

Progress, Normativity, and the Dynamics of Social Change

An Exchange between Rahel Jaeggi and Amy Allen

Amy Allen, Rahel Jaeggi, and Eva von Redecker

Eva von Redecker: I would like to say a quick word to open up the conversation. I think that by moving the notion of progress to the center of your work, both of you accomplish something very interesting, in that you transpose an elaborate and well rehearsed debate in critical theory regarding the foundations of normativity away from the question of critique and into the history of social change and politics. This is what I find really exciting about this whole thematic field. Whether in problematizing the notion of progress, as Amy does, or in revisiting it in Rahel's way, the shift from a mere reflection of critique to one of historical development immediately makes the debate more substantial.

The approaches each of you offer could easily be construed as a direct clash—progress: for and against—, but I am not so interested in pretending that your positions are even congruent enough to be exact opposites regarding the same question. I think it is more interesting to figure out the constellation in which they stand to each other. I hope we can probe this issue, which can be clustered around roughly three concerns: the conceptual role progress plays in critical theory, your respective versions of negativism, and how your views on progress are informed by different accounts of social change. To start us off on your separate takes on progress, I want to begin with a question that might seem a bit playful, but might move us to the important details. I'd like to ask Amy why she thinks that some residual notion of progress, despite her many critiques of it, is, at the end of the day, indispensable for critical theory. I also want to hear from Rahel about why she thinks we cannot simply work with an unmodified notion of progress. Why, for example, can we not take up Hegelian world history or historical materialism?

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Let's begin with Amy: Why do you think that at least a residual notion of progress needs to remain in play?

Amy Allen: I think I would have to start to answer that question by drawing on the distinction I make between backward-looking progress and forward-looking progress.¹ The idea is that the concept of progress has at least two sides: the backward-looking side is the one we employ when we read history as a story of progress in some sense, which could mean in terms of historical learning processes or social evolution or a more full-blown Enlightenment conception of the betterment of humankind. That's what I call progress as a 'fact', which is in scare quotes because this is obviously a normatively laden notion. I borrow that term from Thomas McCarthy, who wrote about what he called "the facts of global modernity," and argued in *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development* that we can't deny certain kinds of claims about progress as an historical fact.² So that's the backward-looking conception of progress. The forward-looking conception of progress is the one that we employ when we want to make our politics progressive—when we talk about the goal that we want to achieve, whether that is thought of in terms of a good society or achieving some sort of social ideal or, more negatively, as alleviating some forms of domination or existing conditions of oppression or suffering. The only sense in which I would say the notion of progress is indispensable for critical theory is this more forward-looking sense. I accept the idea that when we engage in the project of critique, we are critiquing existing social relations in light of some kind of conception of the better, whether that is framed positively in terms of some ideal we are trying to achieve or more negatively (as I would favor framing it) as trying to overcome or transform existing relations of domination. I still think this approach appeals to some kind of forward-looking notion of progress understood as a moral imperative or goal that we're striving to achieve. That's the sense in which I think critical theory needs or necessarily employs a notion of progress: progress toward some kind of improvement or even away from some negative state of suffering or domination. But the backward-looking conception of progress—namely as an historical 'fact'—we can and should do without.

E.v.R.: I think we should definitely get to what you think is problematic about that backward-looking story, but I first want to hear why Rahel, in a certain way, also thinks that a straightforward notion of history as progress won't do, and why we need to rethink the concept of progress. Or, to take a different starting point than critical theory, why do you find the notion of progress as it is employed in analytic philosophy's

debates on moral progress not satisfactory either?

Rahel Jaeggi: What I'm doing with respect to progress right now, and I only have entered this conversation in the last year, is something that is an outcome of what I've tried to develop in my book *The Critique of Forms of Life*.³ There, progress appears only at the very end. It might actually be a very weak idea of progress, but let's face it: if we talk about something like a learning process or the process of overcoming problems, and if we talk about it in a way that includes some kind of an accumulation of experience in a Hegelian way, this is what people would call "progress." But I hadn't yet started working on that conception of progress, and it was something that just sat in the background of my book.

Why didn't I go for a straightforward idea of progress? I was not looking for progress as either an ideal or a fact. Instead, I was interested in establishing criteria for criticizing where we are now. These criteria would look at the developmental process itself instead of looking at what we want to achieve—at normative ideals, things we know as a matter of fact, or what we as philosophers know (that certain values or principles should be in place in order to establish a good society). In one understanding, progress would be something that gets us close to this kind of ideal. That is exactly what I didn't want to do when spelling out a mode of critique and a way of criticizing our form of life. My starting point was to look for criteria that would somehow be self-standing, where the process itself would give us the criteria for whether a certain form of life is irrational or not or good or distorted in a certain way.

To come to the point, I think we should not accept a teleological notion of progress. This should not come as a surprise: a lot of people think that whatever we think of progress, it shouldn't be teleological. But why shouldn't we think of it this way? It seems to be the easiest way to talk about progress, if you talk about it at all: to think of it as something that is defined by some kind of a goal that we could get further from or closer to. But in a negative mode, we have to start from the assumption that we don't know what the good life or the good society is, or the principles by which we should organize social life. In this respect I'm inspired by an Adornian negativity: we shouldn't spell out the good or utopia. I'm also influenced by Marx's anti-utopianism, so I'm always a bit nervous when people say that critical theory needs utopia in the end, where all will be good and kids will be laughing and playing and things like this. There is a kitschy tendency in utopian thinking. At any rate, I'm looking for a notion of progress that is not teleological. The other issue, of course, is fallibilism. We don't know yet what progress is, and we have to figure it out while we are doing it.

There are not many people who would advocate a strong teleological notion of progress anymore. The interesting part of the debate is whether or not we can find something like “progress as a fact” at all. Among those who deny that (not Amy, though), their reservations even undermine the assessment of why we might hold on to certain elements and certain ideals as better than others. One of the interesting things in the contemporary debate about moral progress—and this is why I engage with the issue—is that scholars start with these obvious or, at first sight, local instances of progress that would be very hard to deny. I’m not sure whether these hold, but it was a starting point for me to think about social change and ask how, in those few instances of fortuitous development, we got from here to there. This is actually the discussion I am more interested in than the question of progress itself. I’m interested in the debate about social change and its idealism. I think there’s a notable tendency toward idealism in that part of the contemporary philosophical discussion that is not critical about progress. But even some of the radical critiques of the notion of progress seem to be no less idealistic and no less stuck in a frame of mind in which you do not investigate historical conditions and do not try to figure out the material side of social change that might lead to another world.

E.vR.: I think that defines the task well. Before we go into more detail about the negativistic turn and the material side of social change, I want to linger a moment longer on the first question: how central to critical theory is progress? Maybe we can define the task of the concept a bit closer and then weigh its importance and dangers. It seems to me that in your work, Rahel, despite saying you started off by looking at local, nearly indisputable instances of progress, a stronger notion of progress—of what Amy calls “historical progress” and not merely “progress in history”—does play a role. After that obviously, Amy, I want to hear about the possible pitfalls of such a conception and why critical theory might lose more than it gains by maintaining a substantial notion of progress.

R.J.: Simply put, my take is that in critical theory we have, more or less, three alternatives. The first is Kantianism or some sort of free-standing morality in which we are positively able to spell out what the good is. This need not be Kantianism; it could also be an Aristotelian notion of the good. For critical theory, however, it has mostly been Kantianism: a freestanding morality or normativity for which you don’t need a notion of progress or social change. Most Kantians have a notion of progress, and most Kantians in critical theory are optimistic about being able to spell out what the ‘better’ would be. However, they don’t

need to elaborate on the change itself because, from a normative point of view, it doesn't really matter how it comes about, or whether history has a tendency, or whether there are moments in history that destabilize institutions so that some sort of change emerges. The second alternative is some kind of Nietzscheanism or, as it is for contemporary critical theory, Foucauldianism, which (and I'll put this very cautiously) tends not to be able to rebut the relativism with which it is constantly confronted, or at least they have no strong, genuine idea of how to react to these problems. The third alternative is a version of Hegelianism or Marxism and some kind of immanent criticism of institutions. Here, of course, the Hegelian and the Marxist options are different, as different as the Nietzschean and the Foucauldian and as versions of Kantianism might be.

I suspect that in the end both Foucauldianism and Nietzscheanism need to resort to some sort of Kantian, freestanding morality. Even if they bracket their moral position in a fruitful way, or accept certain notions of equality or freedom as historical and not founded philosophically in normativity, I still think they very much rely on the Kantian position as a result of rejecting the Hegelian-Marxist one. I think of the Hegelian-Marxist position as one in which normativity comes about in and through history, which is an idea that most people think is crazy, especially if history and normativity are understood in their strong Hegelian senses. It is a normative history and a normativity acquired historically. For Marx, it is different because the present does not represent rationality, but irrationality. Yet even that irrationality is in a certain way justified within historical materialism. The possibility of change for the better resides in the inverted version of social institutions that capitalism brought about. Here, the normativity is neither relativistic nor freestanding. That is what I find attractive, apart from the notion of progress, as a critical theorist. Even if this suggests that history has a telos in the end, and even if it's a crazy story that everything that's going on is somehow a progressive move toward a rational outcome and should be embraced for normative reasons, the other story would conceive of social change or history as a series of unrelated events. That seems like a mistake to me.

Instead, we need to discern a social dynamic in history in which institutions and practices are related to what has been wrong with and undermined in previous institutions. I find this idea very compelling, and I don't think we can do without it. We can't conceive of history as unrelated events. Even if you were to advocate a negative teleology and see history as declining, you would still have an idea of how things relate to each other and how new institutions come out of old ones. I don't think this is easy to understand or conceptualize. Of course, we shouldn't do

it the way Hegel and Marx did it, but as critical theorists we have to come up with a way to conceive of how existing social institutions play a role in new ones.

E.vR.: I love how you say that the notion of history that is theoretically attractive is at the same time crazy. According to you, Amy, it is not its craziness that is the problem, but rather that such a notion is dangerous or holds political baggage, and this gives you reasons to move away from it. These would also be reasons not to embrace what Rahel calls “the third strand of critical theory”; but presumably, you would sort the options differently to begin with?

A.A.: Yes, I was very excited to hear that there are three options for critical theory, actually, Rahel, because last time we spoke about this you told me there were only two!

R.J.: Well, number one is not really critical theory!

A.A.: I thought it was because your second option collapses into the first. That’s what we talked about previously. I think this is progress of a sort! Now there are three options on the table! But I think it’s interesting that Rahel inverted their temporal order. I think there is a way in which one could understand this debate as unfolding in an interesting kind of dialectic, whereby the Nietzschean-Foucauldian third position actually represents a kind of “determinate negation” of the first two, in the sense of the term invoked by Horkheimer and Adorno in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.⁴ I’ll come back to the three options, but I also want to say, in response to Rahel’s worry about idealism, that for me, the question about progress emerges in a different way. For me, it is closely bound up with the question of normativity and what I would characterize as a meta-ethical question about how we can ground the first-order normative judgments that we employ as critical theorists. So there is a sense in which my concern with the question of progress is really not at all about the question of the dynamics of historical change. This is not really something I’ve thought through, primarily because I’m most concerned about how some sort of idea of progress or normativity in and through history is used in some forms of critical theory to ground normativity. It may be that in my work on progress I am guilty of some form of idealism because my focus is on this latter question. That’s okay with me because it’s an important question. It doesn’t give you a complete critical theory, but it is a question that has exercised a lot of energy and imagination in critical theory over the last 35 years at least.

To the main question, I would sort the options for critical theory in a slightly different way with respect to the question of how to ground normativity. I would employ more or less the same categories: Kantian, Left-Hegelian or Hegelian-Marxist, and some sort of genealogical alternative. Perhaps controversially, I would put Adorno in the last category and not with the Marxists, although, of course, he's complicated.

The Kantian account attempts to grasp normativity as a freestanding account of practical reason or a constructivist concept of normativity. It doesn't need a notion of progress, but there is one that falls out of it: once you have your trans-historical, universal conception of practical reason, you can talk about progress—historical or otherwise—with respect to what those standards generate.

R.J.: Yes. Progress might be an outcome, but it is not an irreducible part of this philosophical account.

A.A.: I think we both have questions about whether the freestanding account of progress really counts as critical theory in the strict sense. I would say that in the Hegelian-Marxist account, in its classical and in some contemporary formulations (and there is also a question as to whether this criticism would apply to Rahel's account), there is an attempt to derive an account of normativity that can be trans-historical or "global," if you want to use Philip Kitcher's terminology, from an account of history as a progressive historical learning progress.⁵ The best example of this is Axel Honneth's "The Normativity of Ethical Life," in which he discusses how to develop immanent criteria out of an historically specific, situated understanding of how norms are embedded in forms of life.⁶ But the hard question is, how do we avoid conventionalism? Honneth wants to address that question by developing some sort of trans-historical, stronger conception of normativity. Here we can speak of the problem of the idea of progress. In a way, that's where my book, *The End of Progress*, starts, namely with two problems of that particular story of progress.

One is a more conceptual problem that can be articulated in a politically neutral way: the problem of self-congratulation. To say that I won't appeal to any trans-historical, supra-historical, or context-transcendent standards to make large historical claims about progress, but instead derive them immanently in a way that will allow me to draw those broader conclusions, is a little like trying to pull a rabbit out of a hat. I think there is a worry that naturally arises that this reading of history either implicitly helps itself to standards that are trans-historical or context-transcendent in a strong sense, or that it really, in the end, can't escape conventionalism. So the worry is that either there is a

metaphysical standard in the background enabling the trans-historical judgment, or that progress really amounts to telling a story about history that makes us feel better and happy about where we've ended up. That's the self-congratulation worry.

Secondly, there is the more political worry about discourses of progress. This could be thought of as a specific version of a self-congratulatory story that has been told many times throughout the history of the Enlightenment in which European modernity, or Euro-American moderns, have congratulated themselves on their own history and have read their history as a story of progress and development. That particular story is one that is very closely bound with colonialism, neocolonialism, and the civilizing mission—all of these very problematic political positions. The stories of the cognitive or normative developmental superiority of European modernity were (and in many cases still are) used to justify certain kinds of pernicious political arrangements that undergirded colonialism and neocolonialism. That is obviously a very strong charge, and it is not like the concept of progress *per se* necessarily entails this kind of judgment; but conceptions of progress that position European modernity as the outcome of a learning process do, I think, entail that judgment. Unfortunately, in some critical theory, especially in Habermas' theory of modernity and also in some way in Honneth's work, which revives and extends that line of Habermas' thinking, both the conceptual and the political problems are at play.

This brings me to the Nietzschean-Foucauldian or genealogical alternative for critical theory. One difficulty I have about the way Rahel characterized it (and she probably wants to protest the way I characterized the Hegelian alternative) is that it is more than reading history as a series of unrelated events. Alternatively, if that's part of it, it is for very specific methodological reasons that I think are important. This is the sense in which I'm not kidding when I say that one could view this as a kind of determinate negation of these kinds of Hegelian views. It's true that there are Kantian and Hegelian elements in this view—Kantian in the sense that, properly understood, my view and the Foucauldian view hang onto some kinds of first-order Kantian normative commitments, such as freedom as autonomy. That is an ideal in the name of which I work.

There's also a very Hegelian (or Left-Hegelian) historicizing move in this genealogical account in which rationality and normativity are seen as thoroughly embedded in history. However, there is a fundamental and transformative break with each of these ways of thinking about normativity, and I think that involves two things. First, it is not a reading of history in terms of decline and fall, but rather a far more ambivalent telling of history as stories of progress and regress at the same

time, with neither one really overriding the other. Seeing it in this way, we try to understand both the domination and the promise of the norms and practices that have been handed down to us. Second, reading history as a series of unrelated events is a very specific methodological move that is designed to allow us to get more critical distance on a modernity that is itself structured in terms of an historical consciousness. In other words, it accepts the basic Hegelian idea that something like an historical consciousness is part of the legacy of modernity, and then reads history as a series of unrelated events that come one after another in order to get us to see that as a specific historical *a priori* or form of life. There's an extra-reflexive historicization of historicity in this account. I find that aspect of the account very interesting and consider it one that demonstrates that the genealogical account is in fact a distinct alternative—one that starts from a transformative reading of the Hegelian position.

R.J.: I want to react to Amy's idea that the three versions of critical theory might tell a progressive story of determinate negation. One could say that it starts as Left-Hegelianism, and at a certain point, that doesn't work anymore. It is clear that the grand narratives don't work anymore, and no one believes in that kind of Marxism or Hegelianism these days. In that case, there would be two remaining options: the freestanding normativity of Kantianism, which Habermas did embrace at a certain point, or the genealogies of Nietzsche and Foucault. Both might be seen as reactions to the problem that Hegelianism and Marxism ran into, but that would not be a very dialectical resolution. Alternatively, we might say regarding critical theory, and especially with respect to your placement of Adorno in the camp of Nietzsche and Foucault, that the interesting thing about the first Frankfurt generation is that these three options were already simultaneously present. I'm not so sure about Kantianism, but of course you can find in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* both Left-Hegelianism and Nietzscheanism. Maybe critical theory is an interesting mix of these, and maybe we do not have to choose.

But to your remarks, I could have said that whatever the position of Adorno and early Horkheimer, who seemed much closer to Left-Hegelianism and Marxism than Adorno, the most interesting and fruitful question is the way in which the first generation of critical theorists understood, analyzed, and criticized fascism. The notion of regression is present everywhere in their analysis. For them, it's not simply that fascism is something morally evil, bad, or which doesn't live up to the standards of the categorical imperative. Of course, all of this is true. But they thought about it and analyzed it as a moment of regression. If you talk

about regression, you hold on to the notion of progress. It is not spelled out teleologically or presupposed factually, but it is implied in the conceptual logic. Analyzing fascism in terms of regression speaks to me, and I consider it much more fruitful than most other approaches because—and I guess that could be said for genealogy as well—this analysis is not only evaluative, but also informative.

Let's think of what is going on today, when an attempt to do some sort of ideology critique of fundamentalism is actually not popular. Most people are stuck in the idea that there is something morally evil going on. There are people who think of it as a regression, and that we moderns should not accept it. But that is not the kind of fine-grained analysis or dialectical analysis of regression that we're talking about in critical theory in relation to progress and regression. For me, the reason to think about progress here would be that we need a notion of regression, which is a much more attractive notion to me because it is a clue to historical dynamics.

To return again to your remarks, I did not accuse you or genealogy of anything as such. I don't think I've made up my mind about the prospects of coming up with an interesting account of what the dynamics of social change would be in relation to these three options. My claim is more modest: if those are indeed the alternatives, it makes sense to attempt again to work with the third option and develop a modest and pragmatic idea of the philosophy of history. We lose a lot if we cannot come up with a social theory that sees history as more than unrelated events. It is from within an understanding of an emancipatory or meaningful succession of historical moments that we can judge trajectories of transformation. We are then able to say that certain developments don't make sense at all and that some are entangled in the dialectical dynamics of the reaction to and the overcoming of problems. Therefore, I am not so much saying that Hegelian-Marxism is the only way, but I am instead attempting to outline what we lose in some (perhaps too easy) critiques of philosophy of history, namely the whole conceptual grasp of social change, and how we might redeem some of those features.

Maybe this opens up another area of discussion regarding your concerns about progress. If we were right about historical progress, would we then also be right to be self-congratulatory? Not that it would ever be commendable to be self-congratulatory, but I want to slightly disentangle a tendency to argue via guilt by association on the side of progress-skepticism. That our western modernity, and German politics in particular, have committed real atrocities and still considered them progressive, or even justified them as measures required for progress' sake, is beyond question. But maybe we get further by saying that those were not progressive. Just like socialism, progress might not even

have happened yet, but that doesn't imply that it was impossible, or that we lacked the criteria to identify it.

E.vR.: One thing you both share is the conviction that we should presuppose neither a definite goal nor an external framework for assessing change. But you each suggest a different mechanism for how to approach our present and what led up to it. In Rahel's case, the mechanism is something like non-regressive problem solving, and she's already elaborated on what one can do with the notion of regression. In a certain way, that concept is more indispensable to her than the notion of progress. I think in Amy's case it is a problematizing genealogy, which she defines and designs as a very specific type of genealogy which is also richer than one might have thought genealogy was. I'd like to ask you, Amy, how problematizing genealogy, or what you call "historicizing historicity," can do some of the work Rahel suggests we should do via the notion of regression without presupposing that there is something valuable in the present that we shouldn't let go of or fall back behind.

A.A.: I'm not sure I would say that it is supposed to work without presupposing something valuable in the present.

E.vR.: That would raise the next question: What is it that you presuppose? It seems to be a fairly narrow idea of freedom: freedom from domination. Is that what you would see as indispensable, or as something that we have already partly achieved?

A.A.: It presupposes at least that much. There may be other things. I am fairly sure of and explicit about the fact that there is some conception of freedom as autonomy that, as I've argued in my earlier work, is part of the genealogical account, and it is explicitly coming out of some kind of Kantian and Enlightenment lineage that transforms this idea. But it's not a Kantian conception of rational autonomy.

E.vR.: So you accept the content of Kant's idea but not his justification?

A.A.: No, I think the idea also is transformed. In some of my earlier work I talk about how I think Foucault is transforming this Kantian idea of autonomy from some kind of submission to laws to an idea of understanding, or he's coming to see that what we take to be necessary is in fact contingent.⁷ But the process of coming to see that is a kind of autonomy. It isn't simply a process of binding ourselves to moral laws. You might say that it has the form of Kantian autonomy with different content. I understand it as a kind of radically transformative taking up

of a certain Kantian conception of autonomy. Furthermore, I'm interested in the way that Foucault, for example, positions himself as an inheritor of the Enlightenment tradition, and the way in which that notion of inheritance is understood in the Derridean sense of placing oneself in this tradition while radically transforming it. Certainly the notion of freedom is in the background. Explicitly, in my account, the work that problematizing genealogy allows us to do is to free ourselves up in relation to the present and to be in a position to see autonomy as what Foucault would call a "historical *a priori*," or what Adorno would call "second nature." I'm not sure I would even say this is necessary for transforming it. I think there could be transformations that happen for other reasons.

R.J.: But do you consider genealogy necessary for transforming autonomy progressively?

A.A.: When engaging in the work of critique, it is necessary first to free ourselves from our relationships to the institutions and features of our historical *a priori* that set the conditions of possibility for thinking and acting for us. I think the idea of the historical *a priori* is very close to the idea of forms of life, and I'd like to talk about that. I see them as being more or less the same. But again, Foucault situates that idea within this resolutely non-progressive but also non-regressive reading of history. I would frame my interest in the question of progress and history in their relation to normativity, and I see that as different from a question of how to understand how social changes happen. I think the Foucauldian reading of history has a very specific point with respect to critique that enables us to engage in the work of critique by freeing ourselves up in relation to, as he put it, "what thought silently thinks" and thus allowing it to think otherwise.⁸ That might be different than thinking about historical transformation in order to gain a better understanding of the causal mechanisms that enable them to happen or set forth conditions to make historical transformations more or less likely. I wouldn't want to draw an overly sharp distinction there, but I think it's a different angle, and the question I'm interested in with respect to history is what the point of thinking about history is for critique and for critical philosophy. How should we think about history so that we can engage in the work of critique most effectively? I think we should think of history neither progressively, as a story of learning processes, nor regressively, as a decline and fall, but both progressively and regressively at the same time. This is what enables us to problematize most effectively our own present, taken-for-granted, and apparently natural features of our form of life, if you'd like to use that terminology.

E.vR.: In a way this distancing helps not by its connection to the site of social change, but by providing a clearer view when trying to assess those dynamics, which we do as critics and political actors? Although you highlight that power and rationality are entangled, you seem not to consider them amalgamated in a completely indissoluble way: by distancing ourselves, or bracketing our form of life, we might attain something like a clearer picture of how exactly they are entangled.

A.A.: I don't know, but I'd like to stick with the point about social change. Sometimes it may be the case that social transformations happen as a result of people gaining distance or engaging in some kind of critical work, whether that's in the form of written theoretical treatises or just engaging in more critical reflections in their own lives. I suspect that it is very rarely the case that the more critical theoretical work is inducing social change, and in fact is more often coming in later and trying to understand what has already happened. Certainly there are cases in social movements in which activists employ critical vocabularies and theoretical positions, but often the dynamics work the other way: the critic enters after the fact and tries to figure out what happened. That's why I'm trying to be careful about the causal element. If you think about the way people engage in a work of individual or collective self-transformation, it's often prompted by a kind of critical reflection on who they are and what they want to be, whether individually or as a community. But again, sometimes transformations happen, and individuals are left trying to figure out what happened, and what they think of it. They get swept up in the tide of events or were busy thinking other things, and then they look back and say, "How do I make sense of this transformation?" That's why I'm trying to separate the causal question from a more normative question, but not to insist on a strict separation; I just see them as different questions.

Considering questions of rationality and power, I would say that I'm skeptical of the possibility of ever really disentangling ourselves from power relations, or from the weight of social and historical circumstance if you don't want to use what sounds like a very pessimistic language of power to talk about it. However, it is true that freeing ourselves up in relation to our historical *a priori* is something like trying to get some distance from that entanglement while recognizing that we can't really get outside of it, and we're always going to be trying to engage in that process of negotiation.

E.vR.: Doesn't that description lend itself to a stronger claim about the conditions of progress? Perhaps as long as we keep our historical past in a language that is self-congratulatory we enter encounters in a way

that forecloses progress as an imperative, as you understand it to happen. This is kind of a proviso: to make any encounter—because I think, for you, the social dynamics come more from encounters between different contexts—happen in an open and progressive way, the parties who are engaged need to undergo this self-distancing. I think it is quite categorical, so I want to sharpen the point a bit.

A.A.: That's true. I would say that telling a certain kind of self-congratulatory story, for example one about European modernity as an instance of moral and political progress, is an impediment to making progress in a certain sense. That particular self-congratulatory story needs to be undone. Again, it is a local or contextual claim because it is only true for people who are situated within and are the beneficiaries of Euro-modernity. It seems to me that the worry about this story is the way in which it is bound up with colonial domination—in the sense that it both serves as the justification for a set of colonial relations and falls out of a colonial sensibility. The stories about progress and the Enlightenment are rooted in this experience that Europeans—people like Adam Smith, Hume, and so on—read reports from the colonies about what the lives of indigenous people were like. These stories led them to develop a stadial model of progress. They thought, “Those people must be more primitive than we are, and there must be a progressive story that goes from how we used to be to how we are now.” The stadial model is not only a justification of colonialism but also a reaction to an encounter with indigenous peoples; it was immediately set up as a relationship of superiority by Europeans who heard these stories in which Europeans served as inheritors of that primitive condition. That story is one that I discuss in my book and take from the sociologist Gurinder Bhambra, who has done interesting work on the developments of these stadial readings of history, and how they come to infect a lot of social theory.⁹ The problems with that story are such that, as individuals who are situated in positions of power in this global, post-colonial context, it is very important for us to try to work against and undercut them. Otherwise, in intercultural debates about political norms, we are implicitly (or sometimes explicitly) positioning ourselves as superior to traditional, non-modern “others” who haven't learned something that we have learned.

E.vR.: So you are saying that if you are situated in that History (with a capital 'H'), then you have to distance yourself from that framework?

A.A.: That's right.

E.vR.: I think for Rahel it is not important to presuppose this particular story of European modernity having somehow led to all the values we need and cling to. That's not where the notion of progress or regression stands and falls. But if there were *nothing* someone could be self-congratulatory about, then your account, Rahel, would not generate any directionality at all, right? Because you could not even say what non-regression would be, or what one should not fall back behind. Or do you think that you could orient your outlook from any given context?

R.J.: I don't know. This raises a problem for me. I think what I'm doing is much less substantial. It is not about historic modernity as an overarching learning process (which by the way would immediately pose the paradox of how and when we entered the realm of developed morals). It is more about whether we can establish normative criteria for emancipation on the basis of whether this is or is not a learning process or a process of *accumulating experiences*, a term I like better than "learning process" because experience is a richer notion. It doesn't work in English, but in German we use the word *Erfahrungsprozess*. Actually, I think of what I'm doing as something that would work in a pluralist way. The idea that "they" are in some former stage from where we are now is something that would not be applied as a criterion of whatever cultural situation or stage. No matter how far a group is from our ideas of freedom, autonomy, or self-determination, or however one would measure that kind of distance—this distance itself is not the criterion to impose. The focus on past experiences should enable us to analyze the dynamics of change in terms of our learning blockages or absences thereof from within whichever given context. I think that's what Amy's description is grasping, because of course the self-congratulatory version of modernity is a learning blockage. This is exactly the fantasy that the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* undermines. Analysis of this sort rids us of this all too optimistic, delusionary idea of what we as moderns are. This is the aspect of post-colonial thinking that I believe is a crucial contribution to critical theory. Your book is important because it reminds us that this skepticism and undermining of self-congratulatory ideas has always been a part of critical theory; and nowadays post-colonial studies has largely taken on the role of formulating it. In the end, what you're describing and doing is getting rid of learning blockages and trying to free us from a narrative that doesn't allow us to see the dialectics of our progresses in the plural.

What's in the background of my approach, and why I think it's interesting to talk about social change, is that progress is somehow a change within change. My idea (and again, I didn't invent it) is that history is a crisis-driven dynamic of problem solving. I like the idea of problem

solving because it enables us to come up with a more pragmatic, or pragmatic-dialectical, version of what's going on. The main idea, though, is that crises trigger change, and progress is something that takes place within these changes and these dynamics. There are two things that I take from Marx: first, the well-known formulation that we make our own history, but not under circumstances of our choosing, and second, with respect to revolutions and social dynamics, that there is an active and a passive element. This is the kind of thing I'm interested in: the rational and the not-so-rational dynamics, or the agent-related and the not-so-agent-related side of change. I would like to figure out how change is triggered by human agents—sometimes in reaction to problems that needed to be overcome, or that people tried to overcome. But sometimes certain events, circumstances, or innovations take precedence, and new experiences emerge. Then again, there is a dynamic in which unknown, new experiences that somehow interrupt a course of history or a certain historical way of living are re-integrated into a narrative and a form of life. We need to understand the untidy situations in which drastic change is brought about by, for example, technical innovations, which is what I was talking about in the *Constellations* lecture.¹⁰

The invention of the typewriter has done something for the emancipation of women, certainly, and so has the pill. At the same time, those who invented the pill and the typewriter didn't do so because they wanted to liberate women. These side effects were unknown and unintended. This kind of plot, in which there are unintended consequences and at the same time social conflicts and social actors who take up certain problems and turn them into crises that are partly of our own making, has to do with our normative self-understanding. Crises in human history are not like natural disasters. They are things that unfold into crises, like poverty, famously, or the problem of the rabble in Hegel.¹¹ This is not just about people starving; it's about people who have normative claims on society that they think are not fulfilled. This is the kind of dynamic I'm interested in. I haven't written a book on progress as Amy has, but in the end I don't even know if there is such a thing as progress. Do I have to hold onto some real life empirical progress? I don't know.

E.v.R.: I'm actually totally convinced that you have written a book on progress, and that this is one dimension of your *Critique of Forms of Life*. But in listening to you elaborate your approach, it occurred to me that the way I posed the question presupposed that you needed the framework in order to assess what should be sublated in advance. But you could probably say that if we describe problems richly enough, then in some sense the description of the problem generates the criteria of

what might count as surpassing the problem. I can now begin to see how that doesn't presuppose the backward-looking account of progress. Of course there always lurks the Foucauldian or even Benjaminian worry that the way in which the problem is described leads to the situation in which what everyone takes to be a solution is nevertheless what we might want to call "a regression," for example that the problem of immigration in Germany today is framed in terms of "how many refugees we should accept." Would you share that worry? Or do you have any inbuilt warranties against it, perhaps combining the assessment of learning with genealogical distancing?

R.J.: There would be no warranty, clearly, because there is no presupposed telos. I start from the situation of crisis and disorientation—or as you say, by describing problems from scratch. And of course not all remedies of disorientation are progressive; many formulations of problems and solutions are ideological. To me the best way to spell out our shared intuition that indeed they are often wrong—as in the presupposition that a nation decides sovereignly to whom to grant asylum and generally considers this a burden—comes from examining which developments feed into that framework. I think that in this instance, as with many others, one can make a good case that it is an impoverished process, or one that failed to integrate all aspects of past experience, or one that is less rich and complex than it could be if one compares it with what we might have learned. That is different from a stadial teleology. It is a freestanding process driven by determinate negation in which you don't need to know what the overall direction of the movement is. As Adorno says in a famous citation, "Progress would transform itself into the resistance to the perpetual danger of relapse. Progress is this resistance at all stages, not their steady ascent."¹² I wouldn't even think of Hegel as someone who has this kind of overarching teleology. I would say that freedom is more a principle of development than a substantial value that comes at the end and that we realize more and more. It's more the principle that undermines the institutions that establish unfreedom of a certain kind. We could argue about Hegel on this point, but this idea of freestanding determinate negation doesn't actually need to claim that there's already something progressive in history. On the other hand, I wouldn't deny that there are instances of local progress. We wouldn't live without certain things.

A.A.: That's actually a point of agreement between us, I think. Something like what you're calling a "freestanding determinate negation" is what I had in mind when I jokingly referred to the Nietzschean-Foucauldian account as a determinate negation: there is no goal to which it aims,

and yet it is working through, in some sense, these earlier views, and trying to solve problems you might say are internal to them. That's obviously talking about theoretical positions and not about actual norms or practices, but it's a similar principle. I wanted to say something about learning processes, too. Just as I am more or less happy to stick with a forward-looking conception of progress as what it is we're trying to bring about when we engage in some kind of critical work that aims toward social transformation, I would also be willing to countenance some kind of understanding of a learning process. But within the particular context and invocation of certain types of progress, and even in critical theory, I think we need to think in terms of the phrase that's popular in postcolonial literature: "learning to unlearn." That is a kind of problem-driven learning process, but one that involves thoroughly problematizing the backward-looking account of history as a story about progress. I think that's a place where we might agree.

One question I have for you, Rahel, is that you said, off the cuff, that your account is not substantial and local, but because it is freestanding, maybe it ends up being too Kantian in a problematic way. However, I had the opposite thought: how do you see yourself avoiding the problem of relativism? We haven't talked about this yet. I have a story that I try to tell in *The End of Progress* about how I'm interested in meta-ethical or normative questions about progress as they have been employed in critical theory. How are questions about progress used to justify our present normative view that we then employ when we engage in critique? Those stories trade heavily on the backward-looking account of progress that I think is problematic. I think the Kantian story, which could be seen as an alternative to this more Hegelian progressive historical learning process account, is problematic for other reasons that we probably agree on, namely it gives too freestanding an account that is not embedded enough in history and is therefore not true to the methodological aims or starting points of critical theory. The structure of the argument in my book in terms of the normativity question is then a sort of process of elimination.

I think that we agree on the three options. My strategy is to work through the first two and say that I don't think these will work, for various reasons, and the more genealogical story is the one we're left with. But then of course, this still leaves the worry about relativism or conventionalism. Conventionalism is perhaps better, if we're talking about norms that are generated in a socially-embedded way in forms of life, as this is not an individual relativism but a cultural relativism or conventionalism. I want to know your response to this conventionalism or relativism worry. You say that we would not want to impose the things we use to solve our problems on other people who have different

problems or other ways of solving them. I think that intuition is right, and I agree with the desire, if we're going to make judgments about progress, to make them local and contextual. That's what I call "progress in history" as opposed to historical progress. But I don't know how you avoid the problem of relativism or conventionalism. My strategy is to say that giving up on the notion of progress on a meta-normative level doesn't mean that we have to collapse into relativism because relativism is a first-order normative position. One can be a contextualist about normativity and still believe in certain normative principles, just as one can be an epistemological contextualist and still believe in truth. In other words, one can be a contextualist about normativity and think that it is generated locally, contingently, historically, and so on, and still hold onto first-order normative principles that are non-relativistic and that may even be universalistic in scope. That's my attempt at a solution, briefly, but I'd love to know what yours is.

I'd like to say one last thing about problems. Eva was trying to pose them as a kind of wedge between us, or a question on which we might differ. But when reading *Critique of Forms of Life*, it struck me that your account of problem solving through Dewey is very close to how I see problematization working in Foucault in a really interesting way. Foucault also has this idea that problematization has both a nominal and a verbal sense. Things become problematic at a certain point. He didn't use the language of "crisis," but he does talk about things becoming problems for us at a certain point, and that's what he wants to uncover. At the same time, he also wants to problematize things and shed light on problems that not everyone sees as problems or understands to be problematic, or which we need to understand in a different way. There's a back and forth between those two registers in Foucault's account that is also part of your presentation of Dewey. I guess it is the part about problem *solving* where the Foucauldian is going to get nervous. But the idea of problems and problematizations is a really interesting connection between our two projects.

R.J.: You're right to ask how I avoid relativism and conventionalism. I would say that I try to do so by coming up with a formal criterion. We don't judge the outcome of a form of life. Nor do we judge what its inhabitants are doing in a substantial way or what norms and practices or embodied and evaluative practices they are coming up with. What we do judge is the process: how did this come about? Judging the process is somehow bracketing the substance or the content of the form of life while at the same time highlighting that the process in the background of the crisis matters. This rests on a dynamic notion of form of life, one that is not stable, because all of them go through some form of

dynamic. This dynamic is judged as a process using the criterion of whether there are certain kinds of learning blockages, of which ideology would be one version. However, there are others, such as certain institutions or mechanisms, that don't allow you to experience certain things. This move is an attempt to come up with a context-transcendent criterion that is at the same time not freestanding universalism. It is about the dynamic itself. It should avoid conventionalism because in a certain sense the frame or context itself is fundamental. Through relativism you can only see whether certain things are right or wrong when you take into account this framework of their thought or way of living. The idea is to go beyond the framework without standing outside of it.

Again I think about Hegel, not in his theory of an ethical life or in a way that commits me to defending him all the way down, but in that his philosophy of history seems to give us conceptual tools to evaluate the framework itself, or to go beyond the framework and to see that the framework has evolved and has a certain "right." A certain "right" can simultaneously mean that at some point and given a certain specific situation this framework might suggest the wrong moves. To come up with a concrete example, it might not be regressive to wear a veil under certain circumstances when you are attacked as a Muslim woman in the western world. It might not only be an act of resistance, which it certainly sometimes is. It might also be the right move to raise consciousness or to politicize an issue. It might also be wrong, but this depends not on whether the veil itself is a sign of domination or not, but on what kind of constellation it is in, and what kind of outcome occurs as a result of a certain kind of regressive tendency. The move back to certain kinds of neo-bourgeois family values in some recent western middle class milieux might be more of a regression than what is mentioned above. The idea is that it always depends, and every Foucauldian would say it always depends on the situation whether something is an act of resistance.

E.vR.: Maybe, since you're agreeing too much, I can drive the wedge a bit further. I think Rahel's notion that a problematic form of life ultimately points one in the right direction is stronger than what we have discussed so far. For Amy, we are driven to go beyond given forms of life because they occlude something. Rahel has something like practical contradictions at the core of her account. I think we can see this difference beautifully in Adorno's view of interpretation. You both see interpretation as contextual and say that we need to interpret problems and that their solutions depend on how we describe them. In support of that you, Amy, quote Adorno as saying, "Interpretation . . . is criticism of phenomena that have been brought to a standstill; it consists in reveal-

ing the dynamism stored up in them, so that what appears as second nature can be seen to have a history.”¹³ I would say, Amy, that in your genealogical approach you’re making clear that “what appears as second nature can be seen to be history.” I think Rahel pursues a much stronger reading than the one that you give to the line in your book, focusing on the “dynamism stored up.” Because Rahel has this idea that if you get rid of the learning blockage you not only get to something that you didn’t see before, to what “thought has silently thought,” but actually you already get a direction. The dynamism is really there, and it propels you in the right direction. That is quite a strong Hegelian investment on the ontological or social-theoretical level. I don’t think you could agree with that, Amy.

A.A.: No.

E.vR.: Good!

A.A.: I think that often we don’t know what we get. I would be much more cautious about that.

E.vR.: If we stay with the “propelling” element, I’d like to ask each of you what you see as the motor of dynamism. You, Amy, have the passage where you say, with Adorno and Foucault, that unreason, or the non-identical, something that escapes the current frame, moves us.¹⁴ I think you, Rahel, would have a different frame of what brings us forward—for example, contradictions. Maybe you could say a bit more about your respective investments in historical materialism, which is perhaps the biggest difference between *Critique of Forms of Life* and *The End of Progress*. What is it that resists in reality and moves us forward?

A.A.: I would only say that it “moves us forward” in a very limited sense. This is a bit confusing. Could we say something like: “So, yes, it’s right that I try to say that there’s a figure—that I try to read in a very non-substantial way—that one can find in the idea of unreason in Foucault or the non-identical in Adorno.” Whether it actually enables us to move forward in a directional sense is a totally open question. One of the things I find attractive about Foucault’s understanding of history, and maybe this is related to the dynamics of historical change, is its complete open-endedness. He is quite rightly, in my view—but not entirely consistently, if one reads his overly optimistic writings on the Iranian revolution, for example—making the case that we just don’t know what progress is, and so we have to think about the future in an open-ended way. I think that is compatible with the idea of trying to make things

better, or to solve problems, if you want to use that language. “Minimize the relations of domination” is, I think, the language Foucault would use, or “respond to suffering,” if we want to talk about it in a more Adornian way. But we can’t know what the direction of that would be, which is why Foucault says in his “What is Enlightenment?” that the work of critique has to always be ongoing.¹⁵ I doubt that we would disagree on that point; it’s actually pretty obvious, in a way, that if we reject some sort of strong, positive utopianism, then we accept that the work of critique has to be ongoing. That’s related to this caution or skepticism about saying too much about the direction of social change, which is set free by this process. What the outcome of the critique is going to be, though, I think we just cannot know.

E.vR.: It’s interesting that by pointing to non-domination you put more substantial content on the normative side of the directionality than Rahel does. Earlier we spoke of freedom, and I think that if Rahel is committed to the view that the contradictions in crises point us in the right direction, then in some sense she has a thinner idea of progress, because she’s not even committed to saying it’s always about domination or freedom. But there’s a much thicker notion of history or context or social practice assumed in her account.

R.J.: Yes, I feel bad about it. I don’t refer to domination or freedom as the basic principle. Amy can at least say that she has some idea of non-domination and a world with less suffering. It seems to be such an impoverished account of progress to say that it’s just some way of accumulating experiences. It’s not that I don’t have strong commitments and ideas, but with respect to this philosophical project I actually tend to be much more restricted. It might be that in this very narrow or thin formulation of progress there’s a thicker notion of experience that seems to rely on an idea of richness or completeness of experience that is more normatively laden than it appears to be. The idea of rationality at stake here seems to be more utopian, or seems to do a lot of work that is not as thin and as processional as I want it to be.

Returning to Eva’s question of what it is that triggers or makes us leave in a certain situation, for me this is crisis and contradiction on the objective side. This also means that, with respect to normative foundations, or the normative foundations of critical theory in particular, a lot of work is done by the idea that there are crises. It’s not that critical theorists would disturb this totally beautiful (but under certain criteria wrong) form of life, or would try to intervene in something like a peaceful island where people are unconscious, or would meet a romantic and naive person and tell them to strive for modernity. That’s

not the kind of critique we are doing. When I said that progress is change within change, I meant it in the same way that I would say critique is a certain movement within a crisis that is already ongoing. It's a certain way to trigger and intervene in a moment of crisis. For me, this work has an objective side, which is also a material side. My conceptual intervention within critical theory is meant to balance out an ultra-strong focus on the constructivist approach to whatever could count as a problem.

I want to move the discussion back slightly toward this historical materialist idea of crisis or contradiction. I'm very aware that contradiction doesn't do all the work. One of the problems with the Marxist idea of contradiction is that everyone thought that contradiction had a logical status, which means that you don't need to criticize something because it's wrong on its own terms and doesn't even need human agency to collapse. This is not the kind of contradiction I have in mind, but I am at least flirting with the idea that there's something that cannot be denied when it comes to crises.

In a psychoanalytic analogy, one would say that of course you can have different interpretations of a symptom, but there's something that the symptom shows. If within the process of psychoanalysis the therapist doesn't somehow try to find the right cause for the symptom, or if she denies certain aspects of it, then she might not have a correct or deep enough insight into the situation. She would not be able to name the problems in terms of a diagnosis that would apply to the patient. At the same time, it's an interactive process in which those who criticize certain crises or symptoms and diagnose certain problems do so by diagnosing them and triggering something within a patient that will then prove the analyst right or not. This is where crisis and contradiction come in. In contradiction there's more to it. It's something that contradiction has (this is determinate negation), and the potential for its possible solution is somehow written into the problem's description. This is the stronger notion of normativity that comes with this idea of contradiction.

A.A.: I don't disagree with most of what you said, although I might phrase it differently. But the language of contradiction does seem strong. Not only is there the worry that it's objective and logical and does not need agency, but I think it also very strongly implies—though you say that you don't want to hold onto a teleological reading—a kind of teleological directionality.

I think the place where our views are really close is in the relationship between the critic and the objective conditions, if you will. I like the way that Foucault characterizes critique as “following lines of

fragility in the present.”¹⁶ The idea is that the lines are there, and the critic traces them, and one has to have the combination of these two aspects of critique. It’s not as if the critic is just coming in from the outside. The lines of fragility and fracture are there, but there is work done by tracing them and by opening up the space within the present that happens as a result of that work. That sounds quite similar to some of the ways that you’re using the notion of crisis, though maybe not exhaustively.

E.vR.: I’m excited that you’ve already started to talk about psychoanalysis because I was hoping we might get to conclude on that topic. I was wondering what analogous psychoanalytic formulations we might find for your respective approaches. Perhaps for Rahel, progress is this vivid and unblocked appropriation of experience: a model of non-denial, enrichment, and development. Amy’s account might be put in this way: for any such development to take place, there needs to occur a decentering of narcissism, so that one sees the crisis of others and not just the crisis one is in. That’s why you seem to say that we need to outgrow our form of life, just as we might grow beyond primary narcissism in psychoanalytic terms. I don’t know if you agree with that characterization.

A.A.: I like it!

E.vR.: Would you, Rahel, consider it a necessary element for the appropriation of the world, that one sees more than one’s own crisis?

R.J.: To me, this resonates with the idea of impoverished experience; if the problem is a distorted process of experience, a distorted learning experience, or an incomplete *Erfahrungsprozess* (a process of accumulating experiences). There is then the Adornian idea that a strong kind of irrationality is in play if we cannot even encounter “the other” in the world. What I think is interesting is that you said, Amy, that you are much more skeptical, because no matter what we come up with, we don’t know whether it will lead to emancipatory or progressive results. I would totally agree. It just came to mind why, in the end, I am more interested in regression than progress. I would hold onto the notion of regression, but I see it as the counterpart, but not the flipside, of progress. It’s not as if we get a full-blown notion of progress as soon as we have an idea of regression. This runs parallel to something that people very often say about negativity: it is a “trick” of sorts because you only know what’s good if you know what’s bad. I don’t think that’s true. For progress and regression it’s not true either. The relationship between them is different, more complex, and more tentative. I would say that my

idea of progress is based on a retrospective dialectics. It's not something that you could or would even try to have a forward-looking account of, such as an answer to the question of why this step that we do or this kind of problem solving attempt we're engaged in might be progressive. We just want to make sure that it is not regressive. Again, it might turn out later that we haven't seen a whole lot of aspects that would have convinced us that what we thought of as non-regressive was actually regressive. Whether it's progress or not is something you can only see in retrospect because you never know what will happen. This is the experiential side: you start experiments. Problem solving is a pragmatic aspect of this. You come up with a certain solution, and you don't know the effects or even what you're driven by in coming up with a certain solution.

A.A.: I would agree. The content that I give in my own account of what would constitute "forward-looking progress" is not fully worked out in *The End of Progress* but is something I discuss in another recent paper, "Emancipation without Utopia."¹⁷ The core idea is that what would constitute progress in a forward-looking sense is minimizing relationships of domination and transforming them into non-dominating, mobile, reversible, and unstable power relations. It's a very negativistic conception of forward-looking progress. I don't think I'd want to talk about that in terms of preventing regressions. I would agree, though, that whether or not any change that we try to instill turns out to be progressive, even in that negativistic sense, could only be determined after the fact.

I want to come back to psychoanalysis quickly. There's a lot to say, but one thing that strikes me in relation to negativism and the idea of minimizing domination is that there's an interesting analog on the individual level in psychoanalysis. This is not true for everyone who engages in psychoanalysis, but the psychoanalyst Joel Whitebook said to me while we were talking about my work on progress not long ago that he thinks that psychoanalysis is anti-utopian in principle. He was referring to Freud's famous line that the goal of psychoanalysis is to turn "hysterical misery to common unhappiness."¹⁸ I think that's very much like the idea of transforming relationships of domination into mobile, reversible power relationships. To me these ideas are very similar.

E.vR.: But don't we want more?

A.A.: Yes. But what about the dream?! When I was in Brazil talking about that paper on emancipation, a student in the audience asked, "What about the dream?"

NOTES

1. See Amy Allen, "Critical Theory and the Idea of Progress," chap. 1 of *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), pp. 1–36.
2. See Thomas McCarthy, *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
3. See Rahel Jaeggi, *The Critique of Forms of Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, forthcoming); *Kritik von Lebensformen* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2013).
4. See Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).
5. See Philip Kitcher, *The Ethical Project* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).
6. See Axel Honneth, "The Normativity of Ethical Life," trans. Felix Koch, *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 48:8 (2014), pp. 817–26.
7. Amy Allen, *The Politics of Our Selves* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 45–8.
8. Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, vol. 2 of *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), p. 9.
9. See, for example, Gurminder K. Bhambra, *Rethinking Modernity: Post-colonialism and the Sociological Imagination* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).
10. Rahel Jaeggi, "Critical Theory and Philosophies of History" (presentation, *Constellations* Conference: Post-Colonialism, Critical Theory, and Democracy, New York, April 15, 2016).
11. G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H.B. Nisbet, ed. Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), §242, p. 267.
12. Theodor W. Adorno, "Progress," in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 160.
13. Theodor W. Adorno, "On Interpretation: The Concept of Progress (I)," lecture 15 of *History and Freedom: Lectures, 1964–1965*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge: Polity, 2006), p. 135; cited in Allen, *The End of Progress*, p. 195.
14. Allen, *The End of Progress*, p. 194.
15. See Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," in *The Foucault Reader*, trans. and ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), pp. 32–50.

16. See Michel Foucault, "Critical Theory/Intellectual History," trans. Jeremy Harding, in *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*, ed. Michael Kelly (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), pp. 109–37.
17. See Amy Allen, "Emancipation without Utopia: Subjection, Modernity, and the Normative Claims of Feminist Critical Theory," *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 30:3 (2015), pp. 513–29.
18. Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria*, in vol. 2 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), p. 305.