

Frankfurt School contra Heidegger: Adorno's Cultural Critique of the Ideology of German Existentialism in *The Jargon of Authenticity*

Dustin Garlitz
University of South Florida
May 1, 2010

In this paper on *The Jargon of Authenticity*, I will focus on the ideological dimension of Theodor W. Adorno's critique of Heideggerian existentialism. My focus examines Adorno's preoccupation with the idea that German formulations of existentialism resembled the banality of authoritarianism. In addition to examining the jargon's working relationship with fascism, I will look at Theodor Adorno's criticism of Martin Heidegger's language from *Being and Time* as an overall advancement of Karl Marx's analysis of the fetishism of commodities. In situating the advancement, I plan on investigating the extent to which notions of history are employed throughout the 'aura' of the jargon. This will lead me to question if the mechanics of Heidegger's language are really ahistoric, as Adorno claims.

I develop a position in the paper that points to the Heideggerian field of phenomenology's early history of being a worldly-discipline, culturally engaged with the social structures of a capitalist mode of production. I will then argue that it may have only been Heidegger's particular iteration that shut out social reality. In beginning to launch an argument that is more sympathetic to Freiburg than Frankfurt, I will point out that Heidegger was in fact a major contributor to philosophical hermeneutics, and that Adorno may only be focusing on one dimension of this thought (existentialism) when he generates ahistoric criticism of his employment of language. By the close of the study, I express the idea that Adorno believed all fascist-friendly philosophy to be an aberration of thought, making Heidegger no worse than philosophers who were in fact politically minded, such as Carl Schmitt.

Adorno critiqued existentialism and phenomenology throughout his entire career at the Frankfurt School. The young Adorno submitted his habilitation on *Kierkegaard*:

Construction of the Aesthetic in 1931 Frankfurt to German existentialist Paul Tillich. In 1950s Germany, after an extended stay in the United States, Adorno generated a mid-career critique of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology titled *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique*. The late Adorno's critiques of Heideggerian existentialism were published as *The Jargon of Authenticity* (1964) and *Negative Dialectics* (1966). In addition to Heidegger, the *Jargon* examined the existentialism of fellow German philosophers Martin Buber, Karl Jaspers, and Paul Tillich, and criticized their underlying indebtedness to Soren Kierkegaard's philosophical system.

The major problem Adorno had with Soren Kierkegaard's contributions to Continental philosophy centered on the Dane's rejection of Hegelian speculative reason. In Kierkegaard, Adorno found a bourgeois alternative to Karl Marx's response to G.W.F. Hegel. What Adorno does throughout the *Jargon* is construct a Hegelian-Marxist rejection of the German existentialism that developed from Kierkegaard's fundamental problem with critical reason. The theme of Kierkegaard's that Adorno is most critical of in the *Jargon* is the doctrine of love, which he sees as influential in Buber and Tillich's existentialism. The doctrine highlighted Kierkegaard's overarching philosophical theme of radical inwardness, which Adorno finds informing Buber's *I and Thou* relationship and Tillich's stressing of religiosity as an end in itself (both lacked a dialectical character according to the Frankfurter).

The Frankfurt School's Adorno envisioned philosophy as a dialectical mediation of subject and object in a class-based, exchange society. According to Adorno, the existentialism that started with Kierkegaard, moving forward into 20th century German thought, fixated on a notion of subjectivity and 'being-in-itselfness' that lacked the

historical determinedness of an objective social reality. This was developed to the point where Adorno sees the 20th century German existentialist pushing, “a jargon that employs a blank nominalistic theory of language, in which words are interchangeable counters, untouched by history”. (2003, pg. 5) However, he finds that, “history does intrude on every word and withholds each word from the recovery of some alleged meaning, that meaning which the jargon is always trying to track down.” (ibid, ibid) This is a reason why Adorno is not just critiquing existentialism, but in fact isolating the ideological dimension implicit in its German manifestations. By overlooking the theme of critical rationality, Adorno finds German existentialism vulnerable to the historically totalizing phenomena of market-liberalization.¹

Adorno deconstructs Heidegger’s terminology from *Being and Time*, finding that, “The empirical usability of sacred ceremonial words makes both the speaker and the listener believe in their corporeal presence. The either is mechanically sprayed, and atomistic words are dressed up without having been changed. Thus they become more important than the jargon’s so-called system.” (2003, pg. 4) Adorno subjects Heidegger’s terminology to the power of imminent criticism, and advances Marx’s analysis of the fetishism of commodities. As far as Heidegger’s *Being and Time* is concerned, “the symbolisms of the jargon do not represent actual social relations but rather symbolize only the relations between abstract concepts. Lost in the fetishism of the jargon is the actuality of the historical development of human consciousness.” (2003, pg. xiii) In the archetypical dialectics of the Frankfurt School’s modernity, language is entangled in a progressing demythologization, in which there is a removal of its magical

¹ I will examine this aspect more closely starting on page 6.

origins. However, Heidegger's existentialism thrives off a "crude conception of the archaic in language" (2003, pg. 34), making it no better than positivism for Adorno's social theory.

Adorno finds the development of a 20th century existentialist movement that is, at surface, intended to encourage notions of self-liberation and subjectivity, in reality actually blind to the class-based social tensions and alienation brought about by a capitalist regime. Existentialism was in fact originally conceived in the very context of capitalism, and Adorno finds it further mystifying that the jargon's subject matter has always ignored the social construction of reality. Adorno stresses that throughout a text such as Heidegger's *Being and Time*, there is terminology employed in the existential system- such as the word "uprootedness"- that have preindustrial, peasant histories, insufficient for addressing the exploitation of late industrial capitalism. Rather, Adorno sees Heidegger's existentialism declining into the Marxian theory of reification, since it forgets the role that institutions plays in forming the subjective sphere.

Moreover, in Heidegger's "homey" and primal jargon awarding only the immediate pleasures of its reader, the existential sphere of self-experience is void of any "objective context of human society". (2003, pg. xii) Further, "The dialectic is broken off: the dialectic between word and thing and the dialectic, within language, between the individual words and their relations." (2003, pg. 8) He finds the jargon exploiting the capacity of philosophical language to mean more than is simply present in the signing of the language. Therefore it becomes evident that Adorno's fundamental problem with existentialism is two-fold: he finds its internal mechanics are flawed and its problem-set lacks teleological scope.

The intention of Heidegger's language originally centered on answering certain questions of freedom and subjectivity, yet Adorno cannot acknowledge its capacity to engage injustices and disparities in social relations. In fact, he believes the language can after the fact actually harbor totalizing phenomena such as fascism. Adorno finds that in German existentialism's jargon of authenticity, "language provides fascism with a refuge". (2003, pg. 3) In Heidegger's jargon of authenticity, "that division between the destructive and constructive, with which fascism had cut off critical thought, comfortably hibernates". (2003, pg. 15) Adorno sees a 'shifting' of ideology into language, to the point that the usage of such language actually is ideology. Adorno provides a commentary in the *Jargon* that points to how Heideggerian themes, such as 'historical destiny' in *Being and Time*, could have comprised the rhetoric of National Socialism.²

As far as the Frankfurt Side of the critique of ontology is concerned, Espen Hammer emphasizes in *Adorno and the Political* that, "In a society dominated by the abstract exchange-relation, such a procedure of fetishization, he [Adorno] argues, produces pseudo-concreteness and false forms of immediacy. While, in a well-established democracy, the anti-enlightenment cult of origin may just be bad art, in the Germany of the 1930s it became official policy." (2005, pg. 107) The former is how the jargon's everydayness could have informed the rhetoric of Germany's fascist threat, providing room for the full expression of the political economy of conservatism.

In the procedural culture of National Socialism, Adorno does in fact see certain political theories (and not just the inward-turned culture of existentialism) harboring evil and focused on the wrong problem-set. This makes the conservative philosophies of

² This line of thought has been further pursued by Richard Wolin in *The Politics of Being* (1992) and Johannes Fritsche in *Historical Destiny and National Socialism in Heidegger's Being and Time* (1999).

Schmitt and Heidegger two sides of the same coin. Both were compatible with the bureaucratic theories of National Socialism according to Adorno, who believed that it made no difference one focused inward while the other theorized about social relations and its constructs (international law).

The jargon of existentialism and phenomenology has always resembled the more banal characteristics of the administered world, according to Adorno. He writes that, “The jargon proves itself as a piece of the negative spirit of the time; it institutes socially useful work within the tendency already observed by Max Weber; the tendency for administrative to expand out over what they consider as their cultural domain.” (2003, pg. 65) The banalities of totalitarianism were implicit in Heidegger’s jargon from its inception for Adorno, who believed that the perpetuation of, “The fussy attention to individual words, as they were lexically handled in the days of the pre-Heideggerian idol-phenomenology, was already the harbinger of bureaucratic stocktaking.” (2003, pg. 70) Nazism’s procedural culture was an aberration of thought according to Adorno. He found the aberration to have deep historical foundations, and believed there was the corruption of a wide variety of 20th century German intellectual pursuits in the course of its full emergence.

Adorno believes that fascism, in addition to being a conspiracy, came to life over the course of an actual social development. He finds that existentialism, in its design, is not intended to address the social relations that made such a coming to life historically possible. He points out that its notions of subjectivity are intended to negate this societal dimension. In reality, though, the language had an ‘aura’ about it, providing ‘soil’ for fascist iterations. It is partially discrediting, however, that Adorno is famous for

considering his critical theory to be “language without soil”, since in this he meant critical theory was intended to be a worldly pursuit that, despite his criticisms of Heidegger, was far removed from historical inevitability.³

Adorno believed that the ‘aura’ of Heidegger’s existential jargon, in addition to being a mystification of thought (Frankfurt School cultural critic Walter Benjamin found this to be the case with anything containing ‘aura’), actually resembled the vulgarity of the Culture Industry. This entailed a gratification of only immediate desires, as was the case for all the Culture Industry’s products. By examining existentialism by way of the gratification employed throughout the manipulative advertising jingles and commercials of the Culture Industry, Adorno finds that the jargon, “gives itself over either to the market, to balderdash, or the prevailing vulgarity.” (2003, pg. xix) This makes for a much different gloss on Heideggerian terminology than we see in other theorists’ reading of existentialism. The decay of Heidegger’s term ‘*ereignis*’ (translated in English as ‘the event’, “the event of appropriation”, or more precisely “the event of mutual appropriation”, and even possibly, “the happening”) by manipulation and false consciousness becomes obvious very early in the *Jargon*, and Adorno demonstrates throughout the book how things can really go awry in late capitalist culture.

Throughout his critique, Adorno continues to discuss the relevance of the Culture Industry and Benjamin’s ‘aura’ in Heidegger’s jargon of authenticity, as far as both theoretical design and reception are concerned. He finds that, “The jargon pursues artisanship under the shadow of industry, as carefully chosen as it is cheap; it gathers reproduction of kitschy life-reforming impulses that real life has buried under itself, and

³ This ahistoric theme of Adorno’s critical theory has in fact been recently pursued in Richter’s *Language Without Soil: Adorno and Late Philosophical Modernity*).

sparing them the hopeless testing ground of actualization. Instead, language rolls up its sleeves and lets it be understood that right action, in the right action, is worth more than reflection.” (2003, pg. 89) The former is Adorno’s testimony, as possibly the most vocal member of the Frankfurt School, to the thesis that there are serious dangers associated with outright rejection of Hegelian critical reason. Dialectics are about transformation and change for the Frankfurt School. Without dialectical mediation of subject and object (what Adorno considers the existential philosophy’s ignorance of “any perception of the praxis which brings about changes”⁴), the revolutionary moment of full realization of exploitation never occurs. Instead, the Heideggerian subject and its sacrosanct realm of self-experience are further lost in the false consciousness of the Culture Industry, with its deluge of intellectualized artifacts including, by convenience, the German existentialist movement’s literature.

Another philosophical theme of Heidegger’s that is critiqued by Adorno in the *Jargon* is shelteredness. He thinks that in appealing as an answer to one’s existential fears encompassing shelter and security (such as in the case of ‘existential homelessness’ in the late Heidegger), the jargon overlooks real social fears of unemployment and physical homelessness/displacement brought about by the irrationality of a capitalist mode of production. He finds that in Heidegger’s “idle chatter”, the readiness to hand interprets “suffering experience as its opposite”. (2003, pg. 87) Moreover, Adorno points out an ahistoric misappropriation of Heidegger’s in the fact that the social material spontaneously critiqued as alienation and reification for Hegel and Marx is strictly interpreted on ontological grounds for the existentialist: as “bodily” and “a function of a Being-form of Dasein” in the case of Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. (2003, pg. 88) With

⁴ 2003, pg. 89

the description of non-spontaneity, I assume Adorno is emphasizing the part of the Heideggerian system that renders *Dasein* a historical category of Being. However, such a concept of ‘historicity’ in Heidegger’s overarching system points to the fact that there is at least some dimension of history in the existentialist’s outlook (even if he or she uses language in an ahistoric way).

Rather than look only at Heidegger, the *Jargon* turns some of its attention to Jaspers and his existentialist critique of Marxism in *Man in the Modern Age*. Not only is Jaspers critical of Marxism in this book, but he also dismisses psychoanalysis and racial theory. If one interprets the Frankfurt School’s critical cultural theory as the intellectual synthesis of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud (as was especially the case for someone like Herbert Marcuse), of course it is possible to anticipate Adorno, the proponent of the Frankfurt School, having major problems with Jaspers’ 1933 publication. Jaspers finds that hatred comes to life in Marxism, as well as in psychoanalysis and racial theory, and their primary tendencies are ones resembling a destructive nature. Adorno counter-critiques Jaspers’ argument by describing the existentialist as a plunderer of language itself (also think of Heidegger’s very notion of ‘destruction’ in *Being and Time*), rather than a civic-minded intellectual who realizes its full descriptive potential.

Adorno describes the German existentialists and their followers as a ‘cult of authenticity’. He considers these individuals comprising the cult of authenticity “anti-intellectual intellectuals” (2003, pg. 3), whose ‘new religion’ gains acceptance from and wins over anyone who thought that at one point or another they were (or had characteristics that were) authentic, but did not feel it was necessary to express it at the time. Instead of the advertising jingles and commercials of the Culture Industry and its

false sense of momentum appealing to one's immediate desires in consumption, existentialism and its 'cult of authenticity' appeals to people's desire to live their life in an authentic way. This makes it quite seductive and perpetuates its livelihood, because who would not want to be called authentic? Adorno's critical social theory only further clashes with Heidegger's existentialism from *Being and Time* because the very notion of something like '*das Man*' ("the They") is in fact directed toward the inauthentic, and is explicitly attributed as a characterizing trend of social reality.

If his critique is strictly confined to Heideggerian existentialism, Adorno's criticism of Heidegger's flashy style would still, in a way, be similar to his dismissal of jazz in musicology and aesthetics. As far as Heidegger's existential jargon of authenticity not adequately addressing social issues of freedom that arise in a late capitalist context, Adorno's best line of attack would be to focus single-handedly on existentialism and not stress any of the phenomenological approaches to *Lebensphilosophie* and the philosophical anthropology of Heidegger. The reason for this is because there are historical variants of phenomenology that have addressed the social sphere and its relations, such as those pursued by phenomenologist Max Scheler (particularly the field of the social construction of knowledge that he bequeathed) and also Alfred Schutz, with his phenomenological theories of the social world.

Even if existentialism is demarcated from phenomenology, the argument could be made that certain existentialist thinkers, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, were socially-informed, card-carrying Marxists. Reversely, a critical social theorist such as the Frankfurt School's own Marcuse actually studied existentialism under Heidegger at

Freiburg, and attempted to fuse it with Marxism.⁵ As well, other leading political philosophers outside of the Frankfurt School, such as Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss, studied with Heidegger during the Marburg and Freiburg years of the 1920s.

Even if one looks past my Sartre example, and focuses on the subdivision of German existentialism scrutinized in the *Jargon*, Adorno's critique of a figure such as Heidegger could raise fundamental questions of the like, "is Adorno only critiquing one aspect of Heidegger's thought [the existential dimension], and overlooking his contributions to the field of philosophical hermeneutics?" Let me for the moment emphasize the importance of Wilhelm Dilthey's hermeneutics, and the study of history and the human sciences it entails, in the intellectual development of the early Heidegger's 'Hermeneutics of Facticity' (rather than Husserl's transcendental phenomenology). One could counter-critique Adorno by acknowledging that a figure such as Dilthey was actually a contemporary of Georg Simmel. This diminishes the efficacy of Adorno's critique, because he in fact uses a sort of Simmel informed social theory of capitalist culture and its urban relations in the *Jargon* to argue that Heidegger's terminology (of peasant, preindustrial history) does not have the capacity to address social injustices and psychic life of high capitalism's metropolises and urban centers.

Underemphasizing the influence of Edmund Husserl in Heidegger's intellectual development would be essential if one is to advocate the position developed in Adorno's critique. This is because Adorno has a history of being ultra-critical of Husserl's phenomenological thought. Furthermore, according to Brian O'Connor in *Adorno's Negative Dialectic* (2004), prewar Freiburg and Frankfurt were worlds apart. O'Connor

⁵ This was explicated in *Heideggerian Marxism* and pursued up until discovery of the early philosophic and economic manuscript of the young Marx occurred in 1930s Germany.

believes that, “The critical issue separating Adorno from Heidegger is that of the subject-object relationship. Heidegger may not intend that fundamental ontology contain the categories of phenomenological reduction, *epoche*, or Cartesian introduction. Adorno argues, however, that Heidegger’s philosophy retains the key features of immediacy so remarkably exploited by the “phenomenological Husserl””. (2004, pg. 155) Even if one is to advocate the position despite this finding, further secondary literature points to the fact that one cannot still take Husserl totally out of the equation.

The formative years of Heidegger and the emergence of his notion of ‘care’ point do point to a sincere indebtedness to Husserlian phenomenology, and its concept of intentionality. Susan Buck-Morss, in *The Origin of Negative Dialectics* (1977) provides the most sympathetic study to the idea that Husserl, while being crucial in the development of Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, may have not been a historical figure world’s apart from Adorno’s underlying motives. She finds that Adorno believed Husserl to be the most progressive of the bourgeois philosophers. Further, “Phenomenology was a stubborn attempt to reach knowledge of the object, the “things themselves” (“*zu den Sachen*” was Husserl’s slogan) without letting go of the traditional ideal concept of reason as universal and absolute. Husserl failed, but according to Adorno his failure was precisely his success, for it brought the dilemmas and inner antagonisms of idealist philosophy to their fullest articulation.” (1977, pg. 71) The former was true of course because Husserl intended to argue against formalism, and Adorno, in renouncing Heidegger’s philosophy, also argues contra formalism. Buck-Morss continues to find Adorno more sympathetic, in theory, to the phenomenology of

Husserl, since its theories are much more outward-minded than Heidegger or Sartre's variations.

Nonetheless, if one is to further mount an argument against Adorno, he or she would need to point out that the critique contained in the *Jargon* overlooks a key admission of Heidegger's. That is, when Heidegger introduces his philosophical anthropology project and its particular terminology in the opening sections of *Being and Time*, he explicitly notes that these terms are being introduced on purely ontological grounds, and are not intended to comprise an ethics or address a larger-working, ethical system.⁶ Such a fact leads to the question of if one can interpret a larger-working, ethical system to mean culture at-large. If so, this person could argue the fact that Adorno's finds Heidegger's existential thought not wanting to have anything to do with cultural philosophy, and the fragmentary divisions of the social world it studies. To further argue against Adorno, one could say someone like Heidegger's protégé Hans-Georg Gadamer develops concepts of culture and education (*Bildung*) in his hermeneutics that transcend the aesthetic dimension in *Truth and Method*, a study of thought greatly influenced by *Being and Time*. Even the next generation of the Frankfurt School (Adorno's graduate assistant Jurgen Habermas, who in fact lively debated Gadamer and his hermeneutics) develops the concept of the "Lifeworld" in his social thought, pointing to a possible hermeneutical dimension of critical theory that still lay unacknowledged in Adorno's critique of Heidegger.

However, Adorno acknowledges that Heidegger's school of phenomenology once had a social basis (prior to 1925), and is implying that Heidegger took from the likes of

⁶ This aspect of Heidegger's fundamental ontology is stressed by Robert D'Amico in *Contemporary Continental Philosophy* (2000).

Max Scheler all the ahistoric aspects of his phenomenological thought (developing it as a quest for the concretization of self-experience), and overlooked all the fragmentation brought about by the capitalist culture it was formulated in. This leads to a hermeneutic circle and abstractness in the realm of self-experience, resembling a new formalism. Adorno finds, prior to Heidegger, almost all phenomenology (and not just Husserl) indeed renounced formalism. Therefore it becomes obvious that Adorno cannot at any angle come to grips with the new state of phenomenology that Heidegger transformed. Heidegger's staunch rejection of the discipline of sociology only further piques Adorno's animosity towards the new phenomenology. Adorno finds that in trying to formulate an all encompassing philosophical system that studies subjectivity by means of 'equipment', Heidegger's rejection of empirical social science methodologies are a mistake. The using of objects as 'equipment' only furthers the very cultural fragmentation that the concretization of self-experience was supposed to overcome.

In fact, Adorno does actually reference Max Scheler and his phenomenological thought, in relation to the development of Heidegger's fundamental ontology, at one point late in the critique (pg. 115). It is done to reinforce the point that Heidegger's concretization of self-experience mentioned above is in fact a historical deviation of the original school of phenomenology, and took as its *raison d'être* only the theme of wholeness from gestalt theory (without being mindful of certain fragmentary elements of culture emerging during the early days of the school). Adorno emphasizes only Gestalt psychology in Scheler's thought, and believes that Heidegger picked up where he left off: in a quest for transplanting into metaphysics a gestalt theory that was previously unpretentious. This acknowledgment of a lack of pretentiousness in Scheler is as close as

Adorno comes in the *Jargon* to arguing my interpretation that phenomenology, in the age of its earlier 20th century thinkers, was a socially-minded discipline (and that only Heidegger's particular iteration signaled its decline into alleged language solipsism.)

Adorno finds that prior to Heideggerian phenomenology and its pretentiousness, "In pre-fascist Germany, wholeness was the motto of all the zealots who were opposed to the nineteenth century, which they looked on summarily as old-fashioned and done away with." (2003, pg. 115) This further supports the point that it was only Heidegger's flashy style that initiated the decline of phenomenology into abstract subjectivity and socially-blind exaltations. This line of argument I can somewhat accept, since it does not discredit phenomenology's early history. It also supports consistency in Adorno's neo-Marxist thought throughout language, metaphysics, and music aesthetics, as far as career-long projects of critiquing surface style and fashion is concerned (the obsession with appearance/*Schein*).

It should be emphasized that Adorno is not interpreting Heidegger's philosophical system as too bourgeois to adequately address everyday, working-class phenomena. If anything, Adorno is rendering the theme of everydayness in the system too kitschy to the point of obsolescence in a social-market economy. Heidegger's 'ready to hand', for Adorno, is a replica of "Wagnerian theatrical effects" (2003, pg. 88), which were originally intended to distinguish genuine art from kitsch. A false sense of immediacy exudes from his theory, and Adorno's thinks that the sustaining of disbelief is a pursuit of both the Culture Industry and the existentialist's jargon.

Even though Adorno thinks that Heidegger's philosophical anthropology cannot fully explain and reflect on life under the auspices of a capitalist mode of production, he

feels that elements of capitalism - such as the basic exchange relationship - have in fact corrupted the very fabric of existentialism's overarching system. While launching a critique of the Second Division of *Being and Time*, and its existential discussion of death, Adorno finds that, "Heidegger's doctrine [of death] becomes an exegesis of the futile joke: Only death is free and costs you and that costs your life. He is smitten with death as that which is supposed to be absolutely removed from the universal exchange relationship. Yet he does not realize that he remains caught up in the same fatal cycle as the exchange relationship which he sublimates into the They. Insofar as death is absolutely alien to the subject it is the model of all reification. Only ideology praises it as a cure for exchange." (2003 pg. 125) Such a statement is puzzling to me because at first in the book Adorno argues that Heidegger's terminology has preindustrial histories, rendering them incapable of describing the late cultural realities of capital. If this is the case, then Adorno seems to be contradicting himself later in the critique by arguing that built into the very fabric of Heidegger's existentialism are all the exploitative and alienating aspects of capitalism. Therefore, I ask which aspect of Marxist social theory is a reality for Adorno and his ideological critique of 20th century German existentialism: estrangement, alienation, or false consciousness?

In concluding, I want to stress that any German philosophy corroborating fascism was looked at as a failure to Adorno. This makes Heidegger's existential, phenomenological, and hermeneutic thought no better to Adorno than the political and legal theory of Schmitt. Such a reality for Adorno and the Frankfurt School raises the belief that it was by convenience Heidegger's existential jargon did not have relevance to social life under a capitalist mode of production. Cultural engagement has not

traditionally been something viewed as missing in Heidegger and *Lebensphilosophie*. In fact, we saw the social exchange-relationship built into the very fabric of the existential jargon (and this is despite the fact that Heidegger specifically says his terminology is not intended to comprise a larger-working, ethical system). Looking beyond aspects of consumer society, it is still the bureaucratic notions of Nationalism Socialism that Adorno finds appalling in Heidegger's existentialism, with the 'eclipse of reason' perpetuated in its rhetoric. This does in fact make the jargon very politically and cultural relevant to 20th century German life. Therefore my belief is that for Adorno, as well as the rest of the Frankfurt School, the case was simply that some philosophical foundations were more penetrable to corruption of thought than others. This makes the anti-fascist themes of Adorno's critique of Heideggerian existentialism further resemble the other canonical products of Frankfurt School critical theory. During my evaluation of Adorno's constant barrage of Heidegger's existentialism, I confirmed that it is impossible to take the critical aspect out of the Frankfurt School's cultural theory.

Bibliography:

Primary Source -

Adorno, Theodor W. (2003): *The Jargon of Authenticity*. London and New York: Routledge.

Secondary Sources -

Buck-Morss, Susan (1977): *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute*. New York: The Free Press.

Hammer, Espen (2005): *Adorno and the Political*. London and New York: Routledge.

O'Connor, Brian (2004): *Adorno's Negative Dialectic: Philosophy and the Possibility of Critical Rationality*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.