FROM THE ARCHIVE. AN INTERVIEW WITH DOUGLAS KELLNER

Desde el archivo. Una entrevista a Douglas Kellner

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Douglas Kellner is one of the most influential critical theorists of his generation and a central figure in the reception of Herbert Marcuse. Professor Emeritus at UCLA, Kellner authored more than thirty books that helped redefine media studies, critical social theory, political philosophy, and the critique of advanced capitalism. His landmark studies on media culture and spectacle established him as a leading analyst of ideology, communication, and the political economy of information. At the same time, Kellner remains one of Marcuse's most dedicated interpreters. His *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism* (1984) is widely regarded as a foundational study that established Marcuse scholarship worldwide. As the general editor of the six-volume *Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, Kellner opened unprecedented archival access to Marcuse's unpublished essays, wartime reports, lectures, and political writings. Through his scholarship, teaching, and editorial work, Kellner not only preserved Marcuse's intellectual legacy but also demonstrated its continuing relevance for analyzing technology, authoritarianism, domination, and the possibilities of radical social transformation in the twenty-first century.

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In March 2024, Bruna Della Torre and Eduardo Altheman joined Douglas Kellner for a series of long conversations held in his and Rhonda Hammer's home in Los

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Angeles, retracing with him more than six decades of critical engagement with Marxism, continental philosophy, and the Frankfurt School. These dialogues formed part of the *Douglas Kellner Archive Project*, an initiative supported by the International Herbert Marcuse Society and soon to be housed at Columbia University. The project seeks not only to preserve Kellner's extraordinary intellectual trajectory but also to document the living history of Critical Theory as it evolved across generations of scholars, movements, and political struggles.

Kellner's reflections unfold at a moment when Marcuse's work is again attracting renewed attention – both in the academy and within broader political debates – making these conversations especially timely. Over several afternoons, he guided us through his early existentialist passions, his decisive encounters with Heidegger, Sartre, Adorno, and, ultimately, Marcuse, as well as the formative experiences that radicalized him during the Vietnam War era. He also shared the remarkable story of how he came to edit the *Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, gaining access to the OSS and FBI archives that revealed new dimensions of Marcuse's political and theoretical commitments. These exchanges reveal not only the genesis of some of Kellner's most influential books – including *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism* – but also his perspective on the reception, transformation, and global diffusion of Critical Theory throughout the late twentieth century.

What follows is a selection of these conversations: an intimate intellectual history, a testament to the enduring vitality of Marcuse's thought, and a tribute to one of its most dedicated interpreters.

Eduardo Altheman-Bruna Della Torre [EA-BDT]: To start the conversation, can you tell us about your intellectual trajectory and how you came to study the Frankfurt School, especially Herbert Marcuse's work?

Douglas Kellner [DK]: As for my intellectual development, I developed a strong interest in Jean-Paul Sartre and existentialism as early as my teenage years. I read Sartre's plays, novels, and short stories, particularly *No Exit* and *Nausea*; the philosophical themes interested me. This was before I got into philosophy. Once I got into philosophy, shortly after reading Sartre and Camus' fiction, I started studying existentialism and was once again taken by it. This was about my sophomore year in college.

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In my junior year, I went to the University of Copenhagen. I had a junior year abroad, and I got into a deep dive into Kierkegaard, who is, of course, the great Danish religious thinker, but also an existential philosopher. He was a major influence on contemporary existentialism.

Once I got to graduate school, I was convinced I would pursue a PhD in existentialist phenomenology. And at this point, Heidegger was the most attractive figure, in part because my doctoral dissertation director was a Sartre scholar, and other PhD students were working on Sartre. And we had an agreement that basically Sartre wrote *Being and Nothingness* as the French version of *Being and Time*, which was, of course, Heidegger's 1927 German version of existentialism. Therefore, I wrote my dissertation on the concept of an authentic existence in Heidegger.

During that time, the information came out that Heidegger had been a Nazi. Initially, it was reported that he was a Nazi for a very short time. He was a rector in Freiburg, Germany, between 1933 and 1934. He made one speech, which was a Nazi speech as rector of the university. And then he retired as rector. The myth was that he went up into the mountains, and that was his fascism. It was just one talk. Now, later in the 1980s and 1990s, a variety of books came out by Hugo Ott, Richard Wolin, and others that indicated Heidegger was a Nazi activist throughout the 1930s.

After completing the dissertation on Heidegger, I got my first teaching job at the University of Texas, Austin, in a position in the philosophy department dedicated to Marxism. Now, it's interesting that they chose me, and I figured they didn't want a Marxist who could have been a potential campus rabble-rouser in the 1970s. In fact, Joe Bean, the professor who had preceded me in this position, was a Marxist who did precisely that and was a campus activist. He was retired, and I got hired. Once I started teaching Marxism, I really got into it and also became a campus activist. This was a time of U.S. military intervention throughout Latin America, sending military aid to rightwing governments in Brazil, Argentina, and other countries, and even intervening to overthrow the democratically elected Allende government in Chile.

As soon as I got to Texas, I began a deep study of Marx, using the *Marx-Engels Reader* that was something of a Bible of Marxism, containing the key texts. Every year, I acquired a different biography or secondary study of Marx, which gave me an excellent knowledge of the life, work, and social context of Karl Marx and Marxism. After I had been in Texas for two years, I met with the new head of the University

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of Texas Press, who had started a Marxist section. One of my friends, Ross Gandy, had a book in that series, and since I was teaching Marxism, the head of the Press, Iris Tillman, wanted to meet me and asked if I wanted to do a book on Marxism. We discussed what had not been written about in contemporary Marxism. At the time, and to this day, I was particularly interested in Western Marxism: Lukács, Korsch, Gramsci, Marcuse, the Frankfurt School, and so on. Well, there had been quite a bit written about Gramsci and Lukács in English, but not so much about Korsch.

I thus wrote my first book, *Karl Korsch: Revolutionary Theory* (1977), about Karl Korsch, since there was not yet a book in English on the German revolutionary. I went to Hanover, Germany, to the Karl Korsch archives, and photocopied quite a few of his articles from Marxist journals of the 1920s and the 1930s. Korsch was an émigré from Nazi Germany, as were many Marxist Jews and radicals from Hitler's Germany, such as Herbert Marcuse and the Frankfurt School, whom I would later write about. I discovered that Korsch published many articles and some books in the U.S., and I found in the University of Texas library a collection of obscure Marxist journals published by Korsch in the U.S. My book contained a long introduction to Korsch, along with a collection of his most important articles, many in the original German and not translated, a task I and some colleagues of mine at the University of Texas in Austin undertook.

But then, as the 1960s gave way to the 1970s, Herbert Marcuse became my primary scholarly focus. I would probably have done my first book on Marcuse, but several books were already in the making. However, no one had really done the early Marcuse, which combined phenomenological Marxism and existentialism, drawing on Heidegger and Marx. It was fascinating to learn that Marcuse's first essays in German were an attempt to combine existentialism and Marxism, because that's what I was interested in when I went to graduate school at Columbia. I was initially into existentialism, but as my studies in the revolutionary 1960s took place, I wanted to combine existential philosophy with Marxism. So the early Marcuse's synthesis of Hegel, Marx, Freud, and existential philosophy was fascinating to me. Hence, my Marcuse book covered his entire body of work, from his early work in Germany to his work in exile in the United States, where he became a naturalized citizen and the godfather of the New Left.

About that time, French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, my earliest philosophical love, also moved from existentialism to Marxism, which was another eye-opener

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and a reinforcement that this was the intellectual and political way to go in the contemporary era. Hence, for me and many of my generation of the 1960s, it is as if the *Zeitgeist* was telling us that, if we are radical intellectuals seeking socialism and radical social change, Marcuse and Sartre were two major figures. I pursued the study of both, eventually writing, teaching, and lecturing about them.

Further, Marcuse's early writings also focused on Hegel, which became another focal point of my philosophical study. At Columbia University, I had literally five seminars on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Logic* with the top German and even English Hegel scholar, J.N. Findlay; Dieter Henrich, a German Hegel scholar, was on my PhD committee, and when I got my first job teaching philosophy at the University of Texas, I was interested in teaching Hegel, Marx, and 19th-century German philosophy. I had always loved Nietzsche as part of my studies in existentialism. This led me to the Frankfurt School, which combined Marx, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Freud, and which has remained a main focus of my work and teaching to this day.

This narrative explains how I became a Marcuse scholar, whom I took to be the major philosopher of our time in the 1960s and 1970s, and who remains an essential influence on Critical Theory and radical politics. Moreover, I had the good fortune to meet him at Columbia University at the height of his impact on the New Left in 1969. The Vietnam War was going on, SDS was radicalizing the campuses, and an anti-war movement was developing in the United States.

By the way, the Vietnam War was the other political event that radicalized me and led me deeper into Marx and Marcuse. I was apolitical when I arrived at Columbia University in 1965 to study philosophy as a graduate student. In 1966, I heard a lecture by Noam Chomsky at Barnard College on the Vietnam War, about how the French were in Vietnam in the 1950s, and Vietnam started a national liberation movement. Chomsky then explained that the Vietnamese beat the French, but then the U.S. came in as a counterrevolutionary force. At this time, the Vietnam War was beginning in earnest, and the American intervention in Southeast Asia strongly affected my generation, because we were the ones who were going to be drafted and sent to war. Hence, I immediately started to go to anti-war demonstrations, read books about imperialism, and so became radicalized.

Marcuse was the major force of my radicalization, along with Chomsky, who was lecturing against the Vietnam War and profusely writing articles and books on the Vietnam War and U.S. imperialism. However, Marcuse's critique was more from a

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Marxist and New Left standpoint, whereas Chomsky was more of an anarchist anti-imperialist. Further, I also had the good luck in 1969 to hear Marcuse lecture, and it was on the New Left and the Vietnam War.

[EA-BDT]: Can you tell us more about your personal encounter with Marcuse?

[DK] As noted, I first met Herbert Marcuse when I was a graduate student at Columbia University in the 1960s. I began reading his books because I was studying continental philosophy at Columbia University, taking seminars on Hegel, and Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution* was the best book on Hegel. I also took some Freud seminars, and Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* was the best critical sociological analysis of Freud. I also read *One-Dimensional Man*, which was the sharpest critique of the U.S. capitalist-bourgeois American society I had grown up in, since I had lived in the middle-class suburbs. My father worked for corporations, and I had worked in factories during my college years to help support myself. Working on an assembly line and observing my father slaving every day for corporations, I completely understood the Marxist concept of "alienated labor" and Marcuse's notion of "one-dimensional man," where life becomes work under the influence of corporate forces that also control the media, Universities, and other institutions.

Further, Marcuse's *Essay on Liberation* in 1969 was especially exciting for me, because I was part of the New Left by then. We sought liberation from a conformist, militarist, and oppressive society, as well as freedom and social justice. The essay discussed the global revolution taking place everywhere. Right in the midst of this historical moment in 1969, Marcuse came to Columbia University, and I met him.

I had been reading the books I mentioned with excitement, and it was great to meet Herbert Marcuse. The day after his packed lecture on the New Left and revolution, he came to the philosophy department for a reception. Most of the graduate students turned up, whereas most of the professors did not. So we had Herbert to ourselves to ask him whatever we wanted.

We asked Marcuse about Heidegger, and he made a joke – I don't know if this is true – that Heidegger was chiseling his philosophy into stone, a reference to the archaic work of the late Heidegger, who was writing on the Greek pre-Socratic philosophers and discussing how their gnomic sayings were captured in the essence of being. We asked more about Heidegger, who he had studied with in Freiburg, Germany, in the 1920s and 1930s, and he was very critical of him. He said that

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Heidegger was also the professor of Hannah Arendt, Hans Jonas, and Karl Löwith, all of whom I was studying at the time, and that Heidegger was really the one who taught them philosophy; but then he stunned his students, especially the Jewish ones, by joining the Nazis.

And after the war, when Marcuse was working for the State Department during World War II with the OSS in the Anti-Fascism effort, he went with the Americans to interview Germans to see how denazification was taking place. And of course, Marcuse wanted to go talk to Heidegger. He said, "Heidegger, you were my great teacher. You taught me how to read a text. You were so supportive of Jewish students". But Heidegger would not apologize for his fascism, arguing that at the historical moment, he believed Hitler would lead Germany to greatness. Marcuse expressed his disgust with his once-respected teacher and became increasingly critical of him.

[EA-BDT]: And how was Marcuse on a personal level?

[DK]: Personally, he was great. He was very laid back and easy to talk to. Actually, I have a great story that illustrates Marcuse's friendly and engaging personality. After the reception in the Columbia Philosophy Department I mentioned, Marcuse said, "Let's go over to the West End Bar for drinks." The West End is across the street from Columbia, where Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and the Beatniks drank, and also where my philosophy student colleagues and I went almost every day after class for food, drink, and discussion. While I was walking across campus with Marcuse on the way to the West End bar, a member of the Weather Underground came and said, "We want to rap with Marcuse." Then I said, "Herbert, there's a Weather Underground dude who wants to talk to you." We sat down in the grass. And the Weather Underground member said his group wanted to bomb the office of one of the campus professors who was doing work promoting the Vietnam War. And Marcuse said: "No, you don't want to do any violence on campus. You should use the campus to organize peaceful protests and to study; we need to learn Marxism, we need to organize, and the New Left is grounded in the university, so you should be part of that." And then he said: "Now, if you ask me whether you should bomb a bank, I might not dissuade you from it."

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We all laughed, went over to the West End bar, and had a great talk with Marcuse. Two weeks later, the Weather Underground actually bombed the Bank of Santa Barbara!

This showed that Herbert really was into radical action as well as radical theory, but he did agree that the University is not the place for it, that we need to organize and study there, and many of my fellow students and I agreed with him. Later, when I was writing my book on Marcuse, I interviewed him several times, and he was always friendly and generous with his time. After his death, his son Peter chose me as literary executor, so I inherited his library and published my book on him, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism* (1984), and later edited and published six volumes of *The Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse,* published by Routledge Press.

[EA-BDT]: In various writings, Marcuse always says, "You don't cut the branch you're sitting on," referring to university campuses.

[DK]: Yes, and the story I told about Marcuse's advice to the Weather Underground is a great example to demonstrate that. To Marcuse's credit, no one did more to radicalize university students than he did through his writing and his lecturing up until his death in 1979. Noam Chomsky should also get credit for radicalizing many students through his political writings from the 1960s to the present – as he is still alive at 97 years old!

[EA-BDT]: Did Marcuse recommend that you read something in particular?

[DK]: We did ask him in the philosophy department reception which contemporary philosophers we should read. After we talked about Heidegger, Marcuse criticized him and said that "the most important living philosopher is Theodor W. Adorno. You should read his work." And none of us had read Adorno, who was only beginning to be translated into English. We had heard of Adorno, of course, as a member of the Frankfurt School, but he had not yet been translated and wasn't yet much known in the English-speaking world. I had read Adorno's *The Jargon of Authenticity* in German while doing a dissertation in Tübingen on Heidegger's concept of authenticity. That text was my introduction to Adorno, which provides an excellent ideology critique of Heidegger. After Marcuse's recommendation, Adorno's works started getting translated, and I began reading and writing on him and other

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members of the Frankfurt School, whom Marcuse also recommended, such as his close friend Franz Neumann, whose book *Behemoth* (1940) was received as one of the best critiques of Hitler and National Socialism.

[EA-BDT]: This is especially interesting because this is 1969. It's right after '68, when, in East Berlin, West Berlin, and all over the world, you had student upheavals, rebels, and there was this famous disagreement between Adorno and Marcuse. Still, he was recommending T.W. Adorno.

[DK]: As a philosopher, Marcuse could make distinctions between philosophy and politics. What was great about Marcuse was that he embodied radicalism in both. I mean, he was both a great philosopher and writer – tremendous books – *and* also a great activist. None of the other Frankfurt School people were activists, except in a totally different way, Jürgen Habermas, who wrote many books to the present, and was also active in supporting the Social Democrats in Germany and elsewhere, and arguing for radical democracy.

[EA-BDT]: Can you talk about your 1984 book? That's a significant reference point for all Marcusean scholars ever since. It's probably one of the most important books ever written on Marcuse, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*.

[DK]: Well, I decided to write that book after publishing my first book on Karl Korsch's revolutionary theory, which we discussed. And Marcuse was really the one that I loved. I started writing *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism* in the 1970s, when he was still alive, so, as noted, I was able to interview him and consult his archive of letters, lectures, and writings. Writing this book was my primary focus in the 1970s and early '80s. When I completed it, I first sent it to MIT Press. Tom McCarthy, who was a Habermas scholar and a friend of mine, had a series there, but MIT did not accept it. There was a member of the MIT faculty review board who had to approve every book that MIT Press published, and he hated Marcuse. He was able to censor a book by a major American philosopher at the time.

Yet my Marcuse book was eventually published by Macmillan Press in Europe, thanks to Anthony Giddens, one of the best sociologists in the world, who ran Macmillan Press in the UK and then founded Polity Press. He accepted my Marcuse

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book for publication in the series he edited. Giddens later published my Critical Theory and Baudrillard books with Polity Press in the UK and U.S. University Presses, so he was one of my academic godfathers, as I just could not get that Marcuse book published by American publishers because they were scared.

After Giddens and Macmillan published it in the UK in 1984, the University of California Press announced it would publish *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, which was eventually published in the U.S. and translated into many languages. This is probably one of my most influential books. I was working on it when Marcuse died in 1979, and then inherited his personal archive, which helped me finish the book. I later discovered much more crucial work in the Marcuse archives that I drew on for the six volumes of *Collected Papers* I edited, and I continue to find essential ideas in Marcuse's work.

[EA-BDT]: Let's talk about the Marcuse *Collected Papers* project: how that came to be, how you came across those files, those archives? Can you tell us a little bit about that story?

[DK]: After Herbert died in 1979, his wife, Erica Sherover, who was his third wife and a member of my generation, had been in SDS and the New Left and the anti-war movement. And she was a student of Herbert's. After Herbert's second wife, Inge, died, Erica took care of him to some extent, becoming his assistant and helping him with his work during their last years. They had been close for years because of the relationship between student and teacher, and eventually they married, and she became his third and last wife.

Marcuse had a stroke and died when he was visiting Habermas in Starnberg, Germany, in 1979. Erica inherited Marcuse's archives, and she discussed publishing material from them with Herbert, a treasure trove of unpublished articles that I later inherited and published in the six volumes of the *Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*.

Now, to answer your question on how I got these documents was: Erica died of cancer, tragically, at a quite young age. All three of Marcuse's wives, Sophie, Inge, and Erica, died of cancer at an early age, which was quite tragic. So Marcuse's son, Peter, chose me to take over his personal archive, and I ended up with the Marcuse archive, which was a gold mine of material.

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I remember thinking: "Okay, I have got to go through this slowly and systematically." I had studied a lot about fascism and World War II with the book that I had written on Karl Korsch. Also, my father and all my uncles had fought in World War II, and I had read many histories of the period. Hence, I was very interested in Marcuse and other members of the Frankfurt School, such as Franz Neumann and Leo Löwenthal, working for the OSS, the Office of Strategic Services, which was the precursor to the CIA. Some leftists of the 1960s stupidly criticized them because the OSS was the precursor of the CIA. Still, the OSS contained progressive leftists like Marcuse and his colleagues, as well as top liberal intellectuals like Arthur Schlesinger, John Kenneth Galbraith, and others. Basically, some of the best U.S. intellectuals were studying Hitler's Germany and fascism for the OSS, and Marcuse was part of it, and also saw it as his contribution to fighting fascism. After World War II and Germany's defeat, Marcuse went with the OSS to Germany and interviewed people to determine whether denazification was underway. I was very interested in Marcuse's work for the OSS, which hadn't been well documented before.

I went to Washington, DC, and the OSS files were with the CIA. I told them about my academic interest in the Frankfurt School theorists who worked with the OSS and requested a visit to the archives and permission to Xerox the material. The archivists were as friendly and helpful as could be, even though I had been part of the anti-war movement in the 1960s, which we saw as a war against imperialism, as Marcuse and his generation saw their work as part of the war against fascism. I was already a professor at the University of Texas and a serious scholar when I conducted this research, so it helped me gain access to government archives on World War II. Hence, I got along fine with the people running the archive, who are not just archivists, they are also intellectuals and scholars and helped me to get access to all of Marcuse's OSS papers with no restrictions and I published many of them in the first volume of the *Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse* on*, Technology, War, and Fascism* (1998).

I also got hold of Marcuse's FBI files, which were in another archive. Marcuse himself told me that I should look into his FBI files. I had heard that Marcuse had been covered by J. Edgar Hoover and had a big FBI file, along with Bertolt Brecht and a lot of other German Jewish refugees, other people of the Frankfurt School, and Thomas Mann, even. So anyway, I went to the FBI archives and got all of Marcuse's FBI record. Now, this was amazing, because they started surveilling him in the 1930s and '40s, when he was working for the OSS and living in Santa Monica. And

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they had all kinds of documents and information, including interviews with neighbors and mail that they somehow got their hands on. This was really an unknown Marcuse.

I really learned a lot about Marcuse through these files. Not only what he did with the OSS, which was very virtuous because he was fighting against fascism, but they also documented every talk he gave for the New Left, traveling all around the world. It was gold for information about Marcuse, and his archives had all the lecture material he gave, which you all helped me go through today, as a file for future publication. The FBI files contained reports on all these lectures, including how many people attended and what Marcuse said. This was very fascinating material about what Marcuse's neighbors were telling the FBI. And basically, they thought they were a very nice German-American couple. They didn't see anything wrong. They had a lovely son, Peter Marcuse. Kept their garden tidy – they had a nice garden. It was fascinating to get insights into Marcuse from his Santa Monica neighbors through the FBI files.

And I also got the FBI files on Bertolt Brecht. There's been quite a bit of significant scholarship, including Eric Bentley and other prominent Brecht scholars, who went to the FBI files for Brecht, Hanns Eisler, and the other German Jewish leftist refugees that the FBI diligently documented and surveyed, but kept excellent archives. It is material that scholars would not have otherwise. We thank the FBI for their diligent surveillance of our heroes!

[EA-BDT]: We visited the Marx Museum in Trier in 2023, where there's a picture of Marx's face made up of various names of Marxists, and Marcuse is depicted as an "American sociologist". We found this both very amusing and quite interesting from a sociological and theoretical perspective. We want to ask you about the reception of these Critical Theory authors in the U.S., because, in a way, it happened there earlier than in other places.

[DK]: The reception of Critical Theory in the United States started with Herbert. Marcuse was seen by many as the godfather, or as he once put it, the grandfather of the New Left in the 1960s. He was Angela Davis's teacher, one of the era's great radicals. Marcuse became very well known from '68 through the 1970s, up to his death in 1979. It was via Marcuse, the great critical theorist, that we heard of the Frankfurt School.

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But it was not until Martin Jay's book in 1973 that there was a real history of the Frankfurt School that an American audience and student movement could appropriate, and we began doing so as soon as Jay's book came out. By then, translations of Adorno and Walter Benjamin began to appear. Hannah Arendt promoted the translation and publication of Walter Benjamin's books, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, which made him well-known. But it wasn't until after Jay's book that translations of Adorno began to appear in *Telos* Journal.

One of my first publications was a translation of Marcuse's essay "On the Philosophical Foundation of the Concept of Labor in Economics." There was a Heideggerian-Marxist essay he wrote in the early 1930s that I published along with an Introduction in the journal *Telos* in 1973. Then I published a review of Adorno's *Jargon of Authenticity* that I had worked on for my doctoral dissertation in 1974. *Telos* began publishing translations of Adorno, Horkheimer, Benjamin, and other members of the Frankfurt School, along with other journals and publishers of their works. So, it wasn't until the 1970s that the Frankfurt School became well known in the United States – although I became familiar with their work and bought and studied their books in Germany during my two years working on my dissertation at Tübingen University.

And then, suddenly, translations of their books began appearing in the 1970s, and the Frankfurt School became well known. Max Horkheimer's essays on Critical Theory, Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, and Adorno's writings on music and popular culture all came out at that time. This went on through the 1970s and 1980s, up to the present day. It wasn't really until the '70s and '80s that there was a cadre of critical theorists in the United States, and many of us had studied in Germany.

Among the first cadre of Critical Theory scholars were students of Herbert Marcuse writing on the Frankfurt School. Andrew Feenberg, writing on technology; Angela Davis, of course, his most famous student, writing on Marxism and feminism and critical race theory (she also studied with Adorno, so she was also engaging Adorno and the Frankfurt School); Ronald Aronson, another student of Marcuse, wrote books on the Frankfurt School. It was Marcuse's students, myself and a few others, who started writing in the 1970s and into the '80s. And then, suddenly, Critical Theory became well known in American university culture to this day.

Now, there has been a reaction against philosophy and sociology in American universities; they have cut down the departments, particularly the more critical ones

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that teach Marxism and Critical Theory. Whereas in the 1970s there was a boom in Critical Theory publications (seminars, articles, and journals), in the 1980s it slowed down. But it has also become part of American academia because of Marcuse's students. I have had many PhD students writing on Critical Theory, and maybe some of their students as well, so several generations have now written on it.

In addition to the first generation of Marcuse students, Erich Fromm, Franz Neumann, Leo Löwenthal, and other members of the Frankfurt School all had followings and publications, and new works on Critical Theory continue to appear today in the U.S. and throughout the world.

[EA-BDT]: You mentioned yesterday that Fromm was quite well-known in the U.S.

[DK]: Erich Fromm was one of the most popular members of the Frankfurt School in the 1940s, with *Escape from Freedom* (1941), a tremendous critique of fascism. Also, his writings on Marx and Freud of the '40s, his *The Art of Loving*, and *The Sane Society* were very popular books. Like Marcuse, Fromm had a following, and the Erich Fromm Society remains active, as does our International Herbert Marcuse Society.

In the 1950s, the Fromm-Marcuse debate became well known because they had different readings of Freud and began criticizing each other in publications. They never got along, and it is not certain precisely what the whole story is there – maybe some rivalry, or theoretical and political differences.

But Fromm distanced himself from the Frankfurt School when he arrived in the U.S. and pursued his own trajectory, becoming a global superstar, like Marcuse. I was teaching at the University of Texas from 1973 to the mid-1990s when I came to UCLA, and I used to go down to Mexico every year, where Fromm was living in Cuernavaca, and having a tremendous impact on Mexico, as I learned from meeting students there. He was teaching at the major university in Mexico City, the Autonomous University, and had a strong following of students.

Fromm and Marcuse were the two most popular members of the Frankfurt School at first in the U.S. and many parts of the world. Then Adorno, Horkheimer, and Benjamin were translated and became world-renowned. Next came Habermas, of the third generation of the Frankfurt School, who became highly influential in the United States and throughout the world. Habermas had many students, including

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Thomas McCarthy and others who studied in Starnberg with him, then came to the U.S. and wrote articles. People like Axel Honneth, who was Habermas' assistant, went to the U.S. to lecture about Habermas, as did Albrecht Wellmer, whom I remember well. He was perhaps the first Habermas ambassador to our Critical Theory circles in the United States, lecturing on Habermas, and from the 1970s onward, Habermas also became extremely popular.

Habermas and Marcuse always got along extremely well together. But in the U.S., a sort of schism emerged between the Habermasians, for whom Jürgen Habermas was the main man, and others, for whom Marcuse was the main man. I personally support them both and believe we should learn from all these great German intellectuals, including Walter Benjamin and Sigfried Kracauer, who were on the margins of the school, as well as, of course, Hannah Arendt.

[EA-BDT]: Okay, Doug, thank you very much for sharing these wonderful stories with us.