Book Review: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Richard Philcox.

New York: Grove Press, 2008.

Sunit Singh

IT IS NO COINCIDENCE that there is a new English translation of *Black Skin, White Masks* (*Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* [1952], hereafter *BSWM*), since in this first book, Frantz Fanon (1925–1961) himself believed that the fight against racism had nowhere found more succor than in the United States. Fanon poetically describes the shorn "curtain of the sky" over the battlefield after the Civil War that first reveals the monumental vision of a white man "hand in hand" with a black man (196). Yet while blacks continue to remain segregated under Jim Crow, the situation for the French man of color haunted by liberal metropolitan racism, is rather different. He remains locked in an existential struggle for recognition, unaware that freedom means "when there are no more slaves, there are no masters" (194). Fanon contends in *BSWM* that there is no more insidious obstacle than racism to the realization of our species capacities or the completion of the historical dialectic. Of course this claim only makes sense if racism is treated, like in *BSWM*, as a symptom of capitalism. That is, even *The Wretched of the Earth* (*Les Damnés de la Terre* [1961], hereafter *W of E*), fails to achieve the depth of analysis in *BSWM*.[1] The Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver was presumably speaking about *W of E* in the quip that "every brother on a rooftop" in the 1960s was able to recite Fanon. For no one quoting *BSWM* can miss its incisive rebuke of black militancy as proffering a chimeric freedom or its bold claim about alienation as the exclusive privilege of a certain class of blacks. "Fervor," the narrator in *BSWM* poignantly remarks, "is the weapon of choice of the impotent" (9 CLM).[2] The awful truth that no one, except a handful of academic leftists interested in presenting *BSWM* as an anti-humanist phenomenology,[3] reads this book anymore indicates the depth of the sea change in attitudes about race on the Left. But if the utopian interracial schema of *BSWM* speaks to us at all, this is a consequence of the peculiarity of the US as a "nation of nations," where the experience of racism raises the dilemma of freedom with acuteness.

The historic importance of *W of E* to the New Left overshadows the brilliant analysis of racism in *BSWM*.[4] Even the appearance of a new translation on the scene scarcely alters the conditions of this elision. His latest translator, Richard Philcox, in his afterword to the retranslation of *W of E*, explains the relevance of—or rather, expresses the contemporary confusion about—Fanon thus: "We cannot forget the martyrdom of the Palestinians when we read…'On Violence'….We cannot forget the lumpenproletariat, the wretched of the earth, who still stream to Europe from Africa, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the countries of the former Eastern bloc, living on the periphery in their shantytowns." As Philcox laments, "[there are those who] still unreservedly and enthusiastically adopt the thought characteristics of the West."[5] The Freud-Marx confluence in *BSWM* sits at odds with

Born in 1925, psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon joined the radical anti-colonial National Liberation Front during the Algerian War in 1954. He died in Algeria seven years later.

this politically naïve anti-imperialism. No doubt this at least partially explains why the new translation elicits a tepid foreword by Kwame Anthony Appiah. More pointedly, Appiah reads three themes as shared across both works—a critique of "the Eurocentrism of psychoanalysis," a bid to reckon accounts with Negritude, and a concerted effort to develop a "philosophy of decolonization"—as if these formed a triptych. However this is no more than a *trompe l'oeil*. The concern with "disalienation" in the first book is non-identical with anxieties about "decolonization" in the latter: Whereas *BSWM* analyzes the wretchedness of racism under capitalism, *W of E* recoils from the task of pushing through what, in the conclusion to *BSWM*, is referred to as the "pathology of freedom" by virtue of its close identification with Third Worldism. On the other hand, the foreword seems apposite to this new translation, since the choices that Philcox makes in trying to render

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), the founder of modern psychoanalysis, was a key influence in the theory of racism and black disalienation that Fanon develops in *Black Skin, White Masks*.

into English the peculiarity of the French in *BSWM* often coincide with the interpretation Appiah advances on the thematic unity of Fanon's oeuvre. Hence, in its endeavor to restore some of the philosophically inflected categories (particularly in the fifth chapter), the new translation mirrors a wider historical trend privileging a descriptive phenomenology of race over a psychoanalytic interpretation.[6] The manner in which the new edition assumes the onus of parsing the French words *nègre* or *noir* ("black/the black man," "negro," or "nigger") tends to blunt the affective charge of "negro" as well as the rhetorical use of "nigger" by preferring to update—although by no means always—these epithets with the more innocuous "black" or "the black man." Part of the issue is that the French uses a number of words to express the gray scale that distinguishes black skin from white, "the Creoles, the Mullattoes, and Blacks," (*la békaill, le mûlatraille et la négraille*), that in English are collapsed into "black/black man" or the more pejorative "negro/nigger." Nevertheless, the cumulative effect is that the newer version shrouds a claim at the heart of *BSWM*: Blacks as much as whites share the connotations or stereotypes associated with what is "black," so that the "nigger" is always someone else, somewhere else.[7] The new, "more accurate" translation painstakingly reconstructs the specificity of the numerous cultural references in the text, its idiosyncratic use of medical jargon, and its loanwords from existentialism. But these virtues are limited by the fact that it lacks the apparatus of a critical edition with which to adjudicate matters of nuance. Despite its infelicities, the older translation by Charles Lam Markmann, first issued in 1967, seems more aware of its intended audience; its age captures quaintly the historical texture of *BSWM*. The older translation was, in an important sense, more aware of the stakes of *BSWM*.

"The black man," confesses the didactic narrator in the introduction, "wants to be white. The white man is desperately trying to achieve the rank of man" (xiii). This attempt to "achieve the rank of man" is complicated by the fact that under capitalism we share a common lot—alienation. Moreover, in the case of the black man, this alienation results in a double bind, the "first economic, then the internalization or rather epidermalization of this inferiority" (xv). Genuine disalienation, the narrator contends, "implies a brutal awareness of such socioeconomic realities," but a solution to racism needs to be "found on the objective as well as the subjective level," since "reality demands total comprehension" (xv). An individual black man, in other words, can no more overcome racism by desperately plunging himself into the "black hole" of a mythic or cosmic black civilization as if it is simply a matter of the "salvation of the soul" than a neurotic can will himself to health with knowledge alone (xv). After all "what is so often called the black soul is a construction of white folk" (xviii). There is then another uncomfortable realization tied to this

"Fanon" continues on page 4

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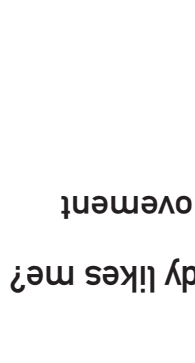

Statement of Purpose

Taking stock of the universe of positions and goals that constitutes leftist politics today, we are left with the disquieting suspicion that a deep commonality underlies the apparent variety: What exists today is built upon the desiccated remains of what was once possible.

In order to make sense of the present, we find it necessary to disentangle the vast accumulation of positions on the Left and to evaluate their saliency for the possible reconstitution of emancipatory politics in the present. Doing this implies a reconsideration of what is meant by the Left.

Our task begins from what we see as the general disenchantment with the present state of progressive politics. We feel that this disenchantment cannot be cast off by sheer will, by simply "carrying on the fight," but must be addressed and itself made an object of critique. Thus we begin with what immediately confronts us.

The *Platypus Review* is motivated by its sense that the Left is disoriented. We seek to be a forum among a variety of tendencies and approaches on the Left—not out of a concern with inclusion for its own sake, but rather to provoke disagreement and to open shared goals as sites of contestation. In this way, the recriminations and accusations arising from political disputes of the past may be harnessed to the project of clarifying the object of leftist critique.

The *Platypus Review* hopes to create and sustain a space for interrogating and clarifying positions and orientations currently represented on the Left, a space in which questions may be raised and discussions pursued that would not otherwise take place. As long as submissions exhibit a genuine commitment to this project, all kinds of content will be considered for publication.

Submission guidelines

Articles will typically range in length from 750–2,500 words, but longer pieces will also be considered. Please send article submissions and inquiries about this project to: *review_editorATplatypus1917.org*. All submissions should conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

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Gillian Rose's "Hegelian" critique of Marxism

Book review: Gillian Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology*. London: Verso, 2009.

Chris Cutrone

GILLIAN ROSE'S ***MAGNUM OPUS*** was her second book, *Hegel Contra Sociology* (1981).[1] Preceding this was *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno* (1978), a work which charted Rose's approach to the relation of Marxism to Hegel in *Hegel Contra Sociology*.[2] Alongside her monograph on Adorno, Rose published two incisively critical reviews of the reception of Adorno's work.[3] Rose thus established herself early on as an important interrogator of Adorno's thought and Frankfurt School Critical Theory more generally, and of their problematic reception.

In her review of *Negative Dialectics*, Rose noted, "Anyone who is involved in the possibility of Marxism as a mode of cognition *sui generis*...must read Adorno's book."[4] As she wrote in her review of contemporaneous studies on the Frankfurt School,

> Both the books reviewed here indict the Frankfurt School for betraying a Marxist canon; yet they neither make any case for the importance of the School nor do they acknowledge the question central to that body of work: the possibility and desirability of defining such a canon. As a result both books overlook the relation of the Frankfurt School to Marx for which they are searching...They have taken the writings [of Horkheimer, Benjamin and Adorno] literally but not seriously enough. The more general consequences of this approach are also considerable: it obscures instead of illuminating the large and significant differences within Marxism.[5]

Rose's critique can be said of virtually all the reception of Frankfurt School Critical Theory.

Rose followed her work on Adorno with *Hegel Contra Sociology*. The book's original dust jacket featured a blurb by Anthony Giddens, Rose's mentor and the *doyen* of sociology, who called it "*a very unusual piece of work*... whose significance will take some time to sink in." As Rose put it in *The Melancholy Science*, Adorno and other thinkers in Frankfurt School Critical Theory sought to answer for their generation the question Marx posed (in the 1844 *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*), "How do we now stand as regards the Hegelian dialectic?"[6] For Rose, this question remained a standing one. Hence, Rose's work on the problem of "Hegelian Marxism" comprised an important critique of the Left of her time that has only increased in resonance since then.

Rose sought to recover Hegel from readings informed by 20th century neo-Kantian influences, and from what she saw as the failure to fully grasp Hegel's critique of Kant. Where Kant could be seen as the bourgeois philosopher *par excellence*, Rose took Hegel to be his most important and unsurpassed critic. Hegel provided Rose with the standard for critical thinking on social modernity, whose threshold she found nearly all others to fall below, including thinkers she otherwise respected such as Adorno and Marx.

Rose read Marx as an important disciple of Hegel who, to her mind, nevertheless misapprehended key aspects of Hegel's thought. According to Rose, this left Marxism at the mercy of prevailing Kantian preoccupations. As she put it, "When Marx is not self-conscious about his relation to Hegel's philosophy...[he] captures what Hegel means by actuality or spirit. But when Marx desires to dissociate himself from Hegel's actuality... he relies on and affirms abstract dichotomies between being and consciousness, theory and practice, etc." (230–231) In offering this Hegelian critique of Marx and Marxism, however, Rose actually fulfilled an important desideratum of Adorno's Marxist critical theory, which was to attend to what was "not yet subsumed," or how a regression of Marxism could be met by a critique from the standpoint of what "remained" from Hegel.

In his deliberate recovery of what Rose characterized as Marx's "capturing" of Hegel's "actuality or spirit," Adorno was preceded by "Hegelian Marxists" Georg Lukács and Karl Korsch. The "regressive" reading proposed by Adorno that could answer Rose[7] would involve reading Adorno as presupposing Lukács and Korsch, who presupposed the revolutionary Marxism of Lenin and Luxemburg, who presupposed Marx, who presupposed Hegel. Similarly, Adorno characterized Hegel as "Kant come into his own."[8] From Adorno's perspective the Marxists did not need to rewrite Marx, nor did Marx need to rewrite Hegel. For Adorno the recovery of Marx by the Marxists—and of Hegel by Marx—was a matter of further specification and not simple "progress." This involved problematization, perhaps, but not overcoming in the sense of leaving behind.[9] Marx did not seek to overcome Hegel, but rather was tasked to advance and fulfill his concerns. This comports well with Rose's approach to Hegel, which she in fact took over, however unconsciously, from her prior study of Adorno, failing to follow what Adorno assumed about Marxism in this regard.

Two parts of *Hegel Contra Sociology* frame its overall discussion of the challenge Hegel's thought presents to the critical theory of society: a section in the introductory chapter on what Rose calls the "Neo-Kantian Marxism" of Lukács and Adorno and the concluding section on "The Culture and Fate of Marxism." The arguments condensed in these two sections of Rose's book comprise one of the most interesting and challenging critiques of Marxism. However, Rose's misunderstanding of Marxism limits the direction and reach of the rousing call with which she concluded her book: "This critique of Marxism itself yields the project of a critical Marxism....[P]resentation of the contradictory relations between Capital and culture is the only way to link the analysis of the economy to comprehension of the conditions for revolutionary practice" (235). Yet Rose's critique of Marxism, especially of Lukács and Adorno, and of Marx himself, misses its mark.

One problem regarding Rose's critique of Marxism is precisely her focus on Marxism as a specifically "philosophical" problem, as a problem more of thought than of action. As Lukács's contemporary Karl Korsch pointed out in "Marxism and Philosophy" (1923), by the late 19th century historians such as Dilthey had observed that "ideas contained in a philosophy can live on not only in philosophies, but equally well in positive sciences and social practice, and that this process precisely began on a large scale with Hegel's philosophy."[10] For Korsch, this meant that "philosophical" problems in the Hegelian sense were not matters of theory but of practice. From a Marxian perspective, however, it is precisely the problem of capitalist society that is posed at the level of practice. Korsch went on to argue that "what appears as the purely 'ideal' development of philosophy in the 19th century can in fact only be fully and essentially grasped by relating it to the concrete historical development of bourgeois society as a whole."[11] Korsch's great insight, shared by Lukács, took this perspective from Luxemburg and Lenin, who grasped how the history of Marxism was a key part, indeed the crucial aspect, of this development, at the time of their writing in the first years of the 20th century.[12]

The most commented-upon essay of Lukács's collection *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) is "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," written specifically as the centerpiece of the book but drawing upon arguments made in the book's other essays. Like many readers of Lukács, Rose focused her critique in particular on Lukács's argument in the second part of the "Reification" essay, "The Antinomies of Bourgeois Thought," neglecting that its "epistemological" investigation of philosophy is only one moment in a greater argument, which culminates in the most lengthy and difficult third part of Lukács's essay, "The Standpoint of the Proletariat." But it is in this part of the essay that Lukács addressed how the Marxist social-democratic workers movement was an intrinsic part of what Korsch had called the "concrete historical development of bourgeois society as a whole," in which its "philosophical" problem lived. The "philosophical" problem Korsch and Lukács sought to address was the "dialectic" of the political practice of the working class, how it actually produced and did not merely respond to the contradictions and potentially revolutionary crisis of capitalist society. It is because of Rose's failure to grasp this point that her criticism of Marx, Lukács, and Adorno amounts to nothing more than an unwitting recapitulation of Lukács's own critique of what he called "vulgar Marxism," and what Adorno called "positivism" or "identity thinking." Lukács and Adorno, following Lenin and Luxemburg, had attempted to effect a return to what Korsch called "Marx's Marxism."

In examining Rose's critique of Lukács, Adorno, and Marx, and in responding to Rose's Hegelian interrogation of their supposed deficits, it becomes possible to recover what is important about and unifies their thought. Rose's questions about Marxism are those that any Marxian approach must answer to demonstrate its necessity—its "improved version," as Lukács put it, of the "Hegelian original" dialectic.[13]

The problem of Marxism as Hegelian "science"

In the final section of *Hegel Contra Sociology*, in the conclusion of the chapter "With What Must the Science End?" titled "The Culture and Fate of Marxism," Rose addresses Marx directly. Here, Rose states that,

> Marx did not appreciate the politics of Hegel's presentation, the politics of a phenomenology [logic of appearance] which aims to re-form consciousness... [and] acknowledges the actuality which determines the formation of consciousness....Marx's notion of political education was less systematic than [Hegel's]. (232–233)

One issue of great import for Rose's critique of Marxism is the status of Hegel's philosophy as "speculative." As Rose wrote,

> Marx's reading of Hegel overlooks the discourse or logic of the speculative proposition. He refuses to see the lack of identity in Hegel's thought, and therefore tries to establish his own discourse of lack of identity using the ordinary proposition. But instead of producing a logic or discourse of lack of identity he produced an ambiguous dichotomy of activity/nature which relies on a natural beginning and an utopian end. (231)

Rose explicated this "lack of identity in Hegel's thought" as follows:

> Hegel knew that his thought would be misunderstood if it were read as [a] series of ordinary propositions which affirm an identity between a fixed subject and contingent accidents, but he also knew that, like any thinker, he had to present his thought in propositional form. He thus proposed...a "speculative proposition"....To read a proposition "speculatively" means that the identity which is affirmed between subject and predicate is seen equally to affirm a lack of identity between subject and predicate....From this perspective the "subject" is not fixed:...Only when the lack of identity between subject and predicate has been experienced, can their identity be grasped.... Thus it cannot be said, as Marx, for example, said [in his *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right"* (1843)], that the speculative proposition turns the predicate into the subject and therefore hypostatizes predicates, just like the ordinary proposition hypostatizes the subject....[Hegel's] speculative proposition is fundamentally opposed to [this] kind of formal identity. (51–53)

Rose may be correct about Marx's 1843 critique of Hegel. She severely critiqued Marx's 1845 "Theses on Feuerbach" on the same score (230). What this overlooks is Marx's understanding of the historical difference between his time and Hegel's. Consequently, it neglects Marx's differing conception of "alienation" as a function of the Industrial Revolution, in which the meaning of the categories of bourgeois society, of the commodity form of labor, had become reversed.

Rose's failure to register the change in meaning of "alienation" for Marx compromised her reading of Lukács:

> [M]aking a distinction between underlying process and resultant objectifications[,] Lukács was able to avoid the conventional Marxist treatment of capitalist social forms as mere "superstructure" or "epiphenomena;" legal, bureaucratic and cultural forms have the same status as the commodity form. Lukács made it clear that "reification" is the specific capitalist form of objectification. It determines the structure of all the capitalist social forms....[T]he process-like essence (the mode of production) attains a validity from the standpoint of the totality....[Lukács's approach] turned...away from a logic of identity in the direction of a theory of historical mediation. The advantage of this approach was that Lukács opened new areas of social life to Marxist analysis and critique....The disadvantage was that Lukács omitted many details of Marx's theory of value....As a result "reification" and "mediation" become a kind of shorthand instead of a sustained theory. A further disadvantage is that the sociology of reification can only be completed by a speculative sociology of the proletariat as the subject-object of history. (30–31)

However, for Lukács the proletariat is not a Hegelian subject-object of history but a Marxian one.[14] Lukács did not affirm history as the given situation of the possibility of freedom in the way Hegel did. Rather, following Marx, Lukács treated historical structure as a problem to be overcome. History was not to be grasped as necessary, as Hegel affirmed against his contemporaries' Romantic despair at modernity. Rose mistakenly took Lukács's critique of capital to be Romantic, subject to the *aporiae* Hegel had characterized in the "unhappy consciousness." Rose therefore misinterpreted Lukács's revolutionism as a matter of "will":[15]

> Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* is an attempt to give [Marx's] *Capital* a phenomenological form: to read Marx's analysis of capital as the potential consciousness of a universal class. But Lukács's emphasis on change in consciousness as *per se* revolutionary, separate from the analysis of change in capitalism, gives his appeal to the proletariat or the party the status of an appeal to a...will. (233)

Nonetheless, Rose found aspects of Lukács's understanding of Marx compelling, in a "Hegelian" sense:

> The question of the relation between *Capital* and politics is thus not an abstract question about the relation between theory and practice, but a phenomenological question about the relationship between acknowledgement of actuality and the possibility of change. This is why the theory of commodity fetishism, the presentation of a contradiction between substance and subject, remains more impressive than any abstract statements about the relation between theory and practice or between capitalist crisis and the formation of revolutionary consciousness. It acknowledges actuality and its misrepresentation as consciousness. (233)

What is missing from Rose's critique of Lukács, however, is how he offered a dialectical argument, precisely through forms of misrecognition ("misrepresentation").[16]

> This is why the theory of commodity fetishism has become central to the neo-Marxist theory of domination, aesthetics, and ideology. The theory of commodity fetishism is the most speculative moment in Marx's exposition of capital. It comes nearest to demonstrating in the historically specific case of commodity producing society how substance is ([mis-]represented as) subject, how necessary illusion arises out of productive activity. (232)

However, the contradiction of capital is not merely between "substance and subject," but a self-contradictory social substance, value, which gives rise to a self-contradictory subject.[17]

Rose's critique of the "sociological" Marxism of Lukács and Adorno

Rose's misconstrual of the status of proletarian social revolution in the self-understanding of Marxism led her to regard Lukács and Adorno's work as "theoretical" in the restricted sense of mere analysis. Rose denied the dialectical status of Lukács and Adorno's thought by neglecting the question of how a Marxian approach, from Lukács and Adorno's perspective, considered the workers movement for emancipation as itself symptomatic of capital. Following Marx, Lukács and Adorno regarded Marxism as the organized historical self-consciousness of the social politics of the working class that potentially points beyond capital.[18] Rose limited Lukács and Adorno's concerns regarding "misrecognition," characterizing their work as "sociological":

> The thought of Lukács and Adorno represent two of the most original and important attempts...[at] an Hegelian Marxism, but it constitutes a neo-Kantian Marxism....They turned the neo-Kantian paradigm into a Marxist sociology of cultural forms...with a selective generalization of Marx's theory of commodity fetishism. (29)

But, according to Rose, this "sociological" analysis of the commodity form remained outside its object:

> In the essay "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat" in *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács generalizes Marx's theory of commodity fetishism by making a distinction between the total process of production, "real life-processes," and the resultant objectifications of social forms. This notion of "objectification" has more in common with the neo-Kantian notion of the objectification of specific object-domains than with an "Hegelian" conflating of objectification, human praxis in general, with alienation, its form in capitalist society. (30)

Rose thought that Lukács thus undermined his own account of potential transformation: "Lukács's very success in demonstrating the prevalence of reification...meant that he could only appeal to the proletariat to overcome reification by apostrophes to the unity of theory and practice, or by introducing the party as *deus ex machina*" (31). In this respect, Rose failed to note how Lukács, and Adorno following him, had deeply internalized the Hegelian problematic of Marxism, how Marxism was not the (mis)application but the reconstruction of the Hegelian dialectic under the changed social-historical conditions of capital. For Rose, Lukács's concept of "reification" was too negative regarding the "totality" of capital, which she thought threatened to render capital non-dialectical, and its emancipatory transformation inconceivable. But Rose's perspective remains that of Hegel—pre-industrial capital.

Hegel contra sociology—the "culture" and "fate" of Marxism

Just before she died in 1995, Rose wrote a new preface for a reprint of *Hegel Contra Sociology*, which states that,

> The speculative exposition of Hegel in this book still provides the basis for a unique engagement with post-Hegelian thought, especially postmodernity, with its roots in Heideggerianism....[T]he experience of negativity, the existential drama, is discovered at the heart of Hegelian rationalism....Instead of working with the general question of the dominance of Western metaphysics, the dilemma of addressing modern ethics and politics without arrogating the authority under question is seen as the ineluctable difficulty in Hegel....This book, therefore, remains the core of the project to demonstrate a nonfoundational and radical Hegel, which overcomes the opposition between nihilism and rationalism. It provides the possibility for renewal of critical thought in the intellectual difficulty of our time. (viii)

Since the time of Rose's book, with the passage of Marxist politics into history, the "intellectual difficulty" in renewing critical thought has only gotten worse. "Postmodernity" has not meant the eclipse or end, but rather the unproblematic triumph, of "Western metaphysics"—in the exhaustion of "postmodernism."[19] Consideration of the problem Rose addressed in terms of the Hegelian roots of Marxism, the immanent critique of capitalist modernity, remains the "possibility" if not the "actuality" of our time. Only by facing it squarely can we avoid sharing in Marxism's "fate" as a "culture." For this "fate," the devolution into "culture" or what Rose called "pre-bourgeois society," (234) threatens not merely a form of politics on the Left, but humanity: it represents the failure to attain, let alone transcend, the threshold of Hegelian modernity, whose concern Rose recovered. | **P**

1. Gillian Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology* (London: Verso, 2009). Originally published by Athlone Press, London in 1981.
2. Rose, *The Melancholy Science* (London: Macmillan, 1978).
3. See Rose's review of the English translation of Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* (1973) in *The American Political Science Review* 70, no. 2 (June 1976): 598–599; and her review of Susan Buck-Morss's *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute* (1977) and Zoltán Tar's *The Frankfurt School: The Critical Theories of Horkheimer and Adorno* (1977) in *History and Theory* 18, no. 1 (February 1979): 126–135.
4. Rose, Review of *Negative Dialectics*, 599.
5. Rose, Review of *The Origin of Negative Dialectics* and *The Frankfurt School*, 126, 135.
6. Rose, *The Melancholy Science*, 2.
7. See, for instance, Adorno, "Progress" (1962) and "Critique" (1969), in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 143–160 and 281–288.
8. Adorno, "Aspects of Hegel's Philosophy," in *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 6.
9. See Georg Lukács's 1922 preface to *History and Class Consciousness*:

   > The author of these pages...believes that today it is of practical importance to return in this respect to the traditions of Marx interpretation founded by Engels (who regarded the "German workers' movement" as the "heir to German classical philosophy"), and by Plekhanov. He believes that all good Marxists should form, in Lenin's words, "a kind of society of the materialist friends of the Hegelian dialectic." But Hegel's position today is the reverse of Marx's own. The problem with Marx is precisely to take his method and his system *as we find them* and to demonstrate that they *form a coherent unity that must be preserved*. The opposite is true of Hegel. The task he imposes is to separate out from the complex web of ideas with its sometimes glaring contradictions all the *seminal elements* of his thought and rescue them as a *vital intellectual force for the present.* (*History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics,* [*HCC*] trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971; orig. pub. 1923), xlv)

10. Karl Korsch, "Marxism and Philosophy" (1923), in *Marxism and Philosophy*, trans. Fred Halliday (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970 and 2008), 39.
11. Korsch, "Marxism and Philosophy," 40.
12. See, for instance: Rosa Luxemburg, *Reform or Revolution?* (1900), in which Luxemburg pointed out that all reforms aimed at ameliorating the crisis of capital actually exacerbated it; and Vladimir Lenin, *What is to be Done?* (1902), in which Lenin supposed that overcoming reformist "revisionism" in international (Marxist) social democracy would amount to and be the express means for overcoming capitalism. In *The State and Revolution* (1917), Lenin, following Marx, critiqued anarchism for calling for the "abolition" of the state and not recognizing that the necessity of the state could only "wither away" as a function of the gradual overcoming of "bourgeois right" whose prevalence would persist in the revolutionary socialist "workers' state" long after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie: The state would continue as a symptom of capitalist social relations without capitalists *per se*. For Lukács and Korsch, such arguments demonstrated a dialectical approach to Marxism itself on the part of its most thoughtful actors.
13. Georg Lukács, preface to *HCC*, xlvi. Citing Lukács in her review of Buck-Morss and Tar on the Frankfurt School, Rose posed the problem of Marxism this way:

    > The reception of the Frankfurt School in the English-speaking world to date displays a paradox. Frequently, the Frankfurt School inspires dogmatic historiography although it represents a tradition which is attractive and important precisely because of its rejection of dogmatic or "orthodox" Marxism. This tradition in German Marxism has its origin in Lukács's most un-Hegelian injunction to take Marxism as a "method"—a method which would remain valid even if "every one of Marx's individual theses" were proved wrong. One can indeed speculate whether philosophers like Bloch, Benjamin, Horkheimer, and Adorno would have become Marxists if Lukács had not pronounced thus. For other Marxists this position spells scientific "suicide." (Rose, review of Buck-Morss and Tar, 126)

    Nevertheless, Rose used a passage from Lukács's 1924 book in eulogy, *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thought* as the epigraph for her essay: "[T]he dialectic is not a finished theory to be applied mechanically to all the phenomena of life *but only exists as theory in and through this application.*" Critically, Rose asked only that Lukács's own work—and that of other "Hegelian" Marxists—remain true to this observation.
14. See Lukács, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," in *HCC*, 171–175:

    > The *class meaning* of [the thoroughgoing capitalist rationalization of society] lies precisely in the fact that the bourgeoisie regularly transforms each new qualitative gain back onto the quantitative level of yet another rational calculation. Whereas for the proletariat, the "same" development has a different class meaning: it means the *abolition of the isolated individual*, it means that the workers can become conscious of the social character of labor, it means that the abstract, universal form of the societal principle as it is manifested can be increasingly concretized and overcome....For the proletariat however, this ability to go beyond the immediate in search for the "remoter" factors means the *transformation of the objective nature of the objects of action*.

    The "objective nature of the objects of action" includes that of the working class itself.
15. Such misapprehension of revolutionary Marxism as voluntarism has been commonplace. Rosa Luxemburg's biographer, the political scientist J.P. Nettl, addressed this issue as follows:

    > Rosa Luxemburg was emphatically not an anarchist and went out of her way to distinguish between "revolutionary gymnastic," which was "conjured out of the air at will," and her own policy (see her 1906 pamphlet on *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions*)....[Later Communist historians have burdened her] with the concept of spontaneity....[But hers] was a dynamic, dialectic doctrine; organization and action revived each other and made each other grow....It may well be that there were underlying similarities to anarchism, insofar as any doctrine of action resembles any other. A wind of action and movement was blowing strongly around the edges of European culture at the time, both in art and literature as well as in the more political context of Sorel and the Italian Futurists....[But] most important of all, Rosa Luxemburg specifically drew on a Russian experience [of the 1905 Revolution] which differed sharply from the intellectual individualism of Bakunin, [Domela] Nieuwenhuis and contemporary anarchism. She always emphasized self-discipline as an adjunct to action—the opposite of the doctrine of self-liberation which the Anarchists shared with other European action philosophies. ("The German Social Democratic Party 1890–1914 as Political Model," *Past and Present* 30 (April 1965): 88–89)

    > The German Left evolved a special theory of action. Where the German Left emphasized action against organization, Lenin preached organization as a means to action. But action was common to both—and it was this emphasis on action which finally brought the German Left and the Russian Bolsheviks into the same camp in spite of so many serious disagreements. In her review of the Bolshevik revolution, written in September 1918, Rosa Luxemburg singled out this

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admissions so long as they are not denied admission and the selection process can be deemed fair.

Fortunately, positive counter-tendencies exist: Some of the protests voiced solidarity with trade unionists, the unemployed, school kids, apprentices, and migrants. Numerous letters of solidarity and "strike" donations arrived at the lecture halls, while, for their part, students sought dialogue with representatives of other organizations. Today, local networks helping merge social struggles on and beyond the campus continue to develop, and a call has been issued for a central demonstration around the slogan "Uni für alle" ("University for all"). Here, at least, activists are posing the question of making education open to everybody, not just making it easier for those who have already gained admission.

But despite these more radically egalitarian tendencies, the student movement in Germany overall exhibits an unmistakable reformist-elitist character, for reasons that are not hard to grasp: Many of the student protesters have already self-identified with the purposes of the German ruling class. Which is to say, their hopes are pinned on joining its ranks. Such an attitude, of course, is unsurprising in itself. After all, few of the students are working class, and the selection function is the main role of educational systems in bourgeois society. Some succeed in competition, others do not. Better education in bourgeois society is, first and foremost, a business interest for the state, which wants to accrue professional talent within its national borders. Better education means a more efficient German professional class and, therefore, greater German capital. Most students who participated in the protests wanted better education. If this means nothing more than better education for the business sectors of Germany in its competition with other nations, then the students, however extreme and spectacular their tactics, are hardly making radical, emancipatory demands.

It comes as no surprise, then, that German politicians, whose vocation is to advance Germany in the international arena, applaud the pluck of these future elites. Scarcely a politician in Germany, regardless of orientation, failed to support the students in their demands for better education. The only reason why explicit concern about Germany's well-being was not actually prefaced to every student resolution in 2009, as was done in the educational strikes the year before, is because of the overall consensus on this point. Students do not have to point out that they were protesting for Germany: Everybody already knows. Politicians, deans, journalists, and students all agree that Germany has to hold its own and that education is an important enticement inducing capital to locate there. The student strikes are a healthy expression of Germany's restless (dis)content with the status quo and the potential for creative innovation in the rising generation of professionals. The widespread support in the media and among politicians is therefore unsurprising. Education officials agreed to revisit certain parts of the bachelor's/master's system. Some university administrations made minor concessions. As long as the students continue to argue the interest of the nation in their appeals, they will be caught within a framework of de facto nationalism. The students can only overcome this perspective if they situate the education system within the predominant social relations of our time and conceive of their movement as part of a broader social struggle across nations.

Most within the "strike collectives" would repudiate any claim they are tacitly nationalist. Yet, because discussions of theory were discarded in favor of activism and "ideological freedom," this nationalist position prevailed. However, now that the broad student movement consists mainly of scattered anti-fascist groups, the call for a "University for all" demonstration at the end of January clearly represents a turn for the better: "Instead of appealing to the welfare-cutting, excluding surveillance state, we need to take to the streets together and fight to turn the school into *our school*, the university into a university for everyone, the [process of] social production into one satisfying everybody's needs—life into self-determined life."[2]

Radical intellectuals advancing emancipatory politics are anything but the norm in the modern university. Students contribute to broader social struggles not *because of*, but *despite* their university degrees. Indeed, the same holds true, mutatis mutandis, for the rest of society as well. In his plea "For Public Sociology," Michael Burawoy comments wryly on the effects of the education system: "It is as if graduate school is organized to winnow away at the moral commitments that inspired the interest in sociology in the first place."[3] Our hopes lie with the critical theorist described by Horkheimer in "Traditional and Critical Theory": "The abstract sociological concept of an intelligentsia which is to have missionary functions is, by its structure, an hypostatization of specialized science. Critical theory is neither 'deeply rooted' like totalitarian propaganda nor 'detached' like the liberal intelligentsia."[4]

Universities are not, in and of themselves, a privileged source of emancipation, and in their own struggle students should join with those interested in more than student politics. On a few campuses, students gained permanent "free spaces for critical thinking," and local networks for broader causes are emerging. These alliances should refrain from representing themselves as apolitical and anti-intellectual, even at the risk of diminished participation. Until this happens, those looking for collaborators in the project of re-establishing the Left will find that their recruitment prospects among the German student movement remain constricted. | **P**

1. Along with <www.bildungsstreik2009.de>, the websites <www.unserebildung.de> and <www.unsereuni.de> also contain information about the current German student movement. Unfortunately, most of the text on these sites is not yet available in English.
2. Bundesweiter Bildungsstreik, "Die Uni Gehört Allen," <www.bildungsstreik.net/die-uni-gehort-allen-30-01-2010-bundesweite-demo/>.
3. Michael Burawoy, "For Public Sociology" (American Sociological Association Presidential Address, University of California, Berkeley, 2004).
4. Max Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 223–224.

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commitment to action for particular praise. Here she saw a strong sympathetic echo to her own ideas, and analyzed it precisely in her own terms:

> With…the seizure of power and *the carrying forward* of the revolution the Bolsheviks have solved the famous question of a 'popular majority' which has so long oppressed the German Social Democrats…not through a majority to a revolutionary tactic, but through a revolutionary tactic to a majority. [quoting RL, *The Russian Revolution*]

With action as the cause and not the consequence of mass support, she saw the Bolsheviks applying her ideas in practice—and incidentally provides us with clear evidence as to what she meant when she spoke of majority and masses. In spite of other severe criticisms of Bolshevik policy, it was this solution of the problem by the Bolsheviks which definitely ensured them the support of the German Left. (Nettl, 91–92)

> The possibilities adumbrated by modern sociology have not yet been adequately exploited in the study of political organizations, dynamics, relationships. Especially the dynamics; most pictures of change are "moving pictures," which means that they are no more than "a composition of immobilities…a position, then a new position, etc., *ad infinitum*" [quoting Henri Bergson]. The problem troubled Talcott Parsons among others, just as it long ago troubled Rosa Luxemburg (Nettl, 95).

This was what Lukács, following Lenin and Luxemburg, meant by the problem of "reification."

16. As Lukács put it in his 1922 preface to *HCC*,

> I should perhaps point out to the reader unfamiliar with dialectics one difficulty inherent in the nature of dialectical method relating to the definition of concepts and terminology. It is of the essence of dialectical method that concepts which are false in their abstract one-sidedness are later transcended (zur Aufhebung gelangen). The process of transcendence makes it inevitable that we should operate with these one-sided, abstract and false concepts. These concepts acquire their true meaning less by definition than by their function as aspects that are then transcended in the totality. Moreover, it is even more difficult to establish fixed meanings for concepts in Marx's improved version of the dialectic than in the Hegelian original. For if concepts are only the intellectual forms of historical realities then these forms, one-sided, abstract and false as they are, belong to the true unity as genuine aspects of it. Hegel's statements about this problem of terminology in the preface to the *Phenomenology* are thus even more true than Hegel himself realized when he said: "Just as the expressions 'unity of subject and object', of 'finite and infinite', of 'being and thought', etc., have the drawback that 'object' and 'subject' bear the same meaning as when *they exist outside that unity, so* that within the unity they mean something other than is implied by their expression: so, too, falsehood is not, *qua* false, any longer a moment of truth." In the pure historicization of the dialectic this statement receives yet another twist: in so far as the "false" is an aspect of the "true" it is both "false" and "non-false." When the professional demolishers of Marx criticize his "lack of conceptual rigor" and his use of "image" rather than "definitions," etc., they cut as sorry a figure as did Schopenhauer when he tried to expose Hegel's "logical howlers" in his Hegel critique. All that is proved is their total inability to grasp even the ABC of the dialectical method. The logical conclusion for the dialectician to draw from this failure is not that he is faced with a conflict between different scientific methods, but that he is in the presence of a *social phenomenon* and that by conceiving it as a socio-historical phenomenon he can at once refute it and transcend it dialectically. (xlvi–xlvii)

For Lukács, the self-contradictory nature of the workers movement was itself a "socio-historical phenomenon" that had brought forth a revolutionary crisis at the time of Lukács's writing: from a Marxian perspective, the working class and its politics were the most important phenomena and objects of critique to be overcome in capitalist society.

17. See Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
18. See Adorno, "Reflections on Class Theory" (1942), in *Can One Live After Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 93–110:

> According to [Marxian] theory, history is the history of class struggles. But the concept of class is bound up with the emergence of the proletariat….By extending the concept of class to prehistory, theory denounces not just the bourgeois…[but] turns against prehistory itself….By exposing the historical necessity that had brought capitalism into being, [the critique of] political economy became the critique of history as a whole….All history is the history of class struggles because it was always the same thing, namely, prehistory. (93–94)

> This means, however, that the dehumanization is also its opposite….Only when the victims completely assume the features of the ruling civilization will they be capable of wresting them from the dominant power. (Adorno, "Class Theory," 110)

This follows from Lukács's conception of proletarian socialism as the "completion" of reification:

> The danger to which the proletariat has been exposed since its appearance on the historical stage was that it might remain imprisoned in its immediacy together with the bourgeoisie. With the growth of social democracy this threat acquired a real political organisation which artificially cancels out the mediations so laboriously won and forces the proletariat back into its immediate existence where it is merely a component of capitalist society and not *at the same time* the motor that drives it to its doom and destruction. ("Reification," 196)

> [E]ven the objects in the very centre of the dialectical process [i.e., the political forms of the workers' movement itself] can only slough off their reified form after a laborious process. A process in which the seizure of power by the proletariat and even the organisation of the state and the economy on socialist lines are only stages. They are, of course, extremely important stages, but they do not mean that the ultimate objective has been achieved. And it even appears as if the decisive crisis-period of capitalism may be characterized by the tendency to intensify reification, to bring it to a head. (Lukács, "Reification," 208)

19. Rose's term for the post-1960s "New Left" historical situation is "Heideggerian postmodernity." Robert Pippin, a fellow "Hegelian," in his brief response to the *Critical Inquiry* journal's symposium on "The Future of Criticism," has characterized this similarly as follows:

> [T]he level of discussion and awareness of this issue, in its historical dimensions (with respect both to the history of critical theory and the history of modernization) has regressed….[T]he problem with contemporary critical theory is that it has become insufficiently critical….[T]here is also a historical cost for the neglect or underattention or lack of resolution of this core critical problem: repetition….It may seem extreme to claim—well, to claim at all that such repetition exists (that postmodernism, say, is an instance of such repetition)—and also to claim that it is tied somehow to the dim understanding we have of the post-Kantian situation….[T]hat is what I wanted to suggest. I'm not sure it will get us anywhere. Philosophy rarely does. Perhaps it exists to remind us that we haven't gotten anywhere. ("*Critical Inquiry* and Critical Theory: A Short History of Nonbeing," *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 2 (Winter 2004): 427–428)

Heidegger himself anticipated this result in his essay "Overcoming Metaphysics" (1936–46): "The still hidden truth of Being is withheld from metaphysical humanity. The laboring animal is left to the giddy whirl of its products so that it may tear itself to pieces and annihilate itself in empty nothingness" ("Overcoming Metaphysics," in *The End of Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 87. Elsewhere, Heidegger acknowledged Marx's place in this process: "With the reversal of metaphysics which was already accomplished by Karl Marx, the most extreme possibility of philosophy is attained" ("The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking" (1964), in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 433).

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conclusion that the totality—capitalism—must itself be transcended: "There is but one destiny for the black man. And it is white" (202). But, paradoxically, the obverse, that whiteness is the flipside of blackness, is false. This is the central claim of *BSWM* that stands at both ends of the book. For the black man, admits the narrator, offers "no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man" (90).

BSWM starts with the observation that the isomorphic relationship between the races results in "a massive psycho-existential complex" (xvi). A "cure" can only be had if one analyzes racism as a symptom. Fanon argues that "*only* a psychoanalytic interpretation" can transfigure the significance of the symptom so as to make life more livable. That is, if we bracket the socio-structural causes of racism, then we can attack the psychopathology of race. Anti-black racism often serves to alibi poverty or class differences, but to confuse anti-black racism as the cause of structural disparities is to misunderstand the particularity of modern racism, which is also why a psychoanalytic explanation of racism differs from a sociological one, despite the fact that its object of analysis is the same. A psychoanalytic treatment of racism takes as its concrete concern the affective satisfaction that blacks as well as whites obtain from anti-black racism. One manifestation of this "double narcissism" is that the "white man is locked in his whiteness, the black man in his blackness" (xiv). Fanon thus develops an analysis of racism rather than race—the naturalization of race is the object of this critique. The role of the analyst is to assist the analysand to "'*consciousnessize*' his unconscious, to no longer be tempted by a hallucinatory lactification, but also to act along the lines of a change in social structure" (80). To simply identify oneself politically as either black or white is to eschew the hard work of analysis.

The ambitiousness of *BSWM* is rooted in its attempt to deal with the ways in which the psychical or fantastical reality of race might be more consequential than the empirical one. Because the connotations with the color black are purely negative, blacks share the stereotypes as much as whites, so disalienation can never mean a simple negation of what is black. Jean-Paul Sartre had made a similar claim about anti-Semitism, which, in a sense, "overdetermines" the Jew. Assimilation, nevertheless, eludes the black man, who is burdened with the "fact of blackness," with *history*. Here the new translation substitutes "the lived experience" of the black man for the "fact of blackness." Now "the lived experience" is much closer to the French *l'expérience vécue*, itself a translation of *Erlebnis* from the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty. Lived experience (*Erlebnis*), which is made up of acts (being-in-the-world) in which consciousness/the body that is faced with the world/other, differs from the notion of experience (*Erfahrung*) at the heart of *Bildungsroman* or self-development. But while there is no ahistorical "fact" of blackness, *Erlebnis* remains a descriptive category in *BSWM*, which means it cannot be arrayed against cumulative experience or *Erfahrung*. Fanon as a Martiniquan who is a French citizen does not feel himself to be black, subjectively, but then the realization comes that objectively, the Martiniquan is seen as black. This "fact" comes as an existential shock to Fanon. He writes, in the words of the old translation,

> I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave-ships, and above all else, above all: "Sho' good eatin'."…But I did not want this revision, this thematization. All I wanted was to be a man among other men. I wanted to come lithe and young into a world that was ours and to help build it together. (112 CLM)

If we compare the last bit of this passage in the new translation its valence is suddenly more opaque: "I cast an objective gaze over myself, discovered my blackness, my ethnic features; deafened by cannibalism, backwardness, fetishism, racial stigmas, slave traders, and above all, yes, above all, the grinning *Y a bon Banania*" (92). Absent from the new translation are the tom-toms (*le tympan*), which still somehow deafen the narrator, even when the verb *défoncer* means to batter or smash in. How, one might ask in exasperation, is one to decipher the reference to "*Y a bon Banania*," an advertisement for a French chocolate drink mix that uses a grinning black caricature that is not unlike Aunt Jemima, without so much as a footnote?

These issues aside, the realization that one is black induces "nausea," shame, and it locks the black man in an infernal circle that makes it impossible for "either side to obliterate the past once and for all" (96, 101). But much like the Jew who once stood in as the symbol of humanity, the black man is now forced to do the same; the struggle for disalienation carries within it the emergent universal category of man. The black man thus finds himself faced with the task of transcendence. He is only a rational subject whom others can recognize in spite of this blackness. However the extent to which the black man is an object of racism he cannot be a subject. "The black man is a toy in the white man's hands" (119). Elsewhere, quoting René Étiemble, the narrator observes, "the white man will always be able to find a specious argument: shameful, dubious, and thus doubly effective" (149). There is then a bad-faith quality to racism that delivers it its affective charge. And Fanon is interested in inquiring: What kind of a subject (with a weakened or hyper-cathected ego) needs the affirmation of the other?

The only way out of this dual narcissism is to liquidate history so that one can recognize that what is attributed to the other is what one should attribute to oneself. The book ends with the words: "Was my freedom not given to me to build the world of *you*? At the end of this book we would like the reader to feel with us the open dimension of every consciousness" (206, translation modified). Fanon urges that the same affect that is enlisted in racism (which, when it is negative and destructive is what we refer to as authoritarianism) is, when it is turned inside out, the dynamic invested with the hope of destroying racism—the denied, twisted investment in the other that racism plays on is the same affective source for the obliteration of racism! The interracial utopian vision in *BSWM* is that this transformation needs to occur within the context of capitalism. This is what it means that "whiteness" is the black's "destiny." Fanon attempts to hook the temporal core of psychoanalysis explicitly to the Marxist conception of emancipation.

> Disalienation will be for those Whites and Blacks who have refused to let themselves be locked in the substantialized "tower of the past." For many other black men disalienation will come from refusing to consider their reality as definitive….In no way do I have to dedicate myself to reviving a black civilization unjustly ignored. I will not make myself the man of any past. I do not want to sing the past to the detriment of my present and my future. (201)

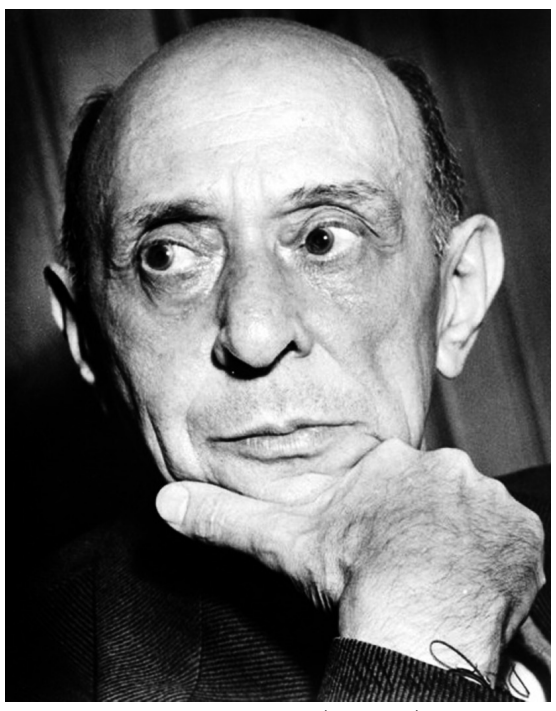
Here, in order to underscore the idea that overcoming the narcissism at the core of racism requires one to break the repetition compulsion of the neurotic symptom, Fanon cites *The Eighteenth Brumaire* to the effect that the socialist revolution draws its poetry from the future. His emphasis on the role of the individual fits this interpretation: On the one hand, the fact that individuals mediate society means racism can be overcome in future based on the elements that are already available; on the other hand, "race" is a reified category that identifies individuals with society.[8] "I am not a prisoner of History….I must constantly remind myself that the real *leap* consists of introducing invention in life….And it is by going beyond the historical and instrumental given that I initiate my cycle of freedom" (204–205).

BSWM makes it clear that emancipation from the psychopathology of racism would mean emancipation from "History" which is itself the manifestation of capital. The collapse of the utopian framework of *BSWM* in *W of E* amounts to an affective disorientation over what *is* versus what *ought* to be the relationship between the struggles against oppressions of various kinds that are reproduced in the context of capital, that therefore also contribute to its reproduction, in the struggle to overcome capital. As the narrator in *BSWM* cautions, "[a] long time ago the black man acknowledged the undeniable superiority of the white man" (202). This superiority was synonymous with capitalism, but insofar as the aim of the black man shifts from trying to achieve a "white existence" to "culture," so much the worse. He asks in frustration: "What am I supposed to do with a black empire?…I am French. I am interested in French culture, French civilization, and the French," "[all] I wanted…[was] to be a man among men" (179, 92). After all, "I should like nothing better" than to drown in "the white flood composed of men like Sartre and Aragon," since as a man "the Peloponnesian War is as much mine as the invention of the compass" (179, 200). The fact is often overlooked, in light of the uncritical enthusiasm for Third World nationalism in *W of E*, but Fanon supported *départementalisation* over independence for Martinique after World War II. His call to arms in *W of E*, "come comrades…let us flee this stagnation [of Europe] where dialectics has gradually turned into a logic of the status quo," fit a wider trend on the Left which sought to locate the future of socialism in Third World movements. This shift, which renders the utopianism of *BSWM* implausible, is useful negatively, in provoking a critical recognition of the ways in which the Left abandoned the aim of emancipation. The limitations of a spatial "fix" to the temporal dynamic of capital are all the more salient in light of historical failures of decolonization to achieve autonomy or autarky in the ex-colonies. These failures obscure, putting it simply, what the black narrator of *BSWM* advocates, namely the rejection of ontology. The Arab like the black Martiniquan had the right to refuse *being* in the name of *becoming*. Yet the reification or naturalization of race is surely what Fanon's final prayer in *BSWM* is intended to stave off: "My final prayer: O my body, make of me always a man who questions" (206). It is thus in the poetry of *BSWM* rather than in the fervent cries of *W of E* that Fanon represents what the Left should aspire to be, namely "hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present."[9] | **P**

1. His other, more minor works include, *A Dying Colonialism* (*L'An Cinq de la Révolution Algérienne* [1959]) as well as *Toward the African Revolution* (*Pour la Révolution Africaine* [1964]).
2. All references to the older translation by Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967) are indicated by the abbreviation CLM.
3. See Homi K. Bhabha's influential essay "Interrogating Identity: Frantz Fanon and the Postcolonial Prerogative," in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 40–65.
4. *W of E* was lauded by the New Left Islamist Ali Shariati as an inspiration for the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Yet Fanon the Marxist probably stood no chance once the mullahs turned their ire against their leftist counterparts who were treated as atheistic interlopers in their revolution. Fanon is also often remembered as a *mujahid* (warrior) of the Algerian War. However there is no space in the martyrologies of the Arab-Islamist FLN for Fanon. He occupies a liminal space even in Martinique, where Aimé Césaire, the chief theorist of the negritude movement Fanon critiqued in *BSWM*, made it clear: "He chose. He became Algerian. Lived, fought and died Algerian." Even within France the "68ers" completely overlooked Fanon in their enthusiasm for the "revolutions" then afoot in China and Vietnam. For more on the ambivalent ways in which Fanon is remembered see the excellent biographical work by David Macey, *Frantz Fanon* (New York: Picador, 2000).
5. Richard Philcox contributes an afterword, "On Retranslating Fanon, Retrieving a Lost Voice," to *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 241–251.
6. A more complete consideration of the awkward relationship between existentialism and phenomenology in *BSWM* is beyond the remit of this review, but if the earlier Markmann translation was weighted toward existentialism, in the new edition Philcox sometimes veers in the opposite direction. For example, in the conclusion, Fanon writes, "Je suis solidaire de l'Etre dans la mesure où je le dépasse" (*Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* [Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1952], 186). Markmann had translated this as "I am a part of Being to the degree that I go beyond it," capturing the reference to Sartre's *L'Etre et le Néant* (Being and Nothingness [1943]), whereas Philcox translates this sentence much more freely as "I show my solidarity with humanity provided I can go one step further" (229 CLM; 204).
7. We should be thankful that the translator breaks the model first adopted in his retranslation of *W of E*, where "negro" is substituted with "black man" whenever the speaker refers to West Indians or Africans and "nigger" is retained only when the colonizer refers to the same, or else the entire thrust of *BSWM* would be lost.
8. For a suggestive article on this subject, see Amanda Armstrong, "On the Relationship Between Psychoanalysis and Emancipatory Politics" *Platypus Review* 2 (February 2008).
9. Percy Bysshe Shelley, *A Defense of Poetry* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrills Company, 1904), 90.

Book Review: Theodore W. Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*. Translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

Bret Schneider



Autrian composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951), whose works Adorno considers at length in *Philosophy of New Music*.

THE NEW TRANSLATION AND REPUBLICATION of Theodor Adorno's *Philosophy of New Music* is a further clarification of modernism, necessitated by the latest discontents with postmodernism's vulgarization, which keeps it at a fictitious distance. Perhaps as his remedy for the most fragmented part of the whole of the arts, namely music, translator Robert Hullot-Kentor has in recent years been steadily reintroducing Adorno's aesthetic philosophy to English readers.[1] The republication of *Philosophy of New Music* continues this process, further introducing readers to Adorno's complex aesthetic theory, also elaborated recently in *Current of Music*, which embodies Adorno's aesthetic hopes for the early emergence of radio transmission. Republishing *Philosophy of New Music* serves the purpose of clarifying a nexus of art history where the relationship between aesthetics and theory could have been drastically reformulated.

Philosophy of New Music is one of Adorno's more obscure, niche analyses. Split into two sections comprising intricate dissections of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, it is tighter and less ambitious than *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* co-written with Max Horkheimer around the same time. However, *New Music* can be understood as *Dialectic*'s complement, its object being entangled with that of the culture industry critiqued generally in the more famous volume from the same period. Operating in an inverse way, *Philosophy of New Music* seeks to exacerbate and expose the same symptoms from within modernist music itself. American readers may have a difficult entry into the text, not only because the writing styles itself on Schoenberg's esoteric manner of composition, but also because of Adorno's object of critique, the historical complications provoking the European modernist avant-garde. The text pays strict attention to Schoenberg's music technique, while delving into historical comparisons to previous composers like Richard Wagner and the regressive, constrictive trajectory implied by their music styles. The volume also incorporates some of Adorno's most sustained ruminations on the changed significance of the musical "material," one of Adorno's most pivotal and least understood concepts for approaching new music as a response to rapidly changing social conditions. As a concept, it seeks to articulate possibilities emanating from the split in idealization and materialization in art—possibilities we now identify as reaching a climax with the music of the mid-century avant-garde that Adorno anticipated.

Philosophy of New Music thwarts the tired criticism of Adorno's writing as elitist, ambiguous, generalizing, or abstract. His critique of Schoenberg adheres so meticulously to the composer's actual technique that, in the process, he demonstrates the ability of objective analysis to destabilize an already contingent aesthetic construction by way of acute specificity. Early on, Adorno attacks *status quo* criticism of avant-garde music: "Amongst the reproaches that [mainstream critics] obstinately repeat, the most prevalent charge is the charge of intellectualism, the claim that new music springs from the head, not the heart or the ear....[Such criticisms] are put forward as if the tonal idiom were itself given by nature....The second nature of the tonal system is an illusion originating in history" (13). Already discernible are the grounds for his more well-known critiques of mass deception through pop music. The simplistic charge of elitism leveled against Adorno's critique emerges out of bourgeois radical culture itself and represents a failure to comprehend the complicated forms of new music's material reckoning with tonal idiom. It thus implies an exhaustion of that history's potential. Bourgeois society's inability to listen to Schoenberg manifests a disintegration of historical consciousness and the surprising reification of a history (tonal progression) which seemed the very opposite of stasis. For Adorno, a dogmatic concretizing of this tonal illusion pre-echoes the same consciousness pop music is a response to, as its development is bound up in both radical and mainstream aesthetics. This is elaborated in the section "Radical Music Is Not Immune," where—in a style which itself reflects the formal contortions of modern artists like Schoenberg who "realize total enlightenment in themselves, regardless of the cunning naïveté of the culture industry"—Adorno asserts that "they also simultaneously make themselves like the internal structure of what they oppose and enter into opposition with their own intentions" (16). A relentless train of self-contained, monolithic statements like these, poetically mobilized to question their own truth content, forms the pointilist mimicry that comprises the whole of the Schoenberg analysis. Likewise, the literary technique of connecting immense paragraphs sans line-breaks (identical in form to Samuel Beckett's contemporary novel trilogy, which Adorno admired) echoes the calculated and monotonous historical transformation from a dynamic music to one of stasis: "the music no longer presents itself as being in a process of development" (50).

The first part of the book, "Schoenberg and Progress," introduces the issue of musical style as the hardening against suffering briefly alluded to in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. "What radical music knows is the untransfigured suffering of men whose powerlessness has so increased that it no longer permits semblance and play" (37). Schoenberg's music, in its strict form and restrictive technique, itself expresses the decline of human subjectivity, allowing it to surface only with dire earnestness. Schoenberg's music embodies Adorno's modern art philosophy. It exemplifies the true art he so intensely argued for, in contradistinction to the false ideology "innervated" in Stravinsky's restoration, which allowed a "binding quality" back into the work. Better a rigorous, elitist art exposing the true, complicated bleakness of declining subjectivity than a fantasized, populist escapism. Though neatly divided into two opposed sections, Schoenberg and Stravinsky each express for Adorno the same individual-consuming "apparatus" of society.

Stravinsky represents all the regressive, destructive complications of a solidarity desperate to maintain the illusion of identity. To Adorno, Stravinsky's music is a calculated mechanism of meandering unintentionality and impressionist lightness (differing from Schoenberg's heavy sound masses). As a mass ornamentation, it summons the audience to rally together to annihilate their own subjectivity. Adorno dissects how Stravinsky's music embodies modernism's paradoxes, incorporating a romanticized primitivism while retaining an impressionist ephemerality of rapidly changing styles. Ritual and sacrifice are significant problems in Stravinsky's music, and Adorno describes their manipulative function in quelling individual subjectivity, a function that is only heightened by Stravinsky's mastery of a style that is both the culmination of history and also ironically its own nihilistic undoing. Adorno notes the ubiquitous trend when he suggests that Stravinsky unwittingly strikes the same nerve as the psychologist C. J. Jung: "The search for musical equivalents

Russian composer Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), who wrote the ballets *The Firebird* (1910) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913). In Stravinsky's highly structured compositional techniques, Adorno identifies a regressive tendency.

to the 'collective unconscious' prepare for the transition to the establishment of the regressive community as a positive achievement" (121). The same regressive impulse extends to the identification with nature in music: "The pressure of reified Bourgeois culture incites flight into the phantasm of nature, which then ultimately proves to be the herald of absolute oppression. The aesthetic nerve quivers to return to the stone age" (113). Almost unflinchingly, the reader can freely associate Stravinsky's ritualist spectacle with reprises of the same in contemporary culture (Lady Gaga's primitive masks embedded in a stylized futurism, and the neo-pastoralism now prevalent in "experimental" drone and electronic folk music, not to mention precious back-to-the-land motifs in contemporary art).

The delusion that Adorno articulates is the same delusion we share today. For this reason, *Philosophy of New Music* is a primary historical artifact for gleaning the impetus of earlier stages of still-crystallizing collective grotesqueness. At first, readers may interpret this text as mere analysis, uncritically adopting the back-cover's claim that the book somehow represents Adorno's "manifesto." But the more the reader grapples with the criticism the volume contains, the more she begins to understand that this text is more than anything else a manifesto on how criticism could actively participate in and clarify artistic concerns, immanently complicating solidarity between theory and practice. That the text has collected so much dust, and that when divorced from its hopes of intellectual action the manifesto socially degrades into the pure "theory" we today (mis)understand it to be, embodies the tragic failure of Adorno's emancipatory modernism.

1. Robert Hullot-Kentor, interview by Paul Chan, *The Brooklyn Rail*, March 2007, <http://www.brooklynrail.org/2007/03/art/robert-hullot>.

Why is it that nobody understands me, yet everybody likes me?

The ambivalence of the current German student movement

Stefan Dietl

"DIESER HÖRSAAL IST BESETZT!" ("This lecture hall is occupied!") In November and December 2009, signs bearing such slogans were found on doors at over 60 German universities. For the second time that year, a broad student movement managed to gain public attention for its demands. Protests at the University of Vienna kicked off what became a Europe-wide solidarity wave. In Germany, the Viennese protest first triggered occupations in Heidelberg, Münster, and Potsdam, after which students at many other institutions also became involved. In most cases, the biggest or most central lecture halls were taken, and tens of thousands of students marched through the streets. The reactions of the different university administrations ranged from immediate eviction (e.g., in Marburg) to negotiations via a press spokesperson (in Jena) to direct dialogue with protesters (in Gießen). For the most part, university administrators and local authorities tolerated the occupations, so that the strongest criticism arose from students opposed to the strikes. Only around two percent of the entire student body participated actively in the sit-ins; of these, dozens lived and slept in the lecture halls, forming working groups, drafting resolutions, and engaging in negotiations. "Strike collectives" were organized according to strictly anti-authoritarian principles with an eye towards the prevention of emerging hierarchies. Publicly visible action peaked on November 24th when students protested a national conference of university rectors and then again on December 10th where protests were held outside an education ministers' conference in Bonn. On some German campuses strike activities continued on an almost daily basis until mid-December. Where students attempted to maintain building occupations over the holidays they were forcibly evicted. On Christmas Day in Munich, for instance, police blocked the entrance to occupied buildings, cutting off food supplies and thereby forcing the strike to a halt. At a handful of campuses, strikes continued for a time after the winter holiday.

What triggered these protests? The website www.bildungsstreik2009.de ("*Educational Strike 2009*")[1] called for a struggle against the commodification and pro-market orientation of education in favor of more self-actuated forms of learning. More concretely, striking students opposed admission restrictions and tuition fees. The deteriorating conditions of universities were attributed to the so-called Bologna Process, a neoliberal initiative that aims at creating a more competitive European Higher Education Area with a harmonized three-cycle system (bachelor's-master's-doctoral) and greater curricular and evaluative standardization. Uniting different student representatives, www.bildungsstreik2009.de argued in the run-up to last year's "hot autumn" that the earlier strike wave in June had accomplished little: There were no modification to the Bologna system, no nationwide abolition of tuitions, no revision of school reforms.

It is difficult to say to what extent the movement has accomplished its goals. For, despite having served at times as the effective organ for the movement, www.bildungsstreik2009.de did not, and does not, represent any formal leadership of the movement as such. During the protests themselves, the site published no joint statements, serving rather as a point of intersection where decentralized collectives could link their wikis and websites, and share Twitter posts. Because of the decentralized nature of the movement itself, it is difficult to establish the common positions or strategies of the protestors. Nevertheless, looking at the different resolutions and events reveals definite patterns and allows one to formulate at least a tentative answer to the question of whether the student movement in Germany helped lay the foundations, in however modest a way, for a future emancipatory politics.

Truly emancipatory politics will eventually overcome the capitalist logic of accumulation and replace it with social forms capable of the satisfaction of human needs. In order to make emancipatory politics attainable, however, theory, practice, and organization are necessary. An internationalist, anti-fascist, anti-capitalist youth movement uniting apprentices, students, the unemployed, the precariously self-employed, and young workers will only be the first step in this direction, and the need for this first step is all the more compelling given the global economic crisis. In Germany, our priority must lie in fighting emerging authoritarian tendencies. Here we are confronted with gradual but significant increases in the state's use of emergency powers, a growing involvement of the military in government decision-making, illegal information sharing between different government departments, and the slashing of social welfare programs. If these trends continue, the scope for emancipatory politics will be drastically curtailed. Ending this disenfranchisement and stopping the reconstruction of coercive apparatuses are therefore crucial.

Any political movement must be measured against the standard of whether or not it constitutes an emancipatory point of departure—that is, whether or not it takes us a step further towards a society without exploitation, oppression, and misery. In the case of the 2009 student movement in Germany, the question is doubtful, since, instead of laying the foundations for emancipatory politics, a major part of the student movement in Germany can be described as reformist, elitist, and de facto nationalist. While there are some counter-tendencies, they are not dominant and do not characterize the movement as a whole.

First, respecting the reformist-elitist character of the movement, it must be acknowledged that most criticism of the pro-market orientation and commodification of the German university floats free of any analysis of the role of education in bourgeois society. Rather, such criticisms are inspired by Humboldtian idealism, evoking older educational models in which the cultivation of the "spirit" was appreciated more than it is now in the age of the "turbo degree." Student protesters shy away from acknowledging the fact that "turbo studies" form an integral part of current economic conditions and represent the state's response to the necessities of capital. They shy away from the recognition that, regardless of whatever other purpose it may serve, students require education as employment credentials in a capitalist labor market.

The protesters' reluctance to ground their demands in an analysis of the present purpose and character of university education explains why the word *capitalism* was scarcely mentioned in their resolutions. Explicit acknowledgement and analysis of the relationship between the capitalist mode of production and bourgeois education systems were silenced by the argument that such talk would deter less radical students or result in the protests' not being taken seriously. This reluctance matches the widespread objections by many student representatives to broader social demands. They repeatedly emphasized that the movement was not chasing after utopian dreams, but rather aiming for palpable improvements in education. In this vein, they often distanced themselves from the student movement of the 1960s. Their protest, they were careful to observe, was not about changing the world or "the system." It should not, therefore, be confused with the protests of past generations. Today's European student radicals seek concrete changes in a clearly defined domain.

Those among the students who vigorously advocated for a strategy that would highlight the expansion of commodification to all domains of human life nevertheless supported the tactic of zeroing in on the educational system first. Criticism of social relations was relegated to reading circles and alternative lectures, or else it was simply postponed for the times one was not involved in the "real work" of realpolitik. The students failed to grasp how the improvements in education that can actually be realized within the system are limited. It does, of course, make a difference for the subjective well-being of students whether the bachelor's degree has to be obtained within 6 or 8 semesters, and whether one is restricted to a fixed schedule or can also include non-degree courses of personal interest. However, reforms of this nature do not directly address the social function of state education. The role of the education system in this society is to produce an unqualified and semi-qualified mass together with a small, but highly qualified elite. The latter are necessary to provide a functional and ongoing national innovation system generative of high levels of generic knowledge that can then be readily exploited by industry.

Demands for improvements within current social relations are driven by one thing above all: the desire to come out on top in the social selection process. This implies the students' widespread, tacit acceptance of the function of education, namely selection. And those in the student movement who openly denounce admission mechanisms are confronted with a dilemma: The politicization of debates about admission as well as the education system as such is unpopular among many of the protestors themselves. Freedom from ideology is enshrined in this student movement. Protesters categorically resist being "instrumentalized" or "manipulated" by political groups. To the protestors, taking any stance on greater social issues means that one is merely recapitulating "dogmas of the past." When points made in debate are identified as part of a "political program," they are rejected on the grounds that only "authentic" thoughts are permitted. For instance, when in Regensburg a member of the German radical group Die Linke pushed for linking the students' protest to demands for broader social transformation, he was suspected of merely campaigning for his party, and consequently silenced. Needless to say, this depoliticized and anti-intellectual attitude leaves little space for discussing anything but very narrow reforms at one's own university. Only thus, the protestors reason, can one safely avoid "political manipulation"—when, in reality, politics are avoided in toto.

The only accepted "political reference point" of the current student movement in Germany is the human rights argument: Education is a basic right for everybody! Unfortunately, both the human as well as the civic right to education is, like any rights conceded by capitalist states, bound to the fulfillment of certain duties, whether one agrees or not. In this case, the right to education is granted only to the extent that the educated apply the skills and knowledge gained through the bourgeois educational system for the good of bourgeois society.

The reformist and elitist character of the most influential segment within the contemporary German student movement is manifest by the near total absence of demands for the abolition of the gymnasium system (selective secondary schools) or demands for unrestricted admission to universities, from janitor to junk collector. The students are, of course, perfectly aware that admission to the university is not available to all. As of 2006, only 35.5 percent of the total population had ever enrolled in college courses, with roughly a third of this number completing university degrees. Still, the protesters do not object to the limited number of

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