

Zeitschrift für kritische Theorie

Heft 36 – 37 / 2013

herausgegeben von
Sven Kramer und
Gerhard Schweppenhäuser

zu Klampen

Zeitschrift für kritische Theorie, 19. Jahrgang (2013), Heft 36 – 37

Herausgeber: Sven Kramer und Gerhard Schweppenhäuser

Geschäftsführender Herausgeber: Sven Kramer, Leuphana Universität Lüneburg,
Institut für Geschichtswissenschaft und Literarische Kulturen

Redaktion: Roger Behrens (Hamburg), Wolfgang Boek (Rio de Janeiro),
Thomas Friedrich (Mannheim), Sven Kramer (Lüneburg),
Gerhard Schweppenhäuser (Witzsburg)

Korrespondierende Mitarbeiter: Rodrigo Duarte (Belo Horizonte),
Jörg Gleier (Berlin), Christoph Görg (Kassel), Frank Hermann (Kassel),
Friedric Janeson (Durham, NC), Per Jepsen (Kopenhagen),
Douglas Kellner (Los Angeles, CA), Claudia Rademacher (Bielefeld),
Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Mönchengladbach), Jeremy Shapiro (New York, NY)

Redaktionsbüro: Alle Zusendungen redaktioneller Art bitte an das Redaktionsbüro:

Zeitschrift für kritische Theorie
Leuphana Universität Lüneburg
z. Hd. Prof. Dr. Sven Kramer
Scharnhorststraße 1, Geb. 5
D-21335 Lüneburg
E-Mail: zkr@uni-lueneburg.de
www.zkt.zuklampen.de

Erscheinungsweise: Die Zeitschrift für kritische Theorie erscheint einmal jährlich
als Doppelheft. Preis des Doppelheftes: 32,- Euro [DJ] Jahresabo Inland: 28,- Euro [DJ].
Bezugspreis Ausland bitte erfragen. Berechnung jährlich bei Auslieferung des Heftes.
Das Abonnement verlängert sich automatisch, wenn die Kündigung nicht bis zum 15.11.
des jeweiligen Jahres erfolgt. Fragen zum Abonnement bitte an folgende Adresse:

Germannal GmbH, Verlags- und Medienhandlung,
Siemensstraße 16,
D-35463 Fernwald,
Tel.: 0641/41700
Fax: 0641/943251
E-Mail: bestellservice@germannal.de

Redaktionsassistent: Philipp Hammermeister

Unschlagentwurf: Johannes Nawrath

Layout und Satz: Philipp Mentrup, Fakultät Gestaltung,
Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaften, Witzsburg

Druck: Bookfactory – der Verlagspartner GmbH, Bad Münden

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Bibliothek: Die Deutsche Bibliothek
verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte
bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.ddb.de> abrufbar.

Aufnahme nach 1995, H. 1; ISSN 0945-7313; ISBN 978-3-86674-184-3

Inhalt

Vorbemerkung der Redaktion 5

ABHANDLUNGEN

Andreas Greiert

»Weh spricht: vergeh«. Negative Dialektik und Biopolitik 10

Hans-Ernst Schiller

In der Spanne eines Augenblicks.

Messianische Motive bei Benjamin, Adorno und Horkheimer 33

Thomas Khurana

Impuls und Reflexion. Aporien der Moralphilosophie

und die Moral der Aporien nach Adorno 60

Sebastian Tränkle

Die materialistische Sehnsucht.

Über das Bilderverbot in der Philosophie Theodor W. Adornos 83

Christian Lotz

Capitalist Schematization.

Political Economy, Exchange, and Objecthood in Adorno 110

Thomas Jung

Bedeutung oder Geltung?

Zum Sprechpragmatismus von Jürgen Habermas 123

Stefan Gandler

Materialismus heute. Alfred Schmidt und Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez 144

Gunzelin Schmid Noerr

Alfred Schmidt und das Projekt einer Geschichte des Materialismus 160

EINLASSUNGEN

Vorbemerkung der Redaktion

| | |
|---|-----|
| Hermann Schweppenhäuser | |
| Zum Begriff der Demokratie | 177 |
| Konstantinos Rantis | |
| Gesellschaftstheorie in Griechenland 1974-2012. | |
| Psychopedis, Kondylis, Castoriadis, Giannaras | 187 |
| Michael Schwarz | |
| Adorno in der Akademie der Künste. | |
| Vorträge und Diskussionen 1957-1967 | 207 |
| Gert Sautermeister | |
| Geschichtsphilosophische Dialektik literaturkritisch gewendet. | |
| Theodor W. Adornos Essay »Zum Klassizismus von Goethes Iphigenie« | 217 |
| BESPRECHUNG | |
| Marc Kleine | |
| Adornos Schriften zu Literatur und Ästhetik. | |
| Neue literaturwissenschaftliche Studien | 234 |
| Kritische Theorie – Neue Bücher des Jahres 2012 in Auswahl | 250 |
| Autoren | 252 |

Darf in Zeiten der Krise an die langen Zyklen der Philologie erinnert werden? Ist es angemessen, den täglichen Meldungen über den Existenzkampf der vom internationalen Finanzkapital enteigneten Bevölkerungen Südeuropas eine Notiz an die Seite zu stellen, die die Fertigstellung der Ausgabe der *Werke* Siegfried Kracauers im Suhrkamp Verlag anzeigt? Kritische Theorie kann sich mit dem aktuellen Leiden nicht abfinden, aber sie muss sich auch den langen Atem bewahren und auf dem Beharrungsvermögen des widerständigen Geistes bestehen. Deshalb sei den Herausgeberinnen Inka Mülder-Bach und Ingrid Belke dafür gedankt, dass sie ein Projekt, das vor über vierzig Jahren, 1971, mit der Arbeit an der Herausgabe der *Schriften* durch Carsten Writte begann, aber in den neunziger Jahren brachlag, in einem zweiten Anlauf 2012 zum Abschluss führten. So sind die ihrerseits in Krisenzeiten entstandenen Werke Kracauers heute wieder allgemein zugänglich und können zur Analyse der aktuellen Situation beitragen. Diesem Ziel ist auch das vorliegende Doppelheft der *ZkT* verpflichtet, in das wir die folgenden ABHANDLUNGEN, EINLASSUNGEN und BESPRECHUNGEN aufgenommen haben.

In den EINLASSUNGEN zeigt *Andreas Greiert*, dass Adornos Kritik der Metaphysik einen der zentralen Anknüpfungspunkte im aktuellen Diskurs über »Biopolitik« bildet, welcher freilich weniger an Adornos historisch gesättigten als an Foucaults konstruktivistischen Begriff des Individuums anknüpft. Ausgehend von den objektiv-realistischen und performativen Aspekten des Widerspruchsbegriffs und dem Leib-Motiv wird der Zusammenhang von Natur und Gesellschaft bei Adorno unter dem Aspekt des Zwangs diskutiert. Dabei zeigt Greiert Übereinstimmungen und Unterschiede zwischen Agambens Theorie des Körpers im Lager und Adornos Theorem des Somatischen und benennt das Verhältnis zur Ethik als entscheidenden Differenzpunkt: Während Adorno eine negative Ethik zugrunde lege, um verantwortliche, verändernde Praxis zu begründen, verabschiede Agamben jegliche Normativität und fordere – die äußerliche Arbeitsteilung zwischen Rechtswissenschaft und Ethik verabsolutierend – den Übergang in die biopolitische Dimension. Damit schließt er an Heideggers apologetische Deutung des Geschehens in den Konzentrationslagern an und sitze wie dieser der Hypostasierung des

Christian Lotz

Political Economy, Exchange, and Objectionhood in Adorno*

I

In distinction to Horkheimer and contemporary Critical Theorists such as Habermas and Honneth, Adorno never gave up on basic principles of Marx's Critique of Political Economy, including the conception of dialectics as outlined in Marx's *Grundrisse*, the concept of social totality, and, mediated by Sohn-Rechel, the principle of exchange and »real abstraction« that occurs within exchange. Rather than understanding society as a sphere of discourses, systems, or layers, Adorno kept fast to a concept of capitalist social reality understood as the »totality of the exchange society.«¹

* This essay was first presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy on February 11, 2012 in Rochester, New York.

¹ Theodor W. Adorno: »Individuum und Gesellschaft«, in: *Frankfurter Adorno Blätter VIII*, edited by Rolf Tiedemann, Frankfurt am Main 2003 (pp. 60–94), p. 87; translation provided by the author. I am following here the tradition of the »Neue Marx Lektüre« (Backhaus, Reichel, Heinrich); for this, see especially, Hans-Georg Backhaus: *Dialektik der Wertform*, Freiburg 2011; Helmut Reichel: »Die Marxsche Kritik ökonomischer Kategorien. Überlegungen zum Problem der Geltung in der dialektischen Darstellungsmethode im »Kapital«, in: *Emanzipation als Versöhnung. Zu Adornos Kritik der »Warentausch-Gesellschaft und Perspektiven der Transformation*, ed. by Inig Feischer and Alfred Schmidt, Frankfurt am Main 2002, pp. 142–190; and Christopher J. Arthur: »The spectral ontology of values«, in: *Radical Philosophy*, issue 101, May/June 2001 (pp. 32–42). In a recent article Alcoff and Shomali claimed that Adorno's philosophy should be understood as a »dialectical realism«, see Linda Alcoff and Alireza Shomali: »Adorno's Dialectical Realism«, in: *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy*, issue 14, 2010, no. 2 (pp. 45–64). This approach to Adorno seems to be misguided, as Adorno would argue that there is no fixed position entitled »dialectical realism«; rather, there are only dialectics. Dialectics, according to Adorno, are not philosophical positions; rather, they comprise the very form of thought that escapes »isms« and reified positions. Thought itself is dialectical, according to Adorno, not the philosophical positions developed from it. Rather unfortunately, though, Alcoff/Shomali contradict this, insofar as they try to fix his theory and thereby transform it into a position within our contemporary discourse. Howev-

Unfortunately, though, it is still the case that interpretations of a majority of US scholars still frame Adorno's philosophy by cultural and aesthetic theory (most likely because contemporary Critical Theorists are no longer Marxists). For example, the categories of a *Critique of Political Economy* such as exchange, as well as Adorno's Hegelian assumption that social concepts are real and his affinities with Marx, are suppressed in recent companions to Adorno. In what follows, therefore, I will try to shift the focus away from cultural theory and, in regard to a central aspect of Adorno's philosophy, demonstrate that we need to understand the ties of Adorno's philosophy to Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* if we want to properly understand his aesthetic and cultural writings.²

In more detail, I shall demonstrate that the usual reception of Adorno's theory of the culture industry leads to distortions if one does not take into account that Adorno never gave up on the concept of society as a totality that is held together by exchange and what Sohn-Rechel called »real abstraction.« Taken from Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*, this principle is the absolute foundation of social synthesis and *Vergesellschaftung*, according to Adorno. I will argue that the culture industry chapter in the

er, Adorno's philosophy is more than this, as his thought transcends the attempt to transform a position into something that one can possess like a commodity. Though Alcoff and Shomali detect the importance of materialism for Adorno's epistemology, they miss an important aspect of what they call Adorno's »epistemology«, namely, the orthodox Marxian basis of Adorno's thought.

² Though Moishe Postone deals with economic aspects within Critical Theory in his contribution to the *Cambridge Companion*, he does not mention Adorno at all. And while some of the contributors to the Adorno companion mention Marx here and there, in general, they dismiss Adorno's Marxian background and instead deal with Weber and Freud (for example, see Bernstein in Tom Hulth (Ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno*, Cambridge 2001, p. 26). In addition, distorted versions of Marx are taken over and repeated. For instance, Bernstein claims that Marx interpreted the whole of history as a history of class conflict without noting that Marx gave this position up in his later critique of political economy. Similarly, Bernstein claims that »Marx modeled the critique of ideology on the critique of religion« (ibid., p. 47), which, in regard to the latter Marx, is simply false. Even Jarvis, in his essay on Adorno and Marx, does not get to the core of Adorno's philosophy, which is the exchange principle of *Capital* interpreted through the lens of Sohn-Rechel's theory of the relation between commodity form and thought form. In a letter to Sohn-Rechel, Adorno claims that Sohn-Rechel's interpretation of the real abstraction was the single most important intellectual experience he had (see Reichel, *Die Marxsche Kritik*, p. 181).

Dialectic of Enlightenment cannot be understood properly if one does not take Adorno's interpretation of Kant's concept of schematization into account, insofar as Adorno claims in this interpretation that schematization is a function of *labor* and *refixation*, which, in turn, depends upon [a] capitalist commodity exchange and [b] the »real abstractions« that occurs in exchange, which establishes value and the abstract nature of capitalist social totality. Accordingly, Adorno's concept of schematization is, in truth, a materialist and social principle. Schematization of objecthood does not occur in the mind of the subject; rather, it occurs in social reality and is *produced* by capitalism. Adorno, though, as I will outline in the conclusion, fails to understand the category of production, as he fails to properly (i.e., on Marxian grounds) analyze the category of exchange and its relationship with other categories, such as money and capital.³

II

According to Adorno, Kant has (unintentionally) conceptualized what the culture industry realizes: the world gets precensored according to standards that determine *what can be perceived*. Accordingly, as a cognitive process Adorno gives the schematism a wider meaning, as he interprets the reduction of knowledge to »mere« cognition as a social operation. What can be known is – on the large scale – precisely determined by the process of schematization, through which universal and individual, concept and intuition, as well as intellect and experience, are »framed.« In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, this framework is conceived as reification: what we experience has gone through a schema that »allows« us to *detect* in our experience only that which was prefabricated through the schema.⁴ In an astonishing move, Adorno gives the famous interpretation of the culture industry a new turn:

- 3 A more detailed critique of Adorno, and the attempt to push the issue of social schematization back to Marx, will be found in my book, entitled *The Capitalist Schema. Time, Money, and the Culture of Abstraction* (forthcoming with Lexington Books).
- 4 Though this thesis sounds as if it were primarily a psychological thesis, Adorno goes one step further, as he turns the Kantian object of *possible* cognition into the object of *possible* social cognition.

»Kant intuitively anticipated what Hollywood has consciously put into practice: images are precensored during production by the same standard of understanding which will later determine their reception by viewers. The perception by which public judgment feels itself confirmed has been shaped by that judgment even before the perception takes place.«⁵

The inner meaning of the culture industry chapter is clearly centered on the function of the schematism. Unfortunately, Adorno and Horkheimer do not reveal the real two sources of their thesis that the culture industry is the *social* form of schematization, which are: [1] the interpretation of Kant's schematism chapter in the *Critique of Pure Reason* as well as [2] the fundament of the transcendental schematism in the exchange principle. The exchange principle, accordingly, is the real source of the schematism that is *produced* by the culture industry.

III

Let me briefly turn to Adorno's interpretation of Kant. Adorno rejects the Neo-Kantian claim (or what he conceives as such a claim) that Kant's main work is either a theory of nature or an epistemology; instead, he claims that the real core of the whole work is metaphysical. This metaphysical core of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is especially visible, according to Adorno, through its implicit reference to the ancient difference between *to on* and *ta onta*, which Adorno calls the »ontological meaning« of Kant's analysis. The categorical framework of beings for Adorno points to the difference between beings and Being:

»You can see here very clearly that, as the precondition of the possibility of knowledge in general, the Kantian concept of the *a priori* is not just to be understood in functional terms, that is, not just with reference to the constitution of knowledge, the grounding of experience. Over and above

- 5 Theodor W. Adorno u. Max Horkheimer: *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, tr. by Edmund Jephcott, Stanford 2007, p. 65. See Theodor W. Adorno: »Kulturindustrie. Aufklärung als Massenbetrug«, in: ders.: *Gesammelte Schriften* (herausg. GS), Bd. 3, hg. von Rolf Tiedemann, Darmstadt 1998 (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Lizenzausgabe Suhrkamp), (pp. 141–192), p. 162.

that, Kant ascribes a kind of ontological meaning, that is, a kind of ideal existence, to these root concepts, to the categories and forms of intuition, and it is this ideal existence that he is attempting to salvage.⁶

The possibility of knowledge, according to this understanding, depends upon an ontological framework that constitutes knowledge as knowledge. Knowledge can only *be* knowledge because it is held in place by what Adorno calls an «ideal existence,» namely, thinghood (as that which entities *are*) makes knowledge possible: «This means, then, that the ontological difference has the meaning that *ta onta* are indeed constituted through the *on*, through pure existence, but that, conversely, pure existence only acquires truth insofar as it relates to *ta onta*.»⁷ The «on» as the underlying «ideal existence» is interpreted by Adorno as the concept of the thing, which makes all references to something in the world possible: «But it is quite obvious that the epitome of nature or of the world is a concept of the thing, that is, the supreme synthesis, the all-inclusive ensemble of all existing things in general.»⁸ Since the pure concepts are called by Kant «categories» and since categories are the rules under which object reference can be thought, thinghood turns into the *lawfulness of experience*: «Kant's answer to the problem of the thing can be summarized in the proposition that a thing is the law of its possible appearances.»⁹ This insight is very important, as we should not confuse the thing or what a thing is with the synthesis of appearances or the synthesis of intuition and concepts in general; rather, the thing is identical with the *lawfulness* of the appearances as the latter's condition of possibility. If experiences would not be «normative» and ruled, no unity and no object reference could be established. We can see that Kant, according to Adorno, returns to an ancient theme: the fleeting character of the world would not allow us to refer to anything «objective,» stable, and fixed in it, if the fleetingness would not itself be identical or be based on the *ruled* forms of the world. Since the unity of consciousness hangs on the transcendental apperception as a *logical* unity, the lawfulness of the thing is ultimately identical with the unity of con-

6 Theodor W. Adorno: *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann and trans. by Rodney Livingstone, Stanford 2002, p. 86.

7 Ibid., p. 87.

8 Ibid., p. 94.

9 Ibid.

sciousness itself, Adorno argues. The condition of the possibility for experiencing *something* in the (fleeting) world is the unity of consciousness as the lawfulness of things. Thinghood, according to Adorno's interpretation, is, consequently, identical with reification; for the fixed and stable character of the thing turns out to be identical with the fixed and stable character of the subject: «reification,» as Adorno puts it, «is a function of subjectivization.» The most important step within Adorno's interpretation of Kant is his claim that the dialectical relation between subject and object in Kant depends upon the *activity of the subject*. The materialist interpretation of the *First Critique* would not be understandable if we would not assume that the subject is active, since only the definition of subjectivity as – ultimately – *labor*, allows Adorno to see it as dialectic between subject and nature: «the world, reality as a whole, is turned into a product, in fact, the product of *labor*, of effort.»¹⁰ This relation between subject and object is, for sure, paradoxical: for, on the one hand, the subject seems to *construct* the identity of the thing (as lawfulness), but on the other hand, the subject thereby turns itself into a fixed form. In addition, as Adorno claims in the footsteps of Lukács, «the livelier the subject becomes, the deader the world becomes. We might talk here of the «commodity character» of the world, whose rigidity and inflexibility keeps increasing thanks to this process.»¹¹ What seems to be the «spontaneity» of the subject is *in reality* the absolute inflexibility of the subject (and, consequently, things, too). This paradox is then further interpreted by Adorno as the «essential autonomy of bourgeois society in general.»¹² On the one hand, the world becomes increasingly dependent upon activities of the subject and has been transformed into a world that is made by subjects; on the other hand, the world that we create increasingly dominates us, since with every activity the independent object-character of the world increases. Every domination of the object, according to Adorno, leads, hence, to a domination of the subject.

So far so good. Adorno's Kant interpretation, however, is not the last word in his materialist interpretation of the schematism as a social principle, as the domination of the subject through itself in thinglike forms

10 Ibid., p. 115.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

is, according to Adorno, derived from the real abstraction that occurs in commodity exchange. Adorno's thesis that »reification is a function of subjectivisation«¹³ implies that both the real subjectivization and atomization that occur in capitalist society (as well as the philosophical theory of knowledge) can be derived from the capitalist exchange logic.

IV

The exchange logic allows Adorno to claim that »objective basic experiences«¹⁴ are visible in Kant's philosophy; namely, in the »antinomy of the bourgeois world« and in the »commodity character of the world, its »rigidity and inflexibility« [*Erstarrung*].¹⁵ The subject that works itself off [*abarbeiten*] in relation to its object, produces itself and its objects as abstract objects, as these objects disconnect themselves from their living dialectical constitution and turn into fixed and reified structures. Kant's thinking is, accordingly, just the subjective expression of the objective *Verkehrung*. As Adorno puts it in a seminar protocol edited by Backhaus, the exchange abstraction »turns that which we exchange into the semblance of a thing-in-itself.«¹⁶ What we usually take to be the abstracting activity of the subject comes into being in truth within the real exchange society.¹⁷

Let me briefly explain this connection. Adorno develops his thesis that the subject is something fixed and reified through commodity exchange in relation to the Marxist conception of a »real abstraction« that occurs in capitalist exchange and leads to the universal and boundless »ghostly objectivity of value«¹⁸ as something *real and invisible at the same time*. The abstraction that occurs in commodity exchange is, as Adorno points out, itself *actual*.¹⁹ What Marx called »social deed«²⁰ interprets Adorno in his

13 Ibid., p. 114.

14 Ibid., p. 116.

15 Ibid., p. 115.

16 Adorno in Backhaus, *Dialektik der Wertform*, p. 507. Translation provided by the author.

17 See Theodor W. Adorno: *Negative Dialektik*, in: *GS 6* (pp. 7-412), p. 180.

18 Arthur, *The Spectral Ontology*, p. 32.

19 See Adorno in Backhaus, *Dialektik der Wertform*, p. 502.

20 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: *Werke* (hereafter MEW), Volume 23, Berlin 1972 ff., p. 101. Translation provided by the author.

article *Society* as the »basic fact of society.« This basic fact is the exchange, the realization of which leads to an »objective abstraction«²¹ and constitutes as a principle the *totality* of society, i.e., it establishes social coherence, social synthesis, and the form of social relations. Social antagonisms, accordingly, are reproduced through this principle, which, as such, becomes invisible in capitalist societies. Nevertheless, the exchange principle establishes the »objective rationality of society«²² and leads to the solidification of social life. The schematization, analyzed by Kant, turns, therefore, in Adorno's eyes, into the objective principle of capitalist society; but, and this is the crucial point, in truth it is the all-encompassing *social* schema that rules social synthesis. This schema as abstraction is, as Adorno puts it in his *Introduction to Sociology*, »both conceptual as well as real.«²³

V

As a result, then, we can no longer claim that ideology and knowledge is *simply* a mental category, as some scholars still claim; instead, the exchange logic, according to Adorno, is identical with an »objective process of ideology – independent from the consciousness of the individuals and their wills.«²⁴ Ideology is, as Zizek puts it, »the form of thought whose ontological status is not that of thought«²⁵, which goes back to Marx's understanding of economic categories as *objective* thought forms.²⁶ Money, for example, seen from this point of view, emerges as a category out of an objectively occurring abstraction and exchange, and, as a result, *every* entity can take on the money form. Once this takes place, the categories such as value, money, interest, capital, etc., can develop *purely* in abstrac-

21 Theodor W. Adorno: »Society«, in: *Critical Theory Essential Readings*, ed. by David Ingram, St. Paul 1998 (pp. 61-68), p. 64. See Theodor W. Adorno: »Gesellschaft«, in: *GS 8* (pp. 9-19), p. 13.

22 Ibid., p. 296.

23 Theodor W. Adorno: *Einführung in die Soziologie*, Nachgelassene Schriften, Abt. IV; Vorlesungen, Band 15, Frankfurt am Main 1994, p. 57. Translation provided by the author.

24 Adorno in Backhaus, *Dialektik der Wertform*, p. 508. Translation provided by the author.

25 Slavoj Žižek: *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London 1994, p. 17.

26 See MEW 23, p. 90.

tion from the social process of production that underlies use values. There are *three* aspects that are important here: [1] the categories emerge from an act of abstraction in exchange, [2] this act is universal, and [3] the abstraction is itself *practical*, i.e., social. As a consequence, the fetishism is itself objective, since in capitalism, value (as a pure and universal abstraction) appears as a *natural* and thing-like property of things, which leads to an »overtunn« of all social relations. Social relations, in other words, become *themselves* more thing-like. The culture industry is, consequently, a *real industry*, i.e., the *production* of consciousness in the form of a social schema based on the irrational-rational nature of the exchange principle and the abstraction that occurs within it.

VI

The main problem in Adorno's attempt to derive the social schematization of objects through exchange is that his definition of exchange remains too abstract, since he does not go further than claiming that the construction of things *as* things is an effect of the reification that occurs in exchange. In going so far as to claim that monopoly capitalism is characterized by the enjoyment of exchange value and not the use value,²⁷ Adorno falls back into what some have called »use value fetishism,« which is the idea that it is *simply* the introduction of exchange in our societies that turns everything, including culture, into commodities.²⁸ This thesis needs to be rejected, however, for two reasons: [1] not all exchange societies are capitalist, and [2] the definition of commodities as the contradiction between use and exchange value remains abstract. Put polemically, it seems as if Adorno simply stopped reading *Capital* after chapter one, falling prey to the classical Marxist view of commodities put forward by Engels, who claimed that the higher categorical forms of commodities, such as money and capital, are *historical* stages that come *after* use and exchange. For reasons that are not relevant to this paper, his position is incorrect. For all we need to acknowledge at this point is that the forms under which things

appear in capitalism are not simply sensible things (use values) with their social exchange forms; rather, we need at least to introduce the money form within which commodities become what they are, namely, *existing* things. Put in Marx's language, Adorno does not realize that the simple circulation process remains »an abstract sphere of the bourgeois process of production as a whole, which through its own determinations shows itself to be a moment, a mere form of appearance of some deeper process lying behind it, even resulting from it and producing it.«²⁹ The thesis expressed here by Marx in the *Urtext* of the *Capital* is that the claim that commodities are circulating in our societies and establishing social relations between commodity owners is far too simple, as the circulation process itself has a specific form under which this circulation process *exists* as a circulation process, which is established through the money and capital form. With Marx we need to see three points: [1] the exchange value/use value distinction is – as such – abstract (i.e., removed from the frame to which it belongs), [2] exchange value needs to become independent from and external to its possible destruction in consumption (which indeed takes place through the move from exchange value to the money form), and [3] consumption needs to become a moment of the whole reproduction cycle. If we understand by »commodity« simply the relation between use and exchange value, then we end up with an *abstract* definition of commodities, as we take commodities out of the circulation and reproduction process that *makes* them into and *allows* them to be commodities. This abstract position, however, is precisely the position that Adorno promotes, inasmuch as he claims that the refined object is simply the object of exchange. Adorno, in other words, does not see that the commodity *form* cannot be reduced to exchange and, instead, needs to be put in relation to all other economic categories that Marx unfolds. Put differently, Capitalist schematization does not simply consist of the exchange principle that takes away the uniqueness of things and turns them into something universal (as Adorno often seems to suggest); rather, the whole distinction of use and exchange is itself the *result* of Capitalist reproduction. Accordingly, the schema that we are in search of cannot be identical with the exchange principle. Though it is important to see that *the* object

27 See Theodor W. Adorno: *Ästhetische Theorie*, in: GS 7 (pp. 7–389), p. 39.

28 For this see Kornelia Hafner: »Gebrauchswertfetischismus«, in: *Erkenntnis und Gesellschaft. Zur materialistischen Erkenntnis- und Ökonomiekritik*, hg. von Dieter Behrens, Freiburg 1993, pp. 59–88.

29 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: *Gesamtausgabe*, Zweite Abteilung: *Kapital und Vorarbeiten*, Berlin 1989, p. 68. Translation provided by the author.

as *the* thing needs to be established as a social form, as Adorno correctly argues, and as *independent* from change and representation, the real independence of »the« thing cannot be reached without taking the money form into account (which becomes absolute under the capital form). Put in terms of political economy, value, or in this case *the thing* under capitalism, must establish itself as something independent from the process of production and consumption. Only if the universal constitution of money as something *separate* from circulation and as something *identical* despite circulation and consumption occurs, can we argue that it functions as the social »in itself« and, accordingly, as the universal schema through which all entities in capitalism are socially schematized, and, hence, are becoming meaningful. Again, if we stop – like Adorno did – with the exchange principle, then we do not grasp what we want to grasp, namely, the specificity of the Capitalist form. Instead, as Adorno and Horkheimer did in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, we fall back onto a *general* human and historical framework and, accordingly, fail to demonstrate what we intend to demonstrate, namely, the *specificity* of the Capitalist schema. From the viewpoint of money and capital, the use value of commodities, which Adorno clings to in an overtly romantic fashion, is only important in capitalism insofar as it leads to a new exploitation of labor power. Put differently, the use of commodities in capitalism is no longer the goal of the reproduction process, as the money form established the commodity as something that only counts as a use value *formed* by money. Accordingly, it is *not* exchange as such, which, taken simply as exchange, remains abstract, but the exchange as money that determines the commodity as what it is. Put simply, exchange has a form and the form of exchange is itself *not* exchanged, but establishes itself as identical »X« throughout all exchanges. Money is therefore something paradoxical, as it needs to be exchanged in order to become itself. Money is here *the thing*³⁰ that remains *independent from* the destruction of the commodity in consumption. As a consequence, Adorno's thesis that it is exchange that establishes everything as something abstract in Capitalist societies³¹ should be rejected,

30 Of course, a final analysis of this issue would need to translate the language of »the thing« back into a social relation by relating the category of money to the system of social categories.

31 See Theodor W. Adorno: *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit. Zur deutschen Ideologie*, in: *GS 6* (pp. 413–526), p. 454.

as the exchange needs to be established itself as something that is *external* to the circulation and consumption process. Only in this case can we argue that »the« thing, i.e., thinghood, is established as something independent, and that it is therefore determining all entities under Capitalism.

As a consequence of their abstractions, such as the concept of exchange, in their famous culture industry chapter Adorno and Horkheimer also fail to analyze, the *industrial* character of the *production* of culture. Though their analysis shows beautifully how a specific ideological and psychic structure, for example, desires, are produced by the culture industry, they do not trace this ideological structure back to the fact that this structure depends upon the structure of *production*. Put differently, they do not really follow up what they claim to speak about in the title of this chapter, namely, the culture *industry*. On the one hand, as Bernard Stiegler has recently pointed out, »consumerism transforms everything into needs, that is, into subsistence, and liquidates desire«³²; in addition, following Adorno and Horkheimer, this destruction is closely connected to a system of frustration.³³ What is experienced as need, however, is now controlled by the Capitalist system, especially since any desire for something outside of consumption has been taken over by a system of need production: commercials, films, advertisements, entertainment, etc., are all targeted towards the production of needs and desires. Accordingly, the relation between labor and capital, between the money form and the capital form is *presupposed* for any claim about the »industrial« character of culture and its takeover of our mental apparatus. On the other hand, the overall driving force behind the expansion of capitalism is the industrialization of mental activities and abilities, first in the form of machines, and nowadays in the form of digital and bio technologies. What we can observe, in other words, is that not only life itself, but also the whole range of the mind, is *turned into* and produced by technologies that are developed and used in contemporary industries. It is no longer simply the case that media technologies take over language (through writing, books, machines, computerization, media, standardizations, etc.), but now include the whole psychic and sensual apparatus of humans: vision, auditory sys-

32 Bernard Stiegler: *For a New Critique of Political Economy*, trans. by Daniel Ross, Cambridge 2010, p. 65. By »desire«, in contradistinction to Adorno and Horkheimer, Stiegler means something that *transcends* consumerism.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

tems, touch, pain, etc. The whole range of the *noein*, in other words, is in the process of being *produced* by these industries. Consequently, what Adorno and Horkheimer fail to see is that the thesis about the schematization of objects needs to be supported by a theory of social reproduction and the production of subjectivity needed for this reproduction. Given the industrial side of the consciousness industry, it should be clear that Adorno's claim that it is *simply* exchange that schematizes object reference in Capitalist societies, is insufficient, as this would require a discussion of the establishment of the money form, and the independence of the money form from the circulation and the capitalization of this form, which leads to the advancement of technology and the turn of the consuming consciousness into a *product*. Consequently, we cannot deal with the culture industry without both the money form as well as the production of electronics (nowadays robotics, as well as nano and biotechnologies) through industries, or through what Marx called the »general intellect«³⁴ and the »social brain«³⁵, which is to say, the production of knowledge and science.

Thomas Jung

Bedeutung oder Geltung?

Zum Sprachpragmatismus von Jürgen Habermas

1. Vorbemerkung

Ein genuin eigenständiges Verständnis von Sprache in den Schriften von Jürgen Habermas auszumachen, stößt zunächst auf einen argumentativen Vorbehalt, der bedacht sein will: Habermas ist kein originärer Sprachdenker, hingegen ein Sozialphilosoph, der sich zur Fundierung und Begründung seiner *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* einem pragmatischen Verständnis von Sprache bedient hat. Das theoriegeschichtliche Motiv der *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* ist eine Revision des »Repertoire[s] der gesellschaftstheoretischen Grundbegriffe«¹, wie dieses von der kritischen Theorie entwickelt und zur Verfügung gestellt worden ist. Der programmatische Leitbegriff des »kommunikativen Handelns« soll dabei die Funktion haben, die notwendige »Umsetzung« der gesellschaftlichen Grundbegriffe zu leisten. Ziel dieser kategorialen »Umsetzung« ist es, eine Rekonstruktion des Lebensprozesses »der Gesellschaft als einen durch Sprechakte vermittelten Erzeugungsprozeß«² zu ermöglichen. Argumentationsstrategisch steckt dahinter das Anliegen, der Kritik einer in der abendländischen Entwicklung »verselbständigten Zweckrationalität«, wie sie von Theodor W. Adorno und Max Horkheimer vorgetragen wurde, die geschichtsphilosophische Überhöhung zu nehmen. Diesbezüglich heißt es: »An die Stelle dieser Kritik der instrumentellen Vernunft tritt in der *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* eine Kritik der »funktionalistischen Vernunft, das heißt, einer gegenüber der kommunikativen Rationalität der Lebenswelt verselbständigten Systemrationalität«³. Diese Kritik gelingt aber nur dann, wenn der »Eigensinn der auf kommunikativen Handeln angewiesenen symbolischen Reproduktion der Lebenswelt«⁴

1 Jürgen Habermas: *Sprachtheoretische Grundlegung der Soziologie*, Frankfurt am Main 2009 (Philosophische Texte, Band 1), S. 11.

2 Ebd., S. 15.

3 Ebd., S. 21 f.

4 Ebd., S. 22.

34 MEW 42, p. 602.

35 Ibid., p. 594. Translation provided by the author.