

MARCUSE'S BRAND OF CRITICAL THEORY AND POST-COLONIALISM

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ABSTRACT

Studies discussing critical theory and post-colonialism consider only the works of Horkheimer and Adorno and are largely focused on revealing disparities between the two approaches. Writings of Herbert Marcuse in which we discover the same themes and issues as in postcolonial studies are totally disregarded, which makes the argument about disparities between critical theory and post-colonialism false to a certain extent. This article argues that critical theory and post-colonialism are not two mutually opposed projects, at least not with Marcuse's version of critical theory. Both approaches are critical of the established reality, both reject positivism, both are interdisciplinary, both are dedicated to the radical *praxis* and, both offer a blueprint of a new socialist society. At the outset, I discuss critical theory and post-colonialism arguing that postcolonial theory can function as a global critical theory. Subsequently, I analyse the theoretical closeness of Marcuse and Fanon while attempting to show how Marcuse's form of activist critical theory influenced not only Fanon but other subaltern liberation movements too. In the closing part, I explore visions of socialism that in Marcuse's and Fanon's works serve both as a critical concept and as the point at which goals of postcolonial and critical theory are realised.

KEY WORDS

critical theory, Marcuse, Fanon, decolonisation, post-colonialism

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INTRODUCTION

Several of the studies dealing with the differences (although similarities would be a more appropriate term) between critical theory and post-colonialism are mainly focused on the works of Horkheimer and Adorno [1-5]. The works of Herbert Marcuse, a full-fledged member of the pioneering generation of the Frankfurt School, are only referenced briefly or totally disregarded. This omission results in a misplaced critique of the Frankfurt School which was put forward by Edward Said and repeated more or less in a similar tone to this day: "Frankfurt School critical theory, despite its seminal insights into the relationships between domination, modern society, and the opportunities for redemption through art as critique, is stunningly silent on racist theory, anti-imperialist resistance, and oppositional practice in the empire" [6; p.386]. There is some truth in that but Said overstates his argument in Marcuse's case¹. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Marcuse played an important role in encouraging intellectuals to speak out against racism and against the Vietnam War. He emphasised the important role of intellectuals within oppositional movements which led more intellectuals to frame their work in relation to these movements than would otherwise have done so [16; p.xii]. In his famous essay *Repressive Tolerance* Marcuse argues for intolerance towards established society, its racism and imperialism. His vision was the creation of a global humane society where violence, aggression and cruelty against all living beings are eliminated [17; p.82], a race-blind and classless society of true equality "... in which Blacks and Puerto Ricans are no longer treated as second-class citizens (...) and in which a good education is granted to all, not merely to the children of the wealthy" [14; p.70]. He criticised racism, imperialism, communism, police brutality, neo-colonial massacres asserting that racist and imperialist policies "should not be tolerated because they are impeding, if not destroying, the chances of creating an existence without fear and misery" [17; p.82].

Hence, leaving out Marcuse's works is a crude methodological mistake because they contain recurring themes of repression, violence, toleration, revolution and counterrevolution, subjectivity, wars outside European soil, feminism, and oppositional *praxis* - themes that resonate with postcolonial writings. In this article I attempt to illustrate that postcolonial theory has more in common with Marcuse's version of activist critical theory than with Horkheimer's and Adorno's. This becomes clearer after Horkheimer's and Adorno's return to West Germany around 1950. Tensions between them started with a mild disagreement about the Cold War that took a more serious tone with the Vietnam War. A pivotal moment in their relationship was the events with the students' movements in Germany when on January 31, 1969, Adorno called the police and arrested 76 students in an attempt of occupying the re-established Institute of Social Research. Marcuse condemned Adorno's move and sided with the students. This event started the question of the partisanship of theory and praxis, which was *differentia specifica* of critical theory. While Marcuse remained committed to the revolution and supported students, Adorno was perceived as having resigned from praxis in favour of theory [18; pp.221-233, 19]. This clearly reveals what a radical form of activism meant for Marcuse: being at the barricades when it matters and allowing theory to be pushed further by *praxis* [18-19, 16]. The student protests were a form of "great refusal", a resolute "no" to multiple forms of oppression and domination². It should not come as a surprise that Marcuse's activist critical theory attracted social movements more than what seemed to be Adorno's and Horkheimer's rather conservative turnabout. The newspapers of the time proclaimed Marcuse as the only remaining member of the Frankfurt School, supporting those movements who seek to realize the goals of critical theory [19; p.314, 20; p.432]. Even Said, who in his remark on critical theory shows ignorance of Marcuse's works, still singles out Marcuse's contribution in explaining the mechanisms of repression and domination: "Some of the work done by critical theorists – in particular, Herbert Marcuse's notion of one-dimensional society (...) has clarified the nature

of the mix of repression and tolerance used as instruments of social pacification in Western societies...” [6; p.404]. To the fact that Marcuse’s activist version of critical theory appealed to and guided social movements from the West hub to the colonial periphery testifies Bolívar Echeverría, a philosopher from subaltern Latin America. He clarifies that his resistance was inspired by Lukács and Marcuse and he does not accept the prevailing view among post-colonialists that critical theory, because of its Eurocentrism, had nothing to give to postcolonial theory and to postcolonial struggles. In a conversation about the time he spent studying in Berlin, Echevarria recalls: “[T]here I connected a lot with Rudi Dutschke, but in a kind of dialogue between the Third World and the European center (...) some Latin American compañeros and I, started the Association of Latin American Students in Germany (...) We had meetings where we read literature, like (...) Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* or works by Marcuse presented by Rudi Dutschke or Bernd Rabehl...” [21; p.331].

The first part discusses the foundations and scope of critical theory and post-colonialism. The argument is that post-colonialism and critical theory are not competing but mutually complementing projects. In the next section, I focus on the theoretical closeness between Fanon and Marcuse. One thing that links Fanon to Marcuse is that his theoretical legacy transcends the geographical and temporal constraints of Algeria and the anti-colonial struggles [22; p.90]. And so does Marcuse’s whose legacy of uncompromised critique and radicalism break with one-dimensionality and continues to inspire various contemporary social movements. Postcolonial theory has much more in common with Marcuse’s critical theory than is the case with Horkheimer and Adorno. The scope of postcolonial studies comprises the entire globe, and Marcuse’s critical theory deals with global issues and issues concerning the wretched ones. Thus, granted the argument that postcolonial theory today can function as global critical theories and that Marcuse’s version of activist critical theory still inspires liberation movements worldwide and is useful for developing global perspectives on domination and resistance. Finally, I discuss the concept of (future) socialism that, in Marcuse’s and Fanon’s works, serves both as a critical concept and as the point at which goals of critical theory and decolonisation are realised.

CRITICAL THEORY AND POST-COLONIALISM

Critical theory originated in Germany in the writings of the members of the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research (a.k.a. the Frankfurt School) and later continued to develop in the USA. Critical theory is founded on a tension that necessitates sublation. In fact, the concept of necessity is itself a critical concept that presupposes even non-existent freedom [7; p.230]. Tension is a defining feature that characterises the relationship between the critical theorist and society, but also the critical theory in relation to traditional theory³. A critical theorist uses the same categories as a “traditional” theorist but in interpreting those categories critical theorist applies the dialectical method by searching for internal contradictions and the way of overcoming them [23; p.208]. Thus, critical thinking becomes a specific mode of activity that is in inseparable connection with society. It becomes a radical transformative praxis hostile to the established reality. Horkheimer captures the transformative character of critical theory: “Critical thinking (...) is motivated (...) by the effort (...) to abolish the opposition between the individual’s purposefulness, spontaneity, and rationality, and those work-process relationships on which society is built. Critical thought has a concept of man as in conflict with himself until this opposition is removed (...) Its subject is rather a definite individual in his real relation to other individuals and groups, in his conflict with a particular class, and, finally, in the resultant web of relationships with the social totality and with nature” [23; pp.210-211]. In the same year, Marcuse published his essay *Philosophy and Critical Theory* supporting and taking further much of Horkheimer’s arguments. The practical realisation of freedom, happiness and rights of all individuals are goals of critical theory, and these issues permeate all of its analysis.

For the theory, these are only potentialities of the concrete social situation that become relevant as political and economic issues [24; pp.105-107]. Critical theory distinguishes itself from philosophy because philosophy delegated freedom to the spiritual realm without encroaching on the material basis of society. Thus, freedom in critical theory means: “a real potentiality, a social relationship on whose realisation human destiny depends (...) The obstinacy that comes from adhering to truth against all appearances has given way in contemporary philosophy to whimsy and uninhibited opportunism. Critical theory preserves obstinacy as a genuine quality of philosophical thought” [24; pp.105-106]. Marcuse's understanding of critical theory shows that its focus is not so much on the class but on the individual⁴. The programmatic task of critical theory does not end with the liberation and happiness of a particular oppressed social class but with the liberation and happiness of all the wretched of the earth.

The subject of critical theory is a definite historical individual in the totality and concrete existence. Hence, Mignolo's remark that the subject of critical theory is some de-contextualised and de-historicized individual is completely out of context: “The problem with Horkheimer's argument is that his subject is a modern subject, de-racialized, de-sexualized, gender-neutral, and unaware that such a subject dwells in Europe, better yet, Germany, and not in the City of Singapore, Tehran, or La Paz, where the issues, problems, and knowledge-making have different needs, genealogies of thoughts, affects, and problems. It is from the body, not the mind, that questions arise, and answers are explored” [26; p.xxiv]. Quite the contrary, Marcuse's subject is rebellious, bodily, erotic, gendered, social, and aestheticist, has overcome mind-body dualism. It faces the challenge of reconstruction and emancipation from oppressive forms [27-28].

Unlike critical theory, post-colonialism never had a geographical, or intellectual centre⁵. It has developed not as a philosophical school of thought but as the convergence of different intellectual currents. The very notion of post-colonialism is ambiguous and insufficiently strictly defined. There are at least two meanings of post-colonialism: 1) as the forcible takeover of land and goods, something that has been a recurrent and widespread feature not only of European but of human history and 2), this is like critical theory, as an academic form of activist engagement. In the former, post-colonialism denotes the part of the globe which used to be colonised directly by political means and then underwent a bloody process of decolonisation⁶ only to be “re-colonised” afterwards by other, mostly economic, means⁷ [31; p.25, 23; pp.8-23]. In the latter, post-colonialism refers to critical studies that aim to make sense of the enduring legacy of Western imperialism and colonialism. These studies comprise heterogeneous and different writings that critically explore how Western domination has shaped socio-political and economic structures on the global level from 1492 to the present day [2; p.500, 33; p.3]. Hence, post-colonialism seems to be a one-size-fits all approach. It can apply to colonial countries and regions and to those countries that do not have a colonial history (i.e., Switzerland) but have Western modes of historical development and thus show colonial modes of thought. This makes post-colonialism an empty shell, or as Kerner argues: “...the scope of postcolonial studies comprises the entire globe”⁸ [33; p.3]. Given the ambiguity, the term should not be applied generously but stringently. As a rule of thumb, Loomba proposes using the feminist concept of “patriarchy”, which describes the relationship of inequality that in practice varies because it always works alongside other social structures. This is a good suggestion on how to use the term [32; p.21]. Marcuse used it similarly, equating various forms of oppression with the masculine values of a patriarchal society [35].

Post-colonialism is an umbrella term for a body of literature that, using Western theoretical concepts, analyses a true state of affairs. It favours concepts of hybridity, non-exclusivity, multiplicity, transgressions, openness to others, the dissemination of difference, etc. It is hostile to any essentialism, which means, rejecting the idea of a universal humanity, or human nature⁹, as a liberal humanist stratagem for suppressing cultural difference [31; p.25]. This position is

justified to the extent because humanism as a historical movement has collapsed [36; p.109] and postcolonial theorists are right in rejecting “hypocritical humanism” of Europe and in justifying the necessity of using violence¹⁰ in the process of decolonisation [10, 37, 38]. Humanism will remain an ideology if society depends on poverty, mass media prevented birth control, the creation and recreation of the precariat, pollution, planned obsolescence and waste and military rearmament [17]. Thus, Marcuse advocates and this puts favoured concepts of post-colonialism close to his version of critical theory, “Marxist humanism”, a humanism of all-inclusive equality where everyone can choose their way of life, their own needs and the way of satisfying them, and so exist as free human beings. In this new humanism, equality is understood in non-exclusive terms as equality of *Otherness*: “To the degree that society becomes humane, it makes the equality of all people (as expressed in humanism) into a reality. This means equality of every human face and person, not just among those of a particular nation, race, or tribe, but above and beyond, and in opposition to, the division of humanity into different nations, races, or tribes. Equality, because every human being has all the qualities and capacities that define humans as human (...) Equality in its humanist sense (...) did not involve people being all the same, but rather the direct opposite” [36; p.108]. For this to happen, the new humanism must become political and face the unpleasant and dangerous challenge of first recognising the bad and then denouncing it. This is a hard task because humanism today implies an incompressible and unparallel critique of the contemporary global world [36; pp.110-111].

Regardless of similarities (at least in Marcuse’s case), the relationship between critical theory and post-colonialism is, to phrase it in the jargon of critical and postcolonial theory, marked by *tension*. Initially, they seem to have much in common. Both reject claims to produce ahistorical knowledge as that would be “incompatible with a theory which attributes a temporal core to truth instead of contrasting truth as something invariable to the movement of history” [7; p.xi]. Both are progressive and emancipatory projects. Both are self-reflexive in subjecting to the scrutiny of their own standpoints [2; p.500]. To achieve an inclusive view, both approaches transcend the boundaries of academic disciplines and integrate methods that challenge and stretch the limitations of those disciplines¹¹. Postcolonial theories are transdisciplinary as they cover a wide field of the humanities and social sciences ranging from epistemic and cultural to political and socioeconomic issues [2; p.500, 33; p.8]. Post-colonialism shares this encompassing orientation with critical theory. Hence, critical theory, like postcolonial theory, draws arguments and empirical data from various disciplines such as philosophy, economy, sociology, psychology, literature and arts. This interdisciplinary approach to humanities and social sciences is a core feature of Marcuse’s version of critical theory, whose numerous ideas and concepts are tacitly present in contemporary liberation movements [28; p.660]. From the initial trio, it was Marcuse who had remained committed to the radical version of critical theory even to the point when the Marxist project failed to deliver. Instead of abandoning Marxism, he turns to its’ revisions and restorations [41, 42]. Marcuse’s ceaseless interventions into Marx’s theory helped him acquire a more accurate insight into the ways capitalism (re)adapts, expands, conquers new territories, and becomes global. In effect, Marcuse’s open and unorthodox version of Marxism applies to the colonial condition where Marxist analysis, as Fanon remarks, must be stretched because in the colonies the economic substructure is also a superstructure, the cause is the consequence; one is rich because one is white and vice versa [10; p.40]. In the same effort, postcolonial theory underwent a materialist turn and thus gained more followers among social scientists. The interdisciplinarity of critical theory and post-colonialism is an attempt of avoiding any form of (methodological) dogmatism¹². Allen argues that critical theory should take postcolonial studies into account and adjust its programmatic basis to incorporate “struggles around decolonisation and postcolonial politics that are among the most significant struggles of our own age” [42; p.185]. But it is vice versa. Postcolonial theory can function as global critical theories [33].

THE “GREAT REFUSAL” OF THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH

Enrique Dussel, a prominent figure of Latin America’s philosophical movement known as the “philosophy of liberation”, acknowledges that from the very beginning, the movement maintained the constant dialogue with Critical Theory and especially Marcuse’s *One-Dimensional Man*, which had some influence on their movement. Next in importance to Marcuse, he places Fanon [43; p.16]. Both authors offered different but complementary perspectives and were read alongside filling each other’s gaps: “...*One-Dimensional Man* – came to influence us within a context that was like the totalitarian horror under which the first Frankfurt School was born (...) The “dirty war” which led to the murder, torture, and disappearance of thousands would last almost two decades (as in Brazil, for example). But along with Marcuse, we read (...) Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* since our reflections were in the post-colonial periphery, in the global South” [43; p.16].

From the very beginning liberation for Marcuse meant the *praxis* of “radical act”, later known as the “Great Refusal”. The “Great Refusal” is a protest against the unnecessary surplus of repression and the struggle for the ultimate form of freedom. Thus, the “Great Refusal” is not tied to a particular time or place (i.e., Europe or the USA) or specific nationalities; instead, it is the universal struggle of humanity for liberation that may assume different forms¹³. Marcuse is even more specific and goes beyond the class category: “[T]he need for liberation exists: it exists as universal need far beyond that of one particular class...” [45; p.187]. Although they have the same underlying existentialist impulse, Marcuse knows fully that the models of a *praxis* of liberation differ at the socioeconomically and technologically developed *centre* and the underdeveloped *periphery* and cannot be exported to other communities. That is why the “Great Refusal” takes a variety of forms: “In Vietnam, in Cuba, in China, a revolution is being defended and driven forward which struggles to eschew the bureaucratic administration of socialism. The guerrilla forces in Latin America seem to be animated by that same subversive impulse: liberation” [15; pp.vii-viii]. Marcuse reminds us that theorising from the perspective of the Western, bourgeoisie class do not give us the right to speak on behalf of the wretched of the earth. Since the “Great Refusals” are decentred by multiple non-European struggles, they cannot be identified with bourgeoisie individualism or are only tied to Western capitalist societies [46; pp.315-316].

The historical task of liberation falls onto the peripheral subject. Marcuse’s preoccupation with the peripheral subject as a revolutionary one is clear in his 1922 thesis *The German Artist Novel* where this subject is revealed as an artist and poet who by his way of life practice the “Great Refusal”. From 1922 until the end of his life, Marcuse continued to nurture his sympathies for those non-integrated strata of society. This becomes fully apparent in his later works in which Marcuse localises the revolutionary subject precisely in those marginalised and alienated groups or individuals, the ones who failed to integrate into society successfully and completely [47; pp.292-294]. In *One-Dimensional Man* Marcuse depicts this subject: “... underneath the conservative popular base is the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colours, the unemployed and the unemployable. They exist outside the democratic process; their life is the most immediate and the most real need for ending intolerable conditions and institutions. Thus, their opposition is revolutionary even if their consciousness is not” [48; p.260]. These are the groups that represent the negation of the system or in Fanon’s words the fellah, the unemployed, and the starving native do not represent the truth, they are the truth and in fulfilling their historical task they embody history¹⁴ [10; pp.40-49]. Hence, liberation, if it is to happen, must come from the periphery whether the periphery is understood in social, gender, or racial terms or more in a geographical meaning¹⁵. In *An Essay on Liberation* Marcuse is unequivocal in his assessment that the “Great Refusal” starts from the margins and the struggle for liberation is waged by the wretched of the earth [15; p.7]. Fanon

reiterates what Marcuse has already grasped: “A white man in a colony has never felt inferior in any respect (...) The colonial, even though he is ‘in the minority’, does not feel that this makes him inferior (...) For the Negro who works on a sugar plantation in Le Robert, there is only one solution: to fight. He will embark on this struggle, and he will pursue it, not as the result of a Marxist or idealistic analysis but quite simply because he cannot conceive of life otherwise than in the form of a battle against exploitation, misery, and hunger” [49; pp.92-224].

Fanon’s project of liberation is perfectly in line with Marcuse’s critical theory and his project of liberation that ends with the creation of a qualitatively different society: “The colonised man who writes for his people ought to use the past with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and a basis for hope. But to ensure that hope and to give it form, he must take part in the action and throw himself body and soul into the national struggle. You may speak about everything under the sun; but when you decide to speak of that unique thing in man’s life that is represented by the fact of opening new horizons, by bringing light to your own country, and by raising yourself and your people to their feet, then you must collaborate on the physical plane” [10; p.232]. The “Great Refusals” are what unite revolutionary subjects both from the centre and margins of the world in their struggle for liberation. Effective revolutionary force is possible only if the opposition forces from Third World countries unite with the forces of developed countries [14; p.66]. This unity is an essential prerequisite because indigenous progress presupposes a change in the policy – abandonment of neo-colonialism [48; p.51]. Fanon disdainfully speaks about intellectual alienation of the western writers, a term that he uses to describe rigidity, fixation on the predetermined forms, non-openness to evolution, progress, discovery and different ideas and experiences that characterises Western philosophical thought [49; pp.223-225]. However, this is not the case of Marcuse’s critical theory, which is characterised by openness to various experiences. This may be a key to understanding the “Great Refusal” from the Fanonian perspective: existential rebellions within the colonial empires to the material struggles of the colonised [46; p.318].

The process of decolonisation process ends with the creation of a qualitatively different society and people: “Decolonisation never takes place unnoticed, for it influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally. It transforms spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actors... It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men, and with it a new language and a new humanity. Decolonisation is the veritable creation of new men” [10; p.36]. Fanon’s vision is almost like Marcuse’s vision of a society of aesthetic ethos freed from exploitation and toil and in which a completely different human sensibility prevails. Such a society is only a step further in the historical movement and can be achieved by reorganising the technological basis of the existing society: “For freedom indeed depends largely on technical progress, on the advancement of science. But this easily obscures the essential precondition: to become vehicles of freedom, science and technology would have to change their present direction and goals; they would have to be reconstructed in accord with a new sensibility – the demands of life instincts. Then one could speak of a technology of liberation, product of a scientific imagination free to project and design the forms of a human universe without exploitation and toil” [15; p.19]. Just as in Fanon’s vision of a decolonised society of new people with different humanity who speak a new language, so Marcuse’s aesthetic society presupposes new anthropology of man expressed in terms of “new sensibility” and “new rationality”¹⁶ that oppose any aggression towards humans, nature and other living beings. The “new sensibility” includes new verbal and body language to communicate new values. It also marks a radical rupture with the vocabulary of domination. The cultivation of a new sensibility would transform the relationship between human beings and nature and the relationships among human beings. The new sensibility is the medium of social change that mediates between the political practice of changing the world and one’s own drive for personal liberation [15; p.33, 50; p.152].

Fanon's "real leap that introduces invention into existence" [49; p.229] corresponds to Marcuse's "Great Refusal" and when Marcuse invokes the wretched of the earth, this brings him closer to Fanon and his existential leap. Marcuse's critical theory engages both Western and non-Western liberation struggles and envisions a society free from any form of cultural, racial, gender, economic, etc. oppression – a multiculturalist society in the full meaning of the term. Marcuse's "great refusals" and Fanon's "leaps" can link transgressive singularities with personal and global agencies of liberation. Contemporary critical theory of liberation gathers refusing voices from multiple peripheries. And this thought can deliver on the promise of Marcuse's critical theory: new aesthetic society must be morally and socio-politically anticolonial and ethically postcolonial [46; p.320]. Global justice movements from 2005 remind us of the continued importance of Marcuse's activist version of critical theory. His critical theory is useful for explaining global domination and resistance. It can also provide a platform from which is possible to critique existing system of domination, (re)evaluate movements of resistance and project radical alternatives to the current society [34].

CRITICAL THEORY AND POST-COLONIALISM: SKETCHES OF FUTURE SOCIALISM

In the writings of Fanon and Marcuse there are outlines of new socialist societies. Since Fanon was principally preoccupied with universal human liberation, then it is no surprise that after his treatment of racism, colonialism, and exploitation, he maintained that liberation could only be accomplished through socialism and democracy [51; p.90]. Turning to socialism in search of solutions was an unusual move, as many other postcolonial thinkers rejected to invoke socialist alternatives. This is part of a more general reluctance amongst postcolonial authors to make political claims from an armchair¹⁷ [52; p.8]. For Fanon socialism is the antithesis of the colonial order and it emerges during the struggle for liberation¹⁸: "Individualism is the first to disappear (...) The colonialist bourgeoisie had hammered into the native's mind the idea of a society of individuals where each person shuts himself up in his own subjectivity, and whose only wealth is individual thought. Now the native who has the opportunity to return to the people during the struggle for freedom will discover the falseness of this theory. The very forms of organisation of the struggle will suggest to him a different vocabulary. Brother, sister, friend (...) a colonised intellectual (...) will in the same way discover the substance of village assemblies, the cohesion of people's committees, and the extraordinary fruitfulness of local meetings and groupments" [10; p.47]. In his socialist vision, Fanon advocates a complete spatial and otherwise decentralisation of political authority. He rejects the bourgeoisie idea that the masses are incapable of governing themselves. Instead of being a controlling device, the party should function as a medium between people and the government: "The party should be the direct expression of the masses" [10; p.187]. Political power if it is to be effective in tackling local issues should be decentralised, i.e., party members should not all live in the capital city "... from the capital city they will 'parachute' organisers into the villages who are unknown or too young, and who, armed with instructions from the central authority, mean to treat the douar or village like a factory cell" [10; p.113]. Fanon advocates a strict separation of governmental and party functions as a remedy for corruption: "The party is not an administration responsible for transmitting government orders; it is the energetic spokesman and the incorruptible defender of the masses" [10; p.187-188]. Public services should live up to their name and deal not with numbers but with people by servicing their needs: "The native civil servants and technicians ought not to bury themselves in diagrams and statistics, but rather in the hearts of the people" [10; p.187]. There is something liberal and democratic in Fanon's insistence on the separation of powers, even though he was deeply disgusted by Western hypocrisy, i.e., the gap between theory (proclaimed principles) and *praxis*. There is no mistake that Fanon was influenced by Western

ideas and disappointed with their realisation. In the same tone as Marcuse, Fanon lamentingly refers to European humanism: “All the elements of a solution to the great problems of humanity has, at different times, existed in European thought. But the action of European men has not carried out the mission which fell to them, and which comprised bringing their whole weight violently to bear upon these elements, of modifying their arrangement and their nature, of changing them and finally of bringing the problem of mankind to an infinitely higher plane” [10; p.314]. In Fanon’s socialist vision, people are those who rule and govern themselves, who can deal with simple and complicated problems, and who can make tough decisions. It is precisely in this part of Fanon’s socialist vision that proximity to Marx¹⁹ and Marcuse once again reveals itself: “Everything can be explained to the people, on the single condition that you really want them to understand. And if you think you do not need them, and that on the contrary, they may hinder the smooth running of the many limited liability companies whose aim it is to make the people even poorer, then the problem is quite clear” [10; p.189]. In Luxemburgian²⁰ fashion, Fanon dismisses the argument that only the selected few know the way to (post)socialism: “... experience proves that the important thing is not that three hundred people form a plan and decide upon carrying it out, but that the whole people plan and decide even if it takes them twice or three times as long” [10; p.193].

Future socialism is a recurrent theme in Marcuse’s works. There is no evidence to support that Fanon shared the same opinion as Marcuse although Geismar and Hansen argue, that during his stay in the USSR to treat leukaemia Fanon recognised the larger similarities between Russian state capitalism and American one [55; p.178, 22; p.179]. Geismar and Hansen may be on the right track, but a more accurate and documented argument is that Fanon rejected the positions of the French and Algerian Communist Parties and proved suspicious of Soviet international politics [56; p.215]. However, there is some evidence that Fanon was difference-blind regarding which side the help for the anti-colonial cause came from: “The colonial peoples are not communistic, but they are irreducibly anti-colonialist. They will not choose the United States because they are afraid of communism, but because their attitude in the great problems that shake the world—in this case the problems of decolonisation—will conform to a spirit of solidarity, of equity, and of authentic justice” [49; p.94]. Back to Marcuse. Unity between progress and destruction, productivity and oppression is deeply rooted in the structures of both societies and can be broken only in a not-yet-existent form of socialism. In the existing socialism, temporary subjugation is justified by the lag in competition with capitalism. But once this form of domination is established, it is prolonged indefinitely into the future. The qualitative difference of a socialist society is lost as it adapts faster and faster to the consumption model of capitalist countries [57; pp.396-398]. For Marcuse, the realisation of a new socialist society becomes even more tangible after he perceived that modern technology can be used for liberation. Thus, not only that the qualitative change in the usage of technology can liberate individuals in capitalist societies, but it can also go beyond Marx’s vision of socialism rendering this version of socialism historically obsolete.

Marcuse’s critical theory was marked by a lifelong search for a revolutionary subject capable of making a leap to socialism²¹. One of the social movements he turns to is the feminist movement which Marcuse believed to be the most important and potentially the most radical political movement [35; p.165]. The feminist movement represented everything that is wrong with rotten capitalism. It was a revolt against decaying capitalism and its historically obsolete mode of production [35; p.171]. Hence, the feminist movement was important for the liberation of all oppressed individuals because “beneath and beyond the male–female dichotomy is the human being, common to male and female: the human being whose liberation, whose realisation is still at stake” [35; p.166]. On the larger scale feminine qualities of receptivity, sensitivity, non-violence, and tenderness, that came to the fore, represented negation and

antithesis not only of the dominant masculine qualities of capitalism and its male-dominated culture but of the existing socialism as well [35; pp.167-168]. Marcuse argued that Marx's socialism needed modifications because it had remnants of the old "performance principle"²². Marcuse was highly critical of the Soviet version of socialism for its serious deviations from Marx's theory and shared commonalities with capitalist societies²³ [62]. That is why in the feminist movement Marcuse saw features that transcend both capitalism and socialism labelling it as "feminist socialism" [35]. Being equal in the spheres of economics and politics, women can take a leading role in the radical change of society. The liberation of women would subvert established values, norms, and needs and would create a new performance principle and aid in cultivating a new sensibility. That is certain feminine qualities would replace masculine ones and become constitutive traits of the new socialist society²⁴: "feminine characteristics would activate aggressive energy against domination and exploitation. They would operate as needs and eventual goals in the socialist organisation of production, in the social division of labour, and in the setting of priorities once scarcity has been conquered. And thus, entering the reconstruction of society as a whole, the feminine characteristics would cease to be specifically feminine, to the degree to which they would be universalised in socialist culture, material and intellectual. Primary aggressiveness would persist, as it would in any form of society, but it may well lose the specifically masculine quality of domination and exploitation" [35; p.170]. Marcuse also sketches the anthropology of socialist humans whose different structure of needs and values manifest in an instinctual revulsion against aggression and destruction, allergy against the functioning of the body as an instrument of alienated labour, the need for privacy and quietness and the need for autonomous self-development [12; p.247].

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Marcuse's version of critical theory and post-colonialism have many similarities. A survey of the literature revealed that studies discussing the relationship between critical theory and post-colonialism consider only the works of Horkheimer and Adorno while completely neglecting Marcuse's works. That makes the debate over the alleged differences seriously flawed. Hence, I tried to demonstrate that Marcuse's critical theory and postcolonial theory are of the same breed. Postcolonial theory can be employed as a global critical theory. Even Mignolo, although hesitantly, acknowledged that "de-colonial thinking is a particular critical theory" - and here are his hesitation - "assuming (...) that critical theory (...) as articulated by Max Horkheimer, is also a particular kind of critical theory and not the norm or the master paradigm against which all other projects should be compared, measured, evaluated and judged" [64; p.155]. Had Mignolo read Marcuse's works, he would know the particular critical theory that has something to offer to postcolonial studies is not that of Horkheimer and Adorno but of Marcuse. Marcuse's critical theory and Fanon's post-colonialism offer a glance into novel socialist perspectives. Undoubtedly, their works do not hold ready-made solutions but can help shape contemporary debates in critical theory and post-colonialism.

REMARKS

¹This is partly true for Adorno and Horkheimer (cf. [5]), but completely untrue for Marcuse. Adorno and Horkheimer addressed anti-Semitism in several writings (*The Jews of Europe* (1939), *Research Project on anti-Semitism: Idea of the Project* (1941), *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) and *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950)) regarding it as an extreme form of racism. For them, race is an ideological construction and not a pre-given fundamental difference between human beings: "race is not, as the racial nationalists claim, an immediate, natural peculiarity (...) [I]t is a regression to nature as mere violence, to the hidebound particularism which, in the existing order, constitutes precisely the universal. Race today is the

self-assertion of the bourgeois individual, integrated into the barbaric collective” [7; p.138]. Anti-Semitism, racism and other -isms are not epiphenomenon of capitalism but the modus operandi of a system whose spinning wheel oppresses one minority today and another tomorrow: “Rage is vented on those who are both conspicuous and unprotected. And just as, depending on the constellation, the victims are interchangeable: vagrants, Jews, Protestants, Catholics, so each of them can replace the murderer, in the same blind lust for killing, as soon as he feels the power of representing the norm” [7; p.40]. To this Adorno added: “Tomorrow a group other than the Jews may come along, say the elderly (...) or the intellectuals, or simply deviant groups” [8; p.203]. No group is ever safe from pogrom: “Indignation over cruelty diminishes in proportion as the victims are less like normal readers, the more they swarthy, ‘dirty’, dago-like (...) the social schematization of perception in anti-Semites is such that they do not see Jews as human beings at all. The constantly encountered assertion that savages, blacks, Japanese are like animals (...) is the key to the pogrom” [9; p.105]. The settlers described the natives in the same zoological terms [10; p.42]. Respecting and celebrating diversities that make humanity, Adorno remarked: “To assure the black that he is exactly like the white man, while he obviously is not, is secretly to wrong him still further” [9; p.103]. True humanity comes with recognizing others as human beings. This makes up Adorno’s vision of a “truly human state”: “... a step away from the anti-Semitic society, which drives both Jews and others into sickness, and toward the human one. Such a step would fulfil the fascist lie by contradicting it: the Jewish question would indeed prove the turning-point of history” [7; p.165].

Marcuse was more open and vociferous on the oppositional practice and anti-imperialist resistance both within the empire’s internal and distant “outer borders”. Since the mid-1960s, Marcuse vigorously opposed and condemned the U.S. intervention in Vietnam as imperialist. For Marcuse the same aggressive forces lead from death on the highways and streets of the USA to bombings, torture, and burnings in Vietnam. Victory for the Vietcong could trigger a domino effect: liberation movements would be activated in other colonies or even at home. The triumph would mean the global mobilization of the exploited coloured races. That is why the stability in those areas is vital to the West [11; p.2]. From this perspective, Vietnam policy is not an isolated event but a continuation of colonial policies that extends from West Germany to Indonesia, and from Turkey to Japan [12; p.243, 13; p.39, 14; p.60]. Thus, imperialism and colonialism for Marcuse were a global phenomenon. He refuses to accept bombings and killings in Vietnam as “legitimate violence” while revolts and uprisings in the West are viewed as “illegitimate violence”. This wording discriminates against opposition and protects the establishment [15; pp.76-77].

²Reflecting on the wider significance of student revolts for all of humanity Marcuse says: “In proclaiming the ‘permanent challenge,’ (...) the ‘permanent education,’ the Great Refusal, they recognized the mark of social repression (...) even in the most spectacular manifestations of technical progress. They have again raised a spectre (...) of a revolution which subordinates the development of productive forces and higher standards of living to the requirements of creating solidarity for the human species, abolishing poverty and misery beyond all national frontiers and spheres of interest, for the attainment of peace” [15; pp.ix-x].

³Term “traditional theory” is used generically for those theories that are suitable or serve the existing dominant paradigm.

⁴However, this is not Marcuse’s first statement in which we discern his preoccupation with the liberation and happiness of the individual. In an essay *On Concrete Philosophy (OCP) (1929)* one can detect the beginning of this lifelong preoccupation: “Concrete philosophy can (...) approach existence if it seeks out Dasein in the sphere in which its existence is based: as it acts in its world in accordance with its historical situation (...) Concrete philosophy will exist in the public realm, because only by so doing can it truly approach existence (...) In such cases

the individual is no longer the point of departure, but rather the goal of philosophy, because individuality itself must first be made possible again” [25; pp.47-51].

⁵Geographical difference is overly emphasized in the postcolonial critique of critical theory based on its European and Western centrality.

⁶The process of decolonization can be roughly divided into three periods: 1) during the first twenty years after the Second World War a large number of sovereign states emerged in Asia and Africa. The Chinese Revolution of 1949 had an enormous influence on anti-colonial struggles throughout this period and up to the mid-1970s. The issue of socialism was the one with which both imperialism and the national bourgeoisie had to deal with as a great many sovereign states of Asia and Africa liberated themselves from the colonial yoke; 2) revolutionary wars of the national liberation marked the period from 1965-1975. These wars had a distinctly socialist trajectory, but socialism was never a viable alternative because the productive forces were at a low level of development. However, these wars left colonial questions in South Africa and Israel unresolved. In South Africa (SA) the indigenous population had not been evicted, the proletariat class was consolidated and the alliance between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Communist Party survived enabling ANC to expand its political influence among the majority of the population. In contrast to SA, the imperialist stakes were greater in Israel where Zionism has succeeded in becoming a powerful ideology of the advanced capitalist countries. Anti-colonial nationalism in the form of nationalist ideologies and in the form of revolutionary wars remained a key constitutive element up until the late 1970s. Revolutions in Iran, Ethiopia and Afghanistan – countries that had not been directly colonized helped in toppling *ancien régime*. The Iranian Revolution offered a glimpse of hope but it was soon shattered after it had become clear that under Khomeini Iran is moving toward more clerical state, and 3) the 1980s marked a new phase in which imperialist structures won over socialism. The post-revolutionary states which grew out of the mix of socialist ideas and anti-colonial nationalism had been contained. Anti-communist ideology grew stronger and succeeded in proving that socialism does not work [29; pp.30-34].

Marcuse was aware that socialist and communist countries were interconnected with capitalist countries. Hence, national liberation movements in Third World countries were not in themselves a strong enough revolutionary force to overthrow capitalism. Such a revolutionary force can be expected only if the forces from the centre of advanced capitalism unite with those in the Third World [14; p.66]. A radical change in the imperialistic metropolises would have a huge impact around the globe. It would trigger the collapse of the lackey regimes in the Third World [30; p.143]. However, unification is the most challenging task that puts forward problems not only of bridging spatial distance but of cultural differences and language barriers.

⁷Imperialism is the driving force of capitalism. And this marks the next stage of imperialism in its most vigorous form of neo-colonialism through which the imperialist powers will once again divide up the world but this time without military conflict [14; p.175].

⁸This is another shared feature of postcolonial studies with Marcuse’s critical theory that “is especially useful for developing global perspectives on domination and resistance, radically criticizing the existing system of domination, valorising movements of resistance, and projecting radical alternatives to the current organization of society and mode of life” [34; p.3].

⁹One must ask himself then: is it wrong to oppress immigrants because they are human beings (this means accepting the universality of human nature) or is it wrong to oppress them because they are Turks, Pakistani, Syrians, Afghans, etc. (this argument avoids accepting common human nature but is absurd).

- ¹⁰Both Marcuse and Fanon are *pro-revolutionary* violence. They justify the use of violence for liberating purposes. Marcuse argues: "... I believe that there is a 'natural right' of resistance for oppressed and overpowered minorities to use extra-legal means if the legal ones have proved to be inadequate. Law and order are always and everywhere the law and order which protect the established hierarchy (...) If they use violence, they do not start a new chain of violence but try to break an established one" [17; pp.116-117]. Fanon feels the same way that counter-violence is morally and politically justifiable: "This assumed responsibility for violence allows both strayed and outlawed members of the group to come back again and to find their place once more, to become integrated. Violence is thus seen as comparable to a royal pardon. The colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence (...) The violence of the colonial regime and the counter-violence of the native balance each other and respond to each other in an extraordinary reciprocal homogeneity" [10; pp.85-88].
- ¹¹In a study *Secularizing Islamists*, influenced by postcolonial theory, Iqtidar uses anthropological methods in political science arguing that political processes and categories would be enriched by a deeper engagement with human beings [39; pp.24-25]. Sousa Santos introduces "diatopical hermeneutics", a methodological approach based on the idea that all cultures are incomplete. Using this approach raises awareness of cultural diversity and the need for intercultural dialogue and exchange [40].
- ¹²Critical theory does not have a single ideological-methodological basis: "Critical theory does not have one doctrinal substance today, another tomorrow. The changes in it do not mean a shift to a wholly new outlook, as long as the age itself does not radically change" [7; p.234]. The transdisciplinary focus of postcolonial theory has helped shape the debates in social sciences on discursive aspects of global power relations [33; p.9].
- ¹³We can observe the traces of the "Great Refusal" even today in the alternative community economies, radical education initiatives and recuperated spaces of production [44].
- ¹⁴For Marcuse colonial subjects are an "'absolute negation' of the blessings of the affluent society" [12; p.238].
- ¹⁵Marcuse uses the term underprivileged to account for those groups that suffer some form of oppression but do not fall strictly into the Marxian category of class. In the USA underprivileged are those national and racial minorities which do not occupy a decisive place in the productive process and thus cannot be considered potentially revolutionary forces from the viewpoint of Marxian theory. In the colonies underprivileged are those who bear the entire weight of the system and make the mass basis of the national liberation struggle against neo-colonialism in the Third World and against colonialism in the USA [14; p.58].
- ¹⁶A "new sensibility" is another attempt for going beyond orthodox Marxism insofar as it requires much more than a change in power relations. It requires the cultivation of new subjectivity. Human subjectivity in its present form is the product of systems of domination. This is why Marcuse was interested in the feminist movement as he saw in it the potential for radical social change.
- ¹⁷Or as in Adorno's case theorize from the "ivory tower".
- ¹⁸The only class capable of a socialist revolution were the semi-rural *lumpenproletariat* who were the most exploited of the colonized peoples and who still had a sense of "nation" [22; p.96].
- ¹⁹Fanon almost retells Marx's vision of socialism: "... while in communist society (...) each can become accomplished in any branch (...), society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to (...) to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner..." [53; p.53].
- ²⁰Rosa Luxemburg rebuked Lenin's argument about the fallacy of the central committee: "... errors made by a truly revolutionary labour movement are historically infinitely more fruitful and more valuable than the infallibility of the best of all possible 'central committees' " [54; p.306].

²¹Marcuse was adamant that no particular class can be the subject of universal emancipation. The identity between the proletariat and the interest of all humanity has been superseded. Universal emancipation today moves beyond securing the material basis of existence, although this remains the starting point of emancipation [57; p.402]. On this account, Marcuse was criticized by Horkheimer and Adorno. This leads MacIntyre to call Marcuse a “pre-Marxist” thinker: “He sometimes speaks not of Marxist materialism but of ‘the critical theory of society [and] is endlessly willing to talk of ‘man’ rather than of men, of what ‘man’ desires or does or suffers” [58; p.21]. However, the term “pre-Marxist” corroborates my argument that postcolonial theory has much in common with Marcuse's critical theory which focused not only on the class but also on other individuals and groups that suffered some form of oppression.

Fanon shared a similar fate of being accused by Hannah Arendt for being un-Marxist [59]. Fanon did not consider it necessary to pass through the stage of fully developed capitalism prior to socialism [51; p.92]. But this hardly makes him un-Marxist as he time and again reveals his appreciation of Marx: “How can one then be deaf to that voice rolling down the stages of history: ‘What matters is not to know the world but to change it’” [60; p.17]. A more appropriate characterization is the one that says that Fanon was neither an orthodox nor a traditional Marxist [61; pp.61-70]. Fanon represented the “new Left” and became a communist by joining a revolution and not the party [55; p.19].

²²“Reality principle” describes norms and values which govern behaviour in society and are embodied in its institutions and relationships. “Performance principle” is a “reality principle” based on the efficiency and fulfilment of competitive and acquisitive functions.

²³In the postcolonial periphery and in Latin America the widespread poverty resulting from three decades of neoliberal colonial policies has been exacerbated in the aftermath of the collapse of existing socialism in 1989 [43; p.25].

²⁴Burcar claims that the transition from socialism to capitalism brought the renewal of precisely the same oppressive and patriarchal practices that Marcuse has described and from which he saw the potential for liberation in the feminist movement: “... the so-called transition from socialism to capitalism is a euphemism for regression (...) The re-installment of capitalist social relations rests on the processes of re-patriarchalization, most clearly evident in the dismantling of the Socialist welfare system” [63; p.12].

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