

# Review of: "Footnotes to History: Márkus's Critique of Habermas's Debate with the Budapest School in the Philosophical Discourses of Modernity"

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Not being a specialist of Budapest School nor of Habermas, my review may be limited and the point that I make out may sound marginal in view of the central theme of the article. Nonetheless let me address a few comments from the standpoint where I have relatively a little more specialty.

Above all, it seems agreeable to criticize Habermasian sunderment of the relations of action based on the exclusive play of language from the relations of production, or that of the latter from social relations. It seems that the author of the article tries to illuminate or does illuminate in consequence the Habermasian gesture to refine and requalify the idea of praxis from a more normatively effective direction in discrimination from the Budapest interpretation and grasp of Marx, particularly, Márkus's.

During the discussion, what catches my eye most was the remark on Husserl as to his role. Although it doesn't occupy much space in the article, how to situate Husserl could make a difference in the assessment of the philosophical positions of both parts. It seems to me that the Husserl part is a little too unclear to avoid some confusion.

I first want to remind the fact that the influence of Husserl is as considerable on Habermas as it is on Marcuse or Lukács or the Budapest School in general. I would say, it might be even bigger on Habermas in a way more faithful to Husserlian spirit and motivation, despite Habermas's criticism on Husserl. It sounds to me that the Lukácsian or Marcusean understanding of Husserl's phenomenological concepts of experience and lifeworld is rather much less Husserlian from Husserl's own phenomenological perspective. It seems that they believed to have found a better clue to overcome the strict objectivism imposed upon the traditional understanding of nature as distilled from socio-historical relations in Husserlian phenomenology of experience. Following the author, I have the impression that Márkus himself inherited in the end from that tradition of acceptance of Husserl, in terms of his vindication of the inter-relation between nature-technology/theory- and sociality.

But the idea of practice in Husserl is clearly and exclusively linked with the practice of philosophers, specifically meaning "doing (Western) philosophy" grounded upon the ancient Greek ethos of *theoria*. Experience or lifeworld, when stated in Husserlian phenomenological context, it never just intends to jut out any social, cultural, historical, or whatever kind of 'other' dimension buried or concealed in depth in the structure of nature or scientific world nor just to clarify the inherent connection between the social relations and ideas or forms of nature, etc. Rather Husserl's clear focus is on a visualization of the apriori *dynamis* of reason-logicality- transcendentally absolutely in play in the structure of any

experience, i.e., experience in the widest sense, including historical experience. For Husserl, it is the (pure) theory-making itself that should be the most normative object of practice, in the most ethical sense. In this context, Habermas's 'over-trust' in the universal power of language and obsession with normativity is much more directly attributed to Husserlian understanding of reason and language qua ideality valued as having "timeless meaning and legitimacy."

Now my wonder is the following: if Husserl's theory of practice is equally responsible to any extent for the recapitulation of the idea of practice by both Habermas and the Budapest School, and if the critique of Habermas by Márkus can be justified with an acknowledgement of the influence of Husserl on Budapest School to any extent, isn't it possible that the critique of each other by each other, as analyzed in this article, can contradict themselves? For example, at the end of the article, indicating the "post-modern" position of Márkus vis-à-vis Habermas's "ahistorical universalist teleological" position with respect to rationality and practice, the author also conveys Márkus's historicist attitude toward philosophy in the language of "coherence, scientificity, and meaningfulness"(p.5): philosophy needs to meet such standards, no matter how historically conditioned it should be. Now the very idea of "meaningfulness" directly representing the essence of scientificity, is the founding and ongoing motif of Husserl's phenomenology to build the "ethical world" teleologically functioning upon and toward the scientific-philosophical meaningfulness as a universal ideal norm, which is rather closer to Habermas in my view. How can the historically conditioned conceptual narrative "have a good story and meaningfulness"(p.5) without a presupposition already of a 'universal normative' standard of what it is to be coherent and meaningful? It sounds like that 'being historical' is simply corresponding to "being in a current time" without further qualification. But "being in a current time"—isn't it already somehow a unification of social-cultural spaces and species—experiences-- into and on a universal time line? Then how and how much different is Márkus's position from Habermas's? Where should Husserl stand here?

I hope that I am not to a serious degree mistaken in understanding the subject-matter of this article with the above questions and wonders.