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Summary : The concept of specific forms of resistance, rooted in Foucault, has come to the fore in radical thought, replacing earlier concepts of emancipation rooted in abstract universals (Marcuse), but at a tremendous cost. Marx's emancipatory but concrete dialectic of class and ethnicity goes beyond both of these one-sided perspectives. Originally appeared in [Logos: A Journal of Modern Society and Culture 12:1](#) (Winter 2013) – Editors

Resistance versus Emancipation: Foucault, Marcuse, Marx, and the Present Moment

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I. The Changed World of 2011-12

We live in a far different world than just a few short years ago. Not only have we suffered the greatest economic downturn since the 1930s, but we have also witnessed the emergence of new forms of mass struggle. Foremost among these have been the 2011-12 Arab revolutions, still ongoing. Not since 1848 has the world experienced such a wave of revolutions crossing borders in such a short period. Moreover, unlike some of the other democratic upheavals of this century (Iran 2009, Ukraine 2004, Serbia 2000, etc.), the Arab revolutions have articulated not only political but also economic demands. The spread of these revolutions to countries whose governments boasted of their anti-imperialist credentials like Libya and Syria has also tested those on the Left who place opposition to U.S. imperialism ahead of everything else. (For more elaboration of this point see my “Year Two of the Arab Revolutions, *Logos* 11:4, Spring-Summer 2012: http://logosjournal.com/2012/spring-summer_anderson/.)

Several other key struggles have emerged in the wake of the Arab revolutions, among them the summer 2011 British youth riots triggered by minority youth, a serious challenge to racially based state/police oppression and austerity economics. We have also seen serious movements against austerity and economic oppression, above all in Greece (begun before 2011), but also in Spain and Israel, as well as the labor upheaval in Wisconsin. In the U.S. and the UK, the 2011-12 Occupy movement has galvanized a new generation of young radicals, most notably in Oakland, California where they were able to shut down of

one of the world's largest ports, while also linking their movement to earlier protests against the murder of an African-American youth, Oscar Grant, by local transit police.

One could make a number of critiques of these new movements concerning their organizational practices or their political stances. In the discussion that follows, however, I would like to concentrate on a philosophical orientation that influences contemporary radical movements, centered on the all-too-common preoccupation with notions of “resistance.”

II. Foucault and Resistance

Over the past decade or so, post-structuralist currents of thought have often merged with anarchism and some elements of Marxism to produce new notions of resistance. These notions include, among others, resistance to power, resistance to the state, resistance to surveillance, resistance to cultural hegemony, and resistance to capital.

To be sure, this constitutes an advance over forms of intellectual radicalism – from Althusser to Adorno – that stressed hegemony almost to the exclusion of resistance. But this advance has come at a price, as will be discussed below.

Before going there, however, it must be asked, where does this 21st century usage of the term “resistance” originate? Not, seemingly, in the broad-based national resistance movements against fascism during World War II. One can instead trace the current usage of the term resistance to a more recent source, the writings of Michel Foucault on power and resistance. Although resistance is not emphasized in his earlier writings, by 1976 Foucault famously takes up resistance as well as power. By now, he sketches power as a “relation,” “not something that is acquired, seized, or shared” (*History of Sexuality*, Vol. I, trans. Robert Hurley, NY: Vintage, 1978, orig. 1976, p. 94). This notion of power as relational was surely meant as an allusion to – and perhaps as a sublation or supersession of -- Marx's notion of capital as a social relation, not a thing.

Foucault writes further: “Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power.... Their [power relationships'] very existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance.... Hence there is no single locus of Great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there are specific cases of resistance... They are the other in the relations of power; they inscribe themselves as

irreducible in relation to it” (pp. 95-96, trans. slightly altered based on the French original).

Note – and I will touch on this below – Foucault’s explicit attack on Herbert Marcuse’s notion of a Great Refusal, one of the French philosopher’s rare direct engagements with the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School.

III. Critique of Foucault’s Concept of Resistance

Why has this term, “resistance,” largely replaced earlier ones like “emancipation,” “liberation,” “a society free of exploitation,” “a society free of alienation,” and the like, and at what cost?

At the level of political activism, one obvious cost of adopting or even adapting Foucault’s notion of resistance is linked to the fact that not all forms of resistance are equivalent.

Is resistance to state power by the Right the same as that by Marxists or anarchists?

Is resistance to Western imperialism by religious fundamentalists the same as that by national liberation movements?

Is the Catholic Church’s resistance to state-sponsored contraception in the USA equivalent to the labor movement?

Are women religious fundamentalists who seized the Red Mosque in Islamabad, Pakistan in 2007 in order to crack down on free expression similar to socialist feminists in the same society like Malala Yousafzai, whom those with politics similar to the former tried to assassinate this year? (For an interesting discussion of Yousafzai’s politics, see Bill Weinberg, “Will American Left Betray Heroine Malala Yousafzai?” *World War 4 Report*, October 12, 2012 <http://www.ww4report.com/node/11487>.)

This kind of problem lay at the root of Foucault’s embarrassing support for Ayatollah Khomeini’s leadership over the Iranian revolution in 1978-79, during which he dismissed worries expressed by an Iranian feminist. As Khomeini assumed power in 1979, Foucault wrote about Islamic resistance to imperialism, this after mockingly referring to Marxist-Leninist notions like “the struggle of classes, of the armed vanguards” as outdated and

misplaced (Janet Afary and Kevin Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 239): “Thus, it is true that as an ‘Islamic’ movement, it can set the entire region afire, overturn the most unstable regimes, and disturb the most solid ones. Islam -- which is not simply a religion, but an entire way of life, an adherence to a history and a civilization -- has a good chance to become a gigantic powder keg, at the level of hundreds of millions of men. Since yesterday, any Muslim state can be revolutionized from the inside, based on its time-honored traditions.” (p. 241).

A second problem is that Foucault’s concept of resistance lacks a notion of emancipation. As the autonomist Marxist John Holloway argues, “in Foucault’s analysis, there are a whole host of resistances which are integral to power, but there is no possibility of emancipation. The only possibility is an endlessly shifting constellation of power and resistance” (Holloway, *Change the World without Taking Power*, London: Pluto, 2002, p. 40).

In their 2011 introduction to a volume of Herbert Marcuse’s writings, Douglas Kellner, Clayton Pierce and Tyson Lewis raise a similar point, albeit in a more philosophical vein: “With the rise of postmodernism and the discourse of power – in particular Foucault’s critique of the Great Refusal – it has become fashionable to replace revolution with the terms resistance – or even with micro-resistance. Resistance is here internal to power, and ultimately produced by power, thus challenging power from the inside.” Kellner et al. go on to quote Slavoj Žižek’s criticism that such a concept of resistance “does not allow for the radical gesture of the thorough restructuring of the hegemonic symbolic order in its totality” (Introduction to Marcuse, *Philosophy, Psychoanalysis and Emancipation*, NY: Routledge, 2011, p. 63).

IV. Marcuse’s Great Refusal

What did Marcuse actually mean by the “Great Refusal”? In his 1964 book *One-Dimensional Man*, which sold very widely in France in the years before the publication of Foucault’s *History of Sexuality* in 1976, Marcuse located revolutionary opposition to modern capitalist society not in the employed parts of working classes, but among bohemians, the unemployed, and racial minorities who refused “the rules of the game”:

“Underneath the conservative popular base is the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colors, the unemployed and the

unemployable.... Their opposition is revolutionary even if their consciousness is not. Their opposition hits the system from without and is therefore not deflected by the system.... The critical theory of society possesses no concepts which could bridge the gap between the present and its future; holding no promise and showing no success, it remains negative. Thus it wants to remain loyal to those who, without hope, have given and give their life to the Great Refusal” (Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1964, pp. 256-57).

However much it was expressed in a language of deep pessimism about the human prospect, it is clear that Marcuse’s revolutionary vision encompassed the need to totally overturn the capital relation, the class society upon which it was based, and its noxious byproducts, from aggressive militarism to stultifying social conformity in the consumer society. In short, a total uprooting was needed, however unlikely that might seem as a concrete historical possibility.

Marcuse’s key difference with Foucault was as follows: Unless these forms of resistance became forms of emancipation, linked to a vision of new human relations, they would founder and achieve little or nothing except the gesture of a Great Refusal.

To a considerable extent, Marcuse’s Great Refusal was rooted in the Hegelian notion of negativity, of absolute negativity, wherein a positive is constructed even as the old is being negated. This was of course what Marx had meant in the *1844 Manuscripts* when he termed negativity the “moving and creating principle” of Hegel’s philosophy (Marx, “Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic, in Erich Fromm, *Marx’s Concept of Man*, NY: Ungar, 1961, p. 176).

But Marcuse’s Great Refusal also carried overtones of the Kantian “ought,” wherein the normative and the descriptive undergo a radical separation. This can be seen in Immanuel Kant’s rather abstract critique of war. Where Hegel’s universals were concrete, in the sense of being linked to real possibilities in the given world, Kant’s were more abstract, sometimes just panaceas like “perpetual peace” that he advised warring nations to adopt from his perch as a philosopher, without mapping out any real social forces capable of making such a change.

The generalized “scream” against injustice and oppression with which Holloway begins *Change the World without Taking Power* may also suffer from some of these problems, as when he writes: “The loss of hope for a more human society is not the result of people being blind to the horrors of capitalism, it is just that there does not seem to be anywhere

else to go, any otherness to turn to.... So perhaps we should not abandon our negativity but, on the contrary, try to theorize the world from the perspective of the scream” (p. 9).

V. Dunayevskaya, Marcuse, and Foucault

When viewed from the vantage point of Foucault’s unending constellation of power-resistance-power, Marcuse’s Great Refusal holds some similarities to the critique of twentieth century Marxism articulated by my mentor, the Marxist-Humanist philosopher Raya Dunayevskaya:

“Without such a vision of new revolutions, a new individual, a new universal, a new society, new human relations,” and “without a philosophy of revolution, activism spends itself in mere anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism, without ever revealing what it is for” (Dunayevskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women’s Liberation, and Marx’s Philosophy of Revolution*, NJ: Humanities Press, 1982, p. 194).

Dunayevskaya also conceptualized some very specific oppositional social forces and groups -- rank and file labor, youth, women’s liberation (as it was called then), Blacks and other racial minorities, and Third World national liberation movements -- that would be, if self-mobilized and united, powerful enough to give life to the aspiration for a new society. In contrast, Marcuse’s emancipatory politics in the form of the Great Refusal remained more of an existential attitude without much of a serious possibility of its realization, because its form of negation was indeterminate rather than determinate or specific. (On the lack of a concept of determinate negation in Marcuse’s thought, see Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.)

Moreover, by leaving his Great Refusal at such a high level of indeterminateness, Marcuse opened himself up to the very type of critique that those like Foucault would level at him and at the emancipatory Marxism of the 1960s more generally. According to Foucault, the Great Refusal was a lot of hot air mixed with noble sentiments, as seen in many of the political pronouncements of radical philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre. To Foucault, such philosophers were always ready to take a stand but not to do the intellectual labor necessary to really develop expertise. Recall Foucault’s evocation of the specific intellectual rather than the generalist one like Sartre, something he himself practiced in his prisoner support work of the 1970s, during which he researched and wrote an important book on the prison, *Discipline and Punish*. Of course, that book also came with a lot of

limitations as well, especially in how it minimized the emancipatory currents that were running through the modern Western prison system in the 1970s, as seen most dramatically in the Attica prison uprising of 1971.

VI. Marx and Concrete Universals: The Dialectics of Ethnicity and Class

Does Marx's work – and that of his philosophical mentor Hegel – take us beyond the conundrum left to us by Foucault and even Marcuse and Holloway? Does he offer us emancipatory universals that are really concrete? Even if this is the case, do his universals still speak to us today and can they still guide our practice?

As I have argued in my recent book, *Marx at the Margins*, Marx's critique of capital was both global and local, both universalizing and particularizing. Over four decades, Marx examined the relationship of race, ethnicity, and nationalism to revolution, particularly in Poland, the US during the Civil War, and Ireland. These writings belie the notion that Marx's conceptualization of capitalist modernity constitutes a "totalizing" grand narrative under which the particulars of race, ethnicity, and nation are subsumed.

Take for example, his writings on Ireland of 1869-70, where he connected class with nationalism, race, and ethnicity – a discussion that began with his writings on Poland and on the American Civil War. Inside the First International, Ireland was a major reason behind his break with the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, who did not want the International to get involved in "non-class" issues like the defense of Irish political prisoners. For his part, Marx thought that this issue was intimately connected to the class struggle in Britain. All of this led him to some important theoretical reflections.

By 1870, Marx saw the Irish independence struggle as deeply linked to the struggles of British workers against capital. This is seen in the "Confidential Communication" of March 1870, a rejoinder to Bakunin that he drafted on behalf of the General Council of the International. English working-class consciousness, Marx wrote, was attenuated by anti-Irish prejudice, in a dynamic similar to that of white racism in the US:

"The common English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers wages and the *standard of life*. . . . He views him similarly to how the poor whites of the Southern states of North America viewed black slaves. This antagonism among the proletarians of England is artificially nourished and kept up by the bourgeoisie. It knows that this split is

the true secret of the preservation of its power” (Marx and Engels, *Collected Works* [hereafter MECW], Vol. 21, p. 120; emphasis in original).

Moreover, the Irish independence struggle could, he wrote in this argument with Bakunin, become the “lever” that could pry apart British and thus global capitalism as part of an international revolutionary struggle:

“Although revolutionary initiative will probably come from France, England alone can serve as the lever for a serious economic Revolution.... It is the only country where *the capitalist form*, that is to say, combined labor on a large scale under the authority of capitalists, has seized hold of almost the whole of production.... The English have all the *material* conditions for social revolution. What they lack is *a sense of generalization and revolutionary passion*. It is only the General Council [of the International] that can provide them with this, that can thus accelerate the truly revolutionary movement in this country, and consequently *everywhere*.... If England is the bulwark of landlordism and European capitalism, the only point where official England can be struck a great blow *is Ireland*” (MECW 21: 118-19; emphasis in original, trans. slightly altered).

The last sentence about landlordism referred to Ireland’s revolutionary peasantry, whose opposition to the system was enhanced by a national factor, that the landlord class in Ireland was to a great extent British, not Irish. Ireland was also where the landed aristocracy, part of the British ruling class alongside the industrial capitalists, had important holdings. It is notable that this period was also marked by the emergence of the Fenian Movement, a revolutionary nationalist movement with a strong class dimension directed against Irish as well as British landlords.

VII. Marx: Productive Forces and Leisure Time

Of course, Marx’s core writings examined the capital relation and its overcoming, not national emancipation. After all, that was the point of his discussion of Irish and British labor, of Ireland’s national emancipation and Britain’s working class revolution, both of them of course only potentials. All of this also rested upon the conquests of the capitalist era, especially the building up of the productive forces. As he wrote at length in the *Grundrisse*, these new productive forces created the possibility of creative leisure time for all in place of stultifying toil, if and when capitalism could be overcome:

“The creation of a large quantity of disposable time apart from necessary labor time for society generally and each of its members (i.e. room for the development of the individuals’ full productive forces, hence those of society also), this creation of not-labor time appears in the stage of capital, as of all earlier ones, as not-labor time, free time, for a few. What capital adds is that it increases the surplus labor time of the mass by all the means of art and science... It is thus, despite itself, instrumental in creating the means of social disposable time, in order to reduce labor time for the whole society to a diminishing minimum, and thus to free everyone’s time for their own development” (Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus, NY: Penguin, 1973, p. 708).

Eventually, Marx maintained, this unrealized potential challenges capitalism itself, and the workers move to overthrow it: “Once they have done so... the development of the power of social production will grow so rapidly that... disposable time will grow for all. For real wealth is the developed productive power of all individuals. The measure of wealth is then not any longer, in any way, labor time, but rather disposable time” (p. 708).

For Marx, however, this painful pathway through the capitalist mode of production was not one that all societies had to follow, now that a few key ones had developed those productive forces, albeit amid all the exploitation and alienation of capitalism.

VIII. Marx: Multilinear Pathways of Development and Revolution

At the end of his life, Marx examined the issue of whether Russia and the large agrarian societies of Asia were inevitably destined to modernize in the Western capitalist manner. In his well-known 1881 letter to the Russian revolutionary Vera Zasulich, he concluded that alternate pathways of development were possible. He based his judgment in large part upon the marked differences between the social structure of the Russian village (and often its Asian counterparts), with its communal property and production relations, and the village under Western European feudalism’s somewhat more individualized social relations. He added that his recent studies of Russian society "convinced me that the commune is the fulcrum for a social regeneration in Russia" (Teodor Shanin, *Marx and the Russian Road*, NY: Monthly Review, 1983, p. 124). In the 1882 preface to the Russian edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels suggested that a local uprising sparked by these communal social formations in Russia could form the starting point for a global communist revolution, if such an uprising could link up with the revolutionary labor movement in the Western capitalist lands.

Moreover, Marx made a key philosophical point during one of these discussions, one that challenges the postmodernist accusation (by Jean-François Lyotard and others) that Marx's work constitutes yet another universalizing "grand narrative" or totality in which all particulars are swallowed up. This is also relevant to Foucault's point about "specific cases of resistance" vs. an overarching Great Refusal. It is a point that takes us back as well to the difference between an abstract universal in the Kantian manner and the Hegelian type of concrete universal.

In an 1877 letter responding to a discussion of *Capital* by the Russian writer N. K. Mikhailovsky, Marx defended himself from the charge of unilinearism, of the notion that Russia had to follow the pathway of Britain, first building up its productive forces and only then being able to contemplate concretely the possibility of a truly emancipated, socialist society. In response to his critics, and to his supporter Mikhailovsky's ham-handed attempt to defend him by ascribing to him just such a formalistic theory, Marx denied explicitly that he had developed "a historico-philosophical theory of the general course fatally imposed on all peoples" (*Marx and the Russian Road*, p. 136). This also reversed Marx's position in his 1853 *New York Tribune* writings on India, where he implicitly supported British colonialism as a necessary stage in the modernization of Asia, a position he and Engels also took with regard to China in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848.

Thus, by the 1880s, Marx was not only theorizing very concretely about Russia's revolutionary possibilities in all their specificity, while at the same time linking the Russian peasant-based revolutionary movement to that of the radical labor movement in the West. He was also sketching this philosophically by explicitly denying the need for "a historico-philosophical theory of the general course fatally imposed on all peoples" (*Marx and the Russian Road*, p. 136).

IX. Hegel's Concrete Universals

All of this was rooted in the most critical and revolutionary side of Hegel's legacy, that found not in his more conservative texts like *Philosophy of Right* or *Philosophy of History*, but in his most abstract works like *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Science of Logic*, and *Philosophy of Mind*. As Dunayevskaya has noted: "Precisely where Hegel sounds most abstract, seems to close the shutters tight against the whole movement of history, there he

lets the lifeblood of the dialectic – absolute negativity – pour in” (*Philosophy and Revolution*, NY: Delacorte, 1973, pp. 31-32).

But like Marx, Hegel also avoids abstract universals of the Kantian sort; in fact, he harshly critiques them. Hegel famously attacked “abstract universality,” as exemplified by those who presented things as a “night, in which, as the saying goes, all cows are black” (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, NY: Oxford, 1977, p. 9 [¶16]). Hegel’s barb was directed against those kinds of Enlightenment reason that he regarded as overly formalistic, which conceptualized human experience via categories that neglected historical or cultural variety and particularity. In short, the universal had swallowed up the particular.

At the same time, Hegel’s particulars often point in the direction of the universal. Thus, the slave develops a “mind of his own” in the famous discussion of Lordship and Bondage in the *Phenomenology*, and this is an important step on the development of human consciousness, part of the road of absolute negativity. At the same time, the master’s self-satisfied willfulness and exaggerated sense of his self-importance constituted a cul-de-sac on that same road to the emancipation of human consciousness.

Moreover, with Hegel, the universal can sometimes exert a pull on the particular, steering it toward universal human emancipation. This is not an easy process, and there are many stops and starts. Some of them are gigantic failures, like the Great Terror, which, as Hegel saw it, devoured the French Revolution because it tried to leap too quickly toward absolute freedom. Here, Hegel offers a critique *avant la lettre* of modern totalitarianism and its show trials and purges, from Stalin’s Russia to Nazi Germany to Mao’s China.

The pull of the universal, of the emancipatory future, is always there, even if for the moment driven deep down, beneath the surface of society. For example, at one point – in a statement that infuriates empiricists and realists – Hegel writes that “the fact is, before it exists” (Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller, NY: Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 477). C.L.R. James later articulated this in Marxist terms in his famous expression, “the future that is in the present” (“Dialectical Materialism and the Fate of Humanity” [1947], *Spheres of Existence: Selected Writings*, London: Alison & Busby, 1980, p. 79).

X. Marx and Human Emancipation

Hegel’s concrete universal is undoubtedly related to Marx’s own concept of human emancipation. In 1859, Marx famously described capitalism as merely a part of the “prehistory of human society” (Introduction to the *Critique of Political Economy*, in

MECW, p. 264). This of course rested upon a concept of socialism, and of the emancipation of labor. This theme can be found throughout his work, as in his youthful *German Ideology* (co-authored by Engels) with its vision of communist existence as one where the individual would perform both mental and manual labor, gathering food and also philosophizing. It marks as well his mature theorizing in *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875) about overcoming “the antithesis between mental and physical labor” (MECW 24, p. 87).

Marx alludes to this notion of a fully emancipated human existence not only in various shorter texts, but also throughout the central works of his critique of political economy, from the *Grundrisse* to *Capital*, as Peter Hudis has shown in his *Marx’s Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism* (Leiden: Brill, 2012). In the *Grundrisse*, Marx writes:

“When the limited bourgeois form is stripped away, what is wealth other than the universality of individual needs, capacities, pleasures, productive forces etc., created through universal exchange? The full development of human mastery over the forces of nature, those of so-called nature as well as of humanity's own nature? The absolute working-out of his creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such the end in itself, not as measured on a *predetermined yardstick*? Where he does not reproduce himself in one specificity, but produces his totality? Strives not to remain something he has become, but is in the absolute movement of becoming?” (*Grundrisse*, p. 488).

A decade later, in *Capital*, Marx elaborated his concept of commodity fetishism, wherein human relations are like those between things, totally objectified and instrumentalized. To be sure, this is a distorting lens, but it is also a form of reality, for under capitalism, that is what human relations “really are.” A most chilling passage. And while Marx contrasts the subtle and hidden commodity fetish to the open brutality of feudal domination over the peasantry, his most important contrast is to the not-yet-society that is nonetheless pregnant within capitalism itself. This is where the veil of the fetish that hides the reality of social relations is to be swept away by the self-activity of the working class: “The veil is not removed,” he writes, until the production process changes, “until it becomes production by freely associated human beings and stands under their conscious and planned control” (Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, trans. Ben Fowkes, NY: Penguin, 1977, p. 173, trans. altered). This requires a “material foundation” that has been developed through a long and painful process, over many centuries (p. 173).

Free and associated labor is also the term Marx used to describe the Paris Commune of 1871 in the *Civil War in France*. There, he wrote that the Commune constituted “the political form as last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of Labour” (MECW 22, p. 334). Similarly, as early as 1843, he had written of the difference between merely political and fully human emancipation: “Political emancipation is not the completed contradiction-free form of human emancipation” (“On the Jewish Question,” in Marx, *Early Political Writings*, edited by Joseph O’Malley, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 34; for a recent discussion of the early Marx’s concept of emancipation, see George Comninel, “Emancipation in Marx’s Early Work,” in *Marx for Today*, edited by Marcello Musto, NY: Routledge, 2012, pp. 73-91; see also my *Marx at the Margins* for a discussion of the limitations of Marx’s essay’s characterizations of Jews and Judaism.)

Such a dialectical, prefigurative standpoint is a far cry from Foucault’s concept of a plurality of “resistances,” a concept that fails to present a vision of a future in which such resistances might no longer be necessary.

To be sure, Marx also mentioned “resistance” from time to time, for example, in his discussion of labor’s struggle, against the voracious demands of capital, for a shorter working day: “As soon as the working class, stunned at first by the noise and turmoil of the new system of production, had recovered its senses to some extent, it began to offer resistance, first of all in England, the native land of large-scale industry” (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 390). But he tied it to a broader concept of human emancipation.

Even Holloway, one of Foucault’s most incisive critics from the Left, does not fully elaborate such an emancipatory future at a philosophical level, grounded as he is in a form of dialectical negativity, that of Theodor Adorno, in which the positive in the negative is sidelined if not rejected outright. As Arvind Ghosh and Peter Hudis write:

“What Holloway fails to single out, however, is that for Marx mere negativity by itself does not surmount the fetishism of commodities. In chapter 1 of *Capital*, Marx does not say that that the spell of commodity fetishism can be broken simply through ‘everyday resistance’ or pure negativity. He instead says that the spell of fetishism is broken when we have ‘for a change, association of freely associated men’” (“Can We Change the World without Taking Power?” *Open Space Forum* [India], October 19, 2005 http://www.openspaceforum.net/twiki/tiki-read_article.php?articleId=49). This points to a limitation in Holloway’s notion of the “scream,” as mentioned above.

XI. Concluding Points

(1) The theories of resistance found in Foucault, and also in many contemporary debates, exhibit several problems, among them notions of resistance that fail to distinguish among different types of resistance to power, whether reactionary or emancipatory.

(2) Another problem is that the notion of resistance often implies a sort of circularity or permanence of resistance – and of power – which occludes the possibility of an actual overcoming of capital and the state in a positive, emancipatory manner.

(3) The Great Refusal of Marcuse, which Foucault unjustly attacks, is a key example of a truly emancipatory politics. At the same time, however, Marcuse's Great Refusal is too abstract, with vestiges of Kantian formalism, thus providing an opening to the kind of critique Foucault makes.

(4) A return to Marx after these debates over resistance and emancipation shows that his general dialectic – rooted in Hegel -- is not one of abstract universalism but has plenty of room for the specificities of nation, ethnicity, and race, issues on which he makes important and original contributions. Marx's theorization of race, ethnicity and nationalism in relation to class and to revolution remains very relevant today, as seen for example in the British youth riots of 2011.

(5) Especially in his later writings, Marx theorizes indigenous forms of opposition to capital and their need to connect to the working classes of more technologically developed sectors (and vice versa). The persistence of these issues can be seen most prominently today in parts of Latin America like Bolivia.

(6) Finally, Marx's entire intellectual project is guided by a vision of an emancipated human future. This is the vantage point from which he measures, critiques, and attempts to sublimate or transcend capitalist society.

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