

Adorno and Horkheimer: Diasporic Philosophy, Negative Theology, and Counter-education

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Critical Theory as a Manifestation of Diasporic Philosophy

From today's perspective, the work of the Frankfurt School thinkers can be considered the last grand modern attempt to offer transcendence, meaning, and religiosity, rather than "emancipation" and "truth". In the very first stage of their work, up to World War II and the Holocaust, Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer interlaced the goals of Critical Theory with the Marxian revolutionary project. The development of their thought led them to criticize orthodox Marxism and it ended with a complete break with that tradition (Gur-Ze'ev, 1996, p. 115), as they developed a quest for a religiosity of a unique kind, connected with the Gnostic tradition and emanating, to a certain extent, from Judaism. This religiosity offers a reformulated *negative theology* within the framework of what I call "*Diasporic philosophy*" (Gur-Ze'ev, 2003; Gur-Ze'ev 2004, p. 3).

As I have tried to explain elsewhere, Diasporic philosophy represents a *nomadic*, hence "Diasporic", relation to the world, to thinking and to existence (Gur-Ze'ev, 2004, p. 9). Its starting point is the presence of the *absence* of truth, God, and worthy hedonism. Diasporic philosophy is positioned against any secular and theist philosophical, existential, and political projects that represent positive utopias and reflect "homecoming" quests. While thus calling for the creativity, love of Life and responsibility of *the eternal improviser* it is also committed to rejecting all dogmas

and other forms of closure and sameness, it also refuses all versions of nihilism and relativism. In my view, later Critical Theory was in its essence such a Diasporic philosophy, as an existential self-positioning and counter-educational erotic endeavor that opens for us the possibility of non-repressive creation, happiness, responsibility, and worthy suffering that is most relevant to our life in face of global capitalism. This is especially so in face of contemporary postmodern rhetoric and fundamentalist calls for worthy homelessness and a reestablished Garden of Eden.

The present constitution of the "risk society" and the McWorld that is being celebrated all over as part and parcel of the capitalist globalization, its culture industry, its technologies and logics, also open new possibilities for Diasporic existence and counter-education. These material conditions and their ontological foundations present new possibilities for counter-education in the most concrete and specific terms and realizations. Improvisation, as one example, here becomes part and parcel of a nomadic existence of today's Diasporic human; and within the framework of counter-education, improvisation in its Diasporic-critical sense may be developed, thought, edified, and implemented as a new self-positioning and de-territorialization in the spirit of Adorno and Horkheimer's religiosity.

Critical Theory's Anti-revolutionary End

In establishing Critical Theory as a Diasporic philosophy, Adorno and Horkheimer articulated a unique interpretation not only of the Enlightenment and Marxism, but also of religion and monotheism more generally. Judaism was of special importance for them, as a manifestation of a non-dogmatic and non-violent existential and philosophical possibility. In this respect, they continued the interpretation of Jewish

pre-monotheistic nature as developed by thinkers such as Theodor Lessing (Lessing, 1924) and Jakob Klatzkin (Klatzkin, 1925), who brought into Jewish thought some of the central conceptions of Nietzsche and Ludwig Klages (Klages, 1951).

In their later work Adorno and Horkheimer came to regard Marx's project as a positive utopia, which by then both had rejected. Horkheimer explicitly declared this trend away from the Marxian thought to that of Schopenhauer and the tradition of philosophical pessimism (Horkheimer, 1985, pp. 339-340). By then his thought was plainly anti-revolutionary. It is the nature of the revolutionary, every revolutionary, to become an oppressor (*ibid.*, p. 418). In his view, every revolution, especially a "successful" one, is a manifestation of power. And justice, when it becomes powerful, is realized only at the cost of its transformation into oppression (*ibid.*, p. 341). Adorno had very similar articulations: "civilization itself produces anti-civilization and increasingly reinforces it" (Adorno, 1988, p. 191). Adorno understood that "moral ideas [...] are directly derived from the existence of the suppressors" (Adorno, 1999, p. 184). Likewise, the early conditions for mature independence, by which every free society is predetermined – are already set by the powers and dynamics of the reality of the absence of freedom (Adorno, 1971, p. 135). In contrast to the Marxian tradition, it is now conceived that as long as even some remnants of freedom survive violence will flourish (Horkheimer, 1989, p. 247).

In the end, whatever hopes Marx did hold on behalf of true society, apparently they seem to be the wrong ones, if – and this issue is important to Critical Theory – freedom and justice are interrelated in mutual opposition. The more justice there is, freedom will diminish accordingly. (*ibid.*, p. 340)

For both thinkers this truth is ontologically and not historically grounded, and sometimes Adorno articulates it in the language of the Gnostic tradition: "space is nothing but absolute alienation" (Adorno, 1970, p. 205). For him this is the

framework for viewing the whole historical reality of advanced technological society, in which everything has become a commodity, and life, with all its layers and dimensions, is nothing but "a fetish of consumption" (ibid., p. 243). In their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Adorno and Horkheimer are not content to target the capitalistic logic and its realization in itself, or representations of totalitarianism such as National Socialism and Stalinism. Ultimately they target the *essence* of culture itself:

Culture has developed with the protection of the executioner [...] All work and pleasure are protected by the hangman. To contradict this fact is to deny all science and logic. It is impossible to abolish [...] terror and retain civilization. Even the lessening of terror implies a beginning of the process of dissolution. (Adorno, 1988, p. 255)

The conception of revolution and Critical Theory within the framework of historically progressing human emancipation is conceived here within a double-layered philosophy of history, one layer linear, the other circular. From the viewpoint of the circular conception of time there is no room for progress in the Kantian, Hegelian, or Marxian sense, and there is certainly no room for a genuine revolution.

According to Benjamin, there is no document of culture that is not at the same time a document of a barbarity (Benjamin, 1972, p. 696). For Adorno and Horkheimer all substantive levels of "progress" manifest an oppressive regression. In this sense Adaptation to the power of progress involves the regression of power. Each time anew 'progress' brings about those degenerations. They manifest not the unsuccessful but successful progress to be its contrary (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1988, p. 42). On the other level of "progress", the explicitly historical one, unless an unpredictable interference occurs the good intentions and progressive talents of educators devoted to revolutionary education are of little use in halting the enhancement and sophistication of barbarism: actually they are its manifestation. In such a reality there is no room for non-repressive "progressive", positive, utopianism, or for an objective, justifiable,

education and praxis for resisting and overcoming the present reality (Horkheimer, 1947, p. 26) Adorno warns us *against the drive of emancipatory education to culminate in an anti-mature human positioning* (Adorno, 1971, p. 147) of the kind that present critical pedagogy only too often is driven into, in the name of "emancipation", "critique", and "the victims' justified counter-violence" (Gur-Ze'ev, 1998, p. 484).

Adorno and Horkheimer gave up the Marxist conception of progress, and in this sense their optimism as to a social revolutionary change, and even the goal, and to a certain degree also the means, of critique. But they did not abandon Utopia and the essential imperatives of Critical Theory as a counter-education and *political emancipatory praxis*. However, their definition of emancipation and the stance of realization of intellectual autonomy as praxis changed dramatically to become more in line with its early Jewish eschatological sources in the Qumran sect and other Jewish and Christian adherents of the Messianic tradition.

In Horkheimer's work the change from a Marxian Critical Theory to a Diasporic philosophy is paralleled by an articulation of *Critical Theory as a new, Jewish, Negative Theology*. Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* follows the same path, attempting to present what I call "counter-education" as a worthy addressing of the present absence of the quest for transcendence and meaning, and as a Diasporic form of awaiting as a self-education for the human stance of readiness to be called upon. It is a central dimension of "counter-education" (ibid.) within the framework of present-day Diasporic philosophy. This is so in the sense that while refusing any dogma it reintroduces the exiled seriousness about that which is called "redemption" in Christian theology. "It is even part of my good fortune not to be a house-owner', Nietzsche already wrote in the *Gay Science*. Today we should have to add: it is part of morality not to be at home in one's home" (Adorno, 1999, p. 39).

This is where the Diasporic dimension is so central to the mature thinking of Adorno and Horkheimer. The refusal to dwell in peace in the present order of things, the negation of the "facts" of the actuality, are but a manifestation of the rejection of metaphysical violence and of all kinds of "homes", dogmas, and self-satisfaction in a world of pain, injustice, ugliness, and betrayed love. Since they refused a positive Utopia, their mature thought could not promise a better world as a justification for resistance to normalizing education and the quest for pleasure, "success", and hegemony. Homelessness and the moral importance of suffering are here grounded ontologically and become a religious way of life. In this they followed Benjamin's lead: it is a kind of religiosity which is Messianic without a Messiah (Benjamin, 1972, p. 203). As a counter-education it holds out no promise of salvation or of redemption. But it might offer a *Messianic moment*, which will overcome the violence of the governing "now-time" (Benjamin, 1971, p. 701) and open the gate to an alternative way of life, an alternative thinking in which challenging Spirit is reclaimed and the de-humanization of humans by the manipulations of the system is resisted as part of the regeneration of Life and its redemption from the all-celebrated triumph of "Spirit" and its cannibalistic-oriented offspring such as Instrumental Rationality.

In this counter-education, *Love* becomes possible, again, as different from the codes, passions, and ideals which are set by the omnipotence of the ruling culture industry. Within the framework of this counter-education the otherness in the self is reclaimed, the otherness of the Other becomes not only legitimate – it becomes an indispensable element in a new kind of Life, in which nomadism is realized on the intellectual and social levels, paralleled by infinite responsibility – with no God, dogma, or party central committee to guide the individual to "the good". **The totally other** bursts in – or does not – and refutes the consensus, unveils the accepted truths,

values, passions, and the other manifestations of the self-evidence. It is a Diasporic, ecstatic, dangerous way of life, within which new possibilities are opened but no guarantees are available; no optimism, no room for assured overcoming of the suggestive power of the self-forgetfulness of the human. This does not mean that the human is doomed to passivity. Even if the actuality of **the totally other** is not to be guaranteed, and it is never an object of manipulation, there is still so much to do in order to prepare one's ears to listen to the unfamiliar music of the presence of **the totally other**. Here the Diasporic philosophy of Adorno and Horkheimer is of much relevance for this self-preparation, self edification, self-reflection, responsibility, and creativity within the framework of a present-day Diasporic counter-education.

Against Educational Optimism

To my mind, while the first stage (the revolutionary-optimistic) of Critical Theory became the foundation of today's Critical Pedagogy, the second stage is a brilliant manifestation of *counter-education*, committed not only to criticize, but also to overcome all versions of normalizing education. Adorno's and Horkheimer's later work offers a framework for counter-educational praxis whose religiosity is fertilized by the alarming recognition of the impossible realization of the imperative of human "homecoming" to God, or domesticating absolute Spirit or Reason; the establishment of a genuine "home" or "homecoming" to the advancing true knowledge of genuine human interests and realization of their potentials is here a constitutive element of philosophy and politics. The current work of Slavoj Žižek, who writes that "the paradox of self-consciousness is that it is possible only against the background of its own impossibility" (Žižek, 1993, p. 15), is very close to this later work of Horkheimer

and Adorno. In this sense the later Critical Theory writings, which I consider essentially Diasporic in the sense that they try to overcome the quest for "homecoming" in all its manifestations, became prima facie counter-educational, even if the word "education" is rarely mentioned and schooling is hardly tackled at all.

The big challenge for the critical mind and for humanistic education is the disappearance of (the consciousness of) alienation within the totality, which is governed by Instrumental Rationality. This quest for alienation and the challenges of the exile of critical Spirit and Love of Life in a post-metaphysical moment mark the difference between a critique of orthodox Marxist ideology and Horkheimer's and Adorno's conceptions. Governing Instrumental Rationality leaves no room for non-efficient and non-pragmatic considerations, and drives out the concepts, ideals, and traditions that allowed speculation and critique of the self-evident, and offered transcendence from the oppressive practices of all master signifiers. Instrumental Rationality is responsible for the current reality, in which the more progressive the processes of de-humanization become, the more efficient becomes the concealment of the oppression by present Culture Industry (Adorno, 2000, p. 233). The *exile of Spirit* and Love of life, and the bridging of the abyss between substance and subject, existence and meaning, creation/work and aim, Diasporic self-positioning and quests for "homecoming", are trivialized, and Spirit is again presented as relevant; *but only as a commodity* that has lost its connection to its use value and functions primarily as a violent symbolic interchange, as part of what I call "the pleasure machine" that normalizing education is so quick to celebrate as "reality" (Gur-Ze'ev, 2003, p. 2). Reified consciousness (Adorno, 1998, p. 200) which is fabricated with less and less antagonistic dimensions (or as part of dynamic recycling of "diversities" within a mega-speed totality where there is no difference that makes a difference) by the

present culture industry reaffirms "spirituality" and "spiritual education" as a power of anti-love-of-life, and occultists are celebrating their victory all over Western culture, especially when it presents itself as the redemptive Diasporic power at the present historical moment (ibid. p. 244).

According to Adorno and Horkheimer there is no stable ground or anchorage to moor optimism or even the very premises of Critical Theory. Under this sky a philosopher worthy of the name must become what I call "a Diasporic human being". The seeming political freedom, free opinion, and tolerance within present Western society conceal and actually serve the process of totalistic de-humanization.

Not only does the mind mould itself for the sake of its marketability, and thus reproduce the socially prevalent categories. Rather, it grows to resemble ever more closely the status quo as its "home" even where it subjectively refrains from making a commodity of itself. The network of the whole is drawn ever tighter [...] It leaves the individual consciousness less and less room for evasion, performs it more and more thoroughly, cuts it off as it were from the possibility of differentiating itself as all difference degenerates to a nuance in the monotony of supply. (Adorno, 2000, p. 198)

The critique of traditional Marxist ideology cannot be of much use here since culture itself "has become ideological" (ibid., p. 206). "Today", Adorno says, "ideology means society as appearance [...]" (ibid., p. 207). However, since ideology is no longer conceived as a socially necessary appearance which veils the "facts", critique of ideology can no longer offer an emancipatory deciphering of "reality" and cannot claim to empower humanistic-oriented resistance to social oppression and to manipulative representations of histories, identities, and realities. Adorno offers a view that does not allow this kind of optimism, since

Ideology today is society itself in so far as its integral power and inevitability, its overwhelming existence-in-itself, surrogates the meaning which that existence has exterminated. (ibid.)

Horkheimer is on the verge of acknowledging that there is no longer justification for a Critical Theory. In a personal letter to Adorno (May 26, 1960) he says that nowadays "*reflection [has become] senseless. Actually the world to which we saw ourselves as belonging is destroyed*" (Horkheimer, 1960, p. 511). Elsewhere he writes that serious talk itself has become senseless and that those who refuse to listen – to the attempts to save meaning – are not totally wrong (Horkheimer, 1978, p. 129). Truth in this context is not absent; it is rather revealed in, and swallowed by, the present reality. It can, however, offer only technological and scientific advance – not meaning, direction, or responsibility to resist injustice. The issue at stake here is not solely truth or justice but the very *quest* for truth and the commitment to justice, or, in other words, the possibility of transcendence (Adorno, 2000, p. 85; Adorno, 1999, p. 65) from meaninglessness and from "sameness" (Adorno, 2000, p. 236) – or what Levinas calls the Same (Levinas, 1987, p. 55) – from the mere *thingness* of Being. Addressing the absence of the foundation for the quest for transcendence and facing its infinity as negative utopia is an ontological sign of Diaspora that Critical Theory offers as an impetus for a possible present-day counter-education.

In the work of later Adorno and Horkheimer, two very different conceptions of truth emerge. One is the hegemony that is established on the existing world of facts, which ultimately represents "power" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1988, p. 236). Here human existence in its essence is revealed at its full price: practical involvement, within which ideals transform into oppression (*ibid.*). The implicit *negation of any optimistic positive emancipatory educational project* of the kind that standard Critical Pedagogy is presently actualizing is mercilessly manifested here.

Within the framework of Critical Theory Adorno offers an alternative. He positions his philosophy against the fundamental assumption of all positive utopias

and all "homecoming" philosophical projects: the assumption that the power of thought is sufficient to grasp the totality of the real (Adorno, 2000, p. 24). In regard to an alternative concept of truth, homelessness and Diasporic existence are here connected to Adorno's central conceptions, among which a special role is reserved for dialectics, non-identity, negation, and reflection. For him

The name of dialectics says no more, to begin with, than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder, that they come to contradict the traditional norm of adequacy [...] It indicates the untruth of identity, the fact that the concept does not exhaust the thing conceived. (ibid.,p. 54)

In light of the centrality to Adorno's later thought of the concept of nonidentity, it is of vital importance to state that for him what I call "Diaspora" is not a merely epistemological dimension. It is even much more than a way of life, and surely it is not a temporary punishment of humans by God only to be overcome by redemptive "homecoming" to a cosmic harmony and non-alienated human existence. As in the Gnostic tradition, Adorno's rearticulated "exiled good God" is present as an *absence* in the reality of the evil God of historical existence and creative reality. This is why for him, while dialectics is the consistent sense of nonidentity it also assures the impossibility of *any* stable ground for a "standpoint" – not only the "wrong standpoint" (ibid.). The aim of Adorno's Diasporic philosophy is *Diasporic self-reflection*, and self-overcoming, which will make possible transcendence, with no ground, ultimate end, or appeasing nihilistic pleasure, rational conclusion, totalizing synthesis, or any other kind of "home" or redemption.

In an imaginary conversation between the philosopher – an implicit reference to the masters of Critical Theory themselves – and the practical man, the philosopher is the one on the defensive, not his practical interlocutor. The genuine philosopher is introduced by Adorno and Horkheimer not as a promising educator but as a neurotic,

who manifests his refusal to be cured when insisting on continuing his project of curing normal, realistic-oriented, sane, people (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1988, p. 255). Facing these conclusions one should ask, what, if any, is the justification for Critical Theory and for Critical Pedagogy as emancipatory education in action, under conditions in which "serious philosophy has come to its end" (Horkheimer, 1985, vol. VII., p. 404)? One may ask if there is a secure or insecure yet worthy non-religious "home" even for counter-education, if Adorno is right in saying:

Whatever wants nothing to do with the trajectory of history belongs all the more truly to it. History promises no salvation and offers the possibility of hope only to the concept whose movements follows history's path to the very extreme. (Adorno, 1998, p. 17)

Critical Theory as a Jewish Negative Theology

The later Horkheimer presents mature Critical Theory as a Jewish Negative Theology. This change carries major educational implications hegemonic Critical Pedagogy has not yet dare to address until now and much less in the present era of the new anti-Semitism as the meta-narrative of the progressive circles. Following Benjamin, it was for him of vital importance that Judaism did not present God as a positive absolute. The negativity of this utopianism is constituted of two elements: the first is rejection in principle of the possibility of a positive realization of *any* Utopia. Horkheimer refuses to imagine a positive picture of future society prior to its realization (Horkheimer, 1985, vol. VII., p. 382). The second is his commitment to confront Critical Theory with its own negativity and its own impossibility. This is a challenge worthy of a Diasporic philosophy that cannot satisfy itself in a concluding synthesis, not even in its essential homelessness or negativity. It is this challenge that opens the gate to counter-education, and in many respects it is the gate itself. In Adorno's words

The plain contradiction of this challenge is that of philosophy itself, which is thereby qualified as dialectics before getting entangled in its individual contradictions. The work of philosophical self-reflection consists in unrevealing that paradox. Everything else is signification, secondhand [...]. (Adorno, 2000, p. 60)

As genuine Diasporic philosophers, both Adorno and Horkheimer refuse any philosophy that leads to consensus, synthesis, and the end of dialectics and worthy suffering. Yet at the same time they refuse to abandon the quest for the Messiah or human emancipation. The *quest*, as a Messianic tension, is central here, not its "successful" fulfillment. The messianic quest so often is interwoven in a positive Diasporic philosophy that it makes possible the institutionalization of religion and normalizing, repressive, religious education, which challenges genuine religiosity and authentic Diasporic existence. Adorno and Horkheimer are careful to position in the center of their counter-education a different Diasporic attitude to Messianism, reflection, and transcendence. In his *Minima Moralia* Adorno concludes that

The only philosophy which can be responsibly practiced in face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption. Knowledge has no light but that shed on the world by redemption: all else is reconstruction, mere technique. Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light. (Adorno, 1999, p. 247)

That is why Judaism was so important for Horkheimer. He saw in it "a non-positive religion", "a hope for the coming of the Messiah" (Horkheimer, 1988, p. 331).

Judaism, within this framework, is not a reality but a symbol for – *non-violent – solidarity of the powerless* (ibid., p. 40), in sharp contrast to the general conceiving of Judaism by present day progressive, post-colonialist thinkers. As a Jewish Negative Theology, Critical Theory expresses, in his view, "a refusal to recognize power as an argument for truth" (ibid., p. 139). Horkheimer's contribution to the Diasporic

perspective is here crystal clear when he identifies "Judaism", as a "non-positive religion", with Critical Theory. Adorno too understood the refusal of power, effectiveness, and domestication in the "Same" of the world of facts as a precondition for genuine counter-education that would challenge the present reality (Adorno, 1971, p. 147).

The conception of being in the continuum of *ontological Diaspora* on the way to *transcending the continuum* was vital for presenting late Critical Theory as a Jewish Negative Theology. The uniqueness of Judaism lies in its permanent demand for justice, emerging out of a *hope* with no real historical anchor: "Jewry was not a powerful state, but the hope for justice at the end of the world" (Horkheimer, 1978, p. 206). The idea that *the demand for justice essentially cannot obtain power*, and that *justice can be realized only at the cost of its transformation into its opposite – injustice*, is central to the educational implications of this version of Critical Theory.

In my mind it implies that counter-education must not attempt to transcend negativism; it is committed to anti-dogmatism and it must resist any manifestation of the self-evident, even that of the oppressed and the persecuted. It must resist popularization and political victories. At the same time its Messianism is directed to resisting actual injustices in the present reality as the only manifestation of the quest for truth and justice. This version of Negative Theology as a mature Critical Theory in Horkheimer's thought complies with Adorno's concept of Negative Dialectics.

It was not in opposition to the view of the philosopher as a neurotic who refuses to be cured, but in compliance with this vision that Adorno articulated the "categorical imperative of philosophy" (Adorno, 2000, p. 54). There he concludes: "it does not hold the key to salvation, but allows some *hope* only to the moment of concept followed by the intellect wherever the path may lead" (ibid.). Yet Adorno's Diasporic

philosophy is not consistent enough with itself, and actually Adorno presents Critical Theory as a path to salvation after all. This, however, is within a negative framework that leaves no room for any positive Utopia or actual salvation in the sense that traditional positive utopias or optimistic-oriented Critical Pedagogy can promise its disciples. In most of his educational texts Horkheimer too is short of consistent Diasporic philosophy and he offers optimism on the possibility of a worthier education – at the expense of counter-education, which if genuine must be truly Diasporic and refuse any optimistic version of normalizing education. The explicit philosophical texts of these thinkers in their second stage of development represent a much more consistent Diasporic philosophy.

Regardless of its impossible situation, according to Adorno philosophy has not concluded its mission. However, it does not have any foundation, self-evidence, social strata, or pain on which to establish its critical education: “Philosophy offers no place from which theory as such might be concretely convicted of the anachronisms it is suspected of, now, as before” (Adorno, 1999, p. 55). Adorno, in accordance with Benjamin and Horkheimer, presents another kind of dialectics that stands in contrast to the orthodox Marxist concept of dialectics and its version of Ideology Critique (as an emancipatory overcoming of alienation and false consciousness, and as a precondition for a revolutionary praxis). As a genuine counter-educator he refuses *any* concept of dialectics that promises victory, emancipation, or peace.

According to Adorno's ontology, human's homelessness is neither a temporary situation nor a punishment, and ontologically it is rooted in the infinite rootlessness, in what Deleuze and Guattari call "becoming" (Deleuze & Guattari, p. 294) or "the rhizomatic", that opens the gate to nomadic existence. Adorno and Horkheimer are

united here in refusing any manifestations of the absolute, the totality, the truth, or a positive justice on earth.

Adorno is very much aware of the contradictions at the heart of his project. His Diasporic project rests here, on these contradictions precisely, as a way of overcoming meaninglessness and self-evidence of various kinds, including the revolutionary kind. "The work of philosophical self-reflection consists in unraveling that paradox. Everything else is signification, secondhand construction, pre-philosophical activity" (Adorno, 2000, p. 60). What then remains for philosophy to do? Is there still a mission it can devote itself to – without transforming itself into its negative and become a new, sophisticated, version of normalizing education?

Adorno, like Horkheimer, constituted his utopian thought on his philosophical pessimism, so Negative Dialectics became the last way to save the struggle to challenge the self-evident and to transcend meaninglessness.

To change this direction of conceptuality, to give it a turn toward nonidentity, is the hinge of Negative Dialectics. Insight into the constitutive character of the nonconceptual in the concept would end the compulsive identification, which the concept brings unless halted by such reflection. Reflection upon its own meaning is the way out of the concept's seeming being-in-itself as a unit of meaning.(ibid., p. 63)

In this sense, and solely in this sense, "philosophy can make it after all" (ibid., p. 60). Adorno's Diasporic philosophy in this respect becomes the only way to resist the process of destruction of the autonomy of the human subject (Adorno, 1998, p. 5). It becomes the only manner of resistance to being overwhelmed by the one-dimensional functionality and thingness of the system (Adorno, 2000, p. 234) and its deceiving message of freedom in accordance with the laws of the market and the current world of facts (ibid., p. 198). As such, within its negativity, it incubates an alternative to the hegemonic educational message propagated by the Culture Industry: it offers

nomadic, creative, religious existence and love via the possibility of refusal of the present process of subjectification; resistance to the reality of constructing the de-humanized agent. As such Diasporic philosophy offers a kind of thinking which allows hope of overcoming the current educational reality (Adorno, 2000, p. 238) of which today's Critical Pedagogy is an important part.

Diasporic philosophy enabled Adorno and Horkheimer to not only effect a radical critical reconstruction of the present historical moment but to go further into offering an existential-philosophical counter-educational refusal of all manifestations of power in the present culture and society. The Diasporic philosophy they constructed was actually a non-positivistic and anti-optimistic alternative; as in the Gnostic tradition, it was *a call to overcome the omnipotence of the presence of "the evil God"*. Such an alternative opened up when they insisted on transcendence, and (against the deceiving call for relativism, nihilism, or pragmatism) on love, meaning, responsibility, and creativity, which are not a mere echo of the hegemonic power-games of the totally administered world.

Critical Theory here becomes an introduction to a renewal of poiesis and ecstatic religiosity without becoming a new dogmatic religious, philosophical, or political "home". At the same time, however, dogmatic and institutionalized religion comes to have special relevance for the Frankfurt School thinkers: they struggled for the very possibility of *Diasporic sensitivity* to the pursuit for **the totally other**. Only within this Diasporic philosophy and its counter-educational alternatives are we to understand its refusal to abandon the imperative of responsibility to the yet unrealized human potentials. To this imperative, as to the presence of hope out of suffering, they offered only one possible way: that of religious negation.

The message here has its origins in the Jewish messianic impulse, the commitment to transcendence from any consensus, and from any manifestation of the self-evident and the Same; it is a call for a struggle to overcome meaninglessness in a Godless world. In this sense, here any possible educational "implication" should be negative, if it is to be true to itself. At the same time, as genuine counter-education it is a manifestation of love and a concrete realization of joy and creativity, *tikun olam* (Gur-Ze'ev, 2003. p. 9). In this sense later Adorno and Horkheimer are so important in any attempt to keep alive the quest and the actual appearance of counter-education as a concrete Utopia of education for love in a postmodern condition.

For Adorno and Horkheimer, the transcendental dimension and the concept of the horizon as a limit that does not have the last word determine the frame of struggle which constitutes the "genuine" human – a position that comes close to mystic tradition. According to Adorno, and here he is very close to Heidegger, from whom he and Horkheimer were so concerned to distance themselves (Adorno, 2000, p. 75), what is incubated, that which awaits in the objects themselves needs such intervention to come to speak, while acknowledging and within the framework of the perspective that the exterior forces inflict, offer and mobilize "outside" [...] (Gur-Ze'ev, 2003a, p. 29).

This dimension is made especially clear in Horkheimer's unpublished works. In every single thing, he wrote in a private note, a higher aim dwells, which is channeled to external infinity, which transcends it. The negative utopia of Diasporic philosophy is expressed here, on the one hand, by the deeds of the genuine philosopher, which manifest openness and readiness to be called on, geared to a total negation of the given reality as the actuality of "truth, beauty, and goodness" (Horkheimer, 1988, p. 162). Horkheimer's starting point, however, includes the acknowledgement that these

dimensions reflect *the absolute*, which will forever remain concealed, unreachable, and misconceived. One must clarify the status of this yearning, a clarification that Horkheimer himself avoided and Adorno did only very little to address. Here we come up against the limits of their mature Critical Theory even when it becomes an implicit rich Diasporic philosophy.

With Horkheimer, as with Adorno and Benjamin, the struggle for the possibilities of *transcendence* from the boundaries of the horizons of the hegemonic reality transforms this praxis into prayer, a holy deed. Here too, holiness is not conditioned or determined by the level of its "success" but by openness and possibility. In Franz Rosenzweig's views on prayer too,

The question is not asked here whether the prayer will be answered and fulfilled. The context of the prayer is its fulfillment. The soul prays [...] for the capacity for prayer [...] this ability to pray is the highest gift given to the soul in revelation. This gift is nothing but the capacity for prayer. But by being superior it already passes the boundaries of the realm of capacity. For, with the ability to pray given, the necessity to pray is also included. (Rosenzweig, 1970, p. 215)

In prayer, the yearning for a dialogue between the human as an infinite challenge to her finitude, and "God" as a representation of infinity, is realized. The central force, here, in my opinion, is not in the establishment of an unproblematic meeting with "God" but in the Diasporic facing up to his absence and in the meeting of the existential moment where *Sisyphean overcoming of mere (pleasurable/painless/"successful") human life is the aim of human life*. A self-contained, domesticated, human subject cannot make possible a true human, since he or she is essentially Diasporic; the human is conditioned by transcendence and challenging the totality of the immanence. The traditional concept of prayer (Drensner, 1970, p. 24) represented this idea in a manner still valid, especially in face of the absence of God. As happens so often with love, happiness, and

creativity, prayer too, when instrumentalized and institutionalized, negates its own essence and becomes a devoted slave of the reality it is committed to transcend.

Even in order to address the idea of the autonomous subject, the human is overwhelmed by inhumanity: a desire for power – a desire for "home" in the swallowing presence of the absolute immanence. Unless Diasporic counter-education is offered, no emancipation or redemption awaits but nihilism and disintegration of human culture. Within counter-education the Diasporic community enriches itself by actualizing *improvisation* in all spheres of life in light of the presence of the absence of the absolute.

This negative presence, the presence of the absence, might reconnect us with *the essence of religiosity* that is so often misrepresented by the institutionalized religions that constitute the false quest for Diasporic existence as a prelude to "homecoming" to the lost Garden of Eden, nirvana, ultimate pleasure, or other positive utopian versions of human's self-forgetfulness. Counter-education as opposed to the hegemonic Critical Pedagogy and the other manifestations of normalizing education does not call for "effectiveness", "success", or "homecoming". It identifies and challenges the Instrumental Rationality in Critical Pedagogy, radical feminist pedagogies, post-colonial education, and all other critical optimisms about the emancipatory dimensions of the cyberspace, radical democracy, and post-colonial alternatives as advocated by critical educationalists such as Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, Douglas Kellner and Patti Lather.

As an alternative it can only be edified into a *prayer*. This kind of prayer, however, is articulated as a concrete way of Diasporic life where the eternal-improviser actualizes her relation to the otherness of the Other in all dimensions and levels of Life. Here counter-education makes *nomadism* possible and

facilitates the posing of new philosophical questions, a lust which gave power to martyrs at the stake, to monks confronting ancient parchments as absent truths, or to women confronting the systematic oppression that was inflicted on them by the ever-growing sophistication of Western phalocentrism (Gur-Ze'ev, 1999, p. 452). The desire for **the totally other** as impetus of Love and authentic creativity made possible the reality in the system while challenging it. It allowed transformation, transgression, and border-crossing from one system of self-evidence but also the "homecoming" project and the commitment to "victory", nirvana, closed "truth" and borderless nihilism. It was not only co-opted for the reproduction of the order of things: it also was a power of *change* and altered systems on the existential level of every individual as well as on the level of the rises and falls of entire cultures and empires.

Critical Theory as a Prayer in a Godless World

As an expression of Diasporic yearning for **the totally other**, prayer was traditionally also a gate to the infinite Other, a gate to overcoming its quest for a positive "home", to the absolute. As such it made possible the birth of young ears that were able to respond to the wordless invitation to Diasporic existence. Prayer, when true to itself, incubates the religious quest, the existential readiness, for such an openness to infinity. As such, prayer also includes a type of special knowledge, and it already represents, in this world, a genuine remnant of the moment of creation. As Rabbi Moshe Sofer (Hatam Sofer) said: "The lamentation over the destruction is itself the building". This knowledge with which we are dealing is close to Gnostic knowledge –

or rather the struggle for knowledge in the Gnostic sense of the word (Jonas, 1963, p. 32).

Gnosis was the struggle for the knowledge of "the good exiled God", the understanding of which was unattainable, hence its noble Diasporic position. Adorno and Horkheimer viewed the "understanding" of the given reality as stipulated in connection with the absolute; an affinity which is viewed as a certain type of knowledge, or conditioned in a specific type of knowledge, which is different from that which is reproduced in the hegemonic realm of self-evidence. In this manner even they, in their Diasporic philosophy, like gnosis, sought after metaphysical knowledge, which can be defined as the "knowledge of the secrets of the universe". Only in this sense can a human hope to achieve salvation (ibid., p. 284). Within the framework of Critical Theory this is the quest for the secrets of the universe, inasmuch as it is a human universe. Today we are faced with the fact that at best it is an anti-humanistic-oriented world that is rapidly going toward self-destruction of all life on the planet as a manifestation of human progress.

Horkheimer's Negative Utopianism as prayer and as Diasporic existence has three aspects. The first is the advent of an ideal Diasporic, anti-ethnocentric-oriented community in which one can attempt to see levels of religion, or an established cult with a special jargon, rituals and gestures, common enemies, similar societal background, etc., within this Diasporic philosophy. Negative Utopianism is also an invitation to the Diasporic community as a sort of "praying congregation", present in writings of Rosenzweig, as well as the method of establishing this community. To a certain degree, this type of community already exists.

The second aspect is the establishment of the religious ecstatic dimension of this Diasporic philosophy in relation to the absence of the absolute. According to Heschel,

the purpose of prayer in Jewish mysticism is to recall God to the world and to establish in it his kingdom (Heschel, 1954, p. 61). In this respect, prayer is the ladder up to the perfection over the horizon. With Horkheimer, the resting point of this ladder is Diasporic existence and the awareness of the absence of the absolute. "The longing for heaven, where he will never enter" (Horkheimer, 1978, p. 212) relies on the existence of the absolute and supersedes it – and at the same time constitutes it. Horkheimer's endeavor as prayer is very close to that of the *Kabbala* concerning the relationship between mystical prayer and divinity.

According to Moshe Idel, one of the *Kabbala* texts illustrating this belongs to Rabbi Elazar of Worms:

Let there be the sound of prayer of Israel – for prayer travels upward towards the heavens above their heads and travels and rests on the head of the Almighty and becomes for him a crown [...] for prayer rests like a crown [...] Human prayers are transformed by their relation that they are transcended and become part of the divine escort: Divine Presence, a wreath on the head of God, and 'like the crown'. (Idel, 1988, p. 372)

Idel sees the composition of a "wreath" by means of prayer as a "crowning of a king". From this aspect he continues, "one can see the *Kabbala* not only as caring for the garden but also caring for the gardener himself" (ibid., p. 197).

Adorno and Horkheimer's Diasporic projects are not very far from the essence of kabbalistic yearning – the yearning of the homeless for **the totally other** than the totality of the immanence of the present reality as the manifestation of Being; the yearning for what Levinas calls "the infinite Other", which is a condition for prayer, and at the same time its fruits. With regard to the affinity to the absolute, the Diasporic project itself appears as a prayer of an eternal nomad, who refuses any positive God, refuses any of the positive utopias and all alternative kinds of "homecoming" projects to the lost Garden of Eden or to its worldly realization. As

such there is no place in it for prayer as a separate activity. This is based on the Gnostic view of true prayer: "prayer as a type of higher communication with supreme reality must be quietness" (Mortley, 1987, p. 37).

The third aspect of this Diasporic philosophy is the establishment of the "genuine individual" in the ideal Diasporic community. The ability of the true individual (the philosopher) to send the invitation to the critical conversation – where lies the possibility of the struggle for salvation of the soul – is also *the moral duty* which Horkheimer imposes on the Diasporic philosopher, and maybe on himself:

Both prayer and romantic love have a common past. Today both are fading, and there is no better manifestation of it than the propaganda taking place in their name... the praise and the condemnation, the sanctions against the skeptic. If he remains purely negative, he contributes to the validity of regression. To be devoted one to another as man intended, in the past, to do with the assistance of prayer, even though the impotence of prayer and the insignificance of man became a well known thing; to transform into much love... to drive aside the skepticism whenever the social and psychological conditions were exposed and understood and from awareness to them: to drive aside the skepticism without forgetting what these skeptical matters brought about - this is the only resistance the individual can offer in face of the vain progress. It will not cease the decline; it will, however, bear witness on the right thing during the period of darkness. (Horkheimer, 1978, p. 206)

This responsibility of the Diasporic, religious, human, who has no dogma, collective, pleasure, "truth", "revolution", Garden of Eden, or God to enslave himself to, is born out of an the *existential decision* – similar to the Kierkegaardian "Either-Or" – which creates dislearning and manifests Love of Life. Adorno and Horkheimer's anthropology understands existence as dependent on that which is beyond it, hence the erotic commitment to transcendence above any given reality or above life as the ecstatic aim of life.

The Diasporic Philosophy of Adorno and Horkheimer

When we elaborate on the religious aspects of Adorno and Horkheimer's Diasporic philosophy it is appropriate to distinguish three terms: religion, religiousness, and

theology. The relationship between Critical Theory and theology, especially in the later Adorno and Horkheimer, is quite clear. First, many of their foremost peers were declared theologians. Second, they presented theology as a basis for a moral alternative and for a critique of the present as a whole, and as dealing with historical research and philosophical judgment of the connection to a God in different religions. Third, they use much theological jargon: "martyr", "the resurrection of the dead", "original sin", and "the burning bush". Fourth, Horkheimer defines his Critical Theory and that of Adorno as "negative theology". Fifth, their work fits the theological category, at least by definition of the members of "radical theology". And sixth, their work became important for many theologians – those who did not consider themselves "radicals", and those who not only enriched their theological matters, but also saw the texts of Benjamin, Adorno, and Horkheimer, and even of Habermas, as theological work per se (Arenas, 1982, p. 379).

Much more problematic is the definition of religion. It is difficult to decide if one should see Adorno and Horkheimer's projects as religious. A clue can be found in the comments which Horkheimer wrote for himself one day in March 1969, and did not publish. In these writings he refers to his project as a *bona fide religious* undertaking, and he plans the last articles of the writings with the purpose of illuminating various aspects of new religiousness. Horkheimer wishes to express four ideas: solidarity; the love of the Other as equal to the integration of theology and science; the basis of fanaticism; and a non-violent solidarity.

These four ideas were supposed to be passed on through these essays: "Our homeland – the Planet"; "He – Like you" (a distortion of the Hebrew usually rendered "Love your neighbor as you would yourself"); "On Output"; and an

additional essay which was planned, but never written, supposedly inspired by the condition of Jews in the Diaspora. He sums up the project: "These four ideas must be formulated in such a manner that they will lead to [the advent] of a new praxis which unifies science and religion" (Horkheimer, 1988, p. 140).

Since the concept of religion seems to us problematic and this connection is not meant to be decided through such an intricate problem – a problem to whose clarification neither Adorno nor Horkheimer devoted proper attention, we shall concentrate on a different kind of problematic: religiousness.

The Diasporic religiousness, which I credit to Adorno and Horkheimer, is similar to the existential religiousness that I find in Kierkegaard – something Adorno clearly states when speaking of Kierkegaard. Adorno and Horkheimer's religiousness is nothing but an interpretation of reality which becomes an ecstatic way of life that not only transcends the historical reality but even transforms the historical moment itself in the sense that it reveals its self-negation in face of the infinite Diasporic essence of Being itself.

As a way of life Diasporic philosophy is not religiousness based on the fear of life but on the affirmation of life, while facing meaninglessness, suffering, and the rejection of all other calls for "homecoming". This refusal makes *nomadism* possible as a religious way of life. It gives life justification, not through purposefulness of the kind from which the concept of oppression is constituted. This justification is a manifestation of love of life and is a Sisyphian one, in the sense of the religion of the Greeks according to the Nietzschean interpretation. The Diasporic human, then, like the Nietzschean super-human, may be truly happy (which is in opposition to satisfaction by the furnishing of phony needs) through this tragedy. The Greek hero, Nietzsche's super-human, and Horkheimer's

philosopher all affirm Life despite their suffering and meaninglessness, but still more *out of* meaninglessness, suffering, and the absolute absence of the Other.

The Diasporic identification of the possibilities for transcendence from the tyranny of the facts of the present reality is also present in Nietzsche's Dionysianism. While opposed to conventional religion, this nevertheless is "the road towards life", which is essentially "religious", a tragic-"holy" struggle, an "aim" that overcomes "God" and redeems Life and "earth" (Nietzsche, 1075, p. 978). Horkheimer, for all his criticism, sees Nietzsche as a thinker who symbolizes a will and a way to salvation (Horkheimer, 1985, vol. XIII., p. 254). The Diasporic religiousness to which we refer to is not stopped by the awareness of "death of God"; on the contrary, the death of God is its starting point. Of this may be said what Victor Nuovo said of radical theology: "a new liberty is formed from the recognition of the *death of man* and *the death of God*. It is radical theology which opens the way to this new liberty" (Nuovo, 1966, p. 25).

Adorno and Horkheimer's Diasporic philosophy does not lack a belief in the deity: it turns the overcoming of the belief in all forms of "God", the absolute or the positive, into a starting point of a re-articulated Gnostic counter-education for love. As such it abides well with the dealings of modern critical theologians who express true religious tension, which is dependent on "waiving the concept of God as the basis for work", in the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Bonhoeffer, 1965, p. 191). This disbelief is close to the religiousness of Karl Barth, who states that today "[true] religiousness is disbelief" (Barth, 1932, P. 327). Even so, the denial of belief should not be seen as a forgoing of the absolute. It is *this* denial of dogmatic belief which makes possible a burst of vital, absolute belief which wills a life of *wandering* upon the skeptic. The holy deeds of the skeptic form the totality

of his existence and the permanence of his Diasporic community. Historically, this is the difference between weak-spirited skepticism, which is pragmatic or carries the suffix "post", and skeptical religiousness, which enriches that same major religion – one which usually produces power and at the same time promises new eroticism. This Diasporic skepticism is the burning bush of the kind out of which God spoke to Moses (Exodus III, 4). This call out of the burning bush will never be easy to identify as other than the echo of the governing power-games and an effect of the immanence of the symbolic exchange. It will never be totally deciphered, classified, or evaluated; it will always remain beyond, other, an abyss, as understood by the deep religiousness of Moses, Pascal, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Benjamin, Adorno, Horkheimer, and Levinas.

Adorno and Horkheimer's Diasporic religiousness is closer to the Gnostic tradition than to atheism. In light of the loss of the relevance of the traditional religions as a manifestation of the overcoming of the bad God over Life, or over the primordial, exiled, God, they sought to give "theism a new meaning [...] from within atheism itself" (Horkheimer, 1988, vol. III., p. 185). This is in order to save the "Judeo-Christian" Utopia of "unification of truth, love and justice, as expressed in the Messianic idea" (Horkheimer, 1988, p. 186).

Central to Adorno and Horkheimer's Diasporic philosophy is *Negative Utopianism*. This is Negative Utopianism geared to the human field of struggle over the realization of its potential for being different, and in a sense more, than merely directed by the system. However, it is not the attainment of power that is here stressed but the Diasporic acknowledgement of the impotence of justice and of the human who challenges injustice.

Adorno and Horkheimer's Diasporic religiousness calls for "unification of religion and philosophy in the realm of true solidarity" (Horkheimer, 1985, vol. III., p. 223). This type of solidarity is supposed to include science as a central element and to perceive it as a threatening enemy. This is not the concept of utopian science which we find in Marcuse's "principle of the new reality", whose maximal utopian version is supposed to be realized in the future society.

Within the framework of Adorno and Horkheimer's Diasporic philosophy the given reality is not in the realm of "the absolute", nor is it the place that one can decide in connection with this reality itself. Both thinkers came out against "dogmatic atheism" on the one hand and against dogmatic theism on the other (Horkheimer, 1988, p. 238).

Utopianism is vital for all versions of Diasporic philosophy, and Negative Utopianism is quintessential for Adorno and Horkheimer. They stress it with special clarity when treating the implicit predecessors of Diasporic philosophy. That is why Horkheimer went so sharply against "Schopenhauer's dogmatic atheism", in which, in his opinion, the idea of "the nil" is no less subjective than the idea of "God", which he refuses to present in a positive manner, in line with the hermetic tradition, Master Eckhart, and Nicolas of Cusa's *De Docta Ignorantia* and its Negative Theology (Nicholas of Cusa, pp. 84-85). His existential decision enabled him to relate to holiness in the era of the exile of Spirit, holiness which is also an endless well of hope enables, against all realities and facts of history. This is also a source of responsibility to (negative) Utopia. No argumentation can offer such fruits. It is the light. It is the holiness, surviving in its exile enables the burst-in of *hope* for those Diasporic humans who still refuse to be swallowed by the anti-Diasporic truths and functional facts. The only argument which can be found for this is a moralistic one: a refusal to

acknowledge the reality of evil, which characterizes this world. In this context he explicitly speaks of "belief" – belief which is capable of unifying in a moralistic manner the community that holds that the terrible reality in the world will not have the last word. In other words, in some respects this is a *yearning* for "true" reality – that intended by the utopian tradition and the tradition of religious salvation. Thus we conclude that ultimately, despite their important contribution to the history of Diasporic philosophy, Horkheimer and Adorno are not consistent in their Diasporic philosophy even in the second stage of their work.

As against this element in their thought it is important to stress that from a consistent Diasporic point of view the Diasporic essence of Being and human essential homelessness when true to itself is the possible arena for dancing with the immanence of the absolute. Only when overcoming the limits of their own work might Adorno and Horkheimer offer us such a *transcending dance*; a religious counter-education that will insist on transcendence from mere power-relations and meaninglessness. This will be within the framework of Negative Dialectics and nomadism as a way of life. It will be a mode of existence that develops special relations with the Jewish concept of an absent God and traditional Jewish anti-dogmatism and the rejection of any call to establish a national, intellectual or moral "home". This refusal of any attempts at domestication and normalization is the terra to which the negation of the present reality is anchored.

Eternal and infinite Diaspora as the manifestation of the absolute makes possible **the grand refusal** and empowers the overcoming of the call to reconcile with the reality and Being swallowed by the historical moment. But what is the non-contingent framework or foundation of "the last truth" or of the negation of its production? Horkheimer's answer is: "the religion" (Horkheimer 1988, pp. 238-239). Here the

struggle for the salvation of religiousness appears to him synonymous with the struggle for realizing the essence or the aim of Western culture.

Diasporic Existence, Judaism, and Counter-education

Even if only implicitly, Adorno and Horkheimer accept *the Diasporic essence of Being* and human life as a starting point for their mature, religious-oriented Critical Theory (Adorno, 1970, p. 137). This enables them to insist on their critique and on their reconstruction of the omnipotence of power and meaninglessness (namely the apparatuses that produce meanings, values, and drives) in current life, on the one hand, while insisting on transcendence from the present reality and devoting themselves to creativity and moral responsibility on the other. They refuse both the quest for Zionism (and all its alternatives) on the one hand and the "post-colonial" project and its predecessors, on the other. They insist on the essence of Jewish Diasporic impetus which avoids optimistic internationalism yet holds on to its genuine cosmopolitanism:

We must all be unified by the yearning, which takes place in this world, injustice and horror will not be the final word, what was the other... what is called religion [...] the idea of infinity, which was developed by religion – we must need it and not give up on it. (Horkheimer, 1985, vol. VIII., p. 343)

The second idea comes to light in the commandment of Jewish religion not to present a positive description of God (ibid.), an idea diametrically opposed to the Marcusean utopia as a whole and that realizes the Jewish commandment "Thou shall not make a statue or mask" (Marcuse, 1969, p. 11). These are at the foundation of the Diasporic **great refusal**, which contains the same special knowledge that is included in the

criticism in the laws of prayer; this is a privileged knowledge, an erotic response to the sudden possible- break out-of **the totally other**.

Already, the first phase of Adorno's and Horkheimer's contemplation includes a Diasporic recognition that one must not establish the truth value of values and goals and it is impossible to prove objective truths; that already here is the existential decision to believe; that only from the act of *deciding* to believe can the counter-educational project spring. The criticism that positions this decision as an experiment to save the moral must still explain rationally how it is possible to see the preference of this move over remaining in relativism or subjectivism or replacing a specific belief system with one of its rivals. The absurd in the decision of Adorno and Horkheimer is that in the absence of the possibility to validate their decision rationally, the project takes place in the realm of *struggle for the salvation* of enlightenment – which they criticize in an extreme manner as an expression of power and oppression.

Their decision exists within the realm of their own religiousness, and only it can be used as a systematic base, just as it provides a utopian purpose as well. But *is it a decision, an act of free choice – or the reaction to the persuasive power of the arbitrariness of the voice of the totally other, that forced itself on them* and made possible their "free" choice to believe? And in what sense is this arbitrariness and power essentially different from the deceiving power of present-day Sirens that counter-education directs us to overcome? The explicit purpose of Adorno's and Horkheimer's Diasporic religiousness in the second phase of their thought is no longer a revolution, but a struggle for "the autonomy of the individual" (Horkheimer, 1985, vol. VIII., p. 341).

In the struggle for salvation, Horkheimer's *animal symbolicum* overpowers mere reality and continues on the paved way of the Cabbalists while he sees himself as continuing the position of Schopenhauer. According to this position reality is essentially not absolute and Life is not governed or reduced to "facts", but the product of the mind, symbols and allegories, objects for infinite creative interpretations.

Each thing which turns into a symbol has the ability to bring us down into a gutter which cannot be described, to the aspect of nil. In all things and every phrase in the world a concealed brilliance of hidden life manifests itself for the Cabbalist, infinite life glows inward [...] It is possible to say that the whole world and all acts of genesis are nothing but style of speaking, as a symbolic expression of that layer of what the thought cannot afford, from it a post or a corner of each building which can be achieved by thought. (ibid., p. 227)

The place of *Diasporic hope* in Horkheimer's thought also matches its understanding by the theologians of salvation within genuine religiosity: salvation is, first and foremost, a *promise* that "its realization might remain no more than a hope" (ibid., p. 224). His "practical optimism" is not attuned to cosmic salvation. It is not even expressed in response to a utopian invitation to an ideal dialogue; within the Diasporic project, on the basis of the *hope* which it generates, the purpose and the end result of counter-education. Then, and only then, is there room for "practical" optimism in relation to the text and the Other as partners to a responsible, creative, loving, nomadic way of life. In other words, the "optimism" spoken of is found in the context and expresses a dimension of its action, and it is not a force or external condition which establishes this religiousness, which, in the long run, is devoted to an existential decision, which molds a way of life which, in the eyes of the believers, is moralistic. Adorno's and Horkheimer's Diasporic project expresses first and foremost yearning and belief which do not require approval and cannot be negated by the present reality and its logic.

What the new Diasporic philosophy that Adorno and Horkheimer offer us is of the kind traditionally Judaism offered to the world. Today, however, it is offered to us under the evil conditions set by the coalition between global capitalism, the world of Jihad, the postcolonialist agenda and new anti-Semitism as the meta-narrative of progressive thinking. This coalition currently develops along new destructions and distorted creative also new possibilities for counter-education and *active cosmopolitanism*. Of special importance is here the old-new justification for acting in light of the (absence) good and the new psychological, philosophical, political and educational potentials for co-poiesis and *improvisation* as a Diasporic way of life.

This new cosmopolitanism transforms the Gnostic and Messianic traditions in face of postmodern and pre-modern fundamentalist-oriented postcolonialist alternatives and reintroduces the Diasporic abyss as a challenge to be presently addressed. This Messianic moment, even as a potential, is normally distorted, misused, or forgotten. But in face of a cultural, economic, political, and, ultimately existential crisis, it awakes. When and if awoken, it might become an impetus for counter-education exactly against the exile of Spirit, the instrumentalization of reason, and the reification of the human relations. In opposition to the optimists, who establish great hopes for "the chosen ones", "the oppressed", "the client" or even for all humanity in the cyberspace, in the post-colonialist liberating struggle or on the foundations of globalizing capitalism (Beck, 2004, pp. 234-235), I offer a Diasporic reconstruction of our historical moment: it is the same globalizing capitalism which rationally sends entire populations into a "flexible job economy", rationalized starvation, structurally guaranteed poor health, and loss of self-respect in the margins of the affluence of "the risk society", which also opens the door for the instant, global, visibility of suffering, for universal needs and values, and for new possibilities for creative, loving,

responsible, improvising counter-education and a Diasporic way of life that transcends ethnocentric solidarity, political borders, and contextual pragmatism and cynicism (Gur-Ze'ev, 2004, pp. 179-202.).

Their work is an important manifestation of counter-education in the Gnostic sense. As such it manifests a Diasporic Philosophy that refuses all calls for "homecoming", to God, to the Garden of Eden, to the Patria, to truth, or to mere-pleasure and practical nihilism. Adorno's and Horkheimer's negative theology, while addressing the relevance of Jewish traditional anti-dogmatism and anti-collectivism, offers us today, more than ever, a goal, meaning, and love – without being swallowed by any "pleasure machine", "truth" or "we". As Diasporic humans we are called upon by their counter-education to insist on transcendence, to actualize love in creativity and in a kind of togetherness that is dialogic and refuses any collectivism and all dogmas. In other words this is the moment of birth of the eternal-improviser.

In the era of the exile of the killer-of-God-each-moment-anew responsible improvisation is to be religiously thought, cultivated and actualized in all spheres of public and individual life experiences. It is a precondition, as well as the manifestation, of genuine creativity that transcends the *Same*. Transcendence here is an ethical act of the eternal-improviser, the Diasporic nomad. The transcendence of the eternal-improviser, as in the case of the genuine hacker, is a non-reified creativity; and even in a post-modern arena it is an open possibility. As Levinas shows us in *Totality and Infinity* the transcendence of the otherness from the continuum of the *Same* is an act of self-constitution that resists even the philosophical logos. The Diasporic philosophy should become a source of dislearning and alterity as well as a gate for authentic religious, creativity and Love that counter-education will develop in the most concrete and specific ways. Improvisation has many aspects that are to be

thought, developed, edified and actualized: breathing, reclaiming forgotten and repressed voices, responding to changing situations while holding on to a Gnostic remembrance of (pre)history and the responsibility to the cosmos and eternity each moment anew are vital for today's *ethical I*, who opens herself to the poiesis of Godless religiosity within troubled Life. As such, the later work of Adorno and Horkheimer makes a genuine contribution to counter-education, which is so much needed in face of the recent success of the violence of capitalism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism. One of the first steps of current counter-education should be the synthesis of Adorno's and Horkheimer's critique of Western society and the logic of capitalism with present day analyses of capitalist globalization processes within the framework of "risk society" that at the same time opens for the eternal-improviser new possibilities for Diasporic existence and new realizations of nomadism of the kind that a re-articulated Gnosis might make relevant. Such a counter-education should not abandon the critical tradition, yet it should insist on Love. It should develop new connections between the aesthetic and the ethic, the intellectual and the physical, the political and the religious dimensions of life of a non-dogmatic creator. How ironic it is that global capitalism, while exiling human spirit and enhancing the omnipotence of the creative "evil God", also opens new possibilities for new forms of Gnosis and for new Diasporic individuals and communities.

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