# FOUNDATIONS OF THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

EDITED BY
JUDITH MARCUS
AND ZOLTÁN TAR

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# Preface

Our greatest debt goes to Professor Joseph B. Maier, who advised and participated at every stage of this project. As its chairman, he invited Zoltán Tar to his Columbia University seminar on Content and Method and suggested the title for the talk: "The Frankfurt School Revisited"; thus the idea for the present volume was born. As the discussant of the ASA session on Critical Theory in 1980, he contributed further to a more correct evaluation of Frankfurt thought. Four of the papers presented at that session (Kreckel, Kurzweil, Löwy, and Heydebrand-Burris) are incorporated here. The editors also wish to thank Alice Maier, long-time secretary to Max Horkheimer and one of the executors of his estate, for generously sharing with us her recollection of her years with the institute and its director.

Most of the arguments set out in the "Introduction" were first presented in lectures and seminars given at various times in New York City (Columbia University and New School for Social Research) and at the universities of Munich and Zagreb. Grateful acknowledgment is given to teachers and students at these institutions, especially to Drs. Dirk Käsler and Helmut Dubiel in Munich and Ivan Kuvacic and Gajo Petrovic in Zagreb.

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Needless to say that the chief responsibility lies with the editors for the selection, editing, and in many cases for the translation of the material, and with Zoltán Tar alone for the "Introduction."

Judith Marcus
Zoltán Tar

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# Introduction

*Zoltán Tar*

"A specter is haunting the sociological enterprise—the specter of the Frankfurt School." So began my introduction to a study of the Critical Theories of the Frankfurt thinkers Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno.[1] In the years since passed, a considerable part of the "cloud of myth, ambiguity, and confusion" I then thought surrounded the school has been dispelled—and not only in the sociological enterprise. While I choose to direct my attention exclusively toward the sociological aspect and implications of Frankfurt thought, I am keenly aware of the truly interdisciplinary endeavor of the school ranging from philosophy and sociology to economics, political science, and literary scholarship—institutionally anchored in the Institute for Social Research since its establishment in Frankfurt am Main in 1923. Accordingly, the reception, perception, and dissection of the intellectual heritage of the school cut through a cross-section of academic disciplines.

The images and perception of the school in their diversity extend well beyond academia. For example, one of the popular images of the Frankfurt School perpetuated in the media is that of a breeding ground for the West German—even worldwide—student protest movement of the 1960s and the terrorist movement of the Baader-Meinhof kind in the 1970s. The first accusation was made and persisted despite Adorno's dissociation from the radical students in his famous *Spiegel* interview: "I had set up a theoretical model but could not expect that it would be put into practice with Molotov cocktails."[2] Even Jürgen Habermas's denunciation of the radical students as "left-fascists"[3] could not quite erase that image. During the 1970s at the height of West German terrorist activities, conservative and right-wing West German politicians[4] stated publicly that the Frankfurt School was directly responsible for them. Those views were reported widely, as exemplified by Flora Lewis's article in *The New York Times*.[5] The American echo of such outrageous assertions is undoubtedly due to its unfamiliarity with the content of the original Frankfurt studies; this assumption is partly confirmed by John Leonard's recent complaint in his review of a Brecht biography that "we are not told what the Frankfurt School was all about."[6] I will come back later to the American

perception of "what the school was about" in my brief discussion of the reception of the Frankfurt School in the United States.

Almost a decade ago it was still possible to assert that "the impact of the Frankfurt School on the American academic community and intellectual circles . . . was minimal."[7] This is obviously no longer the case for several reasons. First, many admirers and advocates of Frankfurt thought, graduate students of the late 1960s and early 1970s, became part of the junior and middle-level echelons of the academic establishment and contributed to the dissemination of Critical Theory. Another factor in the increasing impact of the school is the availability of English translations of most of the major works of Horkheimer, Adorno, et al., often brought out in inexpensive paperback editions. The secondary literature has in the meantime grown to such an extent that its compilation would be an almost insurmountable task. These factors not only help to preserve the intellectual heritage of the Frankfurt School but also contribute to a marked divergence in its image and perception and to the often acrimonious tone of the discussion about its nature and impact. Therein lies at least in part the answer to the queston: Why add a volume of two dozen essays to the already voluminous literature published on the Frankfurt School and Critical Theory?

The first and most obvious reason for such an essay collection is to make easily available scattered articles and a critical assessment to those interested in Frankfurt thought. Quite a few of the essays included have never before been translated into English. Others have, but either in a pirated or incorrectly rendered version[8] which does not contribute to a better understanding of what "the school is all about." These essays are now available for the first time translated from the original German, Hungarian, or Italian texts. The ongoing intellectual battle over the Frankfurt School and/or Critical Theory also inspired a collection of representative articles that deal with different aspects of the work of major writers of the school and at the same time reflect their *polarized* perception and reception both in Europe and the United States. Some of the contributions were written exclusively for this volume, and their themes were first tentatively explored in the framework of the Critical Theory session at the 1980 annual meeting of the American Sociological Association in New York City, with myself as organizer, Judith Marcus as presider, and Joseph B. Maier as discussant. At least in one case—that of Sir Karl Popper's "autobiographical musings" on the Frankfurt School—the contribution was an unexpected but very welcome "bonus" to an already published article by the same author. In other cases—such as the short excursion of Lukács on Benjamin or Kolakowski's assessment of Adorno's philosophical contribution—the critical reflections on Frank-

furt thought were buried in large-scale works which made it unlikely that they would have been easily discovered by those in search of literature on the Frankfurt School only.

Just as the original Institute for Social Research assembled outstanding representatives of many disciplines, the selection and organization of this collection mirrors that interdisciplinary endeavor. Since, for better or worse, the traditional division of labor manifests itself also within academia in the form of the departmentalization of knowledge, the essays are grouped under six topical headings. Reflecting the worldwide reception of the Frankfurt School, the selection includes Western and Eastern European scholarship as well as their American counterparts. The same is true for the ideological outlook for the authors, ranging from conservative to liberal to neo-Marxist. In short, the objective was to provide a comprehensive reevaluation of Frankfurt thought on the basis of disciplinary breakdown—cutting the Frankfurt School into pieces, so to speak—by outstanding representatives of individual academic disciplines, who often assessed the achievements and shortcomings of the Frankfurt School from opposite intellectual and political positions.

Only one aspect is missing that would have deserved a separate heading: the Frankfurt School and Judaism. In my book *The Frankfurt School*, I judged the impact of Judaism as latent throughout the 50-year history of Frankfurt thought and gave the topic "Frankfurt School and Judaic thought" a rather sketchy treatment.[9] Although I may have simplified the connection between the Judaic heritage and Frankfurt thought—and would treat the whole question a bit differently today—I still believe that I was on the right track. Thus, I read with great interest and a certain satisfaction Gershom Scholem's cryptic remark in his book *From Berlin to Jerusalem*[10] that the Institute for Social Research of Max Horkheimer was one of the most remarkable "Jewish sects" that German Jewry produced. I am also glad that I stimulated at least some interest in the subject among those members of the New Left interested in the Frankfurt School. While Martin Jay in his *Dialectical Imagination* almost dismissed the "meaningfulness of Jewishness" and its role in Frankfurt thought and considered Judaism's impact "negligible," he seems to have reconsidered his position as his recent article demonstrates.[11] There are others who move along this line and even try to discover their own Jewish roots that had been buried in their suburban upbringing and "radical" politics.[12] George Steiner perceptively remarks that the "Scarsdale experience" (where things just "do not happen" as they did in Europe) may give only a limited, purely intellectual understanding without any "personal relevance"[13] of what the Jewish experience was in Europe; it does not quite suffice to understand the more complex historical-

sociological experience in European Jewish intellectuals like Horkheimer, Benjamin, Adorno, or Lukács. The Bolshevik Jew, Georg Lukács, whose brother was murdered in Mauthausen by the Nazis, could only sympathize with Semprun's Jewish hero who in the French resistance did not wish to die a "Jewish death," meaning that in the Marxist-Trotskyist tradition he wanted not the limited Jewish emancipation but the emancipation of all the oppressed, as Heinrich Heine so eloquently put it: "What is the great assignment of our times? It is the emancipation, not only of the people of Ireland, of the Greeks, the Jews of Frankfurt, the blacks of West India and similar depressed people, but of the whole world."[14]

If I were to approach this issue today, I would start with Milton Friedman's reflections on the subject (without feeling obliged to embrace his politics and/or economics), that is, with the existence historically of two Jewish traditions. Before leaving for Israel on a fact-finding and consulting trip in 1977, Friedman expressed his views on capitalism, socialism, and the Jews: "My first visit to Israel was made about 15 years ago, and after I left Israel I summarized my impressions by saying that I thought . . . [that] two Jewish traditions were at war with one another in Israel. One of them was a very recent tradition—a tradition 100 or 150 years old. That is the tradition of socialism. . . . Jewish intellectuals have been strongly prosocialist and have contributed disproportionally to the socialist literature. The other tradition, I said was at least 2,000 years old. . . . Here was a tradition of how you get around government regulations. How you find chinks in controls, how you find those areas in which the free market operates and make the most of it."[15] I think Friedman was simplifying things when assuming that the socialist tradition in Judaism is only 100 to 150 years old; both traditions are as old as Judaism itself and often work side by side.

The uninitiated or those who would first encounter the Frankfurt heritage through this collection may be slightly taken aback by the references at one time to the Institute for Social Research, and then to the Frankfurt School or Critical Theory. The complaint may seem justified that they should be told what the "Frankfurt School is all about." It is a generally acknowledged fact that "for any analysis of the sixties and seventies it is crucial to understand the role of the Frankfurt School."[16] The Frankfurt School story has three different sociopolitical contexts in which the intellectual work of the school underwent changes; in addition, historical events even forced the school to change its geographic setting. "There is an interesting story to be told about the transformation of a Marxist institute . . . into a center of critical sociophilosophical theory," as Heinz Lubasz remarks in his contribution to this volume.

## The Story of the Frankfurt School

The institutional origins of the Frankfurt School and its Critical Theory go back to 1923 when the Institut für Sozialforschung was established in Frankfurt am Main, privately endowed and affiliated with the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University at Frankfurt. As Bertolt Brecht, the acid-tongued German playwright described it: "A rich old man, the grain speculator Weil, dies, disturbed by the miseries on earth. In his will he leaves a large sum for the establishment of an institute to investigate the sources of that misery, which is, of course, he himself."[17] Brecht may have taken some poetic liberty with the facts but he was not quite off the mark. Martin Jay's work on the history of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research has little to say about the genesis of the institute and its philosophy, as promised on the book's jacket.[18] Dissatisfied with a "court history" that relied mainly on the account and materials retrospectively given by institute members, Ulrika Migdal[19] recently published the result of her longstanding and painstaking research of that genesis and philosophy. We learn that the gifts of the founder, Hermann Weil, were indeed substantial. Migdal traces Weil's life and dealings from the time when he was an economic advisor to the German Imperial Army to his efforts to establish business connections with the new state, Soviet Russia, in the form of grain imports from the Ukraine. She convincingly argues that the coproduction of MEGA (*Marx-Engels Historisch Kritische Gesamtausgabe*) by the Frankfurt Institute and the Marx-Engels Institute of Moscow and the exclusive grain imports to war-ravaged Austria and Germany in 1921–22 were not accidental.

Be that as it may, 1923 was decisive in many ways. It represents a watershed for the European labor movement, for theory and praxis. Three historical events, interrelated in many ways, stand out: First, the defeat of the October 1923 Communist uprising in Hamburg; second, publication of Georg Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness*; and third, foundation of the Frankfurt Institute by Hermann Weil, after he had once before, in 1920, attempted to establish such an institute.

The defeat of the Hamburg insurrection marked the very end of a wave of East and Central European revolutionary movements that began in Petrograd and swept through Budapest, Munich, and Berlin. The Hamburg failure was the last link in the chain of events that shook the old political and social structure of Czarist Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and imperial Germany. There began a period of transition leading up to the emergence of new types of political and socioeconomic structures: Stalinism in Russia, nazism in Germany, semifascist states

in some other European countries, and reformed capitalism in the West. The establishment of the Frankfurt Institute marks the beginnings of the postrevolutionary epoch; it began with a Marxist orientation but moved away from it gradually.

*History and Class Consciousness* provides a connecting link between the first and third event. While Lukács's essays, written in Budapest and Vienna, were clearly inspired by the six years of revolutionary upheavals, they expressed messianic hopes and looked forward to the long period of academization of important Marxist themes such as alienation and reification, which were most poignantly discussed in the now famous reification essay.[20] These themes were first picked up by the Frankfurt thinkers, then by postwar French intellectuals, and revived more recently in the 1960s worldwide. (Another theme, that of totality, had its revival in the "world-system perspective" of Immanuel Wallerstein.) The coincidence of the establishment of the Frankfurt Institute and the publication of the Lukács volume led some people to conclude that Lukács was the founder of so-called Western Marxism. Such a conclusion can only be made on the basis of unfamiliarity with European intellectual history and the meaning of Lukács's work. Lukács himself refrained from using the term and vehemently protested any such linkage.

The almost 50-year history of the Frankfurt Institute may conveniently be divided into three distinct periods, each named after a director who not only put his indelible mark on the philosophy and politics of the institute but also led the school's fortunes through different historical settings and geographic locations.

The first period from 1924 to 1930 is usually called the "Grünberg era." (The first director, Kurt Albrecht Gerlach never assumed his post as he died unexpectedly at the age of thirty-six.) Carl Grünberg, labor historian at the University of Vienna, gave the institute an orthodox Marxist orientation. He gave notice in his opening address that he was for the "dictatorship of the director" (a policy which its second director, Max Horkheimer, equally adhered to); consequently, a "sharing of the direction of the institute with those who have a different *Weltanschauung* or methodological approach is entirely inconceivable."[21] The relatively short "Grünberg era" was dominated by such politically committed Marxists as Henryk Grossmann and Karl August Wittfogel and by institutional contacts with the Marx-Engels Institute of Moscow, and was characterized by a vehement antimetaphysical stance. Although Ulrike Migdal's meticulously researched *Frühgeschichte* takes a significant step in this direction, the "Grünberg era" as an integral part of the history of the Frankfurt School is still awaiting a chronicler. Very few American

students of Frankfurt thought are aware of this so-called positivist Marxist phase of the Frankfurt School.

Carl Grünberg considered Marxism both as a *Weltanschauung* and as a research method. He stated in his inaugural address that Marxism as an economic and social theory, until then the stepchild of German universities, was to have a home in the new institute. He perceived his time as a transitional period "from capitalism to socialism." His Marxist interpretation was vehemently antiphilosophical: "Philosophical and historical materialism have conceptually nothing to do with each other," he declared. To him, the task of historical materialism was the investigation of "the given concrete world in its becoming and change."[22]

Among the first members of the institute were sociologists, economists, philosophers, psychologists, historians, sinologists, and literary scholars. Most of the members had a Jewish middle- or upper-middle-class background; some were members of the Communist Party (such as Karl August Wittfogel, Richard Sorge, and Henryk Grossmann); and most of them were in some way active in the left-wing politics of Weimar Germany. The journal Grünberg began editing while still in Vienna, generally called the *Grünberg Archiv*, became the main outlet for the early Frankfurt Institute and emphasized labor history in accordance with Grünberg's leanings. Among the theoretical achievements of this first phase of the Frankfurt School was the publication in 1929 of Henryk Grossmann's *The Law of Accumulation and Collapse in the Capitalist System*, Friedrich Pollock's *Die planwirtschaftlichen Versuche in der Sowietunion, 1917–1927*, and Karl August Wittfogel's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas*, published in 1931.

After illness forced Grünberg to give up his directorship in 1928 and the short interim period with Friedrich Pollock at the helm ended, the second phase of the Frankfurt Institute commenced in 1931 with Max Horkheimer's leadership. The "Horkheimer era" lasted until the early 1950s, and it took the institute from Weimar Germany to New York City and exile in the United States. It meant a gradual turning away from Marxism, even of a "professorial Marxism" type, toward a more pessimistic philosophy of culture culminating in such works as *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *Eclipse of Reason*. Horkheimer outlined as the main task of the institute the examination of the interrelationship between the economic substructure of society, the psychic development of the individual, and cultural phenomena, in search of a comprehensive and general theory of contemporary capitalist society. The order of the day was to establish a close and fruitful cooperation between philosophy and the individual disciplines. Social philosophy was conceived as a "materialist theory of history," combined with and supported by empirical

research results. The organization of research based on philosophical formulations of problems was seen as the immediate task. In such research endeavors, philosophers, sociologists, economists, historians, and psychologists were to become permanently formed research teams aimed at grasping societal processes in their totality.

Horkheimer's personality clearly was a factor in the shift of the institute's direction, especially in terms of political commitment. The contemporaneous historical events mentioned earlier—the withering away of revolutionary ferment and the emergence of totalitarian regimes—also had their impact. Horkheimer's autobiograpical remarks reveal him weighing the available alternatives, those of a revolutionary and the more secure and smooth academic lifestyle with the foreseeable outcome: "The revolutionary career is not a series of banquets . . . , nor does it hold the promise of interesting research or . . . salaries." Thus, it is chosen "rarely" by people who are "merely talented" but do not possess "superhuman faith."[23] Horkheimer clearly thought himself to be "merely talented," unlike Marx, Trotsky, and Lukács who chose the revolutionary career. He was guided by his own political maxim: "The man of means . . . can permit himself leftist leanings, provided he goes abroad in time."[24] After Hitler rose to power in 1933, the institute was forced out of Germany; Horkheimer and most of its members moved via Switzerland, France, and England to the United States, settling at first in New York City.

The institute entered into a loose affiliation with Columbia University. The exact circumstances of this affiliation became more fully known in 1980 when Lewis S. Feuer published his account of how "the only Marxist research institute in the Western world . . . was offered a building by Columbia University," whose president, Nicholas Murray Butler, was "an austere conservative."[25] After having found only a "pleasant naiveté" in Martin Jay's brief account, Feuer presented *his* version of the story, based on the correspondence in the Presidential Archives of Columbia University. As it turned out, the Department of Sociology, especially its chairman, Robert M. McIver, and one of its members, Robert M. Lynd, were instrumental in bringing the institute to Columbia. One of the main reasons why the affiliation went smoothly was the abundance of funds the institute had at its disposal and was transferring to these shores. Feuer cites Friedrich Pollock's letter outlining the *exact* financial background of the institute. We learn that *one* of the endowments had the 1934 value of 5 million Swiss francs, not a negligible sum in the years of deepest depression. The institute's budget for 1935 was $100,000, according to Pollock. Should one day the *definitive* history of the institute and the Frankfurt School be written, the results of both Ulrike Migdal's

and Lewis S. Feuer's research, though not their political speculations, would have to be incorporated.

It was during the institute's sojourn in New York City that the term *Critical Theory* was coined by Max Horkheimer in an 1937 essay[26] and then seconded in another one by Herbert Marcuse.[27] Critical Theory is not a theory in the ordinary meaning of the term, any more than Durkheim's *Rules of Sociological Method* constitute easy-to-follow, step-by-step research instructions. Critical Theory's implications concerning theory and attitude may be summarized as follows: There is a historical continuity between Critical Theory and the critical philosophy of German idealism, on one hand, and Marx's critique of political economy and of capitalist society, on the other. Critical Theory as an attitude means that the critical theorist is guided by the maxim that "the thrust toward a rational society is innate in every man."

Although no mention is made of Lukács, there is a definite linkage as far as the ethical bent is concerned, albeit without the organizational commitment as in the case of Lukács. There is a tendency in America to disregard the existence and overriding importance of the ethical commitment in the case of Lukács,[28] mainly due to ignorance. This ethical aspect is best expressed in Horkheimer's statement that "Critical Theory of society is, in its totality, the unfolding of a single existential judgment."[29]

As for the theoretical output of the Frankfurt Institute, the second phase just as the other phases can best be illuminated by paraphrasing Hegel's dictum that social philosophy is nothing but its own time apprehended in thought to which is added the supplemental (Engelsian) proposition that it is and remains limited objectively by the historical conditions and subjectively by the physical and mental constitution of its creator. An analysis of Horkheimer's works and those of his friend, Theodor W. Adorno, since the early 1940s confirms this.

As a consequence of historical events during the second phase of the Frankfurt Institute such as the rise of totalitarian regimes, World War II with its mass killings on the battlefields, the murder of millions of innocent civilians, and the extermination of European Jewry in death camps, there was a shift of interest in Frankfurt thought. The shift was away from a general theory of capitalist society and its concerns and in the direction of specific problems such as the attempt to formulate a theory of fascism: to provide an explanation for the rise and nature of fascism in Germany and Europe; reveal the economic base and political superstructure of the same; and delineate the social psychology or personality of the fascist individual. At first, Horkheimer argued that fascism was the natural and logical outcome of late capitalist society in its stage

of permanent crisis; and in stating that "he who will not speak of capitalism should keep silent about fascism too," Horkheimer came perilously close to adopting the classical orthodox Marxist definition of Dimitrov.[30] To be sure, the much more complex phenomenon of fascism deserves a more sophisticated explanatory scheme, taking into account the economic, political, and psychological factors and their interrelation. (Ehrhard Bahr's essay in this volume addresses that issue.) A perusal of the institute's publications yields no critical assessment of or reflections on the atrocities of the Stalinist period, such as the purge trials, the liquidation of the kulaks, the camps, although there may have been ample internal discussion and debates on this subject.

This is not the place to enter into a critical discussion of the theoretical accomplishments and shortcomings, or even to summarize the major works of the second phase of the Frankfurt Institute; for that the interested reader ought to scrutinize existing studies and the original works of institute members as well as the contributions presented in this volume. A few remarks may be in order about the main task, the shifts of emphasis of the Frankfurt thinkers during that period. As late as 1937, the critical theorist's task was still to contribute to the change toward a rational and just society. Earlier hopes for such an achievement had given way to despair, to a deeply pessimistic appraisal of the chances for a betterment of mankind's affairs. This change in attitude was the result of a deeper knowledge of and insight into American late capitalist society, on one hand, and of the commencement of the final solution of the Jewish question in Hitler's Germany. The joint product of Horkheimer and Adorno's perceptions of the time was the *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* Western civilization was looked upon as in the process of decomposition and collapse; the world was conceived of as the decay of one's own existence. The authors sought to explain why "mankind, instead of entering into a truly human condition is sinking into a new kind of barbarism."[31] The volume was intended to be a metatheoretical treatise on sociology, psychology, and above all, science. Science and technology's transformation from an instrument of liberation into a medium of total reification in capitalist society, and its diabolical use by the Nazis made the authors conclude that "terror and civilization are inseparable."[32] In a parallel study, entitled *Eclipse of Reason*, Horkheimer duly attacked positivism, pragmatism, and scientism. His criticism falls back on a long line of antiscience tradition inherent in German intellectual currents since German idealism. The "eclipse of reason" (*Vernunft*) and the triumph of *Verstand* characterize for Horkheimer and Adorno the *Zeitgeist*, the universal feeling of fear and disillusion in the face of the diminishing hope that the "subject" will ever be able to assert itself and resist all-

powerful manipulation in a society of total bureaucratization. We find here echoes of Max Weber, who exclaimed that "the great question is . . . what can we oppose to this machinery [of bureaucracy] in order to keep a portion of mankind free from this parcelling-out of the soul."[33]

The second phase of Frankfurt thought saw the gradual incorporation of Freudian psychoanalytic theory and conceptualization which culminated in the study *The Authoritarian Personality* by Adorno et al. This study has been hailed by some as "the union of German theory and American empiricism" and sharply criticized by others such as David Riesman who wrote that "if there exists a danger of international repression in America today, it ensues more . . . from the threat of totalitarian Soviet expansion than from sources in American 'authoritarian personality.'"[34]

The third phase began in 1950 when Horkheimer and Adorno returned to Germany. Other members of the institute had already drifted into academic, government, or private jobs. The return of the two chief theorists of the institute was motivated by the usual push and pull factors in migrational movements and aided by both the changing political climate in the United States (rising McCarthyism, Cold War atmosphere) and Adorno's unwillingness and inability to express himself in any other language than German and his failure to get a teaching position.[35] After their return to Frankfurt am Main, the institute was formally reestablished in 1951. The same year, Horkheimer became rector of the University of Frankfurt, a post he held until 1953. Horkheimer and Adorno's collaboration continued in Frankfurt in the 1950s and 1960s until Horkheimer's official retirement in 1958 and Adorno's death in 1969, which marked the end of the Frankfurt School. It should be noted that after a short and transitory codirectorship of Horkheimer and Adorno, Adorno was perhaps more fully responsible for what later became known as the Frankfurt School. Thus this third and final period may properly be called the "Adorno era." The term itself, *Frankfurt School*, was never used by anyone during the first two periods of the Frankfurt Institute; it was invented by critics of Frankfurt thought well after 1950. Horkheimer and Adorno accepted the term reluctantly and rarely used it.

Within the framework of the reestablished institute, Horkheimer and Adorno represented the loyal opposition to the restored West German capitalist system. They became highly visible figures in West Germany's cultural life; they took it upon themselves to reeducate the public and educate a new generation of German intellectuals. In this sense alone it can be said that they helped bring about the oppositional movement of the late 1960s. Students then took literally the anticapitalism of early Critical Theory, disseminated partly through pirated editions of out of

print writings; confrontation between the Frankfurt School and demonstrating students ensued. Leaflets proclaiming "Adorno als Institution ist tot!" ("Adorno as an institution is dead!") were distributed. Adorno had to cancel his lectures and in a seminar on dialectics, female revolutionary students bared their breasts to him. The love affair between the Frankfurt School and radicalized students had run its course.[36]

As to the theoretical content of the third phase, Horkheimer and Adorno's collaboration that had begun in California continued in Frankfurt in the 1950s and early 1960s. Emphasizing the identity of their thought, they coauthored several volumes on philosophy and sociology, most notably *Soziologische Exkurse* (1956) and *Sociologica II* (1962). These two volumes come closest to what could be called systematic statements on the Frankfurt School of sociology. However, the lion's share of the critique of positivist and empirical sociology belongs to Adorno. Adorno is also mainly responsible for the codification of the theory of society, culminating in *Negative Dialectics*. "Theory of society" is a label for the attempted codification of Critical Theory as sociology. This is not the place to elaborate on the Frankfurt criticism of positivist and empirical sociological traditions nor to present theory of society's theoretical and methodological positions at any length.[37] Suffice it to say that dialectical theory of society deals with societal totality, with the laws of motion of society as a whole, and it aims at gaining insight into societal interconnections from basic structural conditions such as relations of exchange. (Totality is understood here as a dialectical category of reciprocal relationships.) Theory of society is thus macrosociology with conceptualization and terminology such as *totality, essence,* and *appearance*, which are Hegelian. I once characterized theory of society as an "amalgamation of artistic reflections (*Kulturkritik*), combined with Marxian categories and elements, and a pessimistic philosophy of history," and see no reason to revise my assessment.[38] A major part of the Frankfurt School's critique of positivist sociology was carried out in the so-called *Positivismusstreit* (positivism dispute), which has since been published in both German and English.

The question of what is the legacy of the school is important and legitimate. My tentative and general answer is that it will continue to exert influence on a significant segment of younger sociologists, especially those with a humanist concern and a critical bent. As to its particular concerns and problems, the legacy of the Frankfurt School may be summed up under four headings.

First, the *humanist concern.* This continued throughout the school's history and served as an antidote to quantifying sociology, which, if

pushed to the extreme, plays a part in the dehumanization of the individual who either gets lost behind the numbers or is left to individual psychology.

Second, *sensitivity* to the real problems of the age, such as the crisis of European societies combined with the rise of totalitarian regimes. Today, this sensitivity can be applied to the crisis of Western civilization. More specifically, there are issues discussed today that derive from the following ideas of the Frankfurt thinkers: the *domination of nature*, which characterizes the dominant tendency in Western capitalist-industrial civilizations that could lead to a "revenge of nature," in other words, the possibility that "progress" results in such regressions as diminishing resources (energy), destruction of the environment, etc. Further, the idea of a *legitimation crisis*, meaning a loss of trust in governments, the existence of a "credibility gap" referred to by many social philosophers, sociologists, and political scientists. Here Jürgen Habermas, the second-generation Frankfurt thinker, comes to mind.[39] Related to this problem is that of *authority* or lack of it. A recent book by Richard Sennett entitled *Authority* (1981) demonstrates the continuing impact of the ideas of the Frankfurt thinkers, as does Christopher Lasch's work *The Culture of Narcissism* (1978). Finally, the concept and growing significance of the Third World, first registered by Karl August Wittfogel, an early member of the institute, and outlined in his study *China Awakening* (1926) and elaborated in his monumental work *Economy and Society of China* (1931).

Third, the Frankfurt Institute pioneered the concept of *interdisciplinary research* to deal with the problems of the age long before the idea became part—under the label "think-tank"—of the American research scene. At the Institut für Sozialforschung a research team was assembled representing all the major disciplines from philosophy to economics and psychology; the work of the organization was interrupted in 1933 and the scholars dispersed. Later there was a renewed attempt in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* to deal in an interdisciplinary fashion with contemporary phenomena.[40]

Lastly, there should be a mention of Adorno's writings, almost ten volumes on the sociology of literature, art, and music, and of his posthumously published *Aesthetics* which provides a theoretical summation of his views.

Assessments of the relevance and legacy of the Frankfurt School will continue and certainly undergo changes as more translations followed by interpretations and debates are forthcoming. Moreover, there are many areas and subareas of sociology, such as social psychology, the study of mass media, political institutions, religion, art and literature, and prejudice, that is, elements of the "superstructure," whereby the contribution

of the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School will remain a source of inspiration for a long time to come. One thinks of Georg Simmel's statement when assessing the legacy of the Frankfurt School: "I know that I shall die without intellectual heirs, and that is as it should be. My legacy will be like cash, distributed to many heirs, each transforming his part into use according to his nature—a use which will no longer reveal its indebtedness to this heritage."[41]

## Reception and Perception of the Frankfurt School

As mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, the impact of the Frankfurt School on the American academic and intellectual scene was minimal, especially during its sojourn in the United States, until the late 1940s. First, there was the language barrier consciously maintained on both sides. As those who are well versed in Frankfurt thought know, the inaccessibility is only partly due to language barriers; it is also intrinsic in Frankfurt thought. Adorno himself pointed out that the matter of language goes beyond one's being able to express oneself in a newly acquired language; in his case it meant that the German language he wrote in "obviously has an elective affinity to philosophy, particularly to its speculative moment."[42] What little response there was, consisted of three kinds: First, the Frankfurt contribution to social science, such as *The Authoritarian Personality*, was sharply criticized on methodological grounds. Second, the rejection on political grounds was based on "native" resentment of those "left-wing" and "highbrow" intellectuals who dared to meddle in American political matters; finally, there were those who praised Frankfurt thought uncritically mainly because they were not really acquainted with its ideas.

Today we can no longer speak of negligible impact nor inaccessibility as a major problem since the most important works of the Frankfurt theorists are available in English translation (however badly done in many cases). Beginning with the 1960s, the Frankfurt School found its way into textbooks, encyclopedias, and curricula. I cannot summarize here even rudimentarily the reception of the school in Western and Eastern Europe, but will limit myself to a short assessment of the American perception, reception, and influence of the Frankfurt School. The latter appealed most to a certain segment of the New Left at least partly because of parallel existential conditions and sociopolitical factors. Just as in the case of Frankfurt School members, many New Left students of the 1960s and 1970s were born into middle- or upper-middle-class (mostly Jewish) homes with an egalitarian-liberal atmosphere that later stood in sharp contrast with the realities of the societal totality they

encountered, such as discrimination and racism in late capitalist American society and the ongoing Vietnam war. The similarity extends to the impossibility of following up the revolutionary excitement with a lasting commitment, with praxis; thus in both cases there followed a *Versöhnung mit der Wirklichkeit* (making one's peace with reality) and what Frank Parkin called "the academization of Marxism" to which I may add, of Critical Theory. If there existed a dissimilarity, it can be perceived in the missing serious theoretical anchorage of the New Left, unlike their Frankfurt ascendants.

The New Left had a deep sympathy and great understanding for the Frankfurt theorists' antiempiricist and antipositivist stance. The link between positivism and capitalism has often been given as the main justification for this stance. Since Kolakowski's treatment of Adorno admirably discusses this issue, I will not go into it in any detail.

It is probably not by accident that since the 1960s and 1970s, Frankfurt thought with its speculative content mainly influenced those young students who empathized with it and had an aversion to more systematic thinking as well as to empirically grounded critical scholarship. Beyond them, however, there is a continuing interest in and indebtedness to certain Frankfurt ideas and critical positions within the Anglo-Saxon world and a still growing preoccupation in Continental scholarship.[43]

## Notes on the Contributions

If it is true that the heritage of the Frankfurt School had for long eluded both its birthplace, Europe, and the English-speaking world, and provoked little reaction from the scholarly world during its heyday, it is also true that since its rediscovery in the late 1960s Frankfurt thought has spawned a wealth of debate and discussion on both its representatives and ideas. The resulting literature is a good indication of the complexity, controversial nature, and even contradictions in the ideas of the Frankfurt School. There has been much discussion about the validity and even the value of Frankfurt thought, including the debate about its most influential and direction-giving contribution to twentieth-century social sciences: Critical Theory or theory of society as it was called in the latter period of the school.

The discussion is undoubtedly due to the fact that the modes of presentation characteristic of Critical Theory ensnare and/or confuse many would-be students of the school. As Paul Connerton aptly put it: "Two lines of least resistance immediately offer themselves when confronted with the problem" of the writings of the Frankfurt theorists. "They may incite either to dismissal or to monumentalization."[44] The

debate with Frankfurt thought represented by the essays in this volume does not belong to either of these two categories. The writers accepted the challenge of the serious intent of the Frankfurt ideas and undertook the equally serious task of critical assessment. The Frankfurt Institute represented a prestigous, diverse group with an impressive array of talents. Since the Grünberg era there was a multitude of topics discussed in its journal, first called the *Grünberg Archiv* and later *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*. The selections in this volume reflect a wide range of topics; aspects of Frankfurt thought are dissected and examined by an array of distinguished contemporary scholars representing a cross-section of academic disciplines. Moving from the general to the particular, the essays are arranged from history and history of ideas to Marxism; their diversity encompasses all the social sciences and philosophy and literary scholarship. It is to be regretted that many valuable and interesting contributions were omitted only because of space limitations. However, the guiding principle of the selection was adhered to: to collect important and many hitherto untranslated or little-known critical contributions in one easily accessible English-language volume. Some contributions have appeared before but were either pirated (and therefore could not be considered for this volume) or so inadequately translated that their meaning was distorted in many cases.[45]

In Part One, "History and History of Ideas," Joseph Maier recounts the intellectual career of Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse, all of whom had been his one-time teachers, later his "fatherly friends," and with whom he closely collaborated since their arrival in the United States and their sojourn at Columbia University. Horkheimer's thought is analyzed as an "amalgam of Marxism, psychoanalysis, and patriarchal disdain for mass society." The Frankfurt thinkers are described as romantic critics of industrial society, living in splendid isolation on Morningside Heights in New York City.[46] Although Maier was intimately acquainted with the Frankfurt thinkers, especially Horkheimer, whose papers he is today in charge of (together with Alfred Schmidt of Frankfurt University), he is nevertheless able to deliver an unusually objective critical assessment of Frankfurt thought. Joseph Maier and Alfred Schmidt represent two successive generations of students of the Frankfurt School: Maier the small contingent of 1940s America and Schmidt the sizable group of followers of Germany of the 1960s. Mannheim's thesis that "the problem of generations . . . is one of the indispensable guides to an understanding of the structure of social and intellectual movements"[47] seems to be borne out by the two "friendly" critics, Maier and Schmidt. While Maier follows the career of the school, Schmidt in his "Postscript" to Horkheimer's selected 1930s essays in two volumes, presents the essence of

Horkheimer's reflections focusing on three key themes: the structure of history (problems of historical social science), Horkheimer's reinterpretation of the age-old epistemological issue of idealism versus materialism, and the position of traditional and Critical Theory on the theory of science.

In his magnificent review essay of Martin Jay's *The Dialectical Imagination*, Heinz Lubasz gives in broad outlines the real problems and issues of leftist intellectuals of twentieth-century Europe that Jay's book purported to tell about. In Lubasz's view, the issues centered around the theory/practice relationship. He also maintains that Jay's book is not *the* history of the Frankfurt School but rather a chronicle that uncritically accepts reminiscences and tends to ignore the real social and historical forces which shaped the fate of the school as well as the question of its place in European intellectual history. In Lubasz's opinion the true history of Frankfurt thought can only be accomplished by the research and presentation ("Forschung und Darstellung") of the history of the Frankfurt Institute in its totality from 1923 until at least 1969, the year of Adorno's death.

Jürgen Habermas, considered by many as belonging to the second-generation Frankfurt School, assesses the journal of the Horkheimer era, *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, on the occasion of its German-language publication in paperback. His discussion centers around four themes: Horkheimer; Erich Fromm; the theory of culture represented by Löwenthal, Adorno, and Benjamin; and the political economy writings in the *Zeitschrift*. Habermas forcefully demonstrates the unique character of the *Zeitschrift* as a remarkable document of European *Geistesgeschichte*.

Part Two, "Philosophy," begins with Leszek Kolakowski's comprehensive analysis of Adorno's philosophical masterpiece, *Negative Dialectics*. Castigating the "pretentious obscurity" of Adorno's style, he judges it as a philosophical counterpart to the abandonment of form in modern art, music, and literature—surely a harsh judgment. He calls *Negative Dialectics* a doctrine of scepticism, consisting of uncritical borrowings from Marx, Hegel, Nietzsche, Lukács, Bergson, and Bloch. (Lucio Colletti goes farther by accusing Horkheimer and Adorno of intellectual theft ["geistiger Diebstahl"].)[48] Kolakowski also dissects the alleged link between positivism, conservatism, and totalitarianism.

Arnold Künzli provides a different textual exegesis of Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* and combines it with a psychological interpretation of some of its themes. He argues convincingly against and finally rejects Adorno's nihilistic picture of a post-Auschwitz world, analyzing it—albeit speculatively—as Adorno's guilt-ridden relationship to his own Jewishness. This pessimism of the post-Auschwitzian world in Adorno's later phi-

losophy is considered most objectionable not only by Künzli but also by many fellow-Jewish refugees from European fascism. Ernst Bloch, for example, who was living in exile in America under comparatively harsher circumstances, found it possible to work on his masterpiece, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (The Principle of Hope), even though he could not sustain his guiding principle, "ubi Lenin ibi Jerusalem," after his return to East Germany.

Michael Landmann takes up the much-discussed topic of reason/unreason and guides us with admirable ease through the treatment of this issue in the work of Max Weber, who initiated the modern debate with his "Occidental rationalism" thesis. He then discusses Lukács, who deals with the problem of synthesizing the Marxist treatment of alienation with Weber's rationalization. Horkheimer and Adorno contributed absolute despair to the ideas of their precursors. Landmann concludes with a presentation of Habermas's reformulation of the problems of reason and shows the complex relationship between alienation and reason: Increased rationalization and the concomitantly increased alienation are dual aspects of the same historical process which culminated in Western capitalist-industrial civilization.

Karl Popper's two short essays—one kindly offered and published here for the first time, and adding an autobiographical note to his assessment of the Frankfurt School—are related to the now famous positivism dispute of German sociology in 1961 of which he was a key participant. Agreeing in one respect with Joseph Maier, Popper castigates Adorno for his views on culture, finding them pure snobbery. Regarding matters of epistemology and philosophy in general, his verdict is again—not unexpectedly—extremely negative. He simply terms much of what has been written by the Frankfurt thinkers as mumbo jumbo, and backs up his statement by translating some of Adorno's "bombastic" statements into plain language. Popper too objects strenuously to Adorno's post-Auschwitzian expression of anxiety and despair, regardless of his own experiences in exile. Popper forcefully rejects the label "positivist," and gives a clear overview of the basics of his own epistemology of the social sciences, contrasting it with those of Horkheimer and Adorno.

Part Three, "Aesthetics," begins with a short piece by Georg Lukács on one aspect of Benjamin's work: the concept of allegory. The old Lukács laboring on his last magnum opus, *Aesthetics*, pays high praise to Walter Benjamin, *the* aesthetician of the Frankfurt School, however loose and tenuous the connection may actually have been. Lukács tried to build Benjamin's ideas into his own aesthetic edifice. Although they never met, there was a mutual respect and a certain influence. Benjamin spoke of Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* as the "event" of

1923 (along with Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*) in one of his letters. Lukács in an interview called Benjamin "extraordinarily gifted" and highly perceptive of many "quite new problems" of aesthetics.[49]

István Hermann, one of Lukács's early students at Budapest University, compares Lukács's and Horkheimer's positions on the aesthetic education of man, a significant theme of German idealism. From a Marxist standpoint, Hermann rejects Horkheimer's pessimistic assessment of the possibilities of modern man in an age of mass culture and total manipulation and contrasts it, not surprisingly, with Lukács's more optimistic standpoint.

Peter Uwe Hohendahl's contribution is a welcome discussion of Adorno's posthumous *Ästhetische Theorie*, thus far untranslated into English. Adorno's work is considered by many as *the* legacy of Critical Theory. Strangely enough, it was coolly received by West Germany's Left audience, who by the time it was published, had moved well beyond Adorno toward a more organized and orthodox version of Marxism. Hohendahl's intriguing treatment explains why it was no accident that Adorno's last work deals with aesthetic rather than social and political problems. Hohendahl pinpoints Adorno's thesis on the autonomy of art in the idealist tradition of Kant, Schiller, and Hegel. He concludes with a discussion of *Ästhetische Theorie* as the product of the 1960s and its relevance for the 1980s is established.

Ferenc Fehér, presently of Australia, sees Adorno as the theorist of avant-garde music and as "the major opponent of the reflection theory and the critic who has done most to 'loosen up' the causal relationship between art and society." He examines Adorno's problem in the framework of the Adorno/Lukács controversy and argues for trying to find the common elements in their works rather than their bitter disagreements. Both Adorno and Lukács, for example, shared an admiration for the golden age of bourgeois art, the autonomous subject, the bourgeois individual, and held in reverence the artistic microcosm of totality created by that autonomous subject.

Part Four, "Sociology and Social Psychology," begins with Paul Lazarsfeld who has had a lifelong lively intellectual exchange with members of the Frankfurt School, especially Adorno. (Both men reported on their professional and intellectual contacts and disagreements in *The Intellectual Migration.*)[50] His brief essay offers a remarkably concise evaluation of his colleagues from the same geographic location but diametrically opposite intellectual landscape. Lazarsfeld discusses Critical Theory as "Marxism without proletariat" and has high praise for Adorno's sociology of music. On the other hand, he thinks that Adorno and his followers did much harm to the sociological enterprise. He talks of the "hypnotic effect" of

Adorno's language and attributes Critical Theory's attraction for young German students to it.

Franco Ferrarotti of Rome University, a self-styled critical sociologist, centers his argumentation on the three theoretical essays of *Autorität und Familie* (1936) and considers this work the key to understanding the Frankfurt School. He recaps Horkheimer's tracing of the role of authority in history; the family is regarded as the essential instrument for reproducing authoritarianism—a view clearly rooted in the author's German experience. Ferrarotti is equally critical of the American traditional tendency to lean toward the psychological, avoiding both the economic and political dimensions—not to mention the historical dimension—and the Frankfurt School's tendency to sidestep particular historical and political situations in favor of a speculative analysis of a wide category of "domination" as such.

Reinhard Kreckel revisits the famous positivism dispute of 1961 that did not resolve any issues. The question of course arises: Why revisit it then? Well, sociologists still argue about the *Methodenstreit* of 1905 that did not resolve anything either. Kreckel's contribution offers a fresh look by someone who was not involved in the original events. The critique of positivism is important in the sense that it has been the central issue of Frankfurt Critical Theory since its inception. Kreckel traces the history and development of this critique from Horkheimer's 1937 attack on a vaguely defined "traditional theory," a critique that replaced Marx's critique of political economy. Kreckel outlines the "falsificationist" conception of science of Critical Rationalism of the Popper School, and argues that any attempt to apply Critical Rationalism to sociology seems to lead to the conclusion that, by its own standards, the results are highly unsatisfactory. Kreckel hopes to overcome this stalemate and "to prepare the ground for a partial joining of forces" between Critical Theory and Critical Rationalism.

Edith Kurzweil compares the uses of psychoanalysis by Critical Theory and structuralism of France. She outlines and analyzes both their similarities and differences which are partly due to native historical and societal conditions and context. She shows that the increasingly vigorous dialogue with psychoanalysis commenced as the school's focus shifted from Marx's political economy to the themes of domination, alienation, and reification. Kurzweil critically dissects Marcuse's linking of Schiller and Freud which led to ideas that were to become a major tool for liberation. She concludes that psychoanalytically informed criticism, whether in its Frankfurt or in its Parisian incarnation, continues to search for improved methods; and this is the main merit of both schools.

Michael Löwy analyzes how knowledge and social classes are related in Critical Theory. In his *Auseinandersetzung* with Mannheim in the 1930s, Horkheimer seemed to recognize that the knowledge of truth corresponds to a certain social positioning, argues Löwy, but he failed to state clearly which classes are supposed to be the social bearers of Critical Theory. Marcuse's writings of the same period show more the influence of Lukács, states Löwy, in that he considers truth intimately related to the struggle of oppressed groups. He concludes that after 1945 all three of the Frankfurt School thinkers (Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse) moved toward a conception that gives some (critical) sectors of the intelligentsia the privilege of bearers of true knowledge. Löwy's essay is a Marxist sociology of knowledge-type critique of Horkheimer's and Marcuse's views of knowledge and truth.

Part Five, "Political Science and Political Economy," opens with Hans Jürgen Krahl's extremely brief and sharp criticism of his one-time teacher and mentor Adorno. Krahl, as one of the leaders of the student Left, expresses the sentiments of his movement. Together with Rudi Dutschke, Krahl was the most articulate voice of his generation on theory.

Ehrhard Bahr examines and critically evaluates the Frankfurt School's major preoccupation during its middle period: the theoretical confrontation with fascism and anti-Semitism. The fact that the Frankfurt School was a relative latecomer to the study of these two phenomena can be explained partly, in Bahr's view, by its effort to minimize the overwhelmingly Jewish membership of the institute. Be that as it may, Horkheimer's 1939 essay "The Jews and Europe" was the first attempt to come to terms with the problem. The more scholarly and systematic treatment of the problem by Franz Neumann in *Behemoth* (1942) did not receive the support of the leadership of the institute mainly because it was too Marxist for its taste. Bahr politely avoids Adorno's naive propositions about the causal link between the "falling rate of profit" and the rise of fascism in *Minima Moralia.* A philosophical explanation was attempted by Horkheimer and Adorno in the "Elements of Anti-Semitism" chapter of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, and Bahr reproaches the two for omitting concrete historical analysis and data and for discussing "anti-Semitism as paranoia," thereby reducing the sociological and historical analysis to the level of individual psychology.

Giacomo Marramao sets out to refute the idea that the Frankfurt School completely abandoned political economy which was the kernel of Marx's critical theory. To do that he investigates the political economy of Friedrich Pollock. Marramao claims that Pollock's political economy and the ideas of the philosophers of the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*

are in a "reciprocal relation." He also provides a sketch of the more complex Pollock-Adorno and Pollock-Horkheimer relationships.

Part Six, "Marxism," begins with Göran Therborn, a Danish-born Marxist sociologist, who was probably the first to subject the theories of Horkheimer and Adorno—and to a lesser degree Marcuse's—to a thorough systematic critical Marxist analysis. He attempts to situate and systematize Critical Theory in three respects: its relationship to traditional theory, to science, and to politics. Therborn ultimately finds Critical Theory to be reductionist: He asserts that Horkheimer's Critical Theory involves a double reduction of science and of politics to philosophy. As a consequence, Marxism's value as a theory of social formations and as a guide to political praxis is abolished.

Lucio Colletti, an Italian Marxist philosopher, offers a critique of the Frankfurt School from the position of scientific-philosophical Marxism. He states that in Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel "we are dealing with familiar romantic themes" blended with Heideggerian elements. He discusses the modern variations on "idealist reaction against science" from Heidegger to Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* Instead of seeing the "evil" in the determinate organization of society, in a certain system of social relations, they locate it in industry, technology, and science. Thus, he judges Heidegger, Husserl, Jaspers, Horkheimer, and Adorno as having this one thing in common in spite of their differences.

The late Lucien Goldmann attempts to "understand" Marcuse and states unequivocally that the relation of radical students of the 1960s to Marcuse is "based on misunderstanding." He sketches Marcuse's career from his first, Heideggerian phase, to his "critical pessimism" and contrasts it with the career of Ernst Bloch. Goldmann believes that Marcuse merely uses "Hegel and Hegelian language to return to a Kantian and Fichtean position." Even so Goldmann gives a sympathetic though critical evaluation of Marcuse, whose shifting responses are said to have finally culminated in a "limited optimism" with regard to social change under the impact of the social movements of students and minorities in the 1960s.

Wolf Heydebrand and Beverly Burris attempt to illuminate one aspect of the Frankfurt School: its relation to praxis with particular focus on the work of Jürgen Habermas. The school had been preoccupied with developing a "theory of praxis" since the 1930s, but this interest turned increasingly into a pessimistic appraisal of the chances for concrete political action. The authors discuss Habermas's turn to the analysis of the phenomena of "work and interaction" as two aspects of praxis, then to "communicative competence" as a first step of praxis, and lastly,

Habermas's concern with developing a "universal pragmatics." In this contribution, Habermas is criticized from a Marxist position. In the last analysis, Habermas's "vision" of political emancipation is said to remain at the level of political emancipation as visualized "by the young Hegelians and does not take the last step toward human emancipation" as proposed by Marx.

## Notes

1. See Zoltán Tar, *The Frankfurt School: The Critical Theories of Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno* (New York: Wiley, 1977).
2. "Keine Angst vor dem Elfenbeinturm: Spiegel Gespräch mit dem Frankfurter Sozialphilosophen Professor Theodor W. Adorno," *Der Spiegel* 23 (May 5, 1969):204.
3. Jürgen Habermas, *Protestbewegung und Hochschulreform* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969), p. 148.
4. See Rolf Wiggershaus, "Die Geschichte der Frankfurter Schule: Gibt es bei uns öffentlich geehrte Verursacher des Terrors?" *Neue Rundschau* 89 (no. 4, 1978):571–87.
5. Flora Lewis, "German Students Sympathize with Causes, but Not Terrorism," *New York Times*, Week in Review (November 13, 1977):3.
6. John Leonard, review of *Brecht: A Biography*, by Klaus Völker, *New York Times* (December 7, 1978).
7. Tar, *Frankfurt School*, p. 2.
8. See I.H. (Irving Howe), "The Piracy of *Telos*," *Dissent* (Winter 1981):86.
9. Tar, *Frankfurt School*, pp. 55–60, 78–79, 181–89, 205.
10. Gershom Scholem, *Von Berlin nach Jerusalem* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977), p. 167.
11. Martin Jay, "The Jews and the Frankfurt School," *New German Critique* (Winter 1980):137–49.
12. Cf. Paul Breines, "Germans, Journals, and Jews/Madison, Men, Marxism, and Mosse: A Tale of Jewish-Leftist Identity Confusion in America," *New German Critique* (Spring-Summer 1980):81–103.
13. For a discussion of this problem see George Steiner, *Language and Silence* (New York: Atheneum, 1972), pp. 143–44.
14. In *Conversations with Lukács*, ed. Theo Pinkus et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1975), pp. 69–70. Lukács refers to Jorge Semprun's *The Long Voyage*, trans. Richard Seaver (New York: Grove, 1964). See also Leon Trotsky, *On the Jewish Question* (New York: Pathfinder, 1970). Heinrich Heine's reflections on assimilation can be found only in German, vol. 4 of *Heines Sämtliche Werke* (Leipzig: Insel, 1912).
15. See "Friedman's Crusade," *Wall Street Journal* (June 28, 1977).
16. Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *The Institution of Criticism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 29.
17. Bertolt Brecht, *Arbeitsjournal, 1938–1942*, ed. Werner Hecht, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), p. 443.
18. Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923–1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973).

19. Ulrike Migdal, *Die Frühgeschichte des Frankfurter Instituts für Sozialforschung* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 1981). G.L. Ulmen already stressed the significance of the *Frühgeschichte* by noting: "While I do not dispute Jay's point regarding the orientation for the Institute's late and post-Weimar period, it has led him to interpret the origin and early and middle years of the Institute wholly on the basis of what came later, thus giving an unclear and inconsistent picture of the Institute's aim in the 1920s. This can only be done by a close study of the Institute under Carl Grünberg and Wittfogel's writings. Concerning Grünberg's Institute and Horkheimer's, one cannot speak of a development but only of a change in direction. Clearly it is essential to distinguish carefully between the Institute of Social Research and the 'Frankfurt School' and Jay has not done so." *The Science of Society: Toward an Understanding of the Life and Work of Karl August Wittfogel* (The Hague, Paris, and New York: Mouton, 1978), p. 548.
20. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin, 1971).
21. Quoted in Tar, p. 17.
22. Ibid., pp. 16–17.
23. Ibid., p. 50.
24. Max Horkheimer, *Dawn and Decline: Notes, 1926–1931 and 1950–1969*, trans. Michael Shaw (New York: Seabury, 1978), p. 45.
25. Lewis S. Feuer, "The Frankfurt Marxists and the Columbia Liberals," *Survey* 25 (Summer 1980):156–76.
26. Max Horkheimer, "Traditionelle und kritische Theorie," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 6 (1937):245–92.
27. Herbert Marcuse, "Philosophie und kritische Theorie," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 6 (1937):635–47.
28. Martin Jay writes: "To make Lukács into an ethical Marxist is to misunderstand the depth of his repudiation of Bernstein and the Revisionists." Martin Jay, "Critical Theory Criticized: Zoltán Tar and the Frankfurt School," *Central European History* 12 (March 1979):93, n. 10. For a more detailed discussion of Lukács and ethics see Judith Marcus: *Georg Lukács and Thomas Mann* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachussetts Press, 1985). For a criticism of Jay's confusion see Zoltán Tar, "The Weber-Lukács Encounter," in *Max Weber's Political Sociology*, ed. Ronald Glassman and Vatro Murvar (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1984), pp. 109–35.
29. Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell et al. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 277.
30. See Tar, *Frankfurt School*, pp. 74–77.
31. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. xi.
32. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic*, p. 217.
33. Quoted in J.P. Mayer, *Max Weber and German Politics* (London: Faber and Faber, 1944), p. 128.
34. David Riesman, "Some Observations on Social Science Research," *Antioch Review* 1 (1951):259–78.
35. Adorno summarized his American experiences in *Minima Moralia*, significantly subtitled *Reflections from a Damaged Life*, a beautiful confession on problems of intellectual existence in exile, a work which remained without echo because only few people, who shared similar experience and injuries,

can really understand it. Adorno was never able to secure a teaching position in spite of his publication record and letters of recommendation such as by Thomas Mann. To be sure, there were intellectuals in exile even more damaged than Adorno. In a collection of interviews with social scientists whose careers were interrupted by the Nazis and the war, one of the interviewees, Hans Gerth, concluded his story with the exclamation: "Adorno referred to the 'damaged life.' My God, he had no idea just how damaged it can be." Gerth, a refugee from Nazi Germany, was shunned by fellow exiles because he left Germany only in 1937; later he was denounced by his American colleagues at the University of Illinois. See Matthias Greffrath, *Die Zerstörung einer Zukunft: Gespräche mit emigrierten Sozialwissenschaftlern* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1979), p. 95.

36. "Of Barricades and Ivory Towers: An Interview with T.W. Adorno," *Encounter* 33 (September 1969):65.
37. For more detailed discussion see Tar, *Frankfurt School*, ch. 3.
38. Tar, *Frankfurt School*, p. 170ff.
39. Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon, 1975).
40. See Habermas's contribution in this volume (ch. 2).
41. Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. with intro. by Donald N. Levine (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. xiii.
42. Quoted in Tar, *Frankfurt School*, p. 173.
43. See Paul Connerton, *The Tragedy of Enlightenment: An Essay on the Frankfurt School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Klaus Hansen (ed.), *Frankfurter Schule und Liberalismus* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1981); J.N. Davydov, *Kritika social'no-filosofkix vozzreni j Frankfurtsko j skoly* (Moscow: Nauka, 1977); Richard Kilminster, *Praxis and Method: A Sociological Dialogue with Lukacs, Gramsci, and the Early Frankfurt School* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979); and Tom Bottomore, *The Frankfurt School* (London: Tavistock, 1984).
44. Paul Connerton (ed.), *Critical Sociology* (New York: Penguin, 1976), p. 15.
45. Jürgen Habermas complained in his letter relating to his article reprinted in this volume that appeared in *Telos* (by his permission!) that it was "butchered" in the process. He requested in a subsequent letter addressed to Dr. Marcus that a new translation be undertaken. After checking the *Telos* version, the editors of this volume decided on a new translation as the preceding one was full of inaccuracies, and often change of meaning possibly due to an inadequate knowledge of German.
46. As Leo Löwenthal remembered, the Frankfurt Institute came to America during its most difficult period: "Those were depression times in America. Let's face it: we hardly noticed what went on all around us. We were so intent on establishing our own little German island here that we almost forgot about the terrible experience that America had to cope with." *Mitmachen wollte ich nie: Ein autobiographisches Gespräch mit Helmut Dubiel* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980), p. 74.
47. Karl Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 286–87.
48. Lucio Colletti, "Marx, Hegel, und die Frankfurter Schule," in *Marxismus als Soziologie* (Berlin: Merve, 1973), p. 81.

49. Georg Lukács, "An Unofficial Interview," *New Left Review* (July-August 1971):56.
50. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "An Episode in the History of Social Research: A Memoir," and T. W. Adorno, "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America," in *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 270–337, 338–70.

# Part One
# HISTORY AND HISTORY OF IDEAS

# 1
# Contribution to a Critique of Critical Theory

*Joseph B. Maier*

"History," writes C.V. Wedgwood in her biography of William the Silent, "is lived forwards but it is written in retrospect. We know the end before we consider the beginning and we can never wholly recapture what it was to know the beginning only."[1] In a way, the following observations are an attempt to do just that; for those who were the principal architects of Critical Theory did not know the end. It would betray a serious deficiency in one's sense of humor, as well as a lack of philosophic piety, were one to undertake a systematic exposition and criticism of Critical Theory in the narrow compass of these pages. The difficulty of such a task is intensified by the fact that although I agree with Edward Shils that "Horkheimer is in a certain sense one of the most influential of social thinkers,"[2] I do not believe his greatness nor the importance of the Frankfurt School, which he founded and guided for more than a generation, to lie either in the uniqueness of their viewpoint—an amalgam of Marxism, psychoanalysis, and patrician disdain for mass society—in the rigor of their deductions, or in the adequacy of their organic determinism to the facts of experience they sought to explain.

To tell parts of a tale of great conceptions and failures seems no less important today than an attempt at complete detachment and objectivity. The protagonists of that tale were men of rare intellect. Two of them, Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse, I had the great fortune to count among my special teachers and fatherly friends. It is in the first place with their thought, and in the second place with the work of Jürgen Habermas, the product of a later generation of Frankfurt School writers, that I propose to deal here. Their writings were parts of a tale, whose end is not yet written, of the repudiation by radical academics, especially in the social sciences, of the ancient Western ideal of dispassionate reason, of objective inquiry, in the study of man and society. They were also parts of a tale of men of good will. "Three passions simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life," wrote Bertrand Russell in

the prologue to his autobiography, "the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind."[3] Such were indeed the passions that governed the lives of all members of the Frankfurt School. Almost all of them were, like Horkheimer and Marcuse, sons of the *haute bourgeoisie,* born and burdened with a deep sense of justice.

## Promise and Reality

Horkheimer's Critical Theory was meant to be a critical theory of bourgeois society, its structure and its history. It was born out of the conviction that in the bourgeois era both the true notion of existing society and the utopian notion of a just and truly human society must perforce assume the form of a theoretical critique of existing conditions as a precondition of practical transformation. This does not mean that the goals of the bourgeoisie were simply to be denied and the bourgeoisie's political emancipation critically cancelled. History since the eighteenth century was not simply a history of the decline of the ideas of liberty, equality, and justice. "What is untenable," said Horkheimer, "is not the ideas and ideals of the bourgeoisie, but the conditions of reality that fail to correspond to them. The watchwords of the Enlightenment and of the French Revolution have lost none of their validity. To demonstrate their relevance in the face of a contradictory reality, is precisely the undertaking of the dialectical critique of the reality hiding behind the slogans. These ideas are but the particular features of the rational society advanced as the necessary demands of morality."[4]

This, according to Horkheimer, was the meaning of the bourgeois revolution—to realize the idea of liberty, equality, and justice in its indivisibility, "the establishment of the right order of things among men, the kind of social order which would satisfy the inalienable right of all to a decent life."[5] The course of the French Revolution was soon to disclose the bourgeois limitations of the struggle to remake the world. "It became evident that the political emancipation of the bourgeoisie and the unfettered growth of unequal economic forces in unchecked competition were one thing, the enthusiastically proclaimed aim and purpose of the struggle quite another."

Here was the negative historical experience on which Horkheimer grounded his critical theory. Convinced of the destructive dynamics inherent in bourgeois society, he planted his own critical thought in the tradition of Marx: "The present order of society is fully comprehended in the critique of political economy."[6] It is a doomed order. It is, in

fact, seen as "perishing because of an obsolete principle of economic organization. The decay of culture is related thereto."[7]

## "Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing"

In the most emphatic sense imaginable, the watchword of the young Horkheimer, as of the young Marx some eighty years earlier, was *Kritik*—criticism. Like the young Marx before him, Horkheimer refrained from raising a dogmatic flag. He did not wish to create a new ideology or modify an old one. He had no design of the future, no program, no ready-made solutions for all time. He possessed no blueprint of a brave new world. His concern was the liberation of man. What he did consider as his principal task and mission to the last day of his life, was, in Marx's words, the "ruthless criticism of everything existing."[8] Reason, he argued in the young Hegelian manner, has always existed, only hitherto not always in a reasonable form. Like Marx, he felt that the critic could start out by taking "any form of theoretical and practical consciousness and develop from the unique forms of existing society the true reality as its norm."[9] The point and pride of Horkheimer's critical theory—or science of freedom, as he might also have called it—was the considered denunciation of, and implicit invitation to change, all those conditions in which a sizable number of men, if not all mankind, were alienated, abased, enslaved, and made pitiful.

The earliest formulations of Horkheimer's critical theory were written in the 1920s. While the Marxist elements were unmistakable, the very language revealed an aristocratic aloofness from sacred writ, at odds with both the reformist versions of the Social Democrats and the rigid dogmatism of the Communists. In 1930, when Horkheimer became professor of social philosophy and director of the Institute of Social Research at the University of Frankfurt, his principal intellectual interests were still focused on the philosophy of Hegel. It was one of the essential ingredients of critical theory. It was to Hegel, he believed, that our insight into the structures of collective life was owed. It was Hegel who sought to comprehend the faculties of men in the context of history. It was he who discovered reason to be at work in the inevitable historical progression from "low" and "false" to "higher" and "truer" forms of existence.

Horkheimer was truly Hegelian in regard to objectivity of outlook. But he shied away from blindly trusting the course of history to produce the right and righteous state of things. This notion, he thought, was an error of a dubious idealism: it metaphysically "elevated" the victims of the historical process into necessary elements of a universal plan of salvation. History, he said, "testifies to the fact that a better society has