

Karl Korsch quoting Karl Marx in “Marxism and Philosophy” (1923):

“ ‘[Humanity] always sets itself only such problems as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely it will always be found that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or are at least understood to be in the process of emergence’ [Marx, Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859)]. This dictum is not affected by the fact that a problem which supersedes present relations may have been formulated in an anterior epoch.”

Korsch, from “Marxism and Philosophy” (1923):

“As scientific socialism, the Marxism of Marx and Engels remains the inclusive whole of a theory of social revolution . . . a materialism whose theory comprehended the totality of society and history, and whose practice overthrew it. . . . The difference [now] is that the various components of [what for Marx and Engels was] the unbreakable interconnection of theory and practice are further separated out. . . . The umbilical cord has been broken.”

Theodor W. Adorno to Walter Benjamin on the *Arcades Project* (August 2, 1935):

“The fetish character of the commodity is not a fact of consciousness; rather it is dialectical, in the eminent sense that it produces consciousness. . . . [P]erfection of the commodity character in a Hegelian self-consciousness inaugurates the explosion of its phantasmagoria.”

Adorno, from “Relation to Left-Wing Hegelianism,” *Negative Dialectics* (1966):

“The objection has been raised that, because of its immanently critical and theoretical character, the turn to [the] nonidentity [of social being and consciousness] is an insignificant nuance of Neo-Hegelianism or of the historically obsolete Hegelian Left — as if Marxian criticism of philosophy were a dispensation from it. . . . Yet whereas theory succumbed . . . practice became non-conceptual, a piece of the politics it was supposed to lead out of; it became the prey of power. . . . The liquidation of theory by dogmatization and thought taboos contributed to the bad practice. . . . The interrelation of both moments [theory and practice] is not settled once and for all but fluctuates historically. . . . Those who chide theory [for being] anachronistic obey the *topos* of dismissing, as obsolete, what remains painful [because it was] thwarted. They thus endorse the course of the world — defying which is the idea of theory alone. . . . If [one] resists oblivion — if he resists the universally demanded sacrifice of a once-gained freedom of consciousness — he will not preach a Restoration in the field of intellectual history. The fact that history has rolled over certain positions will be respected as a verdict on their truth content only by those who agree with Schiller that ‘world history is the world tribunal’. What has been cast aside but not absorbed theoretically will often yield its truth content only later. It festers as a sore on the prevailing health; this will lead back to it in changed situations.”

Adorno, from “Marginalia to Theory and Praxis” (1969):

“If, to make an exception for once, one risks what is called a grand perspective, beyond the historical differences in which the concepts of theory and praxis have their life, one discovers the infinitely progressive aspect of the separation of theory and praxis, which was deplored by the Romantics and denounced by the Socialists in their wake — except for the mature Marx.”