mastery of nature; hence each moment in this process, which does not allow a total mastery, is a break on human freedom, and indeed an imposition on the individual's rights to full self-realization. What we have is an effort to equate the instrumental reason with historical rationality in a way that the reason of history step by step leads to increasing "emancipation" till a final emancipation would be achieved with a total power of man to control all events – inner and outer. The resultant society is seen by Horkheimer and Adorno (2002) to be the organization of human labor in accordance with such power.

Within this framework, the critical theory must regard itself as a reflective continuation of instrumental rationality, without the ability to offer a critical analysis of such rationality. The

latter is already power laden, i.e. its purpose is a continuation of the mastery of the world by demonstrating to what extent there is a lack of total mastery. The scientific perfectibility of power over nature does not lead, by itself, to a "rational decision" that would be capable of subsuming the emancipatory potential of productive powers under conscious rule of the producers. In order to avoid this problematic, one has to offer something that is not a component of the evolution of the praxis process. Adorno and Horkheimer (2002) offer a pre-scientific notion of a "critical relation" that cannot be equated with pragmatic action. It is a position which takes society as such to be an object of criticism. What is meant here is not an extension of practical activities for the improvement of controlling powers or functions with respect to some aim, but a criterion to evaluate the total social fabric. Yet this "relationship" cannot emerge from the sphere of instrumental rationality; its source must be sought elsewhere which the theorists cannot offer.

The power of emancipation seems to rest on a self-conscious recognition of repressions. The recognition opens a reflection with broader horizons than those of direct praxis; it can include the entire socio-political sphere with various interconnections that would escape the level of awareness tied solely to praxis. This is the problematic already inherent in dialectical thought of the nineteenth century concerning power and alienation. The deterministic dialectic that ties a person to material conditions of practical activity cannot explain why such restriction would lead to alienation or even awareness of oppression. The material power,

inclusive of ideological manipulations, make the person into what he is, hence leaving no leeway for alienation from something. Either one extends the notion of praxis to include more than material interests and powers, or one will have mechanistic dialectic without anyone being alienated. The praxis has to include a minimal reflexivity from the political side in a twofold way: first, the pervasive reflexivity of modernity that has abolished masters and slaves through the democratic revolution, insists that the rulers have no legitimation. The general consciousness of liberation of all peoples cannot be thwarted. All contemporary reflection functions on the backdrop of this revolution and thus threatens any power with a revolution. Second, the only legitimation of political power is the maintenance of human freedoms and rights; otherwise the powers are to be regarded as pure force, oppression, and violation. If the latter appears in a modern society, alienation becomes inevitable on the grounds of revolutionary reflexivity. Any oppression is recognized as illegitimate.

While counter arguments might be offered to show that the use of power by a social elite, such as a political technocracy, is justifiable on the grounds that it constitutes a best manner of fulfilling the wants and needs of a population, the argument is "too late." The populations are aware of the difference in social standing between the elites and the rest of the members of society, a difference that is not warranted in light of modern consciousness of the democratic revolution. It is possible, in fact, to argue in the opposite direction. If the inequalities and lack of freedoms are maintained by elites having social power translated into the political arena,

then the populations will no longer be overly keen in following the law. The law that serves private interests of a group, whether the latter are capitalists or some political technocrats, is no law, and the populations can easily see through the facade of such a law. They will disregard the law and accept the fact that all functions are power functions. Thus violence will become acceptable as a *de facto* law if it leads to satisfaction of interests. The result: disrespect for the freely established law, and the reduction of the public domain to social competition for power. The law ceases to be rationally justifiable. Horkheimer and Adorno suggest that the very thought that human awareness is restricted to mere survival, is a key to the dissolution of reason. The monopolization of economic decisions in planned economy of capitalism, and the centralization of all decisions in social technocracies have limited the horizons of the individual to such an extent that the individual is no longer capable of establishing any normative order. The very purposive rationality, with its instrumental tendency to master everything, has subsumed the individual under its sway of power. The latter is expressed in gigantic enterprises that constitute the power of decision over the individual, and sets the standard of behavior. The human has become a sacrifice to the realization of his own instrumental rationality. The new, the fascistic order, is reason in which reason itself reveals its own irrationality. The revelation includes the irrational base of human behavior and thus constitutes the fragmentation of personality. For Horkheimer and Adorno the Russian social technocracy, the mid-European fascisms, the centralized and planned

capitalisms are different variants of the same historical process toward total domination and power. Power for the sake of power, employing instrumental rationality for the attainment of increased power, is the irrational base. This is to say, instrumental rationality as a means does not provide, by itself, any rational basis. It is simply means that can be employed by anyone in the irrational struggle for power.

For critical theorists, Marxism failed: while attempting to overcome philosophy by establishing a scientific criticism of all thought as an expression of material interests, it was left without any criterion for the purpose of life and history. In contrast, for Horkheimer and Adorno, the overcoming of scientism became a precondition for reclaiming theory as critical. This is to say, when philosophical horizon of freedom was replaced by “materialistic idealism”, it became the main antagonist of critical thinking. This means that the “critique of instrumental reason” comprised the fundamental trend of critical theory. This is the contradiction between political and scientific enlightenments: the proclaimed efforts to create a human society by complete mastery of the environment through scientific technology, had to abolish the very subject of liberation. After all, political consciousness of autonomy had to be reified and reduced to quantifiable sum of discrete parts. Of course for Horkheimer and Adorno there had to be a rejection of “merely formal” rationality of autonomy and an ideology of progress with its instrumental rationality. The latter, in contrast to reason, is a tacit mode of exercising power. Such power is tacit since the modern atomistic ontology and mathematical

metaphysics, comprising the ground for scientific technological growth, is also the ground and pervasive mode of social life deemed to be rational organization of the entire life world. Given this context, this prevailing mode of “rationality” cannot offer any liberating reason, since any liberating would be an offer for more instrumental solutions and increasing reification and fragmentation of human entity. While Horkheimer and Adorno reject the notion that instrumental reason is the sole focus of social epistemological interest, they do not see how such an interest can be stopped in its global form as the contemporary historical totality of all life worlds.

It is also the case that if philosophy is deemed to be ideological – in the sense of a reflection of interests then, if it is to be an idea of reason, it can only be coextensive with liberated society which is free from ideological distortions. In other words, if ideology distorts perception, then there must be present an undistorted or privileged perception; but the latter must posit reason, philosophy, that transcends ideology. To identify ideologies as distortions, one must not be subject to them. Philosophically speaking, any critique of ideology must be distinguished from a relativistic sociology of knowledge that is the inevitable purview of any sociologization of philosophy. The issue that Horkheimer and Adorno cannot solve is the rejection of philosophy as “purely formal”, and an inability to find anything else apart from ideologies. The claim that there is a universal distortion turns back upon the critique itself. But this leads Adorno and Horkheimer to abandon any positive theory and accept “nega-

tive dialectics". This conclusion is inevitable if philosophy is deemed to be ideology and thus requires a critique by philosophy – but the latter is no longer available. Thus, any critique of instrumental reason of modern West must remain negative or, to speak phenomenologically, consciousness cannot have any positive content. Adorno did his level best to exclude any positive content in his critique of enlightenment. In terms of Habermas' understanding, such a critique cannot escape the question as to how a critique is possible only negatively by pointing to ideological distortions without itself becoming a distortion? This claim is based on the transcendental principle of self-inclusion which, according to Seebohm, only phenomenology can practice. The task that has to be undertaken must focus on the unwarranted limitations of all events in a life world to conception of power in modernity, and on the failure to understand the concrete human relationships that include more than social and technical concerns. In short, the critique of the power conceptions of modernity requires a critique of all human praxis and thought, inclusive of the thought of modernity, specifically since the latter is dominated by instrumental rationality. Horkheimer and Adorno cannot offer such a critique on the basis of their conception that material praxis is the explanatory hypothesis. The very hypothesis must be a power-laden ideology.

While disagreeing with Horkheimer and Adorno that critical thought cannot have any positive content, Habermas nonetheless claims that any theoretical critique of society, in contrast to traditional theories, has a task of explicating the practical sources of the tradi-

tional theories. This for Habermas, relates to epistemology. Yet it is important to note that he rejects the Husserlian epistemological reflections which point out that the modern sciences have excluded the life world and pre-scientific source of scientific meanings. (Husserl, E. 1962). To recoup this neglected domain Husserl offers transcendental reflection that would exclude any position of interests. This seems for Habermas to be a return to the classical Greek conception of episteme which misses the point by presuming that Greek theory was founded on reflective contemplation and non-participatory observation. The classical Greeks according to Habermas could count on pure contemplation only to the extent that they could presume a cosmological order which was in a position to lend an ideal structure for human relations. Only to the extent that an ontological order of social ideality was taken for granted, could there be a presumption of a theory without practical interest, capable of contemplating the order of the cosmos already embedded in social relationships. In this context, the Greeks could presume practical consequences which seemingly corresponded to social praxis. Since Husserl overlooks this constitutive interconnection, he deceives himself by deeming that his cosmologically and ontologically purified phenomenology could set similar practical expectations as was done by the Greeks with their social-ontological preconceptions. Moreover, Husserl's critique of modernity from the vantage point of his exclusion of all ontological prejudices in sciences, could not offer a critique of praxis which was also ontologically laden and had offered social relationships that could be

accounted for by modern theories. This is to say, purified from such ontological commitments, phenomenology could not deflect modern human praxis and its direction.

The Basic Debate

For Habermas there is no doubt that by challenging the power of myth, Greek philosophy had to assume a cosmic order that would be equally valid for their social order. Hence, the cosmic order was not “disinterested” model, but was implicitly interest laden. The eternal cosmic order was precisely the means by which the emancipated individual could be stabilized within a social order. For Habermas, no pure theory could offer practical consequences for social action; hence it is necessary to discover the interest even behind the positivistic- objectivistic claims of Husserlian pure phenomenology. The latter, after all, rests on the modern ground of the presumption of pure objectivism. If the latter can be deciphered on the basis of its interests, then phenomenology must also take for granted such interests. No doubt, Husserl’s critique of scientific objectivism reveals the limitations of modern ontological presumptions vis-a-vis the life world, yet his efforts to decipher the life world equally objectively, i.e. under the guise of pure theory, merely postpones but does not resolve the issue of praxis. Habermas notes that for modern understanding there is no connection between the theoretical structures and empirical aspects. The connection is established by a mediation that is not thematically given. Thus at the outset Habermas points to three interests: first, the empirical-analytic sciences are laden with technical interests, second, the

historical-hermeneutical sciences rest on practical interests, and third, in the critically oriented sciences one discovers emancipatory interest. (*Erkenntnis und Interesse*, 155) While these three directions do not posit these interests, they are to be discovered in pre-scientific praxis. The latter rests on Gehlen’s and early Heidegger’s philosophical anthropologies which are incorporated by Habermas, although he sees such an anthropology as insufficiently differentiated for the logic of sciences. Nonetheless, it offers a pre-scientific notion of praxis of the human, comprising as well a basis for episteme laden with interests. In this sense, the practical being-in-the-world wherein the human constitutes his reality, is a singular horizon that has to be pluralized in order to demonstrate how the various human activities lead to various standards of scientific knowledge. In addition, it is necessary to differentiate various modes of activities, of being-in-the-world, in correlation to which it would be possible to discriminate various experiences and constitutions of objectivity. Consequently, the different modes of world experience, stemming from different activities, would yield the specific logical-methodological procedures of different types of sciences and lend them a basis of orientation. The factually given scientific logic could thus be deciphered as practically different world orientations. Resultantly, one would be led to interest laden episteme. This is also the basis for Habermas’ controversy with positivism.

One way of showing the technical interest of science is to follow Habermas’ critique of Popper. According to Popper, the fundamental problem consists of the protocol statements

such that the results of controlled observations would lead to direct confirmation. For Popper, this naive view cannot be maintained, since the elemental protocol statements unavoidably contain theoretical generalizations. This led Popper to formulate the thesis of falsification. Instead of simple verification, one must test a hypothesis by efforts at falsification. Yet here the verification problem reappears in a somewhat different guise. The observational statements, with whose aid the presumption of laws can be falsified, cannot be justified on the certitude of sense perception. And this led Popper to claim that the final sense of falsification depends on the consensus of scientific community. This surprising admission of the constitutive role of scientific community serves Habermas as an entrance into his own argument. He points out that with his final conception Popper draws an unwanted consequence which was already worked out by the hermeneutical tradition. The research process which Popper bases on the decision of participating scientific community, leads to an interpretation of communicative interrelationship wherein the researchers must have accepted the sense of their undertaking on the basis of an already pre-given understanding in order to reach a consensus concerning their observational statements. In this sense the very scientific process is immersed in a horizon of pre-given significations that lend each act a mutual understanding and direction.

As far as his argument goes, Popper could be satisfied with a decisionistic solution because he has failed to thematize the immersion of the research process and the scientific community in a pre-given horizon of understanding. Yet

once this occurs, once the dependence of scientific research on a pre-given communicative understanding is brought to awareness hermeneutically, it is no longer possible to avoid the question of such a pre-understanding. Here Habermas sees world orientations as hermeneutical horizons of understanding and as cognitive positions that correlate to various activities. The human acts toward the world in various ways in order to live and thus constitutes communicatively differentiated horizons of understanding providing a framework for what will be regarded as scientifically relevant and knowable. In this sense the conditions of knowledge of empirical sciences, are determined “transcendentally” by positions which the humans assume in order to make nature into a transformable means of survival. Empirical sciences are already embedded in this world interpretation and are led by technical interest. This is the secret of the modern empirical sciences. They believe that they have severed all ties to pre-scientific experience and resultantly can ask the question of validity concerning their methods of research. They take for granted that the factually found empirical methods are correct and must be postulated as universal logic of research. In this, they can remain innocent of the fact that their very methods rest on the pre-scientific technical interest. Resultantly, this very innocence turns around and pervades all scientific activity with technical interests, although constantly unadmitted and ignored by the sciences. It is possible to point to the analyses by Mickunas of the technological ontology and its mathematical-metaphysical homogenization, is an articulation of the grounds of Habermas’ deliberations of interest.

The innocence is not deliberate, but rests on the inability of the very method to deal with the dimension of communication and pregiven understanding. Habermas turns against positivism not only because it is laden with technical interest, but above all, because it assumes its method to be all encompassing. What is needed is an opening of another form of rationality apart from the technical-instrumental reason. His controversy with Popper has already suggested another form of knowledge, the communicative understanding of the community of researchers, comprising an intransgressible presupposition of sciences. This presupposition is to be extricated from sciences and regarded in its own right as a characteristic of socio-cultural being and, above all, of the domain in which even scientific consensus and its challenges can have their autonomous and rational encounters. Thus, apart from the anthropological dimension of work, leading to the technical interest, there emerges another fundamental dimension of activity with its own interests. Although "practical," these interests are not technically instrumental.

Habermas argues that the thesis of practical activity fails to account for the continuity of the social life. A technical reproduction of life is indifferent to barbarism and humanism, and between truth and falsity; as long as something works, it is accepted, irrespective of the continuity or breakdown of society. Thus, already in his controversy with Popper, Habermas has opened the need for another epistemic activity that would "survive" the discontinuities of pure instrumentality. The purposes and mutual understanding of the sense of scientific undertak-

ings are taken for granted and understood. More than that, instrumental rationality is inserted in the interconnections of institutions and traditions, comprising a ground for consensus. The uniqueness of human socialization is no longer regarded solely in terms of the practical transformation of nature; rather, the communicative mutual understanding is presupposed both for social and individual self-identification. What constitutes the continuity of a society is guaranteed by such a communicative understanding. This activity provides the context for the modes of work and appropriation of nature. Linguistic communication is the medium in which the individuals of a community secure their value conceptions and purposive activities, and guarantees that the undertaking of material production assumes a commonality. In this sense, the intersubjective understanding comprises an anchorage which guarantees the continuation of material production. If there are disruptions in this communicative domain, they cannot be solved by technical interventions. The technical sciences are insufficient means for the mastery of the communicative arena, since the latter is presupposed in all the efforts to come to terms with the significance, selectivity, purposes, and needs for the scientific technology. Positivism fails with regard to the socialization process by declaring the experimental sciences to be the sole methodological prop for the solution of all problems. It is precisely in the arena of political understanding that both the technical mastery is either accepted or rejected, or problems are solved communicatively and not technically.

Habermas regards understanding as a principal component of social praxis, coequal

in significance for social continuity to the technical episteme. This hermeneutical dimension comprises a pre-given consensus not in the sense of dialogical agreement, but as a political milieu taken for granted by the social members in all of their specific agreements. This is transcendental-historical base of sense that, according to Habermas, grounds the halved rationality of positivism. Yet this sphere of sense is not yet sufficient to yield a theory of social emancipation. The central issue is the elimination of social relationships of domination which do not stem from some changeless components of social life, but from ideologically obfuscated interests of power. Obviously Habermas is here in a quandary. How can emancipation occur on the presumption of the pre-given domain of hermeneutical understanding that binds the individual to a given social world and tradition, unless it is granted that even this understanding can be challenged and modified in the public domain. Emancipation requires a "disinterested interest" that transcends not only the interests and powers, but is in a position to offer an evaluation of their limitations. At least within the context of the positivistic controversy Habermas cannot offer a solution without accepting the transcendental episteme of Husserl presented in the *Krisis*.

This is not to say that Habermas rejects the transcendental in all of its forms. The forms of technical praxis comprise a transcendental condition for material reproduction. The epistemic orientations of modern empirical-analytic sciences are anchored in the transcendental technicality. The hermeneutical domain

of intersubjective communication is also a transcendental condition for social continuity and for a normative consensus that grounds the empirical-analytic sciences and technical reproduction. The social theory of Habermas accepts, apart from the constituted material reproduction, the communicative dimension of normative integration, the symbolic reproduction of society, not as a pre-given interpretive tradition, but as a revolutionary *polis*. Thus he does not ignore the normatively structured understanding which finds social power and domination by investing the normative with an ontological status. The communicative domain as normative is a context wherein the material reproduction is regulated. Instead of measuring social development by levels of material production, Habermas judges such a development by the forms and contents of symbolically transmitted interaction. The explanatory phenomena are no longer the results of economic development and its power, but the dynamic interaction between social labor and the more encompassing process of understanding. The introduction of the latter reveals a social power founded on the ontologized normative context. What must then be understood are the processes which lead to the intersubjective acceptance of the norms such that even the underprivileged accept the power of the privileged. This is to say, a hermeneutical preunderstanding of the normative tradition leave no room for the challenges of such norms unless one already assume the normative presence of the *polis*. Although Habermas offers no extensive treatment of this syndrome, it seems that the processes of

ontologization of the norms by the empirical-analytic technocracies opens an access to the social acceptance of power and domination. This is discussed by Mickunas, showing that the ontological shift toward modernity was not premised solely on the discovery of a “true” picture of the world, but on a choice between two ontological options.

Habermas was keenly aware of the “corruption” of the public arena, although he expressed this corruption in different terms. By reconstructing the structural change of the public arena as a contradictory realization and a final corruption of a normative idea, Habermas shows that what began as a normative declaration of the political enlightenment, was subsequently reduced to fact. He shows that the initial normative idea of open consensus and thus the abolition of an arbitrary rule in favor of rational discourse and activity, so well exhibited in the public discourses and free debates of the founders of enlightened modern *polis*, was restricted by subsequent capitalism to a factual class domination. While continuing to proclaim the normative idea of free public consensus, capitalism embodied its restricted values in the technical process as a domain of productive choices, and thus reduced the normative idea of public discourse and debate to a materialized criteria of normative structures in production. This abolished all but material interests. Following this lead, sciences had no problem in dealing with the empirical-social data as “value” free and had to accept the class structure of domination as a factual economic state of affairs. Thus one of the expressions of the contradiction is “free enterprise.” The initial

normative idea of consensus, comprising an emancipatory domain of public discourse, could not be fully developed.

No doubt, the guarantee of free public discourse is still in vogue, yet Habermas also points to an issue of the power of mass media to form public opinion. All factors discussed so far suggest for Habermas a need to repoliticize the public, not in the sense of demanding an assumption of liberal or conservative ideologies, but in the sense of public participation in the discourse concerning the assumed normative criteria and their public adjudication. This seems to be the driving force of Habermas’ critical theory: the reestablishment of *polis* in its difference from socio-economic and technical interests. In brief, in order to solve the issue of power and domination, one has to solve the problem of material domination and power in the form of instrumental rationality. The solution that could be offered initially rests on the discovery of the “normative” components which are not added from outside to the social fabric, but are already found in use as taken for granted structures of evaluation of the technical uses of rationality. Such normative components, “values,” offer an access to a critical domain, such as the evaluation of the very praxis in terms of the already pregiven norms. These norms lent traditional critical theories their weight, since it was possible to judge the social praxis and to point out that the norms are abused. This is to say, the norms are part and parcel of the socio-historical context and thus can be either accepted or even challenged. But these norms are the democratically established rights and participatory duties of citizens in the public arena.

Although this ploy is plausible, Habermas claims that its “objectivity” is questionable. This does not mean that the idea of objective-hermeneutical theory of society is abolished; to the contrary, Habermas continues his argumentation in order to attain a *logic of social sciences*. In order to gain social objectivity, Habermas seeks a critical instance in the invariant conditions of socio-cultural existence. In order to claim that a theory of emancipation is scientific, he cannot base himself on the empirical-analytic, and the hermeneutical sciences; thus he undertakes a task of founding transcendently a third form of episteme. He is not satisfied to offer a critique of a society within the limitations of the two pre-given forms of research, but wants to claim a specific human capacity for rationality. This rationality can be exercised critically in a context of free communicative interaction, leading to an idea of free consensus. This, for Habermas, is not an invention but primarily a constant which is accepted even by positivism when the latter constantly engages in scientific discourse. This can be generalized for any domain where the offered arguments by anyone can be either accepted or rejected without compulsion except for the weight of the argument itself. This process can shake the faith in old positions and open up new options. Insights gained on the basis of logical argument are sufficient to abolish false positions purely by logical force. Such rationality encompasses and surpasses both, the technical and the hermeneutical domains, and is capable of bringing to awareness what was heretofore obscure. This emancipatory process is named by Habermas the movement of reflection. This should not be confused with Hegelian

notion of reflection; rather, it is a form of self reflection which appears gradually through an intersubjective and dialogical engagement, capable of dispelling the established deceptions, specifically when the latter are couched in ontological garb. In this sense, Habermas accepts the reflective domain as coextensive with the public arena where rational discourses comprise an adjudicative autonomy as the *ethos* of political society.

In his *Zur logik der Sozialwissenschaften*, (1973) Habermas attempts to incorporate the Philosophical Hermeneutics developed by Gadamer into his postulated theory of “Sociology as Contemporary Science.” Habermas promises to use hermeneutics as an aid to overcome the positivistic inertia of the socio-scientific logic and its historically unreflected linguistic foundations. Habermas sees the significance of hermeneutics in its ability to elevate understanding from its pre-scientific experience to its reflective articulation. Hermeneutics is unavoidable as soon as data are collected at the communicative level and a categorical framework is selected to explicate such data. If we are to abolish our naive relationship with the historical content of theories, we must devise a method of interpreting this content in terms of its categorical frameworks. Such a method will be hermeneutical in principle, but will avoid the pitfalls of philosophical hermeneutics. In order to accept Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics, Habermas needs first to submit it to a critique. This critique is what constitutes the controversy between the “critical school” and “philosophical hermeneutics.” In the exposition of the controversy, Gadamer’s and Habermas’s

notions of reflection, tradition, and language will be discussed.

Reason and Tradition

While Habermas' objections to Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics are not always clear and constantly overlap, they can be identified as dealing fundamentally with the following matters: (1) Gadamer posits an abstract opposition between hermeneutical experience and reflection and method. Such opposition, argues Habermas, is based on a false linguistic ontologization (stemming from Heidegger) according to which language has an irrational dimension. (2) Gadamer neglects to take into account an emancipatory reflection that is not based on the authority of a tradition as a text, and misses extra-linguistic factors, such as social activities, labor, interest, and power-use. (3) Gadamer is compelled, on the basis of the above problems, to ignore the tendency of his own theory toward a universal concept of history. We already argued that historical awareness, as contingent, cannot be a ground for the necessary principles of universal requirements of reason and its attendant emancipatory requirements. Let us take up each of the mentioned points, first, Gadamer's abstract opposition between hermeneutical experience and methodological knowledge. Such opposition transcends the justifiable framework of his critique of the "false" and objectivistic self-understanding of the empirical and analytical sciences. Hermeneutics claims to have demonstrated that the absolutism of the experimental sciences is inadequate. This absolutism assumes that the use of appropriate methodologies guarantees a detached and objec-

tive approach to the study of all phenomena. But method itself is a posited construction that belongs in a particular historical context, and holds the prejudgments of that time. This being the case, methodologies should be rejected as unable to understand the social phenomena they claim to investigate.

Habermas points out, nevertheless, that hermeneutics has not shown that methodological procedures are invalid for disciplines dealing with non-linguistic phenomena. A method either helps us to understand something, or does not. If it does not, we can change the methodology. There is no reason to treat a methodology as if it were a historical force that cannot be escaped. As constructs, methodologies are made by humans and can be changed by humans. Thus the hermeneutical critique of methods turns itself to be inadequate as it bears an anti-scientific, a priori prejudice. *If methodologies were historically bound they could not be rejected, for they would be a constitutive part of a tradition. How could Gadamer, or anyone reject them in the first place?*

The basis of the opposition between hermeneutics and methodology is found in the Heideggerian notion of the ontological self-understanding, and exposed in the formulation of Gadamer's basic hermeneutical quest stated as follows: *What is at issue here is not what we do or what we ought to do, but what happens beyond our doing and wanting.* What happens to us can never be objectified and completely resolved, as it takes place within the process of a tradition in which past and present are mediated. Habermas interprets this as an admission, in a Heideggerian sense, of an all pervasive

Being in whose service we are immersed (the shepherds of Being, being sent by Being, etc.). Thus seen, objects Habermas, the process of a tradition would be a blind, spontaneous “substance” which develops in accordance with its own laws. Habermas finds that Gadamer’s notion of the “merging of horizons” justifies and supports this view. As we continuously test our presuppositions—a linguistic process—the horizon of the present is constantly constituted. *The horizon of the present does not constitute itself without the past, although we do test the past and the understanding of the tradition from which we stem.* There is just as little a horizon of the present in itself as there is a historical horizon which we must attain. Rather, understanding is always a process of the merging of such assumedly independent horizons. This continuous merging is the condition for the domination of the subject by the spontaneity of a tradition. According to Habermas, this “merging of horizons” implies that a tradition continues without interruptions and that it is at the same time more than we can encompass reflectively. This “more,” happening “behind our backs,” is the superfluity of a tradition, a linguistic process that dominates all our actions. But Habermas claims that a reflective appropriation of a tradition is in a position to break the independent process of such tradition—its “spontaneity”—and change it. Reflective appropriation can emancipate us from a tradition. It seems to me that this critique of Gadamer is based on a Husserlian notion of transcendental subjectivity capable of reflecting “pre-linguistically,” and hence non-traditionally, on any possible experiential form and content. As is well known, the Husserlian

project constituted an intent to have a presuppositionless beginning.

Second, it would follow from the above that Gadamer has misunderstood the power of reflection which unfolds in linguistic understanding. This power consists of the ability of reflection to either accept or reject the claims of a tradition on the grounds of their rationality. Reflection can turn toward its own conditions of constitution and make them transparent in their own genesis. It can, therefore, disrupt the dogmatism of a tradition. Gadamer’s misunderstanding of reflection seems to be closely related to his misunderstanding of authority. Hermeneutics gives little credence to the power of reflection and critical thought. It is not surprising then, that it is compelled to lend an undue weight to authority, as Gadamer does when he restores the value of pre-judgments and thus their authority. But authority, Habermas argues, can be abolished by the power of reflection, leading to persuasion by rational insight and communication. Due to the fact that Gadamer lends tradition an overwhelming power of authority, he has to maintain that the effective interconnections of a tradition far supersede the reflective capacity of consciousness. The effective interconnections, as a subjectively felt power of a tradition, are made into an objective—ultimately irrational—force which determines and transforms the conditions of rationality at different times and places. Yet, in face of the contingent process of a tradition, philosophical hermeneutics would have to be seen as an irrationalism.

On one hand, philosophical hermeneutics assumes language to be absolute, transcendent,

and ultimately inexplicable. But on the other hand, it fails to recognize that its own position should be understood as part of a specific and contingent historical context. The claim to any “positionality” needs to be positioned as well. This irrationalism, says Habermas, is a “relative idealism;” a contingent universality. Since language is no longer based on the understanding of transcendental and hence absolute reflection but on an objective, traditional process, it becomes a “contingent absolute.” Hermeneutical reflection would insist on the “linguistic a priori” of all socio-historical understanding, and yet this a priori is contingent, constituting at the same time a transcendent power which can neither be grasped, nor demonstrated concerning its necessity - traditions, after all, are contingent. The consequence of such a relative idealism is **a neglect of non-linguistic social activities such as power relationships and labor interests.** If philosophical hermeneutics were to reflect upon the transmission of a tradition in language, it would discover that such language and tradition stem from social activities. This does not mean that a tradition is unable to encompass its own discursive levels; rather it means that a tradition can be made comprehensible in terms of its relationship to other aspects of social life. Since hermeneutics does not account for non-linguistic social activities, it turns out to be an ideology.

Third, Habermas objects to philosophical hermeneutics on the grounds that it does not posit any transition between the transcendental conditions of historicity and the universal history in which these conditions are constituted. This transition, according to Habermas, should

be located in an anticipation of a historical aim (i.e. searching for the conditions of emancipatory practice). The failure to account for this transition stems from the Heideggerian ontologization of language assumed by philosophical hermeneutics. According to this ontologization, the possibility of critical reflection is precluded: Language is the house of Being. While Habermas’ arguments seem to require this *ethos*, his own analyses fall short of its explicit articulation, although there is a silent introduction of critical rationalism, even if the latter cannot be justified socially-historically. Habermas, nonetheless, must offer such a justification by discovering the criteria for such a rationality. This seems to be suggested when he speaks of the “criteria of rationality” which can be explicated only in a process of a critique. Yet this is precisely what is inadequate as an alternative model for ideologies and their critique. After all, Habermas must presuppose a rationality which must engage in a process of critique to decipher the standards of rationality, yet the latter must, in turn, be presupposed by this rationality if the latter is to have critical criteria. The solution would be transcendental reflection, as a political domain, but Habermas shies away from such a move, since that would be counter to his thesis of socio - historical understanding as the source of all sense. It is to be noted that the necessity of philosophy cannot be based on the contingency of history, without even asking whose history it might be. If there is a critical and emancipatory rationality, a third episteme, then it presupposes that both, the self-reproduction of the technical as well as the continuity of the hermeneutical, have been fully explicated as inadequate, and in

their inadequacy signifying the requirements of the third episteme. Moreover, the movement of reflection must be shown to be intersubjective and constitutive of a distinct form of episteme, such that the latter is constantly signified in the unfolding of the reproduction of the instrumental as well as the hermeneutical forms of episteme. This is to say, the condition for judging both, is neither one nor the other, and yet it is required to recognize both in their difference. While the first two epistememes were in a tension as mediated mediations, the last is the final unmediated mediation.

An additional problem must be considered. Habermas argues that the emergence of the individual consciousness must be tied continuously to the norms of the group. Thus the epistemic interests are attached to the functions of an ego capable of adapting itself to the conditions of social life through the process of education. In the learning process the conflict between the drives and the social strictures leads to an emergence of an identity of an individual. Yet the constitution of the individual seems to suggest a domain which separates itself from the two initial epistemic interests and points to a third. The emergence of the individual allows a third transcendental and autonomous factor, the unmediated mediation for approaching the world. This is the most interesting issue, since the constitution of the individual in the socio-historical process calls, correlatively, for the abolition of convictions and norms alien to the individual. This is to say, the critical moment is attained when the constituted individual is capable of questioning critically the transmitted practices and norms, and thus

of setting the limits to the power of traditional practices and understanding. In contrast to the conservative function by which the symbolically mediated interaction completely submerges the individual, entwines the individual into a horizon of the tradition, the emergence of the individual can be seen as a critical function. In the constitution of the individual identity, the latter learns at the same time to break loose from the accepted prejudgments, till finally the autonomous individual is in a position to mediate the now transparent needs and the demands of a society. If the constitution of autonomy of the individual is thus determined, then it becomes appropriate to allot it a specific form of autonomous, rational, episteme. In contrast to the two types of episteme, the instrumental and the hermeneutical, the cognitive acts acquired in the process of autonomization, need no longer attach purely to the alien nature and society, but can turn reflectively to the self. Corresponding to the process of labor and interactive understanding there is a practical self relationship through which the individual acquires insights into unacceptable powers and thus is in a position of emancipation. Once again, this autonomization is assumed by Habermas' self reflection.

Two questions arise: First, why must the constituted self assume a methodological form of scientific status, equal to the required forms of episteme? Second, how can an epistemic position based on the constitution of the individual become an equal transcendental framework for the constitution of a theory whose object would be the global interconnection of a historical and practical society? In order to derive

a critical theory of society from the activities of self reflection, Habermas must first answer these two questions. Moreover, if the autonomous reflective domain is to be regarded as a condition for a valid episteme, then it must be both practical and intersubjectively verifiable. Obviously, the instrumental episteme is valid because of its technical power to control the environment and yield the desired material results, while the hermeneutical horizon offers a sense for communicative interaction and consensus. What would be the function of the autonomized reflection of the individual? Here the problematic is complex, specifically since the form of reflection is modern. This means that, on the one hand, it has disrupted a naturalistic conception of the human as coextensive with natural logos, and on the other, it has posited as a social given the primacy of the individual. The latter conception has become a preeminent factor in modern hermeneutics and cannot be abolished by a rhetoric of any collectivism. Thus the autonomous reflective domain is a socio-historical facticity, and provides a condition for a critical assessment of any claims to validity and truth; it constitutes a consciousness capable of emancipating from any hypostatized powers.

The intersubjective validation of any autonomously posited theory that would counter any hypostatized power must be regarded consensually. The instrumental reason is not designed for truth but for purposive effectivity, and any objectivity that critical reflection would encounter has to count as “produced.” In this sense, a critique reveals two factors: first, the contingent nature of the produced environment, i.e. its deontologization, and second, opening up pos-

sibilities for reorganizing the social fabric vis-à-vis the consensually reached decisions. The first point allows a critical survey of the established powers and their dependence on specifiable interests. If such interests are exclusive of the consensus of the members of a society, then a critical broadening of consensus is required. The validation of hypothetical proposals does not mean a discovery of some broader truth, but the extension of critical participation of the social members in the public domain, i.e. in the *polis*. The disruption of the objectivist ontology is a reflective recollection of the interests, purposes, and means by which such an ontology emerged and how it assumed a “reality” status. This is at the same time a reflective exposition of the ties of such an ontology to some individual interests. Resultantly, other interests are equally valid and can be consensually instituted.

While Habermas might not fully embrace this direction due to his search for scientific validation, it is nonetheless capable of revealing the objective domain as hypostatized power that are not merely factual but produced and hence changeable. Here the social-objectivistic illusion is broken. The reflective domain provides a critical insight into the criteria of objectivity and discovers that these criteria are normative. The normative is the horizon of selectivity designating what will count under the rubric “objective.” And in a surprising turn Habermas depicts this situation as a “non-compulsive consensus.” Such criteria are a priori in the sense that they are not derived from ontological assumptions, but rather they are freely constituted and ontologies are expressions, embodiments, and ideologies that obfuscate the normative criteria, the in-

tentionalities that comprise active judgments concerning the very intentional constitution of such ontologies. Freely constituted criteria are functional only on the basis of intersubjective consensus. If Habermas aims at a dialogical situation free of domination, then he must accept this critical autonomous reflection as its condition. After all, the instrumental scientific discourse takes for granted a possible intersubjective consensus in the normative domain whose concerns are “what is to be achieved” through scientific-technical means. Dialogue free of domination means a free discourse of individual possibilities which at the same time make transparent that the established objectivities and ontologies are embodiments of other discursively achieved possibilities. In turn, any obfuscation of the constitution of the autonomous domain of reflection shows a process of power imposition and domination. Thus anything that hinders the domain of free discourse is both, unscientific and contradictory. Unscientific, because science as instrumental reason requires dialogical consensus, and contradictory, because it denies the very normative criteria on which the objectivist ontology is built and by which domination and power are justified and legitimated.

Although we drew this conclusion, Habermas’ social theory is involved in an ambiguity. As all social theories of this type, his theory is also beset by historicizing particularities and contingencies. This is to say, an effort to offer an encompassing theory on the basis of a particular development of a particular society, viz. Western-modern, might not be an adequate structure for social theory per se. The thesis of

a historically developed conflict between the emancipatory possibility of communicative activity, and the limiting conditions of instrumental rationality and the resultant forms of class domination and economic power, is developed on the tracing of the bourgeoisie problematic. Thus the social theory is too closely interwoven with a singular mode of socio-historical development to be regarded as an adequate basis for a generalized global theory.

Habermas, nonetheless, attempts at a generalization. The contradictory institutionalization of bourgeoisie public domain is taken by him as a standard of a logic that dominates the dynamics of social development per se. He extricates the conflict between the communicative-normative domain and the historically produced material conditions of a capitalist society, and posits it as a driving mechanism of civilizational processes in general. Yet prior to the possibility of such a generalization, we have to resolve an ambiguity inherent in Habermas’ theory. The depicted conflict allows not one but two generalized interpretations. It is possible to regard the process of practical development that stems from the experience of communicative activity as a domain that is independent of the established dominations stemming from the established modes of productive relationships. In turn, the same developmental process can be seen such that the productive domain is not only immanent to the communicative domain, but also comprises the institutional conditions for the structuring of the hermeneutical domain. In the latter case the social conflict appears no longer, as in the former case, between the symbolic interaction and the dominating material

system, but rather inheres in the communicative process itself. Both interpretations can be supported by historical events. Each offers a different logic of civilizational development. Habermas seems to be unclear as to the side he takes. Although both interpretations stem from the same communicative-theoretical premises, they develop two distinct trends concerning the interdependence of communicative and instrumental activities.

The theoretical context leading to the first interpretation is structured by the discussion concerning the technocratic thesis. This thesis focuses on the political consequences of the technical progress, and the consequences of this thesis were explicated by Schelsky, Freyer, and Gehlen. This thesis could be subsumed under the concept of technocratic domination and power. Habermas accepts this thesis, yet he radicalizes it by showing that it is a false consciousness of a state of affairs that calls for a correct interpretation. The thesis of technocracy must be revealed to be an ideology. To show this, Habermas turns to the basic episteme presupposed by it. If technocracy represents the positivistic consciousness in the domain of sociology, then it is characterized by the “truncated rationalism” that predominates positivism. If the latter generalizes the empirical-analytical mode as an exclusive epistemic access, then for the technocratic thesis this means that it can attain an affirmative reading of the independence of technology by excluding the possibility of different rationalities in social processes. If this is the case, then Habermas can claim that this prevalent sociological thesis of technical domination is conceptually false. On our part

this means that the technocratic thesis is an ideology, since it reflects the normative choices of production and social forms of domination. Once such normative choices are embedded and realized they can be falsely regarded as a given facticity and resultantly ontologized as reality. This move leaves out the hermeneutical domain which initially gave rise to, and continues as a force of interpretation that seems to justify the social praxis realistically. This is not to say that the material power and effectivity is thereby made more mild; rather, what appears is a context of communicative interpretation with its normative presumptions that frame the technocratic thesis. Thus Habermas can claim that the institutional framework or a socio-cultural life world can contain technical rationality as a sub-system. While Habermas seems to distinguish between the hermeneutical domain and life world, identifying the latter with institutions that carry an articulated and a normative world, the distinction would fail to make a theoretical difference. Institutionalized norms are seen by Habermas as a meta-system, yet we prefer not to posit something “meta;” rather, the institutionalized normative components are the very way we articulate, behave, dress, walk, perceive, and judge. The distinctions that Habermas offers arise in transcendental argumentation, but not in phenomenal concretum.

The interference of argumentation misleads Habermas to make subsequent claims that the sphere of instrumental rationality and relationships of domination are value free. This is the phase of his hermeneutical controversy. He wants to allot to science a domain that would be able to counter the domain of interpretative

communication, Indeed, his argumentation is designed to break the hermeneutical circle as a conservative and blind authority by the use of scientific objectivity. Habermas seems to rest his case on the notion that purposive rationality does not coincide with the normative domain; the former can open various acceptable options without changing the normative context. As can be argued, technical processes no longer follow a predetermined path; technology is a play space of possibilities. Such arguments are acceptable up to a point: the variation of technical possibilities. Yet after this point there is a selectivity of which possibilities are to be implemented and which are rejected. Current “socialism” and “late capitalism” clearly manifest what could be called “production politics,” or what we previously encountered as the collapse of the public into the private. This argues for the final impossibility of separating the technical from the communicative, and it seems that Habermas had initially argued for the primacy of the latter as a framework of normative understanding for the former. No doubt, the distinction between the two domains can be achieved analytically, but it would be inappropriate to transpose the analytical distinction to the phenomenal world, without creating a fiction that the phenomena of the produced environment bear only technical rationality but not the normative-consensual selectivity of the product. If the fiction is maintained, if the institutionalization of technical rationality is regarded as the final form of social rationality, then we could claim that Habermas posits an ideology which is the modern ontology. The latter, as we have seen, is a homogenizing abstraction founded on a

selection of “neutral” methodology. To speak semiotically, the mathematical language of such a method excludes as irrelevant all other forms of discourse and fails the objectivity of any historical milieu. In this sense no critical theory is possible, and hence no critique of the technical world ideology could be derailed. Institutionalized power can only be accepted and conservatism must prevail. Paradoxically, Habermas seems to maintain the latter position when he argues that the determining factor in the history of the species is the purposive organization of technical domain. The standard of the socio-cultural development is determined at the outset by the growing power of technical mastery of the environment, and the passive adaptation of the institutional framework to the expanding sub system of technical rationality. Here science and technology become coextensive with ideology. It is nonetheless our task to counter this trend by raising the question whether the technical rationalization implies the progress of normative rationality.

In order to speak of increasing rationalization of social norms, one requires criteria by which to judge the rationality and indeed the increasing rationality of the norms. The criteria of this kind can be plausibly offered within the hermeneutical domain, with a proviso that this domain contains an emancipatory episteme. Thus it could be argued that the social norms have a task of regulating social interaction and can become mediated symbolically through institutionalization. Yet the communicative process of understanding must contain a rule for the realization of conditions that would eliminate domination. This follows from our

previous argument that any dominated activity, either by internal or external forces, cannot be deemed free. The criterion can be fulfilled to the extent that the social members become free participants in all public decisions. At every step of social developed rules of interaction there appears a new knowledge of the limitations to freedom. Political institutions can be regarded as embodiments of these communicatively achieved norms, revealing to what extent they are capable of organizing the public life without power domination. But this would mean that an increasing rationalization of such norms is coextensive with the opening and broadening of communication. From these considerations it would be possible to infer what norms must be promoted and institutionalized.

On our part and on the basis of our previous discussion we would argue that the ontology of modernity, dominated by instrumental rationality, has an inherent, although well hidden, criterion of emancipatory rationalization. After all, the reason for increasing mastery and control of the natural environment, inclusive of the natural human, is the liberation of the human from the forces and compulsions which are not yet submitted to human autonomous rules. What is presupposed as the criterion of technical rationalization is human autonomy. Given this principle in conjunction with the preeminence of the communicative domain, we can now justify the concept of rational development from within the technical as well as the hermeneutical understanding. The criterion and the norms flowing from it, are intrinsic to and not imposed externally upon the two epistemes. The threat to the rational

development of society lies both in capitalism and state capitalism to the extent that they, and their “sciences” attempt to subvert the normative principle by a constant appeal to some form of technical explanation of social events, thus in turn forcing the public arena of free discourse into the arena of social needs, drives, causes, and compulsions. In this sense, the two major “theories” and their attendant sciences are identical, and are conservative legitimations of the existing social dominations and power relationships. Habermas expresses this state of affairs by noting the conflict between the two epistemic forms in late capitalism. Obviously, the conflict is complex and its basic arena is an ambiguous mixture of private and public. According to Habermas, the conflict was created by capitalism inadvertently. While the initial political-public decision lent the social-private arena, pervaded by technological increase in productivity, an unhindered right to pursue its own aims, the social and economic crises engendered by this arena called for political interventions to solve the crises.

The interventions are justifiable on the above mentioned principle of autonomy, already inherent in the technical reason itself. If the individual is exposed to material domination, and subservience to other social members having the power to dictate private fulfillment, then such an individual is no longer in an autonomous position. If the individual is excluded from decisions in the material-productive domain, such an individual becomes reontologized through the ideology of technological explanations and necessities. In this sense the political interventions to control the domain

of instrumental rationality and its productive relationships, constitute efforts to reestablish the autonomy of the individual. Correlatively, such a reestablishment presumes our initial conception of the identity of freedom and equality. The numerous calls for a guaranteed right to a job are surface manifestations of this identity. This is to say, the economic security and independence from the whims of others, is equally a precondition for an autonomous public being. Perhaps we could even suggest that the roots of Jeffersonian democracy in which the voting rights are granted to an economically independent person, is justifiable on this principle. Any economic dependence on other's whim is an abolition of the individual's autonomy. In societies of vast economic-technical enterprises, capitalist and socialist alike, the security of a job is also a condition of economic independence. If the principle of developing social rationality is the autonomy of the individual, then the solution to the issue is political intervention in the arena of technical and economic crises that expose the individual to the irrational domination by material forces.

The question of autonomy leads us to the recognition that there is an eidetic invariant across the entire debate presented so far. Despite the arguments concerning science as "value" free, there was no question that in the form of instrumental rationality and its technological constructs, all scientific achievements were and are value laden. From the horizon of possibilities, we select those that can be technically established in order to serve our purposes – simply speaking, they are selected on the basis of valuation. The latter are constructs that intentionally

select scientific means to achieve what we value. In this sense, modern Western eidetic invariant is *value*. What was given in modern Western as a background awareness, tacitly accepted by the critical school, is now in the foreground of the life world of enlightenment and the unfolding of the constructive-valuative intentionality that has become prevalent. Being in the foreground or "positional" and thematized this awareness points to the problem of legitimation and to the illegitimate ways that the basic awareness became obfuscated, degraded, perverted, and empty. It questions the claim of this life world's value constructs to be the only legitimate reality. This claim to sole reality appears only when the question of its criterion is raised, a criterion which was also assumed in the form of "future emancipation" of the "self" from oppression. The constant reappearance of this tacit criterion comprised a possibility to extricate the debaters from the life world of valuative constructs and raise the question whether such a life world allows one to manifest the presence of *self worth*. Such manifestation – disclosure – becomes a foreground, enacted by a singular being in quest for an authentic fulfillment of self worth in a life world that at one stroke is made inactive, placed out of play. On the background of the life world that is placed out of play in its totality there appears a quest to act in favor of a world that would contain self worth. With the placing out of play, the life world without human worth is exposed to temporality: it becomes chronoscopic, i.e. an inadequate temporal perspective on the reality of the essence of the human. Such temporalization suggests that there is an atemporal, non-positional awareness which,

inevitably can appear only chronoscopically. It is equally important to note that since the disclosure of self worth revealed it to be solely as activity and not accessible through categorical intuition, then honor, dignity, nobility, truthfulness and justice appear only as enacted phenomena and hence have validity to the extent of their enactment. In addition, the striving to enact intrinsic worth is also a chronoscopic awareness, since no single activity, whether honorable, noble or truthful, can fulfill the entirety of the search for self worth. As an activity for its own sake, self worth also demands, as already suggested, public domain wherein such activity can be performed, resulting in the notion that such a domain is to be maintained for its own sake. Both, self worth and public domain are phenomena that mutually require one another and hence are to be maintained as purposes in themselves.

Yet even the awareness of such purposes in themselves requires one more domain of awareness. The disclosure of intrinsic worth as atemporally present, but only chronoscopically experienced, requires a specific constitution

of activity. As we know, awareness is oriented toward the world. Yet such orientation is experienced reflectively, such that the world becomes represented and the self becomes represented as awareness that is turned toward the world. In view of her orientation as intentional aim, person also finds herself confronted by herself. Such orientation toward the world in face of oneself is the essence of activity. Given the awareness of such activity, the latter places another demand: not only reflection that represents an aim toward the world and the one who intends such an aim, but above all asks for legitimation as to the worth of such an action. At this level one does not ask whether such a world is known – this is already granted, but is this world worthy of one's activity. The possibility of constituting a worthy life world is the reflective condition from which the failures of our degraded life world become visible. It seems that the critical school wanted to reach this level of awareness, but failed because it rejected philosophy in favor of all sorts of psychologisms and even sociologizations.

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SANTRAUKA

KRITINĖ TEORIJA IR JOS KONTROVERSIJOS

Straipsnyje svarstomos Frankfurto kritinės mokyklos diskusijos, įskaitant kontroversiją tarp Habermaso ir Gadamerio. Teigiama, kad problemos, kurias svarstomos šios mokyklos „vidinio diskurso“ lauke, glaudžiai susijusios su platesnės apimties – mokslo, technologijos, gyvenimo-pasaulio, verčių, kalbos ir reflektivaus išsilaisvinimo galimybių – klausimais. Analizuojama mokslinio „neutralumo“ ir racionalumo tarpusavio santykio problema. Teigiama, kad reflektyvus racionalumas atveria diskursyvosios praktikos lygmenį, susijusį su patyrimo pirmumo – plačiausia šio žodžio prasme – klausimais.

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