Adorno, Foucault, and the End of Progress: Critical Theory in Postcolonial Times[1]

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Prologue: Critical Theory in postcolonial times

In the 1993 sequel to his ground-breaking and field-defining book *Orientalism*, Edward Said offers the following searing indictment of Frankfurt School critical theory: "Frankfurt School critical theory, despite its seminal insights into the relationships between domination, modern society, and the opportunities for redemption through art as critique, is stunningly silent on racist theory, anti-imperialist resistance, and oppositional practice in the empire."[2] Moreover, Said argues that this is no mere oversight; to the contrary, it is a motivated silence. Frankfurt School critical theory, like other versions of European theory more generally, espouses what Said calls an invidious and false universalism, a "blithe universalism" that "assume[s] and incorporate[s] the inequality of races, the subordination of inferior cultures, the acquiescence of those who, in Marx's words, cannot represent themselves and therefore must be represented by others."[3] Such 'universalism' has, for Said, played a crucial role in connecting (European) culture with (European) imperialism for centuries, for imperialism as a political project cannot sustain itself without the *idea of empire*, and the idea of empire, in turn, is nourished by a philosophical and cultural imaginary that justifies the political subjugation of distant territories and their native populations through claims that such peoples are less advanced, cognitively inferior, and therefore naturally subordinate.[4]

Twenty plus years after Said made this charge, not enough has changed; contemporary Frankfurt school critical theory, for the most part, remains all too silent on the problem of imperialism.[5] Neither of the major contemporary theorists most closely associated with the legacy of the Frankfurt School, Jürgen Habermas or Axel Honneth, has made systematic reflection on the paradoxes and challenges produced by the waves of de-colonization that characterized the latter half of the twentieth century a central focus of his work in critical theory, nor has either theorist engaged seriously with the by now substantial body of literature in post-colonial theory or studies.[6] In the case of Habermas, this lack of attention is all the more notable given his increasing engagement in recent years with issues of globalization, cosmopolitanism, human rights, and the prospects for various forms of post- and supra-national legal and political forms.[7]

Like Said, I believe that there is a reason for this silence, and I think that the reason is related to the particular role that ideas of historical progress, development, social evolution, and socio-cultural learning play in justifying and grounding the normative perspective of contemporary Frankfurt school critical theory.[8] Habermas and Honneth both rely, in different ways, on a broadly speaking left-Hegelian strategy for grounding or justifying the normativity of critical theory, in which the claim that our current communicative or recognitional practices represent the outcome of a progressive historical learning or social evolutionary process and therefore are deserving of our support and allegiance figures prominently.[9] Although neither thinker subscribes to an old-fashioned, metaphysically loaded philosophy of history with its strong claims to the unity, necessity, and irreversibility of historical progress, both do endorse a post-metaphysical, contingent, disaggregated story about modernity as the result of a process of historical learning or

social evolution. Moreover, and more important, both *rely* on this story about historical learning or social evolution to justify and ground their own normative perspective. In other words, both Habermas and Honneth ground their forward looking conception of progress as a moral-political goal – what I call progress as an imperative – in a backward looking story about the processes of social evolution or historical learning that have led up to 'us' – what I call progress as a 'fact'.[10] For Habermas, this left-Hegelian understanding of modernity is one strand in a larger argument that also consists of a universalist, formal-pragmatic analysis of linguistic communication; for Honneth, it is part of an attempt to work out a thicker, more contextualist account of normativity. These important and substantial differences aside, however, both thinkers are deeply committed to the idea that European, Enlightenment modernity – or at least certain aspects or features thereof – represents an advance over pre-modern, non-modern, or traditional forms of life and, more importantly, this idea plays a crucial role in grounding the normativity of critical theory for each thinker. This is, I think, why Habermas continues to defend the universal, context-transcending character of the ideals that emerged historically in the European Enlightenment even in the wake of charges that his approach is Eurocentric,[11] and Honneth goes so far as to argue that the idea of historical progress is irreducible or ineliminable for anyone doing critical theory.[12]

But it is precisely this assumption that proves to be a major obstacle to the project of opening Frankfurt School critical theory up to a serious and sustained engagement with postcolonial studies. For perhaps the major lesson of postcolonial scholarship over the last thirty-five years has been that the developmentalist, progressive reading of history – in which Europe or 'the West' is viewed as the outcome of a progressive, historical

development – and the so-called civilizing mission of the West, both of which have served historically to justify colonialism and imperialism and continue to underwrite the informal imperialism of the current world economic, legal, and political order, are deeply intertwined.[13] In other words, as James Tully has pithily put the point, the language of progress and development is the language of oppression and domination for two thirds of the world's people.[14] If we accept Nancy Fraser's Marx-inspired definition of critical theory as the "self-clarification of the struggles and wishes of the age,"[15] and if we further assume that struggles around decolonization and postcolonial politics are among the most significant struggles and wishes of our own age,[16] then it seems to follow that if it wishes to be truly critical, critical theory should frame its research program and its conceptual framework with an eye toward decolonial and anti-imperialist struggles and concerns. In the light of this desideratum, however, Habermas and Honneth's ongoing commitment to and reliance upon the idea of historical progress raises a deep and difficult challenge for their approach to critical theory: how can their critical theory be truly critical if it relies on an imperialist meta-narrative to ground its approach to normativity? On the other hand, it must be granted that Habermas and Honneth have adopted this left-Hegelian strategy for good reasons. Seeking to ground their normative perspective immanently, within the existing social world, but without collapsing into relativism or conventionalism, they have turned to the idea of social evolution or historical progress as a way of capturing a kind of transcendence from within. Thus, one might justifiably ask how critical theory can be truly critical if it gives up its distinctive, left-Hegelian strategy for grounding normativity?

In what follows, I attempt to chart a way out of this dilemma by sketching an alternative strategy for thinking through the relationship between history and normativity,

drawn from the work of Theodor Adorno and Michel Foucault. My overall aim is to show that critical theory can find within its own – and nearby – theoretical tradition the resources not only for decolonizing itself by weaning itself off of its progressive reading of history but also for a contextualist, immanent grounding of its own normative perspective. Accomplishing both of these tasks is necessary if critical theory is to remain truly critical in postcolonial times.

Critique as Historical Problematization: Adorno and Foucault

Unlike Habermas and Honneth, the thinkers of the first generation of the Frankfurt School were extremely skeptical about the idea of historical progress, to say the least. In his ninth thesis on the philosophy of history, Walter Benjamin famously depicted progress as the storm that blows in from Paradise and irresistibly propels the angel of history into the future. With his back to the future, the angel of history faces the past and "sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet."[17] Following Benjamin, though only up to a point,[18] Adorno pithily encapsulates this view of progress in his lectures on *History and Freedom*: for Adorno, the catastrophe of Auschwitz "makes all talk of progress towards freedom seem ludicrous" and even makes the "affirmative mentality" that engages in such talk look like "the mere assertion of a mind that is incapable of looking horror in the face and that thereby perpetuates it."[19] Importantly, Adorno doubted not that progress in the future was *possible* but rather that any sense could be made of the claim that progress in the past is *actual*, and he was extremely critical of the ways in which belief in the latter becomes a kind of blind faith or ideological mystification that stands in the way of attempts to achieve the former. In other

words, Adorno sought to radically de-couple what I have called progress as an imperative from progress as a 'fact'; the former only becomes possible when we rigorously problematize the latter. This is what motivates his paradoxical sounding claim that "progress occurs where it ends."[20]

Adorno's skepticism about progress as a 'fact' is shared by one of the other great historico-philosophical thinkers of the late twentieth century, Michel Foucault. Already in his first major philosophical work, the *History of Madness*, Foucault announced his intention to write a history that would "remove all chronology and historical succession from the perspective of a 'progress', to reveal in the history of an experience, a movement in its own right, uncluttered by a teleology of knowledge or the orthogenesis of learning. The aim here is to uncover the design and structures of the experience of madness produced by the classical age. That experience is neither progress nor a step backward in relation to any other."[21] Foucault's skepticism was motivated by a somewhat different moral sensibility than Adorno's – his critique of progress stems not from an awareness of the horrors of the Holocaust but rather from a sensitivity to the ways in which progress in the human sciences is predicated upon the exclusion of madmen, social deviants, homosexuals, and others deemed 'abnormals' – but both thinkers converged on the philosophical point that conceptions of historical progress proper necessarily presuppose a suprahistorical, atemporal, universal point of view that we now know to be a metaphysical illusion. In this sense, both Foucault and Adorno can be understood as attempting to break out of – at least a certain interpretation of – Hegelian philosophy of history and its closely related conception of dialectics. And yet Foucault, like Adorno, remained firmly committed throughout his career to the basically Hegelian thought that philosophy –understood as a

project of critique – is a historically situated endeavor, that philosophy consists in a critical reflection on our historical present that makes use of conceptual tools that are themselves the products of history. In this sense, both thinkers can be understood as attempting to think through the possibilities for a thoroughly historicized understanding of critical philosophy, one that also reflexively historicizes itself and its own notion of historicity. In so doing, Adorno and Foucault offer an interesting and compelling alternative to Habermas and Honneth's left-Hegelianism; theirs is a radical taking up of the Hegelian legacy that preserves and deepens its historicizing impulse while jettisoning its progressive claims.

Precisely because of their skepticism about progress, Adorno and Foucault are often read as offering a negative philosophy of history, a *Verfallsgeschichte*, a conservative story of history as a process of decline and fall that is, as Habermas famously put it, "insensitive to the highly ambivalent content of cultural and social modernity."[22] Habermas maintains that Adorno and Foucault follow Nietzsche in collapsing the distinction between validity and power, and that this leads them to a totalizing critique or abstract negation of the normative content of Enlightenment modernity.[23] In what follows, in contrast to this interpretation, [24] I argue that an alternative methodology for thinking history can be found in the work of Adorno and Foucault. Neither progressive nor regressive, this methodology weaves together vindicatory and subversive genealogies – and, as such, it reconstructs history as a story of *both* progress *and* regress – in the service of a distinctive genealogical aim: a critical problematization of our present historical moment. This problematization is in the service of a project of immanent critique that aims not at a totalizing refusal or abstract negation of the normative inheritance of modernity but rather at a fuller realization of that inheritance and its ideals of freedom, inclusion, and respect for the other.

In the remainder of this section, I identify six common themes in the work of Adorno and Foucault that form the core features of my conception of critique as historical problematization. These themes are: reason and power, utopian and utopianism, the historicization of History, genealogy as problematization, critical distance (or, philosophizing with a hammer), and problematization and the normative inheritance of modernity. After laying out these themes, I will consider in the final section of this paper how this Adornian-Foucaultian alternative conception of the relationship between history and normativity can help critical theory to engage in the difficult work of decolonizing itself. Allow me to emphasize at the outset that my aim is neither to compare Adorno and Foucault (though I will of course point out some similarities and differences along the way) nor to synthesize them (though I will be weaving together some of their insights), but rather to use their work to sketch an alternative framework for thinking through the relationship between history, normativity, and critique.

1. *Reason and Power*: Although Adorno and Foucault are both sharply critical of the idea that history is to be understood as the progressive realization of reason, neither endorses a totalizing critique or an abstract negation of enlightenment rationality. For Adorno, "what makes the concept of progress dialectical, in a strictly non-metaphorical sense, is the fact that reason, its organ, is just one thing. That is to say, it does not contain two strata, one that dominates nature and one that conciliates it. Both strata share in all its aspects."[25] In other words, reason is entangled with power and we cannot, as critical theorists following Habermas have attempted to do, identify a use or a stratum of reason that is not so entangled. And yet Adorno is no advocate of "the denial of reason"; indeed, for him, such a denial would be "certainly not a whit superior to the much derided faith in

progress."[26] Rather, the task for philosophy, as Adorno understands it, is to reflect on its own activity as a rational enterprise and in so doing to attempt to transcend itself, to transcend the concept, as he says, "by way of the concept."[27]

Similarly, for Foucault, although his work foregrounds the relationship between reason and power, he does not conclude from this that reason should be put on trial. "To my mind," he writes, "nothing would be more sterile."[28] To say that the entanglement of reason with power justifies putting reason on trial would be to find oneself trapped into "playing the arbitrary and boring part of either the rationalist or the irrationalist,"[29] a trap that Foucault elsewhere refers to as "the 'blackmail' of the Enlightenment."[30] To be sure, unlike Adorno, Foucault is skeptical that "'dialectical' nuances" can enable us to escape this trap.[31] Moreover, he suggests that his attempt to "analyze specific rationalities rather than always invoking the progress of rationalization in general" distinguishes his approach to the entanglement of rationalities and power relations from that of the Frankfurt school.[32] Nevertheless, like Adorno, he insists that it is the task of philosophy understood as a mode of critical thought to reflect on its own rational activity and its entanglements with dangerous relations of power. As he puts it:

> *What* is this Reason that we use? What are its historical effects? What are its limits, and what are its dangers? How can we exist as rational beings, fortunately committed to practicing a rationality that is unfortunately crisscrossed by intrinsic dangers….if it is extremely dangerous to say that reason is the enemy that should be eliminated, it is just as dangerous to say that any critical questioning of this rationality risks sending us into irrationality.[33]

2. *Utopia and Utopianism*: But if the task of philosophy is to reflect on its own rational activity and in so doing attempt to transcend itself, what sense can be made of this notion of transcendence? If the aim of philosophy is to push beyond itself, then what is

meant here by 'beyond'? One might think that there is an abstract, metaphysically loaded conception of utopia waiting in the wings here. Although Adorno is less hostile than Foucault to the concept of utopia,[34] both are careful to offer only negativistic accounts of utopia or the good life toward which such notions of transcendence might aim.[35] For Adorno, we cannot glimpse the right life from within the wrong one, and the very idea of reconciliation forbids it being posited as a positive concept;[36] this is why utopia can only be glimpsed indirectly and in an anticipatory way through the illumination cast by certain works of modern art.[37] Similarly, for Foucault, we cannot have access to a point of view outside of power relations, which means that any conception of a society that is devoid of power relations will be utopian in the negative sense. Both thinkers are very attuned to the fact that any vision of the good life offered from within a society structured by relations of domination is likely to reproduce those power relations, to be infected by them, so they both eschew utopian speculations about what kind of content 'the good life' might have.

However, there is also a sense in which Adorno and Foucault are more radically utopian thinkers than either Habermas or Honneth, for they hold on to the possibility and desirability of radical social change in the direction of an open-ended conception of the future.[38] In other words, Adorno and Foucault envision social transformation not just as the better and fuller realization of our existing normative ideals – for example, a version of liberal democracy that is more transparent and less distorted by power relations, or a recognition order that is more inclusive and egalitarian – but also as the possibility of the radical transformation of those ideals themselves, where that transformation would not necessarily be a regression. The early work of Foucault in particular is filled with thought experiments that pose this possibility: someday we might look back on our present

preoccupation with mental illness and wonder what all the fuss was about, and from that point of view our current historical a priori may well seem benighted. Although we can't imagine what it would be like to inhabit that future that point of view, there is a critical value for Foucault in being open to this possibility and to the idea that the creatures who inhabit that point of view will inhabit a different historical a priori and hence a different moral universe. In order to be genuinely critical, critical theory has to be open to both kinds of social transformation – not just reformism, whether radical or not, but also radical social change – and it has to be careful not to prejudge the outcome of such radical transformations, for to do so would necessarily be to presuppose that our own historical form of life is not only superior to all that came before it but also unsurpassable, that it constitutes the endpoint of history. Such a presupposition is not only conceptually problematic for a theory that aims to be postmetaphysical, but also, for reasons sketched out in the introduction to this paper, politically problematic for a theory that aims to be truly critical.

3. *The Historicization of History*: Both Adorno and Foucault understood their own critical, historico- philosophical projects as historically situated. In this way, both attempted to think through the logic of the second, historicist Enlightenment, to apply the insights of this historically situated conception of rationality reflexively to the historico-philosophical enterprise itself. This is evident in Foucault's early work when he makes it clear that history is important for him not because historicity is characteristic of our reason or our existence but rather because History—the Hegelian conception of history as the progressive unfolding of a rationalization process—is central to our modern historical a priori, which is thus both historical and Historical.[39] The point of Foucault's historicization

of History in the *History of Madness* is to show the historical contingency of this idea of History and to analyze the role that it plays in the exclusion and domination of those who are deemed unreasonable. Similarly, Adorno, in good dialectical fashion, understood his conception of philosophy as historically situated as itself historically situated. In this way, he too historicized his own conception of historicity.[40] Indeed, Adorno is sharply critical of both Heidegger and Hegel on precisely this point, because they fail, in different ways, to historicize their understandings of historicity. Heidegger's is, thus, an "ahistorical concept of history" that, by locating the concept of history in existence, "amounts paradoxically to an ontological inflation that does away with the concept of history by a sort of conjuring trick.[41] If we are to avoid this "ontological inflation" through which history becomes "mutation as immutability,"[42] we have to locate the concept of history *in history* rather than in existence. Adorno repeats the "mutation as immutability" charge against Hegel, whom he accuses of failing to fully realize his own conception of dialectics by appealing to a timeless, unhistorical conception of history that is both metaphysical and mythological: in this way, history for Hegel "acquires the quality of the unhistoric."[43] The proper response to this, according to Adorno, is to perform a reverse dialectical "transmutation," this time "of meta-physics into history."[44] As with Foucault, the historicization of history is both the thread that connects Adorno to Hegel and the gulf that separates them.

4. *Genealogy as Problematization*: The historicization of History is closely bound up with its problematization, where this means two things: first, revealing the historical contingency of our own historically situated point of view;[45] second, showing how that point of view has been contingently made up and as such is bound up with particular relations of power.[46] Because our historically situated point of view is inflected with a

certain conception of History, effectively problematizing that point of view demands a distinctive way of taking up while radically transforming that conception, which I will characterize as a distinctive kind of genealogical method. Following Colin Koopman, who in turn builds on some insights from Bernard Williams, we can distinguish three different modes of genealogical inquiry: subversive, vindicatory, and problematizing.[47] The common core of these three ways of doing genealogy is their attempt to explicate, as Nietzsche puts it in the preface to *On the Genealogy of Morals*, "a knowledge of a kind that has never yet existed or even been desired," namely, "a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances in which [moral values] grew, under which they evolved and changed."[48] In other words, the common core is a historical approach that asks how specific, contingent historical processes have led human beings to develop and embrace this sort of value or concept. However, each of these three modes of genealogical inquiry uses such knowledge for a different end. The subversive mode of genealogy aims not only to raise the question of the historical emergence of our values, but also to reject them as lacking value in some other, more important sense.[49] Vindicatory genealogy, by contrast, traces the historical emergence of our values with an eye toward showing those values to be justified and reasonable.[50] The third mode of genealogical inquiry has both subversive and vindicatory features insofar as it aims to reveal both the dangers and the promise contained in the values, concepts, or forms of life whose contingent history it traces, but its aim is neither simply subversive nor vindicatory. Rather, its aim is a critical problematization of our historical present.

In a late interview, responding to a question about the difficulty of pinning down his political position, Foucault highlights the importance of problematization for his own

practice of critique: "It is true that my attitude isn't a result of the form of critique that claims to be a methodical examination in order to reject all possible solutions except for the valid one. It is more on the order of a 'problematization'—which is to say, the development of a domain of acts, practices, and thoughts that seem to me to pose problems for politics."[51] However, the aim of this critical problematization is not, as Foucault's critics have often assumed, to subvert or undermine the acts, practices, and thoughts that are so problematized. Rather, as he put it in an oft-quoted passage from another of his late interviews: "I would like to do the genealogy of problems, of problématiques. My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do."[52] Moreover, although the aim of Foucault's genealogies is clearly not to vindicate our current practices or forms of rationality, there is an important if often underappreciated vindicatory element to his problematizing genealogical method. This element comes out clearly in "What Is Enlightenment?" when Foucault emphasizes "the extent to which a type of philosophical interrogation—one that simultaneously problematizes man's relation to the present, man's historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject—is rooted in the Enlightenment."[53] In other words, Foucault situates his own problematizing critical method within the philosophical ethos of critique that forms the positive normative inheritance of the Enlightenment—an inheritance that demands fidelity not to its doctrinal elements but rather to its critical attitude, an inheritance that involves reaffirming the legacy of the Enlightenment in and through its radical transformation.

Although Adorno does not use the terms "genealogy" or "problematization"—much less "genealogy as problematization" or "problematizing genealogy"—to describe his

approach to history, still the outlines of such an approach can be found in his work.[54] One of his major criticisms not only of Hegel but also of Marx and Engels is that they failed to acknowledge that the antagonism that they saw as the fundamental driving force of history was itself historically contingent, that "it need not have been."[55] Adorno links this recognition to the possibility of a specifically critical social theory: "Only if things might have gone differently; if the totality is recognized as a socially necessary semblance, as the hypostasis of the universal pressed out of individual human beings; if its claim to be absolute is broken—only then will a critical social consciousness retain its freedom to think that things might be different some day."[56] Moreover, as we saw above, Adorno clearly and emphatically rejects any straightforwardly vindicatory reading of history: "After the catastrophes that have happened, and in view of the catastrophes to come, it would be cynical to say that a plan for a better world is manifested in history and unites it."[57] However, his aim isn't a straightforward rejection of the values and norms of enlightenment modernity either. For example, although Adorno is highly critical of the entanglement of the modern principle of equality with capitalist mechanisms of exchange and bourgeois coldness and thus with structures of reification and relations of domination, he also regards these principles as important historical achievements that protect individuals from some kinds of injustice. "Anyone who like me has had experience of what the world looks like when this element of formal equality is removed," Adorno writes, "will know from his own experience, or at the very least from his own fear, just how much human value resides in this concept of the formal."[58] Adorno's position, as Jay Bernstein explains, is that "the ideals of the enlightenment, as they have come down to us, are a mixture of domination and promise: the equality of individuals in the market is also their

reduction to their labor power, and the reduction of labor power to labor time; the concepts which enjoin the freedom of the moral law—respect, fear, and so on—are also repressive."[59] Thus the aim of Adorno's philosophy of history, like Foucault's, is to chart the simultaneous historical emergence of both the domination and the promise of the ideals of the Enlightenment, the unity, as he says, of discontinuity and continuity.[60] The method for doing so can be understood as a kind of problematizing genealogy, even if Adorno himself doesn't use this term.

5. *Critical Distance, or, Philosophizing with a Hammer*: However, for it to be possible to problematize our own historically situated point of view and reflect on its entanglements with power relations, we must be able to get enough critical distance on that historically situated point of view that we can see it *as* a point of view. Adorno and Foucault offer us two tools for gaining such critical distance. First, both make use of an image or a figure that cannot be reconciled into the dialectical unfolding of History; by resisting recuperation into the dialectic, this figure reveals the fragmentary nature of and opens up lines of fragility or fracture within our Hegelian Historical modernity, thus making possible reflection on it. This figure of whatever escapes the reconciling, unifying logic of modernity is, for Adorno, the non-identical, and, for Foucault, unreason.[61] Adorno's method for revealing the nonidentical is brought out clearly in "The Essay as Form." For Adorno, the essay is "the critical form par excellence" precisely because it "allows for the consciousness of nonidentity, without expressing it directly."[62] Moreover, it is the essay's fragmentary character that enables it to illuminate nonidentity without directly expressing it (and thereby subsuming it under the logic of identity thinking). This fragmentary character mirrors the fragmentary and antagonistic nature of the social and cultural reality on which

they essay reflects. The essay "thinks in fragments, just as reality is fragmentary, and finds its unity in and through the breaks and not by glossing them over….Discontinuity is essential to the essay; its subject matter is always a conflict brought to a standstill."[63] Although it might be tempting to see Adorno's negative dialectics as rooted in a metaphysical claim about the non-identical understood as the ultimate *Ding-an-sich*, negative dialectics is better understood as a historically situated response to a particular form of social organization and its accompanying worldview. As Adorno puts it, "Dialectical reason's own essence has come to be and will pass, like antagonistic society."[64] In other words, for Adorno, negative dialectics is not a transcendental condition of possibility for thinking but rather a historically situated tool for thinking through our present.[65] It is necessary because of the historically contingent unfolding of the dialectic of enlightenment; it is a method for jump-starting a historical dialectic that has come to a standstill. Similarly, Foucault's invocation of unreason should not be thought of as a metaphysical gesture; rather, for Foucault, it is the figure of unreason that opens up lines of fragility and fracture within our historical a priori and allows us to take up critical distance on that historical a priori.[66] For both Adorno and Foucault, tracing the figure of the nonidentical or of unreason through the fragmentary, non-systematic, and experimental work of critical thought – or through the anticipatory illumination cast by works of art – serves to reveal the fragmentary, fragile, and internally fractured nature of our present historical situation.

However, since our historical a priori sets the historically specific conditions of possibility for thought for us, it forms the backdrop for what "thought…silently thinks," as Foucault once put it.[67] Freeing thought up in relation to what it silently thinks is necessary for enabling it to think differently, but freeing oneself up in this way means pulling oneself

free of the very conditions of possibility of one's own thinking and acting. As Martin Saar puts it, the aim of genealogy as a form of critique is that of "telling the subject the story of the powers working on him [sic], telling it the story of its own becoming."[68] Saar argues that this distinctive goal accounts for the hyperbolic and exaggerated nature of genealogical texts. Only stories told through exaggeration and hyperbole, Saar argues, "release the explosive power contained in the revelation of processes of power and forceful construction. In this sense, genealogies are textual shocks and momentous negative world disclosures."[69] While the shape and contours of some prior historical epoch can be uncovered through gentle digging, in order to see one's own historical a priori as historical, one must philosophize with a hammer, as Foucault, following Nietzsche, put it. Or, as Adorno puts it: The dialectic advances by way of extremes, driving thoughts with the utmost consequentiality to the point where they turn back on themselves, instead of qualifying them."[70]

6. *Problematization and the Normative Inheritance of Modernity*: Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the problematization of our own point of view can and should be understood not as a rejection or abstract negation of the normative inheritance of modernity but rather as a fuller realization of its central value, namely, freedom.[71] Adorno's account of second nature reveals the close link between his philosophy of history and the possibility of freedom. Central to Adorno's complicated account of the relationship between nature and history is the idea that historically constituted objects come, over time, to seem natural and therefore unchangeable. Revealing this 'second nature' to be historically contingent and therefore changeable is a crucial task of critical theory for Adorno. As Adorno puts it: "Interpretation…is criticism of phenomena that have been

brought to a standstill; it consists in revealing the dynamism stored up in them, so that what appears as second nature can be seen to have a history…criticism ensures that what has evolved loses its appearance as mere existence and stands revealed as the product of history."[72] This entails uncovering the illusory, congealed history contained within second nature, an illusion that is reinforced by narratives of historical progress. This is very close to Foucault's characterization of genealogy as the attempt to "record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality; it must seek them in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history."[73] This sort of unmasking of the congealed history contained within what we tend to feel is without history breaks history's illusory and ideological spell, and this is how Adorno understands freedom: "the positive meaning of freedom lies in the potential, in the possibility, of breaking the spell or escaping from it."[74] Breaking or escaping the spell, freeing thought up from what it silently thinks in order to enable it to think differently – these are both ways of realizing freedom. As Foucault put it, the goal of criticism, understood as "a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, and saying," is that of "seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom."[75]

So for both Adorno and Foucault, the problematization of our own point of view has a normative point. It aims not at a debunking of the core normative ideals of enlightenment modernity but rather at a *fuller realization of the ideal of freedom*. But Adorno's work goes further than this, and in this sense goes beyond Foucault, by also suggesting that the problematization of our own point of view not only enhances our freedom in relation to second nature or to our historical a priori; it also is required if we are to do justice to the

other. This idea comes out in the final lecture of Adorno's lectures on moral philosophy. After spending most of the lecture course offering a detailed and devastating critique of Kantian moral philosophy, Adorno argues in his final lecture that moral philosophy can only be possible today as a critique of moral philosophy.[76] Life under modern capitalism is so deformed and distorted that moral philosophy today cannot provide plans or blueprints for living the good life; as Adorno famously laments, "wrong life cannot be lived rightly."[77] Hence, the goal of moral philosophy should be to uncover this situation and to reflect on – rather than obscure, deny, or ignore – the contradictions to which it leads. The most that one can say about the good life under current conditions is that it "would consist in resistance to the forms of the bad life that have been seen through and critically dissected by the most progressive minds. Other than this negative prescription no guidance can really be envisaged."[78]

Following on from his critique of Kant, Adorno contends that we have to resist the abstract rigorism of Kantian morality but without giving up on notion of conscience and responsibility without which the idea of the good life is inconceivable. "At this point," Adorno writes, "we find ourselves really and truly in a contradictory situation. We need to hold fast to moral norms, to self-criticism, to the question of right and wrong, and at the same time to a sense of the fallibility of the authority that has the confidence to undertake such self-criticism."[79] In other words, we have to hold fast persistently to the norms that we learned from our experience while at the same time engaging in self-criticism of what presents itself as "unyielding" and "inexorable."[80] This requires an awareness of our own fallibility, but where this fallibilism is both an epistemic stance and a moral one. As Adorno puts it, "the element of self-reflection has today become the true heir to what used to be

called moral categories."[81] To say that self-reflection is a moral category is to say that it is "by reflecting on our own limitations [that] we can learn to do justice to those who are different" and "that true injustice is always to be found at the precise point where you put yourself in the right and other people in the wrong."[82] This is why Adorno claims that if you were to press him into offering a list of cardinal virtues, he "would probably respond cryptically by saying that I could think of nothing except for modesty," by which he means that "we must have a conscience, but may not insist on our own conscience."[83]

I submit that the best way of achieving the stance of modesty is through a critical, genealogical problematization that combines both vindicatory and subversive, or progressive and regressive, strands, but whose aim is neither simply vindication nor subversion. By allowing us to reflexively critique the social institutions and practices, patterns of cultural meaning and subject-formation, and normative commitments that have made us who we are, problematizing critique opens up a space of critical distance on those institutions, practices, and so forth, thereby freeing us up in relation to them, and thus also in relation to ourselves.[84] Notice that for Adorno this modest stance motivated not only by the epistemic point that we have a tendency to go wrong in our normative judgments and thus we have a duty to call them into question. Although Adorno was enough of a historicist and a practitioner of immanent critique to agree with Foucault that "we have to give up hope of ever acceding to a point of view that could give us access to any complete and definitive knowledge of what may constitute our historical limits" and, thus, that as far as the project of critique goes, "we are always in this position of beginning again,"[85] he also makes the further claim that the problematization of one's own point of view is *morally* required if we are to do justice to those who are different from ourselves. In other words,

and here is a different way of construing the normative point of the method of problematization, such problematization is motivated not merely by epistemic concerns about our inescapable fallibility given our inability to have access to a god's eye point of view, but also by our commitment to equal respect for the Other, that is, to justice.

Adorno, Foucault, and the 'Postcolonial'

Adorno and Foucault offer a radically different way of thinking about the backward and forward looking conceptions of progress in relation to the project of critical theory. Both reject any vindicatory, backward looking story of historical progress as a 'fact' about what has led up to 'us', but they do so not in favor of a romantic story of decline and fall, but rather in the service of a critical problematization of the present. Moreover, at least Adorno, if not also Foucault,[86] holds on to the forward-looking conception of progress as a moral-political imperative, though he does re-conceive progress negativistically as the avoidance of catastrophe and de-couple this forward looking conception from the backward looking notion of progress as a historical 'fact'. In stark contrast to Habermas and Honneth, for whom the backward looking story of historical learning, social evolution, or progress plays a crucial role in grounding their normative visions of what would count as progress in a forward-looking sense, Adorno claims that calling into question the conception of progress as a historical 'fact' is necessary for any kind of future progress to be possible. Thus, even though Adorno doesn't give up on the possibility of progress in the future – in fact, he finds such a resignation to be not only conceptually problematic but also morally repugnant – his understanding of what might count as progress in the future is not rooted in a backward looking story of progress as what has led up to 'us'. Progress occurs

only where it comes to an end. Although this claim of Adorno's did not seem to be motivated by post-colonial concerns, and although his relationship to post-colonial scholarship – like Foucault's – is rather vexed and complicated, it seems to me that this idea is enormously productive for a critical theory that aims to decolonize itself.

Indeed, despite their well-documented and oft-noted Eurocentrism, both Foucault and Adorno have proven to be fruitful resources for postcolonial theorizing. Thus, on the one hand, Foucault's work served as an inspiration for a great deal of work in postcolonial theory, including, but certainly not limited to, one of the founding texts of the field, Said's *Orientalism*.[87] Said productively takes up Foucault's notion of discourse, analyzing Orientalism as a discursive construction that dictated how the West understood the East, as a form of "knowledge" (though largely an ideological fantasy of the Orient that bore little relation to the actual cultures subsumed under that heading) that was also a form of colonial power.[88] This analysis proved so productive for postcolonial studies that Ann Laura Stoler could observe in 1995 that "no single analytic framework has saturated the field of colonial studies so completely over the last decade as that of Foucault."[89] And yet, Foucault's work has also been subjected to harsh critique by post-colonial thinkers – to include the later Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Stoler herself.[90] Stoler's important book, *Race and the Education of Desire*, focuses on Foucault's later work and argues that his historical genealogies of power relations in European modernity systematically ignore issues relating to colonialism, racism, and liberal imperialism. As Stoler puts it, "what is striking is how consistently Foucault's own framing of the European bourgeois order has been exempt from the very sorts of criticism that his insistence on the fused regimes of knowledge/power would seem to encourage and allow."[91] Stoler's critique is motivated by

an understandable frustration with Foucault's centrality to postcolonial theorizing despite his own studied ignorance of the problem of colonialism, an ignorance that is all the more galling considered that Foucault could not have been unaware of this problem, given that he lived and taught in Tunisia in the late 1960s and given that no French person of his generation could have been blind to the Algerian question. As Robert Young has argued, Foucault's "virtual silence" on issues of race and colonialism renders his work "so scrupulously Eurocentric that you begin to wonder whether there isn't a deliberate strategy involved"; and yet, Young continues, "the lasting paradox is that despite the absence of explicit discussions of colonialism, Foucault's work has been a central theoretical reference point for postcolonial analysis."[92]

Such issues have played out somewhat differently in the case of Adorno: his oft-noted Eurocentrism makes the usefulness of his work for postcolonial theory seem doubtful, at least at first glance. Thus, Espen Hammer notes that Adorno's "blunt Eurocentrism" is evident in the fact that he was "virtually oblivious to the concerns of postcolonialism, including racism, discrimination, and imperialism,"[93] and the editors of *Adorno: A Critical Reader* acknowledge that he was "deeply Eurocentric" and "possessed no knowledge of a world outside of Austria and Germany, let alone Europe."[94] However, despite this deep and blunt Eurocentrism, in recent years there has been a wave of attempts to claim Adorno as a thinker with substantial resources to offer postcolonial theory, focusing particularly on his conception of negative dialectics.[95] Namita Goswami, for example, offers a "radical postcolonial reading of Adorno" arguing that "Adorno's conception of negative dialectics can be understood as postcolonial in its understanding of difference," where difference for Adorno means non-antagonistic heterogeneity.[96]

Goswami also turns to Adorno for the kind of "hopeful despair" that she argues it appropriate to our historical moment, particularly in the face of anthropogenic climate change and its differential effects across the globe.[97]

In light of these complex debates, which I cannot even attempt to settle here, I would like to emphasize that my point is not is that postcolonial theory can be understood as a simple or straightforward extension of a certain radical strand of European critical theory represented by the likes of Foucault and Adorno. As Dipesh Chakrabarty explains, although it is true that Foucault's work, for example, has been highly productive for postcolonial studies, "it would be wrong to think of postcolonial critiques of historicism (or of the political) as simply deriving from critiques already elaborated by postmodern and poststructuralist thinkers of the West. In fact, to think this way would itself be to practice historicism, for such a thought would merely repeat the temporal structure of the statement, 'first in the West, and then elsewhere'."[98] Nor is it my aim to show that Foucault and Adorno do in fact offer important resources for postcolonial theorizing – although I think that this may well be the case. Rather, my point is that Adorno and Foucault, for all of their faults and their own tendencies toward Eurocentrism and their blindness to issues of colonialism and imperialism, nevertheless offer important resources within the tradition of critical theory for the crucially important project of de-colonizing critical theory. They do so precisely because and to the extent to which they enable us to rethink critical theory's commitment to the idea of historical progress, an idea that has been thoroughly implicated in the logic of colonialism and thus subjected to withering critique by post- and decolonial thinkers. By historicizing and critically problematizing the very Hegelian notion of History as the progressive unfolding of a rationalization process that progressively rationalizes

power relations on which Habermas and Honneth still implicitly or explicitly rely – even as they seek to recast this idea in more deflationary, pragmatic, and post-metaphysical terms – Adorno and Foucault offer an alternative way of thinking through the relationship between normativity and history. Adorno and Foucault offer a radically reflexive and historicized critical methodology that understands critique as the wholly immanent and fragmentary practice of opening up lines of fragility and fracture within the social world. This conception of critique also dovetails in important ways with the recurring image in post- and de-colonial theory of colonialism as an open wound or an epistemic fracture,[99] of the subaltern as fracturing History from within,[100] and of de-colonial thinking as creating a fracture within imperialist systems of thought.[101]

One might object that this approach is too inward looking, too focused on disputes and problems internal to critical theory, and to a specific tradition of critical theory at that. This objection could take at least two different forms. One form would say that critical theorists should engage with big challenges such as human rights and international law, the critique of capitalism, the prospects of transnational democracy, and so forth, and that the conception of critical theory sketched here is too inward looking, even navel gazing, to be of much use for such projects. To that critic, my response is that my project is in a sense much more modest than she assumes it to be. My aim is not to offer a complete critical theory of society, nor is it to suggest that the reading of Foucault and Adorno that I have sketched here can provide us with such a theory. Rather, my aim is to address a very specific but also quite fundamental and important problem in critical theory, namely, the problem of normative foundations. With respect to that problem, I hope to have shown that the existing strategies for grounding the normativity of critical theory, beholden as they are

to ideas of historical progress and socio-cultural learning or evolution, are deeply problematic and are ultimately incompatible with a theory that aims to be truly critical, in the sense of aiming at the self-clarification of the struggles and wishes of our postcolonial age. Drawing on my reading of Adorno and Foucault, I have sketched an alternative conception of the relationship between history, normativity, and critique, one that can open critical theory up to a deep and substantial engagement with the challenges of postcolonialism.

A related objection has to do with the specific way I have sought to stage the encounter between critical theory and the postcolonial. After all, one might argue, following Terry Eagleton, that it is far from obvious that taking on the insights of "postcolonialism" – understood as a particular theoretical project, prominent in Europe and the United State, heavily influenced by French poststructuralism – is the best way to think through the challenges and injustices of postcolonialism – understood as the current social, economic, and political situation of formally decolonized states, which are still subjected to gross forms of global injustice, largely through the workings of the international financial system.[102] If one wants to think through the challenges of postcolonialism, one might ask, why not turn instead to Marxism, which after all offers ample resources for connecting the critique of capitalism to the critique of imperialism, even if Marx himself never quite connected all of those dots? A longer story needs to be told here about the ongoing, heated debates between Marxists and postcolonial theorists, and the not unrelated, equally heated debates between Marxists and poststructuralists.[103] But the upshot of that story is that Marx's philosophy of history does not move far enough away from the progressive, developmental reading of history that is rightfully a central

target of post- and decolonial critique. This is *not* to say that none of Marx's insights are fruitful nor is it to say that the critique of capitalism is not important for contemporary critical theory; many of them are and of course it is. It is just to say that *for the specific project of rethinking the relationship between normativity and history,* we are better of turning to Adorno and Foucault than to Marx.

But here's where the second form of the objection of inwardness arises: my approach could be seen as too inward looking in a different sense, too focused on mining the insights of European thinkers to address the legacies of colonialism, and thus too committed to a kind of decolonization from within when what is needed is a more radical decolonization from without. Why, after all, do I turn to Adorno and Foucault rather than to CLR James or Frantz Fanon or Enrique Dussel? By keeping the focus on European thinkers, am I not ultimately just offering another Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism, thus repeating the very gesture that I claim to be criticizing? Following Walter Mignolo, I would say in response that although the Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism may well be insufficient for the project of fully decolonizing critical theory, this does not mean that it is unnecessary. It is true that what I have offered here is largely, though not entirely, an internal critique of European critical theory. Partly this is a function of my own social, institutional, and intellectual formation, as someone who was trained in this tradition in institutions of higher learning in the US and Germany – as Rorty never tired of reminding us, we have to start from where we are – but the point of engaging in this kind of internal critique is to show that even starting from the tradition of European critical theory, by compelling critical theory to decenter its own critical perspective, critical theory can become something else.

[1] I am grateful to Wendy Brown, Penelope Deutscher, Barnor Hesse, Cristina Lafont, Matthias Lutz-Bachmann, Thomas McCarthy, and Charles Mills for helpful comments on an earlier version of this essay.
[2] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 278.
[3] Ibid., 279.
[4] Ibid., 10-11.
[5] One prominent exception to this trend is Thomas McCarthy's *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), which constitutes an important attempt to grapple with the legacies of colonialism and imperialism from the point of view of Habermasian critical theory. I have benefitted enormously from reading McCarthy's book, and from his critical responses to my recent work on this topic. McCarthy is, however, more sanguine than I am about the prospects for reconstructing concepts such as historical progress and development, and about the extent to which Habermasian critical theory can successfully address issues of postcoloniality. I discuss some of my criticisms of McCarthy more fully in my review of his book in *Constellations* 18: 3 (September 2011): 487-492.
[6] To be sure, in his recent work, Habermas has rethought his account of modernity in light of challenges to the secularization thesis and has embraced the concept of multiple modernities. This is a substantial revision to his theory that does not, in my view, go far enough in responding to the challenge sketched below. I discuss this aspect of his recent work in chapter two of *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016). However, despite these important amendments to his theory, he has refrained from engaging seriously with postcolonial theory, and he continues to defend his understanding of the normative content of European modernity against charges of Eurocentrism, even continuing to speak favorably, if fleetingly, of a 'civilizing' role for Europe in relation to the rest of the world (see, for example, Habermas, *The Divided West*, ed and trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 16 and 47). Honneth, unlike Habermas, has mostly refrained from discussing how his recognition theory might apply in a global context, with the notable exception of his essay "Recognition between States: On the Moral Substrate of International Relations," in *The I in We: Studies in the Theory of Recognition*, trans. Joseph Ganahl (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012). Although this paper offers an interesting extension of Honneth's recognition theory to the realm of international politics, it does not engage with issues of postcolonialism, except rather obliquely, nor does it deviate from his basic strategy for grounding his normative project, which is the main focus of my critique.
[7] Habermas's sharp criticisms of George W. Bush's explicitly neo-imperialist foreign policy notwithstanding, his faith in existing international institutions and his hopes for the constitutionalization of international law can be seen as indications of a failure to appreciate the full complexity of the structures of informal imperialism that have arise in the wake of formal decolonization. On this point, see James Tully, "On Law, democracy and imperialism," in *Public Philosophy in a New Key*, volume 2: *Imperialism and Civic Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[8] On the importance of the idea of progress for normativity in Habermas's work, see David S. Owen, *Between Reason and History: Habermas and the Idea of Progress* (New York: SUNY Press, 2002); in Habermas and Honneth, see Matthias Iser, *Empörung und Fortschritt: Grundlagen einer kritischen Theorie der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2008). For a critical discussion of the resulting "Kantian imperialism," see Tully, "On Law, democracy and imperialism."

[9] Obviously I am painting with broad brush strokes here, and a good deal of work needs to be done to back up these interpretive claims, especially in the case of Habermas, who can also be read as a neo-Kantian moral constructivist. For a detailed interpretive argument for the claims summarized here about the role that the idea of progress plays in justifying the normative perspective of Habermas and Honneth, see chapters 2 and 3 of *The End of Progress*.

[10] 'Fact' is in scare quotes here because this is obviously also a normative judgment; I borrow the term from McCarthy, though I use it differently than he does. See McCarthy, *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development*, 155-165.

[11] See, for example, Habermas, *The Divided West*.

[12] Axel Honneth, "The Irreducibility of Progress: Kant's Account of the Relationship between Morality and History," in *Pathologies of Reason: On the Legacy of Critical Theory*, trans. James Ingram (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

[13] The relevant literature in postcolonial theory is too vast to cite in a single footnote, but Said's work could be taken as exemplary in this respect. See Said, *Orientalism*, 25th anniversary edition (New York: Vintage, 1994), and Said, *Culture and Imperialism*. For a helpful overview and defense of the idea of informal imperialism as applied to the current global order, see Tully, "On Law, Democracy and imperialism." I discuss this issue in much greater detail in chapter 1 of *The End of Progress*.

[14] James Tully, personal communication.

[15] Nancy Fraser, "What's Critical About Critical Theory: The Case of Habermas and Gender, in *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 113.

[16] This is not to say that decolonization *began* in our age, which would be to ignore the very different temporalities and trajectories of decolonization in Caribbean and the Americas, for example. It is just to say that the waves of formal decolonization in the wake of World War II and the resulting neocolonial and informally imperialist global political order that has been in place at least since 1970 constitute and are the loci of some of the most significant social and political struggles and wishes of our age.

[17] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 257-258

[18] For helpful discussions of the methodological and substantive differences between Adorno and Benjamin, particularly as these relate to their distinctive critiques of progress, see Antonio Vázquez-Arroyo, "Universal history disavowed: on critical theory and postcolonialism," *Postcolonial Studies* 11: 4 (2008): 451-473, and Brian O'Connor, "Adorno's Philosophy of History," in *Theodor Adorno: Key Concepts*, ed. Deborah Cook (Durham: Acumen, 2008).

[19] Adorno, *History and Freedom* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 159.

[20] Adorno, "Progress," in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 150.
[21] Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa (New York: Routledge, 2006), 122.
[22] Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 338.
[23] See Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 126-130 (on Horkheimer and Adorno), and 276-281 (on Foucault).
[24] For a fuller elaboration of this defense on textual grounds, see my re-readings of Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and Foucault's *History of Madness* in Allen, *The End of Progress*, chapter 5.
[25] Adorno, *History and Freedom*, 157.
[26] Ibid., 169.
[27] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1973), 15.
[28] Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in *Power: Essential Works of Michel Foucault*, volume 3, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2000), 328.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth: Essential Works of Michel Foucault*, volume 1, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1997), 312.
[31] Ibid., 313.
[32] Foucault, "Subject and Power," 328-329.
[33] Foucault, "Space, Knowledge, and Power," in *Power*, 358.
[34] Unlike Foucault, who prefers to speak of heterotopia rather than utopia, Adorno offers a definition of utopia that is linked to his notion of reconciliation understood as a non-violent, non-totalizing togetherness of diversity. See Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 150. On Foucault's relationship to utopia, see Mark Kelly, "Against Prophecy and Utopia: Foucault and the Future," *Thesis Eleven* 120: 1 (February 2014): 104-118.
[35] For a compelling defense of Adorno's negativism, see Fabian Freyenhagen, *Adorno's Practical Philosophy: Living Less Wrongly* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
[36] See Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 145.
[37] See Albrecht Wellmer, *The Persistence of Modernity: Essays on Aesthetics, Ethics, and Postmodernism*, trans. David Midgley (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 63.
[38] I am deeply indebted to Nikolas Kompridis for my thinking here about critical-utopian task of critical theory. See Kompridis, "Re-Envisioning Critical Theory: Amy Allen's *The Politics of Our Selves*," *Critical Horizons* 15: 1 (March 2014): 1-13, and, more generally, Kompridis, *Critique and Disclosure: Critical Theory Between Past and Future* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006). For my reply to Kompridis's critique, see Allen, "Normativity, Power, and Gender: Reply to Critics," *Critical Horizons* 15: 1 (March 2014): 52-68.
[39] For fuller discussion of this point, see Allen, "Feminism, Foucault, and the Critique of Reason: Re-reading the *History of Madness*," *Foucault Studies* 16 (September 2013): 15-31.
[40] On this point, see Vázquez-Arroyo, "Universal History Disavowed," 458.
[41] Adorno, *History and Freedom*, 123.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 356-357.
[44] Ibid., 360.

[45] On this point, see Raymond Geuss, *Outside Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 153-160.
[46] On this point, see Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013), chapter 3.
[47] Ibid., chapter 3. See also Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).
[48] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage, 1967, 20.
[49] Nietzsche's work can be taken as a paradigm case of subversive genealogy; on this point, see Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique*, 73-83.
[50] Koopman takes Williams's genealogies to be exemplary of the vindicatory approach; see ibid., 65-73. Elsewhere, I argue that Habermas's use of genealogy in his recent work is in the end a vindicatory one, and that this shows how far apart his use of this term is from Foucault's. See Allen, "Having One's Cake and Eating It, Too: Habermas's Genealogy of Post Secular Reason," in Craig Calhoun, Eduardo Mendieta, and Jonathan van Antwerpen (eds), *Habermas and Religion* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).
[51] Foucault, "Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. Vol. 1, Essential Works of Michel Foucault*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1997), 114.
[52] Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," in *Ethics*, 256.
[53] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *Ethics*, 312.
[54] Indeed, this genealogical element in Adorno should not be too surprising, given the heavy influence of Nietzsche on his work. For insightful discussions of Adorno's relation to Nietzsche, particularly with respect to method, see Gillian Rose, *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno* (London: Verso, 1978), chapter 2, and Christoph Menke, "Genealogy and Critique: Two Forms of Ethical Questioning of Morality," in *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno*, ed. Tom Huhn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[55] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 321.
[56] Ibid., 323.
[57] Ibid., 320.
[58] Adorno, *History and Freedom*, 253.
[59] Jay Bernstein, *Adorno: Disenchantment and Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 238-239.
[60] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 320.
[61] Max Pensky notes the affinity between Adorno and Foucault on this point in Pensky, *The Ends of Solidarity: Discourse Theory in Ethics and Politics* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2008), 34.
[62] Adorno, "The Essay as Form," in *Notes to Literature*, vol. 1, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 18, 9.
[63] Ibid., 16.
[64] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 141.
[65] Here I part company with Brian O'Connor, who presents negative dialectics as offering a transcendental account of the necessary and universal structures of experience. See Brian

O'Connor, *Adorno's Negative Dialectic: Philosophy and the Possibility of Critical Rationality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004).

[66] See Foucault, "Critical Theory/Intellectual History," in *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*, ed. Michael Kelly (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994). I discuss this aspect of Foucault's conception of critique in more detail in Allen, "Foucault, Feminism, and the Critique of Reason."

[67] Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of the History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1985), 9.

[68] Martin Saar, "Genealogy and Subjectivity," *European Journal of Philosophy* 10: 2 (2002): 231-245, 236.

[69] Ibid., p. 239. For a related analysis of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as a form of critical world disclosure, see Honneth, "The Possibility of a Disclosing Critique of Society: The *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in Light of Current Debates in Social Criticism," *Constellations* 7: 1 (2000): 116-127.

[70] Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from a Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 2005), 86.

[71] On this point, see also Freyenhagen, *Adorno's Practical Philosophy*, pp. 82-83.

[72] Adorno, *History and Freedom*, 135.

[73] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Vol. 2, Essential Works of Michel Foucault*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 1998), 369. On this point, see also Saar, "Genealogy and Subjectivity," 233.

[74] Adorno, *History and Freedom*, 174.

[75] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", 315-16.

[76] Adorno, *Problems of Moral Philosophy*, ed. Thomas Schröder, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 167.

[77] Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 39.

[78] Adorno, *Problems of Moral Philosophy*, 167-168. For insightful discussion, see Freyenhagen, 133-186.

[79] Ibid., 169.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid., 169-170. Note that there are interesting affinities between Adorno's conception of modesty and Saba Mahmood's conceptualization of humility in *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). I discuss those similarities more fully in *The End of Progress*, 201-203.

[84] For insightful discussion of this point, see Saar, "Genealogy and Subjectivity."

[85] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" 316-17.

[86] I suspect that Foucault would be much more skeptical than Adorno is about the possibility of progress in the future. For myself, I am won over by Adorno's argument that to conclude that progress in the future is impossible simply because it has not occurred up to now is to make a false inference. If x is actual, then it follows that x is possible; but from the fact that x is not actual, it does not follow that x is impossible. This is, of course, not to settle the extremely thorny question of how we could possibly determine what would count as historical progress in the future.

[87] An admittedly partial list of other important works of postcolonial theory and studies that have been heavily though not uncritically influenced by Foucault would include Bhaba, *The Location of Culture*; Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*; Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, and *The Politics of the Governed*: Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety*; Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*; Scott, *Refashioning Futures*; and Young, *White Mythologies* and *Postcolonialism*.
[88] On this point see Robert Young, "Foucault on Race and Colonialism," *New Formations* 25 (1995): 57-65.
[89] Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 1.
[90] For a helpful overview, see Nichols, "Postcolonial Studies and the Discourse of Foucault: Survey of a Field of Problematization," Foucault Studies 9 (September 2010: 111-144.
[91] Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire,* 5.
[92] Young, "Foucault on Race and Colonialism," 57.
[93] Hammer, *Adorno and the Political* (London: Routledge, 2006), 5.
[94] Gibson and Rubin, "Introduction: Adorno and the Autonomous Intellectual," *Adorno: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 14.
[95] See, for example, Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*; Goswami, "The (M)other of all Posts"; Patke, "Adorno and the Postcolonial"; Spencer, "Thoughts from Abroad: Theodor Adorno as Postcolonial Theorist"; Varadharajan, *Exotic Parodies*; Antonio Vázquez-Arroyo, "Universal History Disavowed."
[96] Goswami, "The (M)other of all Posts," 105-06.
[97] Ibid., 108.
[98] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference, 2nd edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). 6.
[99] See, for example, Gayatri Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 309.
[100] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 94.
[101] See, especially, Mignolo, "Delinking."
[102] Terry Eagleton, "Postcolonialism and 'Postcolonialism'," *Interventions* 1: 1 (1998): 24-26.
[103] On this point, see Allen, *The End of Progress*, 23-25, and also Robert Young, *White Mythologies*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 2004).