



On the Methods of Critical Theory: Advancing the Project of Emancipation beyond the Early Frankfurt School

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Abstract

This article offers a reconstruction of the methodological tools pioneered by the first generation of the Frankfurt School (FS) and how they have been adapted in the contemporary project of emancipation in Critical International Relations Theory (CIRT). It is argued that the praxeological and methodological commitments of the early FS are of continuing utility in the post-positivist turn in IR theory. The paper also argues that CIRT has made significant advances on the original programme of CT developed by Horkheimer in the early 1930s. In particular, it is contended that the alleged pessimism typically associated with the later work of the early FS can be overcome if critical analysis looks beyond the state to those possibilities of emancipation pregnant within the global processes of world politics. Here the work of CIRT is argued to offer a number of advances on the sociology of the early FS, which was problematically confined to the examination of Euro- and state-centric possibilities for emancipation.

Keywords

Critical Theory, Critical International Relations Theory, dialectics, emancipation, Frankfurt School, Max Horkheimer, immanence, methodology

When an active individual of sound common sense perceives the sordid state of the world, desire to change it becomes the guiding principle by which he organises given facts and shapes them into a theory. (Max Horkheimer)¹

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Introduction

The late work of Adorno and Horkheimer is typically thought of as being sceptical, even pessimistic, regarding the possibilities for emancipation in the conditions of late or advanced monopoly capitalism.² While the early work of the Frankfurt School (FS) had expressed considerable hope for the eventual emancipation of humankind, the historical experiences of the defeat of the working class in Europe, the deformation of the Soviet Union, the rise of fascism, and the growth of the Western culture industry are all believed to have contributed to a brooding pessimism that ultimately culminated in a turn to religious metaphysics as a possible locus of negation (Horkheimer) or a retreat into aesthetics (Adorno).³ If one were to read isolated passages from the Adorno's *Minima Moralia*, Horkheimer's late essays, or even the whole text of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, one could be forgiven for assuming that society was perched on the edge of a precipice; like the sword of Damocles, hanging ever so precariously above society was the threat of totalitarian decay that seemed nigh inevitable.⁴ As Honneth has noted, it was not the programmatic writings of the early Horkheimer towards an emancipatory social theory but the 'negativistic' social philosophy typical of the late Adorno that stood as the guiding interests of Critical Theory (CT) during and after its return from exile.⁵

Yet it is precisely these negativist tendencies that this article hopes to reverse for the contemporary project of emancipation in CIRT. It pursues this broad contention through three interrelated arguments. The first part offers a detailed reconstruction of the initial programme of the FS and its relation to emancipatory politics. In particular, it reconstructs the dialectical, materialist and critical methods pioneered by Horkheimer and Adorno to illustrate their continued relevance for the study of world politics. The second part then examines the work of Robert W. Cox, Mark Neufeld and Richard Wyn Jones to illustrate how the methodological tools developed by the early FS have been successfully deployed in the post-positivist turn in IR theory. Here, a reinterpretation of the key texts of the early FS is given to reclaim the emancipatory potential in this body of work that has been lost under the dominance of the mainstream interpretation that has erroneously suggested that a 'politics of despair' was the only legacy of the first generation of the FS. Finally, the paper argues that CIRT has made significant advances on the original programme of CT by looking beyond the state to those possibilities of emancipation pregnant within the global processes of world politics. Here Ashley's dialectical competence model is argued to be an example – though, of course, not the only one in CIRT – that offers a number of advances on the sociology of the early FS, which was problematically confined to the examination of Euro- and state-centric possibilities for emancipation.⁶ The paper concludes by suggesting that the emancipatory project of CIRT can be enhanced by continuing to adapt the programmatic aspects of CT's approach to the analysis of social life in ways that remain committed to identifying the dialectically immanent potentialities for emancipation in world politics.

Locating emancipation in the programme of Critical Theory

Critical Theorists in IR have borrowed heavily from the foundational debates in German sociology, and in particular from Horkheimer's now famous distinction

between 'Traditional' and 'Critical' Theory that provided the ontological and methodological basis for the formation of the Institut für Sozialforschung (Institute for Social Research) in the 1930s. These debates were taken up by the discipline of IR in the early 1980s⁷ and were reflected most clearly in Cox's now famous distinction between 'Problem-Solving' and 'Critical' Theory.⁸ Taking up the methodological proscriptions first formulated by the FS, CIRT became a primary catalyst for the so-called normative turn in IR theory by offering alternative methodological and normative systems against the positivist assumptions of the dominant paradigm in IR theory, neo-realism. In this first part, I offer a detailed reconstruction of the dialectical, materialist and critical approaches to the social sciences pioneered by Horkheimer and Adorno in order to illustrate how such methodologies remain of fundamental importance to the project of emancipation in world politics.

Horkheimer's early work, particularly his 1931 'Inaugural address' and the groundbreaking 'Traditional and Critical Theory', offered the foundational programmatic and methodological aspects of CT.⁹ While at different stages Horkheimer used the terms materialist, dialectical and critical to describe his philosophical viewpoint, the common feature was a concern with human emancipation from suffering – a focus without which, Horkheimer believed, social philosophy would be unable to grasp reality, and would end either in metaphysical transcendentalism or an objective system that was compromised by its subjective relativism.¹⁰ The human striving for happiness and the reduction of its suffering were for Horkheimer something 'properly basic', a 'natural fact', that needed little justification and this concern with the unfolding of all humankind's capacities was what linked together the various materialist and humanist movements that Horkheimer viewed CT to be an heir to.¹¹ The reduction of suffering became the foundational element for CT and brought into focus the power of nature and the weakness of society as the twin axis of its project of emancipation. That is, CT sought to emancipate humankind on two fronts: from the coercion 'by nature' and the coercive forces of 'social life' (including juridical, political and cultural orders). The problem for Horkheimer, however – in reasoning that paralleled Adorno's introductory thesis in *Negative Dialectics* – was that due to changed historical conditions, philosophy could no longer be conclusive, prescriptive or definitive: its sole remaining task was to foster a mutual critique of itself and the world.¹²

Despite the inconclusiveness of philosophy in modernity, it nevertheless had a definitive goal for Horkheimer: nothing less than the reconciliation of reason and reality to ensure humankind's 'autonomy' within society – a goal that remains as acutely relevant today as it did in the 1930s. For Horkheimer, the prevailing patterns of social life that were experienced as the 'product of blind necessity' by which humankind collectively suffered should no longer continue to be practised 'uncritically'.¹² This necessitated a reflexive revolution of sorts – an ability of human beings to speculate and re-direct their thoughts and actions towards reason – but it was precisely this 'revolution in consciousness' that positivist science undermined. Under the dominance of the instrumental value of positivist research, thought was made to accept the tasks set to it by the 'needs' of governments, commerce and industry, so that questions as to whether the content of these tasks was the 'correct' one for humankind, or whether the form of social organisation in which they arose was 'still suitable' for humankind, were relegated to questions of mere

taste and personal decision beyond the bounds of rational argumentation and political redress. Instrumental rationality actively discouraged human thought from what Horkheimer regarded as its 'practical tendency' of pointing to the future. Given that there was 'no philosophical truth' by which all normative commitments were rendered groundless, to commit thought to anything more than scepticism or nihilism was cast as ideology: something false in its inherent subjectivity.¹⁴ Yet in distinction to these negativist presuppositions that sought to bind philosophy within an ineffectual and apolitical realm of aesthetic choice, Horkheimer located the 'real social function of philosophy' in its criticism of prevailing conditions and the exposition of all contradictions in which humankind was 'entangled' through its collective attachment to 'isolated ideas and concepts'. That is, Horkheimer sought a critical theory to negate the 'one-sidedness' in modern human society to point towards the future of a 'rational organisation of human existence' and the 'realisation of the good'. Bringing about an 'equitable state of affairs' was the necessary condition for the 'unfolding' of humankind's potential, a potentiality that made the socio-economic conditions necessary for such a state of *happiness* central for CT.¹⁵

In its pursuit of the good, Horkheimer believed that a critical philosophy could 'function as a corrective of history' by confronting the existent in its historical context and conceptual principles and measuring them 'against the social background from which they emanate[d]'. This immanent method served to criticise and transcend such principles by helping people to recognise the 'factors' that impeded the free development of humankind towards the utopia that Horkheimer viewed as being 'blocked' by the existent constraints of modern life.¹⁶ Yet *barbarism* was just as likely as *emancipation* in this dialectic, and Horkheimer was ever mindful that the backwards step was always a possibility. The problem for CT was that the contradictions in society could not be resolved purely by theoretical reflection alone. The utopian method of describing the perfect socio-political form was neither 'meaningful nor adequate' but needed to be augmented by focusing on psychological, moral and social conditions. So while Horkheimer furnished CT with utopian aspirations of the good life – as clearly evidenced in his support for Kant's defence of Plato's inquiry into Utopia – it was a utopianism tempered by recognition of the inherent powerlessness of such rationalism if left at the level of abstraction beyond social history.¹⁷ Horkheimer rejected the *false* idealism of such approaches, for without a historically situated society as its referent, a purported critical theory of society would 'remain locked in within itself', taking refuge in utopian fantasies and fighting 'sham battles' between rival visions of the future.¹⁸

For Horkheimer, the distinguishing feature between utopian fantasies and CT was not one of principle but the 'sober desire' to know how such ideals could be realised by focusing on the 'concrete relationships and tendencies' that could lead to an *actual* improvement in human life.¹⁹ The conditions of contemporary society were such that a 'community of freedom' was now possible, and it was this material potential that provided CT with its 'content'.²⁰ In this 'struggle for the future' the aim was to overcome the fragmentation of social life that maintained the privileges of the few and to move towards an 'association' of freedom in which all persons had the 'same possibility of self-development'. This association was no longer some 'abstract utopia' in Horkheimer's estimation, but a real possibility given the present level of technology and productive

forces. This 'image' provided a certain 'obstinacy' – a belief in the possibility of fulfilment – for CT, even in periods when the course of events seemed to be moving further away from such an ideal future.²¹ Despite this radical potential for emancipation, however, there was yet a purposelessness and obscurity to social life reflective of the contradictory nature of bourgeois society, which, dominated by the exchange principle, was not 'governed by any plan', but moved accidentally, generating constant friction in social relations. The atomistic, alienating and unplanned make-up of society was made to seem to be an 'unchangeable force of nature, a fate beyond man's control'. Horkheimer called this the 'two-sided' character of the social totality: the present was indeed a product of human making but not of its conscious making, and it was experienced as something comparable to non-human natural processes, not as a creation of humankind's 'unified, self-conscious will'.²²

In the place of such 'traditional' approaches that depicted society as the sum total of blind interactions, Horkheimer's CT viewed society as something that originated in human action and which could, in principle and in fact, be under human control and made the object of planned 'decision and rational determination'. A necessary corollary was the condemnation of the existent categories that were taken for granted as 'pure factuality' in traditional theory and thought to 'rule' society, work, value and productivity, going beyond these prevalent ways of thinking to the potentials immanent within society.²³ What animated CT was an interest in the genuine self-determination of humanity, away from the blind necessity of the exchange principle, to a state of affairs in which humankind's actions flowed from its *own* decisions. Its ultimate 'goal' of a 'reasonable organisation of society' and the abolition of such social injustices was not some teleological endpoint deduced from a priori moral principles but a conclusion forced upon it by the 'distress' that Horkheimer identified empirically and whose potential overcoming was something already immanent to society, albeit as yet inadequately grasped by the 'common mind'. For Horkheimer, it was now possible to show the contradictions between the principles *and* actuality of bourgeois society: how it 'excluded' ever larger numbers of people from the happiness that had been made possible by the abundance of economic forces. Insofar as humankind remained in conflict with itself – between its alleged extrinsic self and its intrinsic (private) pursuit of self-interest – it was unfree.²⁴ Yet by focusing on the continuous changes in social relations brought about by economic developments, the alteration of those conditions that caused unhappiness could become the tangible goal of a critical materialist thought.²⁵ In so doing, CT could break from idealism, metaphysics and transcendentalism because the ideals it retained were those shaped by the real needs and possibilities of society. Horkheimer believed that a self-aware mankind could be roused through prevailing injustices and the 'despair of the masses' to recognise the contradiction that marked their existence and thereby substitute such alienating social relations with a radically different 'ground plan' – a 'better order of things'.²⁶

Yet what was it that made Horkheimer confident that the methodology employed by CT could lead towards 'a better order' and not the reification of society common to traditional approaches? The key lay in the ontology of the human *subject* that CT presupposed: here the subject was not 'the isolated individual' nor the 'sum total of individuals' but 'a definite individual' in their real relations to other individuals, groups, class conflict

and the ‘web of relationships’ within the social totality and nature.²⁷ In assuming such a position, CT took issue with those approaches that posited the ego/self as autonomous and separable from society (i.e. liberalism), *and* those approaches that believed in non-existent unanimities between individuals within a constituted society of the ‘rhetorical “we”’ (i.e. nationalism).²⁸ For similar reasons, the early FS broke with the Marxist reliance on the agency of the proletariat and while the school has since been derided as Marxism ‘*without* the proletariat’,²⁹ CT did not reject the material or normative power of class, but rather assessed that the situation of the proletariat in a society dominated by instrumental reason, the ubiquitous power of the culture industry, and the narcissistic collectivity of nationalism, was no longer in a position to ‘guarantee’ that it possessed ‘correct knowledge’ of its historical situation or its historical mission as the agent of Marxian emancipation. For along with many other facets of human existence, this class had become unintelligible – even co-opted – by performing essentially mechanical functions for capitalist production processes in the service of the dominant ideology. While the proletariat undeniably possessed the experience of meaninglessness, wretchedness and injustice, the move to solidarity through suffering was being prevented from becoming a social force by the imposed social structure itself.³⁰ As such, CT could no longer canonise the proletariat, but must instead become itself a ‘promotive factor’ for emancipation, possessing the deepest grasp of the historical situation. Rather than edifying a particular class, CT was to pursue its method of immanent critique against the principles of existing bourgeois order to reveal its inner contradictions and thus draw out ‘real opposition’ against it. It was not in attempting to present a ‘true picture’ of proletarian existence, consciousness and its interests, but in forming a ‘dynamic unity’ with all the oppressed under societal contradictions, that CT could give expression to the ‘concrete historical situation’ and act as ‘a force within it to stimulate change’.³¹ Arguably, CT could then be enabled to arrive at a much wider, even cosmopolitan basis for its emancipatory politics, a potential, however, that was not reached because of the first generation’s limited analysis of global social forces (as we shall see in the next section).

On methodological grounds the key targets for CT were the ‘semi-enlightened’ approaches to the social sciences that were stultified by their theoretical monism and pre-given acceptance of the given order: namely, naturalism, empiricism and positivism.³² For Horkheimer, science as a social practice should not be exercised unreflectively: hence his vehement attack on positivist social science that pursued its object by abstraction from its context (the social totality) and professed the dogma of the ‘invariability of natural laws’ without acknowledging the dependence of both the natural order, and the knowledge of it, on humankind’s activity. Positivism attempted to reduce all possible knowledge to a collection of external data in order to deduce unchangeable natural (social) laws from which it believed it could develop a definitive system – the facts of which were demonstrable through *analytical science* alone and were alleged to be beyond the epistemological grasp of *philosophy* to question.³³

Under positivist approaches, the observer was deemed the passive recipient of independent data and the specialist was not seen as affecting the object by their own theory.³⁴ Yet, for CT, the ‘facts’ positivism took for granted were ‘socially performed’ through the historical character of the object and the historical character of our senses and perception. Adorno referred to this as being conceptually mediated, in which all the subjective and

objective factors investigated neutrally by empiricism were actually mediated through society so that the facts it deemed *final* were in fact *conditioned*.³⁵ Similarly, for Horkheimer subject and object were mutually interrelated, with both factors at work in each other, so that an adequate social theory needed to grasp the interplay of both aspects and not 'separate' them as divergent realities. Moreover, the theoretical and scientific activities of humankind were not the independent knowledge of a fixed object but a product of an ever-changing reality. There was no 'autonomy of thought': knowledge was a historical phenomenon and the product of non-independent processes. Every piece of knowledge was a representation made by particular persons in particular socio-historical contexts and for particular interests, so that 'facts' were seen to *emerge* from society and thus lost the 'pure factuality' they were deemed to possess for the traditional theorist. Rather, for CT, the way knowledge of underlying societal structures was obtained belonged to a particular historical situation – a 'product of a dialectical process' that could only be understood in the context of the dynamism of society itself.³⁶

Without this historical and dialectical ontology, positivism concerned itself only with the appearance of things, a limitation that it was actually 'proud' of. Yet, for Horkheimer, because it looked only to the appearances of society – appearances that were above all temporally and culturally relative – positivist approaches were essentially 'empty' in their social analysis.³⁷ Positivism could look to 'sociation' and examine concrete life, the family, the state and so on, and yet would still be unable to say anything about the *value* of these phenomena.³⁸ At the same time, however, such an approach that solidified the Cartesian dualism between thought and being was inherently useful for bourgeois society because its explanation of social life processes as a natural mechanism precluded any theory of, or purposive human action towards, the alteration of society. In so doing, positivism granted a certain metaphysical aura to existing society as if it were an *immutable* reality. The idea that a critical theory of society could become a 'genuine force' of emancipation was rendered incomprehensible under a positivist ontology that deemed that what could be put into practice was determined by the 'closed causal system of reality' and *nothing* else. This ahistorical understanding of society ultimately led to a 'faith' in the 'unchangeableness of the social structure' so that either determinism or nihilism – both of which foreclosed on any possibility of change – became the only explicable theoretical orientations to take. Within the prevailing mode of production and the instrumental rationality it fostered, any form of emancipatory or critical thought appeared at best speculative and useless, and at worst biased or unjust. This subject/object dualism in the positivist research process thus came to be reflected in society at large: individuals in modern society were 'isolated', 'helpless' and came to see themselves only as 'passive participants' in a process that could be foreseen but never modified.³⁹

The Popper–Adorno controversy, later published as *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, reiterated the position of CT vis-à-vis positivism through a concerted attack on Popper's 'observer with a problem' approach to the social sciences. Here the respondents of the critical camp (Adorno and a young Habermas in particular) argued that Popper had simply transposed, with certain modifications, the methods of the natural sciences that eluded a linear, mechanistic and undialectical framework with an underlying notion of progress biased towards technology and instrumentalisation. Part of the problem for the CT camp was due to the distinct character, object

and subject of the 'natural' as opposed to the 'social' sciences. The diverse nature of society – the different and opposed interests of individuals, the inconsistency between the general and particular – meant that *homogeneity* could not be asserted in the same manner as the natural sciences could do of matter.⁴⁰ The other part of the problem consisted of the normative implications of such positivist approaches, clearly illustrated in Popper's refusal to acknowledge the social contradictions embedded in capitalist society and his attempt to gloss over them through an appeal to an incremental-based scientism.⁴¹ Popper upheld the superiority of science, but paradoxically restricted its application to a 'piecemeal' approach to politics, a field that he implied was best reserved for technological problem-solvers.⁴² Without recognition of the contradictory nature of science as an institution that stood behind capitalism actively promoting its technological expansion, Popper's thesis falsely depicted science as normatively neutral – the mere accumulation of knowledge, facts and data. The scientific researcher/observer was to provide practical results and not question the interests and values which the knowledge they produced actually served, so that the ways in which science assisted processes of social domination remained hidden. The social sciences became the servants of a 'responsible' and conservative politics, the functionary instrument of the overarching social framework that, ironically, contradicted the values that Popper himself upheld in the research process: plurality, openness and the contestation of ideas.⁴³ Yet, as argued by Wilson, the question was not simply what functions a subordinate social science performed in advanced capitalist societies, but the larger issue of domination located in this view of science whose reified dichotomies masqueraded as empirical observations of phenomena in the real world. The pernicious effect of this depiction of a normatively neutral social science was that it had become so entrenched that it conditioned humankind's very way of viewing social change as something impossible.⁴⁴

However, in a statement that would be echoed in Robert W. Cox's famous adage decades later that 'theory is always *for* someone, and *for* some purpose', Horkheimer claimed that there was no theory of *society* 'that does not contain political motivations'.⁴⁵ For him, the motivations of traditional sociology and positivism were located in the political and economic needs of bourgeois society that rewarded knowledge that had instrumental or practical applications while neglecting those whose use-value was not immediate for production purposes. The work of such traditional approaches supported the capitalist economic structures that imbued their research with purpose so that the division of labour in both *theoretical* and *practical* work accorded to the interests of the authors of these (capitalist) social structures. In this traditional form, theory was rendered a mere tool of production that was to concern itself only with problems that arose in technical development and did not question the value of this form of production as such. Accordingly, traditional approaches formed a part of the total economic process, helping to 'make it possible' and lending to the dominant ideology a strong cohesive force in a society threatened with collapse under the weight of its inner tensions.⁴⁶

It is unsurprising therefore that pragmatism and positivism resonated most promisingly in the conditions of modern capitalism because they were able to connect their theoretical work with dominant interests; they eliminated all utopian or speculative criteria of judgement by reidentifying *technological* progress with progress as such, and

at the same time produced facts, data and results, all of which were useful for the reproduction of social life.⁴⁷ Yet by insulating themselves from the speculative and reflexive aspects of objective reason, they came to perpetuate a new dogma or myth system: that is, the conception of theory as instrumental rationality was absolutised ahistorically and reified as if it were the 'inner nature' of all knowledge.⁴⁸ The result was not only the myth of the 'immutability thesis' that betrayed the very objectivity positivism upheld as its standard, but the collective avoidance of theoretical considerations of society as a whole by 'belittling' the importance of the comprehension of social processes.⁴⁹ Concerns for a better society – the purview of an emancipatory CT – were subsumed under attempts to prove the present as 'permanent'. Horkheimer noted that with the move to bourgeois liberalism there was a correspondent diminishing of expectations that 'reality could be reasonably shaped' so that it became 'less and less important' to discuss 'constructions of the best possible world'.⁵⁰ The perpetuation of this myth system led to such disillusionment that people in modern society came to 'sarcastically prefer the worst over the pretension of [something] better'.⁵¹ One could recall here the recent electoral backlash against the Obama administration, which had once been viewed with such great hopes for change.

It was not lost on Adorno that it was only the immediate practical and administrative utilisability of empirical sociology that gave it such primacy in modern times. Yet Adorno questioned the supposed objectivity of traditional empirical sociology which he claimed rested only in its methods and not in the object of its study, because these approaches ignored societal objectivity, i.e. the conditions, institutions and forces in which human subjects *act*. Accordingly, such research merely postulated the 'reified consciousness of the people tested' because all that such studies registered – whether through statistical data or behavioural modes – were the reactions that took place within the dominant system. Anything outside was methodologically excluded. As the traditional sociological method prepared in advance what was to be ascertained, the generalisations it derived were attributable not to *reality* but to the *method* itself.⁵² Insofar as such approaches assumed their methods captured the individual's consciousness – and that such nominalism had an immediate causal role in social processes rather than relations of human intersubjectivity – they possessed a tendency to fetishise their object.⁵³ What such studies missed out on was the 'objectification' of its object – the objectification of society itself, and in particular the constraints of economic objectivity on the subject. In these fundamental respects, they left the social system unanalysed and became more idealist the more they avoided examining the economic causes of material need. Such isolated social research became 'untrue' when it extirpated the totality that was incomprehensible to its method and remained unable to view the essential connections in society. The problem was compounded by the fact that under the power and influence of the culture industry, this pre-formation of people's consciousness had increased to such a degree that there was scarcely a gap left which may have permitted an awareness or exposition of this pre-formative process by the people themselves.⁵⁴

Yet whereas for Adorno this lack of freedom in the methods of traditional sociology reflected the lack of freedom in society itself, for Horkheimer, the fact that the relation between positivist knowledge and its utilisation in capitalist society had now been revealed by CT turned against the purported neutrality of positivism: it exposed

its ideological function and helped to issue the demand for an alternative model of rationality. At the same time, however, Horkheimer acknowledged that an awareness of the relativity of theoretical thought and positivist fact was not enough to push forward a new concept of theory – something that required nothing less than the reconsideration of the ‘knowing individual’, the relation between subject and object (something taken up directly in Adorno’s *Negative Dialectics* which championed the non-identical).⁵⁵ For similar reasons, Adorno had put forward as a tentative solution to this arbitrary division of labour in the social sciences the amalgamation of divergent sociological methods that would combine empirical research with theoretically central questions – what Horkheimer would also advocate as the ‘dialectical penetration’ of philosophy and the specialised sciences.⁵⁶ In this way, CT could *extract* rather than *reject* the relative merits from other methodological approaches and points of view, thus making its own account more comprehensive. Moreover, such an approach could confront what empirical social research directed at the subjective consciousness/unconsciousness of human beings with the objective factors of their existence. For example, whereas empiricism became mere ideology at the point where it positioned public opinion as absolute rather than as ‘the socially average illusion’, for Adorno the real question was the ‘consistency or inconsistency of opinion in itself and of its relationship to reality’ (Sache). In this way, CT could pierce the veil behind the pre-formation of humankind’s reified consciousness in modernity, and in so doing confirm the necessary critical nature of theory by making its task the dissolution of the temporally and spatially fixed object into a field of tension between the possible and the real.⁵⁷

What became the key method CT employed in its attempt to trace the possibilities of emancipation in society was dialectical analysis, an approach imbued with notions of interaction, flux and contradiction, and which focused on the antagonistic character of society – an antagonism that could not be ‘conjured’ away by the illusory generalisations of traditional sociology.⁵⁸ Through this method, the social structure that CT examined was not upheld as static, immutable or uncontested, but as a ‘developing picture’ with a ‘historical dimension’.⁵⁹ While social structure was fluid, it could be grasped by delineating the transformative processes in all social relationships and the dynamic movement of events within society. This dialectical approach rejected any notion of a Kantian transcendent order and replaced philosophical ontology and anthropology with the historical development of humankind. Human traits were not hypostasised as ‘suprahistorical factors’ and temporal meanings and values were not considered as ‘fixed, changeless elements’. As dominant modes of thought and productive processes were relative and changeable they did not dictate the way the ‘future [was] to be built’ and hence Horkheimer’s CT took an activist posture towards history, aiming to be not just a theory of emancipation but a part of the process of its realisation.⁶⁰ At the same time, however, this dialectical outlook meant that CT was cognisant of its own fallibility: that it was not independent of humankind nor that it possessed a development or volition of its own. Even its own normative goal of emancipation would be transformed in different historical and cultural conditions so that CT was to remain self-reflective while examining immanent possibilities for the realisation of its project.⁶¹

In sum, the early FS leaves IR scholars with a range of unique methodological tools – dialectics, materialism and immanent critique among others – that are capable not

only of understanding the conditions of human emancipation but in promoting them. These tools were developed specifically with the normative goal of emancipation in firm view: a positive commitment to humankind's autonomy and the negative sublation of human suffering, the twin poles of the emancipatory project pioneered by the early FS. Through these methods, CT – whether directed towards emancipating social forces within states as was the purview of the early FS, or towards emancipating the relations between them as is the concern of CIRT – could assist in correcting the atomistic, alienating and exploitative nature of social life under the contradictions of bourgeois society under late capitalism that has since expanded across the globe. Rather than positivism's alleged value-neutrality, which only thinly veiled how its knowledge was immediately utilisable for the practical, administrative and productive purposes of late capitalism, CT focused its methods on the 'definite individual' set amidst the 'web of relationships' within the social totality and nature. By being able to expose the contradictions of these deformed intersubjective relations through its range of methodological tools, CT could express the historical situation of existing *unfreedom* and act as a force within it to stimulate change. Here its ability to foster the dialectical penetration of philosophy *and* science offered it a powerful – and in my view unsurpassed – means of promoting emancipation. Through its methods, social structures, institutions, states and international society could no longer be viewed as static or immutable entities. All were equally exposed as having both historical dimensions and a future that was indeed alterable. Whether such change could be directed consciously by humankind itself was one possibility within an open horizon of our *own* choices. In this way, an activist posture to history with emancipatory intent was adopted that combined a complex array of methods, both scientific and philosophical, as critical weapons to help realise human emancipation. As we shall see in the next section, these methodologies developed uniquely by the early FS continue to have relevance and utility in contemporary CIRT.

Emancipatory possibilities in the sphere of world politics

Adorno once stated that 'epistemological controversies which are indeed fought out long ago ... are forgotten all too willingly by short-winded consciousness in its reference to the urgent requirements of the research process'.⁶² While this charge was levelled at positivist sociology in the German academy of the early 1960s, it could well have applied to the discipline of IR theory in the early 1980s. Then, the epistemological and methodological controversies that the original programme of CT had debated with positivism were willingly forgotten or remained unheard of by the majority of IR scholars. The dominant theoretical position – structural or neo-realism – maintained a positivist methodology in its study of the international system to the exclusion of all other approaches. Having already recounted the broad methodological components of CT that have directly challenged positivism, I now wish to highlight the benefits that have flowed from its application in IR theory with a particular focus on two examples. The first illustrates how the methodologies of CT were highly influential in leading to the post-positivist turn in IR.⁶³ This will be done via the reconstruction of how Cox and Neufeld utilised the key epistemological insights of the FS to fundamentally rupture the dominance of the neo-realist orthodoxy. The second example then illustrates how CIRT has built upon and

extended the first generation of the FS by including global social forces in its critical social analysis of world politics. It is argued that through a reconceptualisation of key texts of the early FS begun by Wyn Jones, and through the dialectical competence model of Ashley, CIRT has moved beyond the confines of the state and the European context which unduly limited the remit of the initial programme of the FS.

From problem-solving to Critical Theory

While the problems of neo-realism's positivist approach to world politics have been criticised by many schools in IR theory, the first forays of this type of critique were those that had adopted – or independently developed – the critical methodological insights of the early FS outlined above. Theorists such as Ashley, Cox and Linklater revealed one of neo-realism's fundamental limitations through the dialectical prism of CT: the ahistoricism of the system reproduction thesis. The central tenet of neo-realism was shown to be premised on the assumption that the conditions of international anarchy were reproductive, in the sense that Herz's security dilemma would lead to ongoing tensions that would reinforce existing patterns of uncertainty, and thus lead to the self-perpetuation of these systemic features structuring IR. Yet from the dialectical view of CT, this not only divested human beings of agency, but reified particular historical conditions as not only determinative of human possibility but as perpetual fetters on the human condition. Neo-realism's ahistoricism not only betrayed its claim to materialism by denying that human consciousness and social forms were developmental, but also foreclosed on any potential for the self-creation of the species, who were relegated to the status of mere automatons or 'structural dupes', determined by the systemic features of international anarchy.⁶⁴

Neo-realism was therefore only suited to account for forces that maintained the system's equilibrium rather than identifying the contradictions that could lead to the system's transformation. Consistent with the biases and limitations inherent in traditional empirical sociology as identified by Horkheimer and Adorno, the knowledge produced by neo-realism was not only utilisable for the dominant interests in the system that it studied, but was actually instrumentalised by them: neo-realism became the doctrine of the new mandarins that infused the foreign policy offices of the Western powers and its leading academic institutions.⁶⁵ Yet Cox identified that because neo-realism was fixated on the systemic features of IR alone it was incapable of grasping the importance of sociality as a generative mechanism of change, and therefore inferior to the relational essentialism of critical approaches.⁶⁶

Along these lines, Leysens and Neufeld have argued that so-called Coxian CT was superior to other approaches in IR because of its inherent dialectical basis: its commitment to considering how a particular order came about, the analysis of social contradictions therein, and its reflection on the possibilities for transformation immanent within existing social forces.⁶⁷ Whereas neo-realism saw conflict in the world system as a 'recurrent consequence of a continuing structure', Cox's dialectical approach saw in social contradiction the possible cause of structural change.⁶⁸ That is, for Cox, historical phases were produced in processes of contradiction and he looked at the problem of world order taken as a reciprocally interrelated whole, with an awareness of not reifying the world as a system.⁶⁹ In this way, the capacity of dialectics to acknowledge the

'historical malleability of structures' served to differentiate it from structuralism that posited fixed and immutable structures.⁷⁰ It was this methodological feature that forged the distinction between what Cox referred to as 'Problem-Solving' and 'Critical' Theory: whereas the former assimilated 'particular situations to general rules', the latter sought 'out the developmental potential within the particular'.⁷¹

The overlap between Cox's approach and the methodological commitments of the early FS are clearly evident. Both suggest the ability of dialectical methods to be able to pierce the veil that conceals the supportive relation between positivism and the existing power structures of the state and capital; both suggest the possibility for coming to a better understanding of reality by focusing on its transformation processes rather than the abstraction of the system reproduction thesis or the doctrine of immutability. What the early FS was able to offer the discipline of IR was a thoroughly developed critical methodology involving dialectical analysis and immanent critique that could avoid such 'artificial prioritisation' (the isolation of parts from their 'social genesis' as in empiricism) or emptying the whole of its components and then abstracting them as a 'system' (as in Waltz's 'Third Image' analysis).⁷² These methods have since been successful in penetrating IR theory precisely because they necessitate a process of reflective judgement on the relationships of interconnectedness in world politics and not just the abstraction of particular elements or moments. By taking the 'dialectical leap' into the dynamism within the complex patterns of social relations and the contradictions that may engender world transformation, CIRT was privy to phenomena that neo-realism had closed itself off too.

Yet it is interesting to note that Cox was largely unaware of Horkheimer's work at the time he was writing his seminal articles in *Millennium*, despite the many uncanny parallels that exist between his work and the programme set out in Horkheimer's 'Traditional and Critical Theory'.⁷³ However, the fact that Cox did not refer to himself as a 'Critical Theorist', but preferred the title of an 'eccentric' (Susan Strange's words) or a 'non-conformist',⁷⁴ only revealed that he did not consciously share close affinities with the FS rather than denying their substantively shared normative and methodological concerns. Moreover, what is of importance is that Cox takes up nearly identical dialectical methods to those that Horkheimer had advanced 50 years previously in order to contest positivism's ahistoricism and veiled ideological support of the status quo. What had shifted was merely the target of critique from traditional empirical approaches in sociology to neo-realist approaches in IR. Moreover, it is important to note that the fact that Cox had not engaged with the FS, and with Horkheimer's work in particular, fed into what Booth has identified as a certain weakness in how Cox labelled the 'critical' approach in his foundational article. Cox had made it appear as if CT was not interested in 'solving problems' or was somehow anti-theoretical to those approaches that were concerned with solving problems, which ultimately played into the rhetorical devices of critics that suggested CT was therefore a redundant form of idealism. The problem then was precisely the fact that Cox had not closely read Horkheimer, who as we have seen stressed the unity of philosophy and science in a progressive form of social theorising concerned with emancipation. CT, depicted in Horkheimer's original programme, possessed both technical and practical interests and was a guide for strategic action to bring about a 'better world order'; as Booth writes, 'its knowledge-interest is solving problems, through tactical or strategic action for emancipatory purposes'.⁷⁵

The argument for dialectical reflexivity in CIRT in opposition to the sterility of positivist neo-realism has also been advanced by Neufeld. Neufeld directly linked the importance of Cox's approach, which reflected on the origins, contradictions and possibilities for the transformation of world order, with his own work.⁷⁶ Concerned with the dearth of approaches in IR theory oriented towards 'human emancipation', Neufeld argued against the logic of positivism and for a turn towards intersubjectivity and immanent critique, as in the works of Bernstein, Gramsci and the FS. For Neufeld, because human consciousness was co-constitutive of social reality, it possessed agency to transform that reality, and the task of CIRT was to help our understanding of the possibilities for 'a radical, emancipatory, transformation of the global order'.⁷⁷ Whereas Cox was only suggestive of his political vision and deliberately distanced himself from the use of the term 'emancipation' unless in reference to the work of others,⁷⁸ Neufeld was far less guarded, and openly harked back to the normative commitments of the early FS. Using a distinct terminology that recalled Horkheimer's appeal for a critical social theory that looked towards the question of the 'better order of things', Neufeld outlined his vision of a 'created space' within which equality and freedom were to be attained in what he called a global Aristotelian polis.⁷⁹

The focus of Neufeld's work, however, has not been in giving greater definition to this vision. Rather it was in explicating how IR theory could contribute to such a project of emancipation by deploying key methodological aspects that had been in no small measure developed by the early FS. For these reasons, Neufeld has upheld the key elements of CT (reflexivity, agency/transformation and social critique) as superior to positivist approaches. For him, the reflexive dialectic of the critical tradition inverted the very categories of positivism through its willingness to be reflective of its own assumptions and its recognition that all theories (including CT itself) possessed normative and political implications. While this would seem to lead down the familiar path of relativism as attendant on all theoretical positions, for Neufeld it was by being reflexive regarding the politico-normative dimensions of different approaches that one could assess the relative merits of each.⁸⁰ Rival theories could be compared according to their politico-normative project, and 'whether that project enhance[d] human potential and promote[d] the attainment of the global polis'.⁸¹ For him, differing research paradigms were therefore *comparable* and hence Neufeld observed various continuities between postmodern, feminist, Gramscian and FS approaches to IR that attempted to break the discursive hegemony of neo-realism and move towards some form of emancipatory politics.⁸²

Wyn Jones's work in Critical Security Studies has affirmed the principles and precepts of the FS, particularly those methods that he believes can 'generate innovative ways of thinking about the theory and practice of security and strategy'. He suggests his contribution lies not in producing new knowledge per se but in its 'method and critical evaluation', and he takes up explicitly Horkheimer's initial framework for CT.⁸³ Following Horkheimer's lead, Wyn Jones claims that the understanding of theory developed by the natural sciences has since become ubiquitous and universalised to all fields of knowledge, and, like Cox before him, relates the problems associated with such positivist claims specifically to Waltz, whom he regards 'as a latter-day Teutonic deductivist'. The same illusions that Horkheimer identified in earlier positivist

approaches are seen to resurface in IR theory: illusions that Wyn Jones argues arise from the lack of reflexivity in neo-realism. Despite claims of objectivity and value neutrality, the things studied by positivist analysis are actually determined and influenced by ‘extrascientific factors’, for such theories remain part of society and are therefore subject to its pressures – pressures to undertake research that is useful according to capitalist and statist demands. The methodological pre-commitments of positivist analysis lead to a particularly pernicious effect. As he writes, positivism leads to:

normalizing and privileging one particular understanding of what constitutes knowledge ... the privileging of [the] epistemology [of positivism] has the effect of undermining the truth-claims of those who wish to challenge the provenance of the prevailing order. It makes other ways of knowing – and other ways of being – illegitimate.⁸⁴

To overcome these problems, Wyn Jones appeals to Horkheimer’s conception of social theory in which the study of society is conceived as ‘part of the realm of ethics and concerned with the pursuit of the good life’: of ‘man’s emancipation from slavery’.⁸⁵ This is coupled with CT’s unique ability to reintegrate rather than reject the perspectives of the natural sciences within a progressive social theoretical framework that Horkheimer had outlined in his vision of the interdisciplinary research programme for the Institut für Sozialforschung.⁸⁶

Yet the later work of the first generation seems to throw up considerable challenges to this potential for emancipation – challenges that Wyn Jones does not directly overcome. For Wyn Jones, Horkheimer and Adorno’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment* effectively heralded the end of the emancipatory vision that had previously animated the FS, because the natural sciences were here considered to be ‘irredeemably tainted by instrumental reason’. The transition towards instrumental rationality in late modernity had infected even the most progressive approaches to the social sciences which could only now aid in the further ‘manipulation’ of society rather than its ‘emancipation’. As a result, the ground of immanent critique, the critical tool Horkheimer had championed in ‘Traditional and Critical Theory’, was lost, because CT was itself directly implicated in the ‘dark side’ of modernity. As Wyn Jones states, ‘the baleful effects of instrumental reason have insinuated themselves into every aspect of human existence’ and even polluted the attempt of CT to emancipate it. In Wyn Jones’s view, this accounted for Adorno’s move to aesthetics and Horkheimer’s retreat to theologism in which social change towards emancipation was deemed impossible. Yet Wyn Jones did not make the subsequent move to grapple with these typical pessimistic interpretations of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* or the *Eclipse of Reason*, much less try to overcome them. He identifies the ‘extremely bleak version’ of CT that arose in the later works of the first generation and attempted to redeem the project of CT through a broader consideration of how later generations of the FS such as Habermas, Honneth and Beck had sought to overcome this impasse.⁸⁷

Yet it is possible to salvage the emancipatory insights of these key texts through a reconstruction of the primary methodological commitments of the first generation that remain traceable within them. For example, the primary thesis of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* excluded many factors that did not stand in direct relation to instrumental

rationalisation processes and thereby erroneously cast an all-encompassing net of ‘pathology’ over the process of civilisation as a whole. Horkheimer and Adorno gave only a one-sided account that neglected the unrealised potential in Enlightenment thought and thus infringed upon the precepts of their own method: they failed to take the dialectical step of placing their abstract analysis of Enlightenment processes back within the social whole. As argued by Honneth and Bronner, the advancements of legal freedoms, democracy and the broadening of individual action – the very developments that provided the background against which the dominance of instrumental rationality could appear as a ‘historical mis-development’ – were recast as being pathological in themselves.⁸⁸ The fact that Horkheimer and Adorno attempted to achieve a form of ‘world-disclosing critique’ through the deployment of rhetorical devices (the narrative metaphor, chiasmus and exaggeration) revealed that there was some residual aspect of society left outside instrumental domination that could understand such a form of critique. The rhetorical devices employed in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* not only revealed that Horkheimer and Adorno clung to some hope of emancipation through them but that there were emancipatory possibilities even within a society dominated by instrumental rationality: potentialities that could be reclaimed.⁸⁹ Similarly, in *Eclipse of Reason* the fact that Horkheimer believed there could be no positive concept of reason derived from his critique of instrumental rationality did not mean that instrumentalisation had become total and the social world voided of all emancipatory potential.⁹⁰ While Horkheimer’s anticipation of an ‘authentically human history’ had turned into its opposite, namely, ‘the automatising of society and human behaviour’, the dialectic of human suffering and social movements towards its (potential) sublation remained.⁹¹ For Horkheimer it was the experiential *suffering* of human beings under the domination of the technical interest in modern capitalism that generated resistance and continuously reinvigorated the possibility – no matter how improbable – of human emancipation. Arguably, the title he gave to this work deliberately alluded to the passing nature of the instrumentalisation of reason under the conditions of modernity, for an eclipse is usually only partial and is always only momentary.

Emancipatory possibilities in the sphere of world politics

We have already seen how the various methods developed by the early FS promoted a form of critical social theory concerned with emancipation and how these methodologies have been taken up within various aspects of CIRT. In particular, we have seen how Cox and Neufeld utilised dialectical approaches to challenge the orthodoxy of neo-realism in IR theory, and how Wyn Jones deployed key aspects of Horkheimer’s methodology in Critical Security Studies. Moreover, we have seen how it is possible to reclaim the emancipatory themes in those later works of the first generation that have been unduly labelled pessimistic or negativistic through a critical reconstruction of the immanent possibilities for emancipation that they maintain. In all of these ways, we have seen how the original programme of the FS can be of continuing utility in CIRT’s project of emancipation. Yet there is one final aspect of the relation between the critical social theory of the early FS and contemporary CIRT that needs to be addressed: how CIRT has, of itself, expanded the initial remit of CT into a cosmopolitan dimension. Without an analysis of

this important development, the account would remain one-sided, suggesting that the learning process has been solely unidirectional *from* the FS *to* CIRT. In making this argument I have selected the work of Richard Ashley for illustrative purposes, not because he is the only figure in CIRT to have made such contributions, but because his work in CIRT has not been as well reflected on as that of Andrew Linklater or Robert W. Cox. This section is in part an attempt to fill this gap.

While many key thematic ideas have been taken directly from CT and transposed into CIRT (i.e. the normative focus on emancipation, the ontological commitment to social relations, and the various epistemological and methodological issues as discussed above), this should not overshadow the fact that the latter has expanded the scope of critical inquiry to include global processes that the early FS remained largely unconcerned about or significantly downplayed. A sociology that does not engage with the global situatedness of communities remains limited, precisely because it abstracts human community away from its global context – something that Horkheimer and Adorno's commitment to dialectical methods should have alerted them to, given its fundamental assumption of the interconnectivity of all things. Yet to the extent that Horkheimer and Adorno took the state as the key referent for political community, the original programme of CT necessarily excluded an analysis of the wider axis of human society and overlooked the potential for the extension of its project of emancipation into the cosmopolitan sphere. This is not to suggest that the early FS did not make sporadic references to international politics, but rather to highlight that because such analysis was not systematically undertaken, its potential to identify the immanent possibilities for human emancipation *in the world* was reduced accordingly.⁹²

The lack of insight into the global dimensions of its emancipatory project severely limited the depth of the critical analysis of the early FS. One could argue that the same 'sins of omission' that CT raised against the methods of positivism that, as we have seen, failed to adequately situate its analysis in the social whole could be levelled against the first generation themselves. Horkheimer and Adorno's approach to social theory – no matter how critical it was of the adoption of the physical sciences to the analysis of social life – came to mirror such traditional approaches because they focused on what they considered as given and immediate: namely, the European context and the ebbing of working-class movements under the fascist heel and the rise of the culture industry. This focus precluded an appreciation of movements of emancipation outside the West, limiting the horizon of possibility under a non-reflexive Euro-centric gaze. It can be inferred that it was this fundamental epistemological oversight that contributed, in large part, to the late pessimism of Horkheimer and Adorno, forcing their retreat to the wholly other or aesthetics respectively – not because the historical moment of emancipation had been purportedly missed, but because their sociology was too narrowly focused on the Western political situation to observe other possibilities for the realisation of the project of emancipation. While the FS never set out to make a contribution to the analysis of world politics, and cannot be condemned for something that was beyond their purview, the unique contribution of CIRT *to* the FS lies in its methodological inclusion of global emancipatory social forces. Here, the states system is perceived as a historically evolving normative system that, while being anchored in the Westphalian tradition, possesses a plurality of forces and immanent possibilities for change.⁹³

Ashley has employed the various methods of CT to elevate concerns regarding power and the global hegemonic order to help practically realise the project of emancipation in world politics. This twin focus on power and hegemony has offered considerable advances on the original programme of CT because it situated emancipation within the global context and the possibilities (and limitations) that the international state system provided for its realisation. While Ashley's theoretical development has, over time, dropped its earlier concerns with Habermas's theory of communicative action, it has continued, rather than abandoned, its concern with radical emancipatory politics and complementary methodologies.⁹⁴ By linking postmodern and critical approaches under the banner of 'dissidence' and 'the prospects for emancipation', he has focused on historically emergent (contested) practices in order to locate and strengthen resistant practices in world politics.⁹⁵ As important as Ashley's successful combining of these critical methodologies has been, arguably his key contribution lies in how he has problematised the ontological primacy given to the state in sociological and IR theories and offered a method to analyse global processes of power and change through his 'dialectical competence model'.

Ashley has taken an activist rather than transcendent approach to history – one that rejected any teleological (Kantian) understanding of its processes in favour of a historical narrative of openness in which dissidence and marginality, plurality and difference, could emerge.⁹⁶ Distancing himself from those practices of the Enlightenment that had resulted in forms of domination, Ashley argued for the need to move the concept of emancipation away from the exclusionary discourses of the state and the statesman towards a 'boundless space of freedom'.⁹⁷ At the same time, however, Ashley sought to pry the practical interest of classical realism (particularly of Herz whose emancipatory cognitive interest and reflective reason Ashley admired) away from the unidimensional, structural positivism of neo-realism. Based on Habermas's work that was prefigured in *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, Ashley argued that the Waltzian variation of neo-realism was aimed at mere problem-solving and exuded a technical, rather than practical or emancipatory interest.⁹⁸

For Ashley, neo-realism's approach formed a 'self-enclosing unity' bound within its four interrelated assumptions: structuralism, statism, utilitarianism and positivism.⁹⁹ Ashley later equated neo-realism with the problematic structuralist Marxism of Althusser that purged theory of its 'rich dialectical content', imposed a 'deadening ahistorical finality', and made structure, rather than agency or practices, 'decisive'. Through its interest in power and in expanding control, neo-realism effectively neutered the critical faculties leading to the 'impoverishment of political imagination' and the perceived impossibility of 'creative change'. This static approach framed the discourse of IR as the dominant orthodoxy that preferenced technical imperatives in the service of unquestioned ends.¹⁰⁰ Under such a discourse, the structural determinacy of the 'conditions and limits' of the international system were taken to be 'fixed and immutable'.¹⁰¹ World politics was stripped of any creative potential by which human beings could strive to 'shape freely their collective will'. Moreover, because of its ontological pre-commitment to the primacy of the state – the 'sovereign presence among sovereign presences' – neo-realism fixed extremely narrow limits to the possible expansion of political community.¹⁰² Yet the technical interest of neo-realism proved itself completely self-referentially, with the

result that opposing theories or normative systems were regarded as irrational objects having no scientific standing, only the whimpering of personal ethics. In this way, neo-realism excluded all standpoints that could expose the limits of the given order, something that Ashley warned would 'deaden' criticism and gravitate the discipline of IR towards the 'reactionary pole' rather than exploring the 'opportunities for the creative evolution of world society'.¹⁰³

In place of neo-realism's ahistorical assumption of stasis that denied historical transformation and human agency, Ashley sought to build upon the practical knowledge constitutive interest of classical realism that was concerned with *understanding*. Ashley identified in this practical interest a certain 'generative potential' that remained limited under classical realism but which could be developed through his own 'dialectical competence model' towards a better understanding power. This model focused on 'competent international practice': that is, practices of power, statesmanship and crisis that could lead to transformation – questions of practical significance typically associated with the interests of classical realism but which Ashley asserted should be accommodated within any 'reasonable complete theory of international politics'. What Ashley sought was a more 'realistic' approach to world politics – one that could actually comprehend what neo-realism falsely claimed it could, and in this way strengthen the emancipatory project of CIRT.

Ashley demonstrated how neo-realism's presupposition that power was determined by the capabilities of states and not something rooted within society denied both the social *basis* and social *limits* of power. In holding to these presuppositions unreflectively, neo-realism was unable to grasp the nature of power which for Ashley was 'community reflective': that is, dependent on one's recognition as 'an agent capable of having power'.¹⁰⁴ In distinction, Ashley's dialectical competence model surpassed the weaknesses of both technical and practical forms of realism because it was developed in such a way as to account for 'the emergence, reproduction, and possible transformation of a world-dominant public political apparatus' that, for Ashley, was anchored in the balance of power. Moreover, by taking up Herz's focus on the systematic examination of technological, social and economic change,¹⁰⁵ Ashley's dialectical competence model situated the balance-of-power regime not in the abstract systemic sense of neo-realism, but within the real social, economic and environmental conditions on which it depended.¹⁰⁶ In particular, Ashley brought economic concerns into the public sphere of political responsibility in such a way that overcame the tendency of neo-realism to 'immunise' the global economic framework from criticism – something that was one of the primary ways by which neo-realism allied itself with those vested interests that benefited from the hegemony of the capitalist logic in concert with the state.¹⁰⁷ In this way, Ashley was fundamental in raising critical thought to include within its immanent methods both the ideational role of power and the material conditions of world order in which any emancipatory politics was necessarily immersed. Moreover, by welding the practical interest of classical realism with the emancipatory interest of critical approaches to IR, Ashley pre-empted many of those criticisms that would suggest that his thought eluded a romanticist emancipatory programme.¹⁰⁸ It also provided a clear example of how CIRT was able to conjoin the insights from empirical approaches to IR that were concerned with power, order and security with an emancipatory theoretical

framework – or what Horkheimer had called the ‘dialectical penetration’ of philosophy and the specialised sciences, discussed above.¹⁰⁹

What Ashley’s self-reflective and methodologically demanding dialectical approach offered was nothing less than a means of understanding processes of change in world politics – questions that were precluded in classical and neo-realism, but also in the initial programme of the FS that had neglected the cosmopolitan dimensions of emancipation. By opening analysis to production and rationalisation mechanisms and material and ideational factors, and by taking into account global hegemony as situated in the global array of social, economic and environmental conditions, Ashley’s dialectical method could begin to understand the origins, maintenance and possible transformation of the current world order.¹¹⁰ Here Ashley made the connection with the methodological and emancipatory concerns of the early FS but extended them in ways that were not only a direct challenge to neo-realist orthodoxy but also an advance on the programme of CT itself. As is well known, one of the primary contradictions in the modern condition observed by Adorno and Horkheimer pivoted on the exchange principle of mutually opposed interests. With the expansion of capitalism to all corners of the globe, the exchange principle necessarily spread with it, generating these tensions in increasingly heightened form, pushing humanity towards what Horkheimer called a ‘new barbarism’ on a global scale. The continuity of the exchange principle as the basic facet of capitalist structure meant that CT could focus on a historically changing object (in terms of geography, temporality and subject) but which nevertheless remained identical.¹¹¹ Yet the FS lost sight of this objective (and universal) exploitation of the oppressed under capitalism in favour of looking at subjective reasons for the assumed integration of the proletariat into forms of domination in the West. While Adorno seemed cognisant of this problem,¹¹² he did not integrate these insights methodologically into his work, but assumed integration to have occurred equally across the globe.

In this way Ashley’s dialectical competence model overcame the tendency of the FS towards an endogenous, state-focused and Euro-centric form of critical theorising and offered a way for CT to revitalise the project of emancipation by taking into account global forces in the dialectic of oppression and emancipation. For example, the strategic unity between power and capitalism for Ashley was most clearly revealed in times of crisis and the continuing readiness of the dominant hegemony to orchestrate the transnational use of force in response to, and for, capitalist imperatives.¹¹³ Ashley’s dialectical competence model offered a means of focusing on this fundamental alliance between resource allocations and principles of legitimacy on which the global balance-of-power regime depended. Moreover, examining this relation offered insights into the potential for global crises that could be transformative of the conditions of the hegemonic regime. Most importantly, Ashley’s approach did not view the hegemonic regime in isolation from its parts, nor from a vantage point within the sociology of a particular state, but as a dominant world order among a ‘multiplicity of mutually interpenetrating and opposed world orders’. In adopting this narrative of a contested world history that immanently linked the economic and socio-political relation of the state and capital on a global scale, Ashley adapted the methods of the FS to the context of IR in order to understand the changed historical conditions of contemporary world politics and channel any transformative potentials from domination towards emancipation.¹¹⁴

Conclusion

This article has sought to contribute to the recent revisions away from negativist interpretations of the FS and instead uphold the methodological principles and emancipatory interest developed in the initial programme of the FS that challenged the normative vacuity and historical stasis of positivist approaches to the social sciences. In particular, it reconstructed the dialectical, materialist and critical methods pioneered by Horkheimer and Adorno to illustrate their continued relevance for the study of world politics. It then looked to the work of Robert W. Cox, Mark Neufeld and Richard Wyn Jones to illustrate how the methodological approaches developed by the early FS have been successfully deployed in the post-positivist turn in IR theory. The paper then argued that Ashley's dialectical competence model was illustrative of one of the ways in which CIRT has helped advance the remit of CT and reveal emancipatory potentialities in world politics that the Euro- and state-centric focus of the early FS was not able to fully apprehend. In this way, the article has demonstrated two key arguments. First, CIRT has made a fundamental contribution to the project of emancipation of the FS other than merely 'levelling up' its analysis from sociology to IR. CIRT has, in fact, adapted the methodologies of the FS to engage with the cosmopolitan dimensions of human emancipation in ways that have advanced the sociological remit of the FS to include global emancipatory forces. Second, the methodologies of the FS remain relevant and utilisable for understanding world politics and they can be adapted to great effect in the study of IR, particularly for those concerned with furthering human emancipation.

A primary reason why the early FS has not been utilised more widely in IR is because many of its insights are counter to the dominant approaches in the discipline, concerned as they are with upholding the status quo rather than emancipating humankind from its fetters. To these eyes, Critical Theory appears alien and antagonistic – something that challenges them in ways they cannot admit without, at the same time, admitting the injustices of the world order they uphold. Critical Theory is therefore often spurned rather than grappled with, and consequently fails to take up more than one week of lectures and reading material even in the most advanced IR theory courses. The problem is then self-perpetuating, as generation after generation of IR scholars are socialised into the dominant paradigm, with few critical skills to interrogate what they are taught and little access to critical approaches from which they could find suitable alternatives.

Notes

- 1 Max Horkheimer, 'The Latest Attack on Metaphysics', in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), pp. 161–2.
- 2 On the different periods or phases of the early Frankfurt School, see Helmut Dubiel, *Theory and Politics: Studies in the Development of Critical Theory*, trans. B. Gregg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985). For detail on the debate between Pollock and Neumann regarding 'state capitalism' or 'monopoly capitalism' respectively, see Tom Bottomore, *The Frankfurt School* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1984), pp. 21–5.
- 3 On Horkheimer's late pessimistic turn, see Martin Jay, 'Mass Culture and Aesthetic Redemption: The Debate between Max Horkheimer and Siegfried Kracauer', in S. Benhabib, W. Bonß and J. McCole (eds), *On Max Horkheimer: New Perspectives* (Cambridge, MA:

- MIT Press, 1993), p. 380; Rudolf Siebert, 'Horkheimer's Sociology of Religion', *Telos*, 30, 1976, pp. 127–44. Jameson has countered many of these interpretations regarding Adorno's alleged pessimism, but notes the increasing importance he attached to aesthetics. See Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. R. Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 8; Frederic Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno Or The Persistence of Dialectic* (London: Verso, 2007). While he did retreat to a form of 'romantic Marxism' due to his continued optimism, as illustrated in his support of the 1968 movements, Marcuse is distinguished in this paper from Horkheimer and Adorno, who both retreated to certain forms of scepticism in their later writings. For this reason, much of the paper focuses on refuting the negativist readings of Horkheimer and Adorno. For the works of Marcuse that clearly illustrate his continued optimism, see Herbert Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), and *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978).
- 4 See Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1974); Horkheimer, *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*; Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).
 - 5 I have adopted the term *negativist* as it goes further than both pessimism and fatalism in denoting not only a mood or attitude but a form of historical assessment. See Axel Honneth, 'A Physiognomy of the Capitalist Form of Life: A Sketch of Adorno's Social Theory', in *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), pp. 66–7, and Axel Honneth, 'Afterword to the Second German Edition', in *The Critique of Power: Reflexive Stages in a Critical Social Theory*, trans. K. Baynes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), p. xviii.
 - 6 Here Linklater's more recent work could be an important reference point, as he has been concerned with developing the sociology of IR in particular relation to the harm principle. However, as I have engaged with this elsewhere, I will not repeat it here. For an example of Linklater's contribution to the sociology of IR, see Andrew Linklater, 'The Problem of Harm in World Politics: Implications for the Sociology of States-Systems', *International Affairs*, 78(2), 2002, pp. 319–38.
 - 7 Ashley, Cox and Linklater were instrumental in this development. See Richard Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neorealism', *International Organisation*, 38(2), 1984, pp. 225–86, and Robert W. Cox, 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory', *Millennium*, 10(2), 1981, pp. 126–55, both reprinted in R. O. Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). Andrew Linklater, 'Men and Citizens in International Relations', *Review of International Studies*, 7(1), 1981, pp. 23–37.
 - 8 See Robert W. Cox, 'Globalization, Multilateralism and Democracy', The ACUNS John W. Holmes Memorial Lecture, 1992. Available at www.acuns.org/membersubm/johnholmes/globalizat. Somewhat surprisingly, Cox has stipulated that he had not read the FS's work at the time of his groundbreaking *Millennium* piece, so the overlap with Horkheimer's earlier work was only coincidental. See Robert W. Cox, 'For Someone, and For Some Purpose' (interview with Shannon Brincat), in *Critical Theory in International Relations and Security Studies: Interviews and Reflections* (London: Routledge, 2011).
 - 9 Max Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, p. 206, note 14.
 - 10 See Max Horkheimer, 'The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research', in *Between Philosophy and Social Science: Selected Early Writings* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), pp. 11ff; Max Horkheimer, 'On the Concept of

- Philosophy', in *German 20th Century Philosophy: The Frankfurt School*, ed. W. Schirmacher (New York: Continuum, 2000), p. 7.
- 11 Max Horkheimer, 'Materialism and Metaphysics', in Horkheimer, *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, pp. 44–5; Max Horkheimer, 'The Social Function of Philosophy', in Horkheimer, *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, p. 267.
 - 12 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', p. 230; Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 163.
 - 13 Horkheimer, 'The Social Function of Philosophy', pp. 261, 258.
 - 14 Horkheimer associated Mannheim with this tradition. See Horkheimer, 'The Social Function of Philosophy', p. 262, citing Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1937).
 - 15 Horkheimer, 'The Social Function of Philosophy', pp. 270, 264–7.
 - 16 Horkheimer, 'On the Concept of Philosophy', pp. 14, 17.
 - 17 Horkheimer, 'The Social Function of Philosophy', pp. 259, 269–70, citing Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. F. M. Müller (New York, 1920), pp. 257–8.
 - 18 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', p. 211.
 - 19 Horkheimer, 'The Social Function of Philosophy', pp. 269–70.
 - 20 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', p. 217; Max Horkheimer, 'The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research', in *Between Philosophy and Social Science: Selected Early Writings*, p. 6.
 - 21 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', pp. 217, 219, 220.
 - 22 Society has never been the result of what Horkheimer called 'conscious spontaneity' (something coterminous with Critical Theoretical activity) but had been founded either by oppression or the blind outcome of conflicting forces. Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', pp. 213, 225–7, 197, 200, 204, 210, 207–8; Horkheimer, 'Materialism and Metaphysics', p. 45.
 - 23 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', pp. 207–9.
 - 24 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', pp. 229, 242, 216–17, 213, 209–10.
 - 25 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', p. 238, and Horkheimer, 'Materialism and Metaphysics', p. 24.
 - 26 Horkheimer, 'Materialism and Metaphysics', pp. 45–6, 22; Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', pp. 241, 212.
 - 27 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', pp. 210–11.
 - 28 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', p. 210.
 - 29 Emphasis added. Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, trans. P. S. Falla (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), vol. 3, p. 355.
 - 30 Arguably, one could contest this assessment of the proletariat, particularly if one were to look at the global context. Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', pp. 213–14.
 - 31 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', pp. 214–16.
 - 32 Horkheimer, 'On the Concept of Philosophy', p. 6.
 - 33 Horkheimer, 'Materialism and Metaphysics', pp. 36–8, 40, quoting Auguste Comte, *Discours sur l'esprit positif* (Paris, 1909), p. 22; Horkheimer, 'The Present Situation of Social Philosophy', p. 7.
 - 34 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', pp. 201–2, 229.
 - 35 For Adorno, the relations between the parts and the whole in society were conceptually mediated so that the conceptual was part of social reality itself. One example he gave was the principle of exchange which was not immediate but conceptual. Society then 'obeyed' this conceptuality so that *exchange value* displaced *use value* and came to dominate human

- need so that the illusion of exchange dominated reality, or, as Adorno described it, exchange 'bewitch[e]d' the world. See Theodor W. Adorno, 'Sociology and Empirical Research', in T. W. Adorno et al. (eds), *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. G. Adey, and D. Frisby (London: Heinemann, 1976), pp. 80–5.
- 36 Horkheimer, 'Materialism and Metaphysics', pp. 29–35; Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', p. 209.
- 37 Horkheimer, 'Materialism and Metaphysics', p. 38, quoting G. W. F. Hegel, 'Address at the Opening of his Lectures in Berlin', 22 October 1818, in Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 8 (Stuttgart: Glockner Ausgabe, 1929), p. 35.
- 38 Horkheimer, 'The Present Situation of Social Philosophy', pp. 7–8.
- 39 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', pp. 231, 218, 232.
- 40 Adorno, 'Sociology and Empirical Research', p. 77.
- 41 H. T. Wilson, 'Science, Critique, and Criticism: The "Open Society" Revisited', in J. O'Neill (ed.), *On Critical Theory* (London: Heinemann, 1977), pp. 207–8.
- 42 For Popper, the social sciences could be oriented towards success through a problem-solving approach that would ensure that social engineering could offer a 'responsible' politics and not the totalitarianism he so feared under the 'Utopian social planning'. Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), pp. 64–76; Wilson, 'Science, Critique, and Criticism: The "Open Society" Revisited', p. 211.
- 43 See Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1958); Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, 2 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1945).
- 44 Wilson, 'Science, Critique, and Criticism: The "Open Society" Revisited', pp. 213–14, 209.
- 45 Cox, 'Social Forces, States and World Orders', p. 128; Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', p. 222, emphasis added.
- 46 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', pp. 204–6, 232.
- 47 S. E. Bronner, *Of Critical Theory and its Theorists* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 82–3; Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', p. 196.
- 48 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', p. 194.
- 49 Max Horkheimer, 'Notes on Science and the Crisis', in Horkheimer, *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, pp. 4, 7.
- 50 Horkheimer, 'Materialism and Metaphysics', p. 12.
- 51 Theodor W. Adorno, *Collected Worlds of T. W. Adorno* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), vol. 5, p. 32.
- 52 Adorno, 'Sociology and Empirical Research', pp. 70, 74–5, 78.
- 53 Adorno illustrated the problems of such a method through a hypothetical questionnaire on the categories of 'classical' and 'popular' music – categories which presupposed that the audience already listened in accordance with these categories. See Adorno, 'Sociology and Empirical Research', pp. 72, 75.
- 54 Adorno, 'Sociology and Empirical Research', pp. 79, 74, 71, 75; Horkheimer, 'Materialism and Metaphysics', p. 26.
- 55 Adorno optimistically noted that this could in the end serve freedom by attesting to the lack of freedom in society. Adorno, 'Sociology and Empirical Research', p. 74; Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', p. 199.
- 56 Horkheimer, 'The Present Situation of Social Philosophy', p. 8.
- 57 Adorno, 'Sociology and Empirical Research', pp. 83, 85–6, 69.
- 58 Adorno, 'Sociology and Empirical Research', p. 77.
- 59 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', 224–5, 234, 239.

- 60 Horkheimer, 'Notes on Science and the Crisis', pp. 4–6; Horkheimer, 'Materialism and Metaphysics', pp. 25, 31; Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', p. 233.
- 61 Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', p. 240; Horkheimer, 'Materialism and Metaphysics', p. 25, citing Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, parts I and III, trans. R. Pascal (New York: International Publishers, 1947), p. 15.
- 62 Adorno, 'Sociology and Empirical Research', p. 82.
- 63 Part of this discussion appears in Shannon Brincat, 'Towards a Social-Relational Dialectic for World Politics', *European Journal of International Relations*, 17(4), 2011.
- 64 Kevin Anderson, 'Dialectics Today', lecture presented at Wuhan University, China, 29 October 2007. Available at: <http://marxisthumanismtoday.org/print/node/25>.
- 65 The reference is, of course, to Chomsky and his ideas that were also developed in 'The Responsibility of Intellectuals', *New York Review of Books*, 23 February 1967, and Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969).
- 66 Hayward R. Alker (ed.), *Dialectical Logics for the Political Sciences* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1982), p. 83.
- 67 Anthony Leysens, *The Critical Theory of Robert W. Cox: Fugitive or Guru?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 109; Mark Neufeld, *The Restructuring of International Relations Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 58–60.
- 68 Cox, 'Social Forces, States and World Orders', p. 134.
- 69 Cox, 'Social Forces, States and World Orders', p. 128, and Robert W. Cox, 'Towards a Post-Hegemonic Conceptualisation of World Order: Reflections on the Relevancy of Ibn Khaldun', in J. N. Rosenau and E.-O. Czempel (eds), *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 135, 139.
- 70 Robert W. Cox, 'Multilateralism and World Order', *Review of International Studies*, 18(2), 1992, p. 176.
- 71 Robert W. Cox, *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 53.
- 72 Christian Heine and Benno Teschke, 'Sleeping Beauty and the Dialectical Awakening: On the Potential of Dialectic for International Relations', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 25(2), 1996, p. 417.
- 73 For example, both were concerned with exposing the limits of positivist social sciences and in advancing a dialectical and historical methodology; both were committed to a possibilist narrative in which human freedom could be enhanced; and both focused their analysis on the material conditions in which that freedom could be advanced. The fact that one called positivist approaches 'traditional' the other 'problem-solving' is rather a superficial discrepancy – an issue of labelling that can be remedied by analysing the shared substance of each argument. Yet for Leysens this constituted a divergence between Cox's work and CT that warranted the distinction between 'Coxian' and 'Frankfurt' CT, an argument that is somewhat stretched. See Anthony Leysens, *The Critical Theory of Robert W. Cox: Fugitive or Guru?*, pp. 115ff; Cox, 'For Someone, and For Some Purpose', pp. 4–12.
- 74 Susan Strange quoted in Robert W. Cox (with M. G. Schechter), *The Political Economy of a Plural World: Critical Reflections on Power, Morals and Civilisation* (London: Routledge, 2002), back cover. Cox favourably refers to this description in Cox, 'For Someone, and For Some Purpose', pp. 4–12.
- 75 See Ken Booth, *Theory of World Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 243–4.
- 76 See Neufeld, *The Restructuring of International Relations Theory*, pp. 58–60. See also Mark Neufeld, 'Reflexivity and International Relations Theory', *Millennium: Journal of*

- International Studies*, 22(1), 1993, pp. 53–76; Mark Neufeld, ‘The Pedagogical Is Political: The “Why”, the “What”, and the “How” in the Teaching of World Politics’, in L. S. Gonick and E. Weisband (eds), *Teaching World Politics: Contending Pedagogies for a New World Order* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992).
- 77 Neufeld, *The Restructuring of International Relations Theory*, pp. 1–7, 94.
- 78 Cox, ‘For Someone, and For Some Purpose’, pp. 1–10.
- 79 On Horkheimer, see note 26. Neufeld, *The Restructuring of International Relations Theory*, pp. 9ff.
- 80 Neufeld, *The Restructuring of International Relations Theory*, pp. 19–20, 33–7, 40–6.
- 81 Leysens, *The Critical Theory of Robert W. Cox: Fugitive or Guru?*, p. 109.
- 82 Neufeld, *The Restructuring of International Relations Theory*, p. 60.
- 83 Richard Wyn Jones, *Security, Strategy and Critical Theory* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999), pp. 90, 6.
- 84 Wyn Jones, *Security, Strategy and Critical Theory*, ch. 1 (p. 9 of 15). Available at: www.ciaonet.org/book/wynjones/wynjones01.html.
- 85 Horkheimer, *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, p. 246.
- 86 Horkheimer, *Between Philosophy and Social Science*, p. 9.
- 87 Towards the latter half of the book he moves to Gramscian IR as offering a renewed basis for engaging with the emancipatory possibilities foreclosed by the pessimistic turn in the FS. See Wyn Jones, *Security, Strategy and Critical Theory*, chs 3 and 6.
- 88 Honneth, ‘Pathologies of the Social: The Past and Present of Social Philosophy’, p. 30; Bronner, *Of Critical Theory and its Theorists*, p. 84.
- 89 Axel Honneth, ‘The Possibility of a Disclosing Critique of Society: The Dialectic of Enlightenment in Light of Current Debates in Social Criticism’, in *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*, pp. 56, 59–60, 57–8, 60.
- 90 Max Horkheimer, ‘Foreword’ to *Critique of Instrumental Reason* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), p. viii.
- 91 Max Horkheimer, ‘Foreword’ to *Eclipse of Reason*, pp. ix–x.
- 92 With the loss of Neumann and Pollock, the FS took less and less interest in political economy, and its references to the international sphere or cosmopolitan social relations, few as they had been in the past, disappeared almost completely. See Dubiel, *Theory and Politics: Studies in the Development of Critical Theory*, chs 3 and 4.
- 93 See Richard Ashley, ‘The Eye of Power: The Politics of World Modelling’, *International Organisation*, 37(3), 1983, p. 514.
- 94 Ashley has focused on the emancipatory problematic, though at times he is unclear whether his influences were either more or less Habermasian than Foucaultian. See Richard Ashley, *The Political Economy of War and Peace* (London: Frances Pinter, 1980); Richard Ashley and R. B. J. Walker, ‘Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Studies’, *International Studies Quarterly*, 34(4), 1990, pp. 367–416; Richard Ashley, ‘The Poverty of Neo-Realism’, *International Organization*, 38(2), 1984, p. 229.
- 95 This continuity is clearly visible in his adoption of genealogical and dialectical methods. See Ashley and Walker, ‘Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline’, pp. 370–5; Richard Ashley, ‘The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Toward a Critical Social Theory of International Politics’, *Alternatives*, 12, 1987, pp. 408–11, 427–9; Ashley, ‘The Eye of Power’, pp. 498–9, 511–14, 521–7; Richard Ashley, ‘Untying the Sovereign State: A Double Reading of the Anarchy Problematique’, *Millennium*, 17(2), 1988, p. 237.
- 96 Richard Ashley, ‘Living on Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War’, in J. Der Derian and M. J. Shapiro (eds), *International/Intertextual Relations* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1989), pp. 266–7.

- 97 Ashley, 'The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space', p. 419.
- 98 Following Habermas, Ashley defined the emancipatory interest as that concerned with 'securing freedom from "hypostatized forces" and conditions of distorted communication (e.g., ideology)'; as 'An interest in securing freedom from unacknowledged constraints, relations of domination, and conditions of distorted communications and understanding that deny humans the capacity to make their future through full will and consciousness'. See Ashley, 'Political Realism and Human Interests', *International Studies Quarterly*, 25(2), 1981, pp. 204, 208–9, 215–21, 226–31, citing Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. J. Shapiro (London: Heinemann, 1971), pp. 211, 314. Elsewhere he equated the emancipatory interest to the exploration of possibilities hitherto closed off to history. See Ashley, 'Untying the Sovereign State', p. 260. See also I. George, *Discourses of Global Politics: A Critical (Re)introduction to International Relations* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1994), pp. 171–2.
- 99 For Ashley's definitions of these four factors see Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neo-Realism', pp. 237, 239–61.
- 100 Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neo-Realism', pp. 226–88, 233–5, 279–80.
- 101 Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neo-Realism', pp. 231–5. For details on the four commitments of positivism see Ashley, 'The Eye of Power', p. 527.
- 102 Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neo-Realism', p. 260; Ashley, 'Untying the Sovereign State', p. 245.
- 103 Ashley, 'Political Realism and Human Interests', pp. 224–5; Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neo-Realism', pp. 254, 237, 285.
- 104 Ashley later uses the example of Marx's discussion of Louis Bonaparte to illustrate this. Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neo-Realism', pp. 255–62, 265, 271–5, citing Karl Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', in *The Marx–Engels Reader*, ed. R. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1972), pp. 438–9.
- 105 Ashley, 'Political Realism and Human Interests', pp. 228, 230, citing John Herz, *The National State and the Crisis of World Politics* (New York: David McKay, 1976), and John Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).
- 106 Ashley discussed several features of this dialectical competence model: (i) the emergence, reproduction and transformation of the world-dominant political apparatus; (ii) the social, economic and environmental conditions on which it depended; (iii) the balance-of-power orientation and coordination of political practices; (iv) the learning potential in this balance-of-power regime; (v) the crisis that may undermine/transform the conditions of the balance-of-power regime; and (vi) the situation of the balance-of-power regime as the dominant order in a multiplicity of competing world orders. Richard Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neo-Realism', pp. 267, 276–9.
- 107 Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neo-Realism', p. 260.
- 108 Roger D Spegele, 'Richard Ashley's Discourse for International Relations', *Millennium*, 21(2), 1992, pp. 149, 157–8, 160, 166; Ashley and Walker, 'Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline', p. 380.
- 109 See note 56.
- 110 Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neo-Realism', pp. 229, 282, 294.
- 111 The person, community or culture imperilled by the domination of the exchange principle may be variegated and unique but still suffer under a universal form of oppression common to all. See Horkheimer, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', pp. 213, 225–7; Horkheimer, 'Materialism and Metaphysics', p. 45.
- 112 See Adorno, *The Positivist Dispute*, p. 84.
- 113 Ashley, 'The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space', pp. 423–6.

- 114 Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neo-Realism', pp. 276–9; Ashley, 'The Eye of Power', p. 514. In his later work, Ashley expanded the agenda of CT once more to problematise what he saw as being the fundamental knowledge-practice that controlled the thought, disciplined the meaning, and defined all imaginable possibilities in world politics: the *anarchy problematique*. However, as this approach involved more discursive methods of analysis it will not be explored here. See Ashley, 'Untying the Sovereign State', pp. 227–62.

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