

Unveiling Adorno's Concern for Revolutionary Praxis and Its Enduring Significance: A Philosophical Analysis of His Writings on Sociology and Philosophy

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Abstract : Adorno's reputation as an abstract and pessimistic thinker who indulged in a critic of capitalist society and culture without bothering himself with opening prospects for change, and who has no interest in political activism, recently begun to be questioned. This paper, which has a twofold objective, will push revisionist readings a step further by putting forward the thesis that revolutionary praxis has been an enduring concern for Adorno, surfacing throughout his entire work. On the other hand, it will hold that his understanding of the relationships between theory and praxis, which will be explained by referring to Ernst Bloch's distinction between the warm and cold currents of Marxism, can help to interpret the paralysis of revolutionary practice in our own time under a new light. Philosophy and its tasks have been an enduring topic of Adorno's work from the 1930s to *Negativ Dialektik*. The writings in which he develops these ideas stand among his most obscure and abstract so that their strong ties to the political have remained mainly overlooked. Adorno's undertaking of criticizing and 'redeeming' philosophy and metaphysics is inseparable from a care for retrieving the capacity to act in the world and to change it. Philosophical problems are immanent to sociological problems, and vice versa, he underlines in his *Metaphysik. Begriff und Problem*. The issue of truth cannot be severed from the contingent context of a given idea. As a critical undertaking extracting its contents from reality, which is what philosophy should be from Adorno's perspective, the latter has the potential to fully reveal the reification of the individual and consciousness resulting from capitalist economic and cultural domination, thus opening the way to resistance and revolutionary change. While this project, according to his usual method, is sketched mainly in negative terms, it also exhibits positive contours which depict a socialist society. Only in the latter could human suffering end, and mutilated individuals experiment with reconciliation in an authentic way. That Adorno's continuous plea for philosophy's self-critic and renewal hides an enduring concern for revolutionary praxis emerges clearly from a careful philosophical analysis of his writings on philosophy and a selection of his sociological work, coupled with references to his correspondences. This study points to the necessity of a serious re-evaluation of Adorno's relationship to the political, which will impact on the interpretation of his whole oeuvre, is much needed. In the second place, Adorno's dialectical conception of theory and praxis is enlightening for our own time, since it suggests that we are experiencing a phase of creative latency rather than an insurmountable impasse.

Keywords : Frankfurt school, philosophy and revolution, revolutionary praxis, Theodor W. Adorno

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