

Two sorts of philosophical therapy: Ordinary language philosophy, social criticism and the Frankfurt school

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journals.sagepub.com/home/psc**Tom Whyman** 

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Abstract

In a recent article, Fabian Freyenhagen argues that we should understand first-generation Frankfurt School critical theory (in particular, the work of Adorno and Horkheimer) as being defined by a kind of ‘linguistic turn’ analogous to one present in the later Wittgenstein. Here, I elaborate on this hypothesis – initially by calling it into question, by detailing Herbert Marcuse’s extensive criticisms of Wittgenstein (and other analytic philosophers of language) in *One-Dimensional Man*. While Marcuse is harshly critical of analytic ordinary language philosophy, he is much more sympathetic to a different sort of ordinary language philosophy, which he unpacks with reference to Karl Kraus. I show how, by getting Marcuse’s criticisms of Wittgenstein and other analytic philosophers, and lauding of Kraus, into view, we can better understand the first generation of the Frankfurt School as having practised a sort of ‘non-quietistic’ philosophical therapy (that may or may not have been the sort of thing that Wittgenstein himself had in mind).

Keywords

Adorno, Frankfurt school, Horkheimer, Marcuse, naturalism

It is a curious quirk of Adorno’s biography that he spent a period of the 1930s at Oxford, where he was working on a study of Husserl supervised by Gilbert Ryle ([Müller-Doohm 2005](#), 192). In a way, Ryle was the obvious supervisor for the refugee Adorno, as Oxford’s leading expert on phenomenology: in 1929, he had reviewed *Sein und Zeit* for *Mind*. But this was no great meeting of minds. Adorno was often frustrated by the philosophical

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environment at Oxford, where according to one letter he felt that ‘I have to reduce my work to a childish level in order to make it comprehensible’ to his colleagues (Müller-Dooch 2005, 193). His studies of Husserl would eventually evolve into the work of published as *Metacritique of Epistemology*, an uncharacteristically dry book nonetheless formative for *Negative Dialectics* – but there always remained a sense of ‘ships in the night’ to Adorno’s time at Oxford, where he arrived too early to see the ordinary language philosophy of Ryle and Austin in full flower, was seemingly too far from Cambridge to have heard much of the later Wittgenstein, and does not appear to have encountered R.G. Collingwood – perhaps the one big Oxford beast Adorno might actually have been receptive to learning something from – at all.

Adorno had arrived at Oxford when he’d been forced to flee Frankfurt following the rise of the Nazis; he left when he was invited by Max Horkheimer to join the Institute for Social Research in exile in New York. For this reason, perhaps the most obvious assessment of Adorno’s time at Oxford is that it represented a sort of lost middle-of-the-decade – as he was forced, by political circumstance, to put the most vital parts of his intellectual project on ice, breaking off the work he had begun as a young lecturer in Frankfurt – ‘The Actuality of Philosophy’, ‘The Idea of Natural-History’ – only for him to finally reap its harvest in the form of the work he completed, often in collaboration with Horkheimer, in the USA: *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *Minima Moralia*, *The Authoritarian Personality* and the *Philosophy of Modern Music*.

But what if, in fact, this way of looking at Adorno’s Oxford period has got it all wrong? What if, actually, the key to Adorno’s entire project – the key, indeed, to the thought of the first generation of the Frankfurt School in general – was always hidden somewhere in something about Adorno’s time in Oxford, as if tucked away at the bottom of a drawer in his lodgings at 47 Banbury Road? (Müller-Dooch 2005, 190).

In his 2023 article, ‘The Linguistic Turn in the Early Frankfurt School: Horkheimer and Adorno’, Fabian Freyenhagen does not exactly make such a suggestion.¹ But it is, I suppose, a thought that might occur, to a suitably situated reader (myself, for instance), in the course of engaging with it.

Specifically, Freyenhagen’s claim in his article is that there is a sort of ‘linguistic turn’ in First-Generation Frankfurt School (henceforth: FGFS) critical theory: a turn which both pre-dates, and differs markedly from, Habermas’s ‘communications-theoretical’ turn. And *here* comes philosophy as it was done in the early to middle part of the 20th century, in the UK: thanks to this first ‘turn’, we can observe – Freyenhagen thinks – observe real affinities between the FGFS, and later Wittgenstein.²

In this article, I will both elaborate on, and reinforce, Freyenhagen’s claim that we can read the FGFS through Wittgenstein. Initially, I will do this as any good dialectician must: by calling it into question. In his article, Freyenhagen reads Adorno and Horkheimer together, as being united by their pursuit of a shared project (Freyenhagen 2023a: 129). But he does not consider the third major theorist associated with FGFS: Herbert Marcuse.³ In chapter 7 of *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse launches the most sustained attack on analytic philosophy that I’ve come across anywhere in the FGFS corpus, arguing that the philosophy of linguistic analysis – as represented most prominently by Ryle, Austin and

Wittgenstein – stands radically opposed to the emancipatory, transformative purpose of philosophy proper.

On the surface, it might seem that if we buy the considerations Marcuse brings to bear in *One-Dimensional Man*, we are thereby foreclosed from affirming any meaningful affinity between the FGFS and Wittgenstein. However, I argue, Marcuse's attack on the analytic tradition in fact points the way forward – to seeing how both the analysis of 'ordinary language', and the associated ideal of 'philosophical therapy', can in fact be directed *towards* the emancipatory purpose insisted on by the Frankfurt School. Implicitly, Marcuse uses *One-Dimensional Man* to describe 'good' and 'bad' versions of both ordinary language philosophy and philosophical therapy. I explain how Marcuse is conceiving of these things via the work of Karl Kraus, who Marcuse names as the patron saint of the 'good' sort of ordinary language philosophy. I then suggest that we can use Marcuse's models of 'good' ordinary language philosophy and philosophical therapy to illuminate what Adorno was doing in *Minima Moralia*. The overall effect is both to deepen, and to reinforce, what Freyenhagen claims about the FGFS 'linguistic turn'.

I. Freyenhagen on the 'Linguistic Turn' in Horkheimer and Adorno

Freyenhagen makes his claims regarding a 'linguistic turn' in FGFS in the context of what we might think of as the 'Classic Objection' to FGFS theory: Habermas's suggestion, which has exercised the scholarship ever since,⁴ that what Adorno and his generation were doing was 'self-undermining' because, 'by engaging in a (purportedly) totalizing critique of modern reason, it makes itself impossible' (Freyenhagen 2023a, 127). By attributing a linguistic turn to the FGFS, Freyenhagen hopes to diffuse the Classic Objection: not by showing, as Habermas would like, that the FGFS are able to identify the solid 'normative foundations' on which their critique of reason rests (Freyenhagen 2023a, 139) but rather, by providing clear grounds for supposing that the Classic Objection would simply not have troubled Adorno et al. at all. In short, Freyenhagen hopes to show the Habermasian fly its way out of Adorno's fly-bottle.

So how might the attribution of a linguistic turn to the FGFS be able to do this? Freyenhagen takes his cues from Horkheimer's 1947 book *Eclipse of Reason* – an often neglected product of the wartime period during which he was collaborating closely with Adorno.⁵ As Freyenhagen notes, the title of the text refers to the eclipse of non-instrumental, 'objective' reason, which is supposed to be somehow a property of the world, by its 'subjective' double: something which is associated with both (a) abstract classification, inference and deduction, and (b) the selfish (and ultimately destructive) pursuit of means-end goals (Freyenhagen 2023a, 130–1 and n. 9). According to Horkheimer, subjective reason has 'eclipsed' its objective counterpart insofar as it has become socially dominant. Subjective reason, under whose domain falls things like the formation of scientific laws, has made it possible to us to produce weapons like the atom bomb, which have the power to destroy all life on earth: the eclipsing of objective reason has blinded us to the many reasons why we *shouldn't* (Freyenhagen 2023a, 132).

One obvious way of parsing Horkheimer's distinction between subject and objective reason would be to associate it with a form of *naturalism*. In his 2023 article, Freyenhagen doesn't mention 'naturalism' by name – but certainly, the view he attributes to the FGFS would bear some comparison to the 'negative Aristotelianism' he previously attributed to Adorno in his 2013 book *Adorno's Practical Philosophy: Living Less Wrongly*.⁶ According to Freyenhagen, a conception of normativity can be read to be at work in Adorno, such that goodness and badness are indexed to certain objective facts about what it is for us to either flourish, or be restricted in our flourishing, *qua* members of the human species (Freyenhagen 2013, 232ff). As Freyenhagen specifies, Adorno's other methodological commitments prevent him from affirming anything in particular about the human good (Freyenhagen 2013, 240). But the thought here is that our society has provided us with a wealth of evidence about the human *bad*. This is enough both for moral philosophy – and, crucially, for the critique of moral philosophy (Adorno 2001, 167) – to get going.⁷

On this reading then, the realm of 'objective reason' would be Horkheimer's term for things like facts about the human species – what determines, ultimately, what it would be for us to live well (or badly). 'Subjective' reason (classification and means-end rationality) *ought* to be guided by, grounded in, objective reason (it ought to relate to the facts). Instead, objection reason – or at any rate, certain of its claims – has been forgotten, and this has allowed the subjective reason of *individual* thinking subjects to run rampant – with increasingly disastrous results.⁸

Here is where the 'linguistic turn' comes in. If objective reason has been eclipsed, then there is a very real and pressing question as to how we're supposed to be able to be able to *access* it: how, that is, we are supposed to be able to critique the subjective reason that is now, the FGFS tell us, running rampant. This worry, indeed, resonates with a major objection to ethical naturalism more generally: the idea that ethical naturalism is inherently conservative, since naturalists have a tendency to point to whatever the dominant practice is right now, then pay it the exaggerated compliment of *calling* it natural – falsely asserting that it can never shift.⁹

This is also why the Classic Objection can seem compelling. The FGFS want to critique reason – but according to them, 'reason' has now become so damaged that it has turned into its opposite. So then *everything* – including the FGFS's own critique of reason – must thereby lapse into irrationality. And so Habermas's neo-Kantian, transcendentalist approach starts to seem as if it has a lot to recommend it: for the Habermasian, language always already contains certain structures of rationality, thus normativity, inherently within it. And this then gives us enough 'normative resources' for the critical theory of society and culture to get going.

This would, indeed, be one version of a 'linguistic turn': as Freyenhagen specifies, a 'linguistic turn' need only require accepting two basic tenets. Firstly, that 'all philosophy has to be (also) philosophy of language' – thus that 'there is no standpoint outside of language to grasp the world'; secondly that 'There is no private language' – thus that 'intersubjectivity is unavoidably inscribed into language and thereby philosophy' (Freyenhagen 2023a, 129). Where Adorno and Horkheimer's supposed linguistic turn differs from Habermas's, however, is that, while he argues that language has a normative *structure*, for Adorno and Horkheimer, language is substantively inseparable from the

expression of objective truth. While certain (diminished) forms of language might be used to *conceal* the claims of objective reason, it is also only through and with language that we might combat this.

One challenge that Freyenhagen faces in his article is that textual evidence for the hypothesis that the FGFS conceived of their project as involving something like a ‘linguistic turn’ is pretty scant – certainly not close to enough to provide us with an open-and-shut case. But to illustrate the position, Freyenhagen is able to quote the following pregnant passage from *Eclipse of Reason*:

“Philosophy must become more sensitive to the muted testimonies of language and plumb the layers of experience preserved in it. Each language carries a meaning embodying the thought forms and belief patterns rooted in the evolution of the people who speak it. It is the repository of the variegated perspectives of prince and pauper, poet and peasant” (Horkheimer 2013, 117–118).

Meanwhile, in a 1941 letter to Adorno, which Freyenhagen also cites, Horkheimer wrote:

“Language intends, quite independently of the psychological intention of the speaker, the universality that has been ascribed to reason alone. Interpreting this universality necessarily leads to the idea of a correct society” (quoted by Freyenhagen in his 2023a, 136).

Now, as Freyenhagen concedes (Freyenhagen 2023a, 133–134), one perhaps more obvious way to read a passage like this would be to defer to Walter Benjamin, and thus to the Jewish, mystical philosophy of language Benjamin engaged with via the influence of his friend Gershom Scholem: the idea of the world as some great text, which one might assemble into the news of the coming of the Messiah.¹⁰ Freyenhagen, however, opts to read Horkheimer’s remarks about language and objective reason through the prism of the later Wittgenstein.

The later Wittgenstein’s project can be understood as a sort of endless attempt to view the world as an alien might: to attempt to figure out *why* the things we take for granted, the things that typically make simple and obvious sense to us – the ways that we apply and extend rules; conventions like the direction an arrow points in; or the fact that when we point to an object and name it a child will know that this is supposed to be the object’s name – *actually* make any sense at all. Invariably, Wittgenstein’s answer to these sorts of questions, is that what makes sense here makes sense relative to a *practice* – with all of our practices ultimately grounded in the type of creature that we are, in what Wittgenstein identifies as the human ‘form of life’. Thus:

“To imagine a language is to imagine a form of life” (*Investigations* part 1, s. 19).

“Giving orders, asking questions, telling stories, having a chat, are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing” (*Investigations* ‘part 1, s. 25).

In short then, we can read the later Wittgenstein as advocating a form of humanism, in which all meaning occurs only as part of our species-life. ‘If a lion could speak’, after all, ‘we would not understand it’ (*Investigations* Part 2, s. 327) – a rational lion would apply *its* reason very differently to how *we* apply *ours*. We can extend this thought to say that for Wittgenstein, reason – ‘objective reason’, as Horkheimer would have it – is an *essentially human thing*. And this humanistic Wittgenstein obviously bears some pretty strong affinities with the Aristotelian Adorno that Freyenhagen describes in his book.

So it is, too, with the FGFS linguistic turn. For Freyenhagen, the idea is that by reading *Eclipse of Reason* through Wittgenstein, we can arrive at a position whereby ‘as inseparable from the human life form, language contains traces of “the structure of the reality” of this life form, and thus, of (at least part of) objective reason’ (Freyenhagen 2023a, 139). This is how the FGFS intend to accomplish their critique of (subjective) reason: by mining language, as a *specifically human practice*, for the fragments of objective, *human* rationality inevitably sedimented in it. Just as when the sun is eclipsed by the moon, it hasn’t actually been eaten by a dragon: for all the claims of objective reason might be *obscured* by its subjective counterpart, that does not mean (thankfully) that they thereby cease to exist.

2. Marcuse contra analytic philosophy

But can we really affirm such a fundamental affinity between FGFS and later Wittgenstein? As Freyenhagen acknowledges, when Adorno does write about Wittgenstein – which is rarely – he is typically uncomplimentary (Freyenhagen 2023a, 134). Thus, in one illustrative passage, from his 1965-66 *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, Adorno proclaims:

“I would maintain that Wittgenstein’s statement that ‘What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence’ is the anti-philosophical statement *par excellence*. We should insist instead that philosophy consists in the effort to say what cannot be said” (Adorno 2008, 74).

While Wittgenstein is credited in *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology* as ‘the most reflective positivist’, (Adorno 1976, 3), intellectually superior to his Vienna (wannabe) acolytes, he remains a ‘supporter of scientism’ and a ‘subjectivist’ (Adorno 1976, 6) – very much someone who was, Adorno seems to be implying, *not on our side*. In his article, Freyenhagen dismisses these worries by noting that they refer to the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* – thus that one must remain open to the idea that the work of Adorno and his colleagues bore some profound affinities with the later Wittgenstein, for the simple reason that neither was aware of the other’s work. But this argument is not *entirely* borne out by the FGFS corpus. In particular, in chapter 7 of his 1964 book *One-Dimensional Man*, Herbert Marcuse dissects Oxford and Cambridge analytic philosophy at some length: with a particular focus on Ryle, Austin and the Wittgenstein of *Philosophical Investigations*.

Marcuse, of course, was never as close a collaborator with either Adorno or Horkheimer as they were with each other – and after World War II, instead of returning to

Frankfurt, he remained in the USA, where he became a prominent supporter of the student movement in California (a marked contrast with Adorno's late-life clashes with the student movement in West Germany¹¹). Nonetheless, he is generally recognised as the third major theorist associated with the FGFS – and what is more, his critique of the analytics often reads as a more fleshed-out version of Adorno's dismissive take on Wittgenstein's thought cited above. There is therefore good reason for reading Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* critique of analytic philosophy as forming part of the shared corpus of FGFS – just as Freyenhagen reads Adorno and Horkheimer as sharing a philosophical corpus.¹²

The general thrust of Marcuse's critique is that analytic philosophy is 'positive', where thought proper ought to be 'negative'. As a typical member of the FGFS, Marcuse believes that philosophy ought to be able to engage in the emancipatory critique of society and culture as it presently exists. Analytic philosophy, by contrast, seeks in Marcuse's view to purge thought of any of the resources that we need in order for this critique to take place.

Where real empiricism would be attentive to the sensual, material dimensions of experience which society represses, 'the empiricism of linguistic analysis moves within a framework which does not allow such contradiction – the self-imposed restriction to the prevalent behavioural universe makes from an intrinsically positive attitude' (Marcuse 1991, 176). Analytic philosophy aims to 'reduce the scope and truth of philosophy'. It 'leaves the established reality untouched', because it 'abhors transgression' (Marcuse 1991, 177). It turns 'philosophic thought', into 'affirmative thought' (Marcuse 1991, 176); it 'stigmatizes non-positive notions as mere speculation, dreams or fantasies' (Marcuse 1991, 177).

"Austin's contemptuous treatment of the alternatives to the common usage of words, and his defamation of what we 'think up in our armchairs of an afternoon'; Wittgenstein's assurance that philosophy 'leaves everything as it is' – such statements exhibit, to my mind, academic sado-masochism, self-humiliation, and self-denunciation of the intellectual whose labour does not issue in scientific, technical or like achievements" (Marcuse 1991, 177–8).

According to Marcuse, analytic philosophy works against the real ends of philosophical thought in two related ways. The first is that it insists on sticking to the analysis of 'ordinary language'. Thus, Marcuse cites examples such as Wittgenstein devoting 'much acumen and space to the analysis of "My broom is in the corner,"' (Marcuse 1991, 179)¹³ or Austin pouring over 'two different ways of being hesitant' at aching length (Marcuse 1991, 180–1).

For Marcuse, this obsession with 'ordinary discourse' is 'the token of a false concreteness' (Marcuse 1991, 179). The tone of analytic philosophy 'seems to move between the two poles of pontificating authority and easy-going chumminess' (Marcuse 1991, 178) – a tone illustrated by Wittgenstein's 'condescending' use of 'du' in *Investigations*, or Ryle's high-faluting presentation of "'Descartes's Myth'" as the "official" doctrine about the relation between body and mind', which is then followed by 'the preliminary demonstration of its "absurdity," which evokes John Doe, Richard Roe, and what they

think about the ‘Average Tax-payer’ (ibid.). This has the effect, Marcuse notes, of militating against intellectual non-conformity: ‘it ridicules the egg-head’ (Marcuse 1991, 179). Austin, Ryle and their ilk work by installing themselves in the position of authoritarian public school headmasters, who rile up their charges to bully, marginalise and generally otherwise abuse the swottier boys who don’t bother so much with sports. At other times, analytic philosophers are portrayed by Marcuse as setting themselves up as an ‘investigating committee’, enforcing a sort of intellectual McCarthyism and/or show-trial Stalinism.

“The intellectual is called on the carpet. What do you mean when you say...? Don’t you conceal something? You talk a language which is suspect. You don’t talk like the rest of us, like the man in the street, but rather like a foreigner who does not belong here. We have to cut you down to size, expose your tricks, purge you” (Marcuse 1991, 196).

The point of analytic ordinary language philosophy is supposedly to confine philosophical inquiry to the stuff of ‘real life’. But the way it goes about this, Marcuse argues, mutilates life as lived. Ordinary language philosophers, as Marcuse notes, want to confine their investigation to ‘our common stock of words... “all the distinctions men have found worth drawing”’ (Marcuse 1991, 92). But what, he asks, is this ‘common stock’?

“Does it include Plato’s ‘idea’, Aristotle’s ‘essence’, Hegel’s *Geist*, Marx’s *Verdinglichung* in whatever translation? Does it include the key words of poetic language? Of surrealist prose? ... If not, then a whole body of distinctions which men have found worth drawing is rejected, removed into the realm of fiction or mythology” (Marcuse 1991, 192–3).

One important dimension to Marcuse’s complaint here is that analytic ordinary language philosophy is given over to what Adorno would have identified as a form of ‘actionism’ – the compulsion to ‘do things’ with words which would comfort them with the thought that they are not ‘only’, for instance, sitting in their armchairs coming up with concepts.¹⁴ What the analytics identify as ‘ordinary discourse’ means phrases like ‘my broom is in the corner’ – phrases that, Marcuse claims, are ultimately ‘fulfilled’ by ‘causing a behavioural reaction’: the observation is made so that the addressee will fetch the broom (Marcuse 1991, 183).¹⁵ By contrast, in philosophical concepts such as ‘substance’, ‘idea’ or ‘man’:

“[...] no such transformation of meaning into a behavioural reaction takes place or is intended to take place. The word remains, as it were, unfulfilled – except in thought, where it may give rise to other thoughts” (Marcuse 1991, 183–4).

Over time, of course, ‘through a long series of meditations within a historical continuum, the proposition may help to form and guide a practice’ (Marcuse 1991, 184). But even then, the proposition itself would remain ‘unfulfilled’ (ibid.) – for Marcuse, thought always spins at least somewhat autonomously from how things are in the world. This,

after all, is the source of philosophy's power. Compare Adorno in his *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*:

"This speculative surplus [in philosophical thought] that goes beyond whatever is the case, beyond mere existence, is the element of freedom in thought, and because it is, because it alone does stand for freedom [...] it represents the *happiness* of thought. It is the element of freedom because it is the point at which the expressive need of the subject breaks through the conventional and canalized ideas in which he moves, and asserts himself" (Adorno 2008, 108).

In particular, Adorno tells us, what this allows us to do, is to think in a way aimed not at the 'justification or amelioration is suffering', but rather 'the expression of suffering' (ibid.). To proclaim a philosophy which speaks suffering and so gives voice to the very real ways in which human beings, right now, are being denied the ability, or possibility, to flourish. In this way, philosophy is able to express what Horkheimer calls 'objective reason'.

This is something that Marcuse emphasises against analytic ordinary language philosophers as well. By restricting itself so wholeheartedly to what it assumes is the 'ordinary', 'everyday' world, Marcuse notes, analytic philosophy omits 'the larger and denser context in which the speaker speaks and lives', removing its analysis 'from the universal medium in which concepts are formed and become words' (Marcuse 1991, 184).

"This larger context of experience, this real empirical world, today is still that of the gas chambers and concentration camps, of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, of American Cadilacs and German Mercedes, of the Pentagon and the Kremlin, of the nuclear cities and the Chinese communes, of Cuba, of brainwashing and massacres. But the real empirical world is also that in which all these things are taken for granted or forgotten or repressed or unknown, in which people are free" (Marcuse 1991, 185).

Instead of giving voice to suffering, analytic philosophy tends to confuse *attempts* to express it with the problem itself – as if all would be well in the world, if misery-guts intellectuals like the FGFS would only quit complaining. Marcuse discovers this in the second key way that analytic philosophy works against real philosophical thought: its commitment to 'philosophy as therapy'.

While Wittgenstein does get mentioned in the passages from chapter 7 of *One-Dimensional Man* where Marcuse attacks ordinary language philosophy, the nature of the attack makes it clear, to any suitably qualified reader, that the main targets are Austin and Ryle: it is *their* banteringly bullying headmasterliness and implacable devotion to the Oxford English Dictionary that Marcuse is attacking, with Wittgenstein simply being damned by some affinities, in ways that might not always be entirely fair.¹⁶ But here, the main target is (and here Freyenhagen should perhaps start to worry) *very much* the later Wittgenstein.

Marcuse describes the ostensibly ‘therapeutic’ function of analytic philosophy as consisting in the ‘correction of abnormal behaviour in thought and speech, removal of obscurities, illusions, and oddities, or at least their exposure’ (Marcuse 1991, 174). And who is the patient here? ‘Apparently a certain sort of intellectual, whose mind and language do not conform to the terms of ordinary discourse’ (Marcuse 1991, 188). As Wittgenstein tells us, the idea is for philosophy (as therapy) to ‘leave everything as it is’, by giving itself (and the philosopher) peace. ‘So that it is no longer tormented by questions which brings itself in question’ (ibid, quoting *Investigations* Part 1, s. 133). As Marcuse comments, there is ‘no more useless “discovery”’ (ibid.).

Here Marcuse’s main objection to ‘philosophy as therapy’ is that it tends to a certain quietism that is distinctively Wittgensteinian. Wittgenstein sees himself as dissolving ‘pseudo-problems’: the aim is to no longer have to do philosophy anymore. But Marcuse sees philosophical problems as objective reflections of problems in the life-world: a view that, incidentally, he very much shares with Adorno.¹⁷ The philosopher, thus, as a human being engaged with the world as it is, *really ought* to be tormented by certain urgent questions. These simply *are not* silly neuroses which need to be forgotten or dissolved.

As Marcuse has it, by focussing their efforts on exorcising philosophical thought as such, analytic philosophy ends up ‘creat[ing] more illusory problems than it has destroyed’ (Marcuse 1991, 191). All ‘therapeutic philosophy’ amounts to, in the end, is a repression.¹⁸

3. Karl Kraus as ordinary language philosopher

At this point, it might be hard to see how there could be any real affinities between FGFS and later Wittgenstein. *Perhaps* the notion of ‘the human form of life’ is useful for illuminating something about Horkheimer’s conception of ‘objective reason’ – but only, at most, as something very loosely analogous to it. Marcuse’s critique of Oxford and Cambridge analytic philosophy shows us that there is now common ground: the analytics and the FGFS diverge in terms of their method, their general orientation towards philosophy, and how they conceive of the relation between thought and world.

But there is more to Marcuse’s critique than the purely negative dismissal of analytic approaches to philosophy that I’ve reported in [section 2](#) above. On the score of both ordinary language philosophy, and the idea of ‘philosophy as therapy’, Marcuse implicitly distinguishes between the ways he believes these things are practised by analytic philosophers, and what they *could be*, if they were undertaken by someone with the sort of emancipatory orientation associated with the FGFS. There are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ forms of ordinary language philosophy, and there are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ forms of philosophy as therapy.

The bad sort of ordinary language philosophy has already been described at some length above. It works by enforcing an arbitrary distinction between ‘ordinary’ uses of language and its opposite – in order to police ‘obscure’, ‘unclear’ philosophical uses of language, which point the way beyond the world as it presently exists. The effect, deliberate or otherwise, of the practice of this sort of ordinary language philosophy is thus to

enforce a particular ideology: to leave us trapped in the world as we are informed it is by the powers-that-be.

“Describing to each other our loves and hatreds, sentiments and resentments, we must use the terms of our advertisements, movies, politicians and best sellers. We must use the same terms for describing our automobiles, foods and furniture, colleagues and competitors – and we understand each other perfectly” (Marcuse 1991, 198).

But this function of the bad sort of ordinary language philosophy can also, Marcuse implies, indicate *via negativa* what a better sort of ordinary language philosophy *might* do. As he goes on to write, immediately following the passage just quoted above:

“This must necessarily be so, for language is nothing private and personal, or rather the private and personal is mediated by the available linguistic material, which is societal material. But this situation disqualifies ordinary language from fulfilling the validating function which it performs in analytic philosophy” (ibid.).

What is interesting about this passage is that in it, Marcuse indicates his commitment to something like what Freyenhagen would identify as a ‘linguistic turn’: effectively declaring that there is ‘no such things as a private language’, while also implying that there is nothing completely outside it. This ‘linguistic turn’ is also, plausibly, intended by Marcuse as the basis for social critique. Earlier on the same page, he has told us:

“[...] the spoken phrase is an expression of the individual who speaks it, and of those who make him speak as he does, and of whatever tension or contradiction may interrelate them. In speaking their own language, people also speak the language of their masters, benefactors, advertisers. Thus they do not only express themselves, their own knowledge, feelings, and aspirations, but also something other than themselves” (ibid.).

Thus Marcuse indicates that he believes – as Horkheimer does – that language has some sort of rationality *other* than the public, surface-level one ‘hidden’ inside it. By analysing language, then, we can figure out some deep truth about the world in which it has been uttered, or written.¹⁹

The ‘good’ sort of ordinary language philosophy consists in the attempt to do just this. ‘The desideratum’, Marcuse tells us, is to do something quite in line with what Horkheimer says in the *Eclipse of Reason*: ‘to make the established language itself speak what it conceals or excludes, for what is to be revealed and denounced is operative *within* the universe of ordinary discourse and action’ (Marcuse 1991, 200).

For Marcuse, the patron saint of the ‘good’ sort of ordinary language philosophy is Karl Kraus, the Viennese journalist and cultural critic whose work was beloved by the FGFS. In the German-speaking world, in his own time, Kraus was a writer of immense stature, a name regularly under consideration for the Nobel Prize – but in English he is barely known, even among serious scholars of his most prominent fans.²⁰ This is the product of a number of factors – Kraus is very much one of those German writers who

‘writes about German’, and so is rather impenetrable to non-Germanists; his work is irreducibly rooted in the social and political milieu of the Vienna of his day – but perhaps the most important one is the fact that he published as a blogger might have in the mid-00s, or a journalist with a substack might today: exclusively writing for *Die Fackel*, a newspaper which he edited (and eventually almost exclusively authored) himself.²¹ His thought is thus expressed across a vast range of articles written for a popular audience of his contemporaries; nothing so readily consumable as one or two great books.

In a 1931 essay, Walter Benjamin describes Kraus as a writer for whom language and morality are indelibly linked. ‘Nothing is understood about this man until it has been perceived that, for necessity and without exception, everything – language and facts – falls, for him, within the sphere of justice’ (Benjamin 2005, 443). Kraus dedicated his work to the ‘moral [...] vital’ ‘hatred’ of ‘the tribe of journalists’, (Benjamin 2005, 433) whose constant chatter and dissemination of subjective ‘opinions’ (as opposed to objective ‘judgements’) threatened to do what Marcuse accused analytic philosophy of: to eliminate the power of resistance to a world without redemption. Here Benjamin quotes Kraus:²²

“Is the press a messenger? No: it is the event. Is it speech? No: life. The press not only claims that the true events are its news of events, but it also brings about a sinister identification that constantly creates the illusion that deeds are reported before they are carried out. [...] We have placed the person who is supposed to report outbreaks of fire, and who ought doubtless to play the most subordinate role in the State, in power over the world, over fire and over the house, over fact and over our fantasy” (Benjamin 2005, 440).²³

‘To the ever-repeated sensations with which the daily press serves its public’, Benjamin comments, ‘[Kraus] opposes the eternally fresh “news” of the history of creation: the eternally renewed, uninterrupted lament’ (ibid.).

What this actually *amounts to*, it turns out, is a method very much analogous to the one which Freyenhagen attributes to Adorno and Horkheimer. For Benjamin, Kraus’s central slogan can be found in a 1929 poem, ‘After Thirty Years’, in which he writes: ‘You came from the origin – the origin is the goal’ (Benjamin 2005, 451). This line, as Benjamin points out, ‘is received by the ‘Dying Man’ as God’s comfort and promise’ (ibid.): at once the haunting promise of the necessity of death, and the ultimate comfort, the thought that the world, in all its horror and confusion, amounts on some level to ‘a wrong, deviating, circuitous way back to paradise’ (ibid.).

This is the perspective, Benjamin tells us, from which Kraus proclaims his judgement on the Vienna of his day (Benjamin 2005, 453–4). As we might recognise, keeping Freyenhagen’s discussion of Adorno and Horkheimer in mind, what it amounts to is a form of naturalism: Benjamin refers to Kraus’s invocation of ‘the origin’ as the perspective of a sort of objective reason; the ‘goal’ that all critique must tend towards. From entirely within language, we must attempt circuitously to find our way to the right world, of which our language as it presently exists forbids us to speak.

This reading would be borne out by Adorno’s remark in *Negative Dialectics* that, while Kraus’s maxim may sound conservative – and may indeed have been intended by Kraus

himself to express a sort of *conservative* social critique – it also expresses something that is, for Adorno’s own method, vital: ‘namely, that the concept “origin” ought to be stripped of its static mischief’ (Adorno 1973, 155).

“Understood this way, the line does not mean that the goal had better make its way back to the origin, to the phantasm of ‘good’ nature; it means that nothing is original except the goal, that it is only from the goal that the origin will constitute itself. There is no origin save in ephemeral life” (Adorno 1973, 155–6).

In his ‘Introduction’ to *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, Adorno briefly invokes Kraus in a very similar way to how Marcuse does in *One-Dimensional Man*: describing him as someone who developed a ‘physiognomy of language’ in which ‘aesthetic criticism’ takes on a ‘social dimension’ (Adorno 1976, 45). While acknowledging Kraus as an influence on Wittgenstein, Adorno also implies that Kraus’s way of seeing language is the right way to transcend Vienna Circle positivism (Adorno 1976, 44).²⁴

As a model for how this sort of critique *might* be in play (with whatever political intention) in Kraus, consider his 1909 piece ‘The World of Posters’. Here, Kraus begins by describing how, as a child, advertising posters seemed to portray the world as it objectively was: an advert for something called ‘Schlesinger’s Collar Support’ convinced him that the world was almost entirely made up of people ‘whose lives are centred about [the problem of] achieving the final consolidation of collar and cravat’ (Kraus 1984, 44). Over the years, of course, he has come to realise that this is not quite how humanity is – but it remains difficult to sort out the fantasy given to us in adverts from the reality, as the faces, the objects and the landscapes he has seen in posters have indelibly conditioned his understanding of what there ‘really’ is beyond them.

“Is there life beyond the posters? When a train takes us outside the city, we do see a green meadow – but this green meadow is only a poster which that lubricant manufacturer has concocted in league with nature in order to pay his respects to us in the country as well” (Kraus 1984, 45).

There is, strictly speaking, no escape – and yet, fragments of redemption can still be made to shine through the muck. Towards the end of the piece, Kraus declares that he is fleeing ‘to the paradise of dream’, where a ‘hypnagogic’ arrangement of mascots and advertising slogans arrange themselves around him until eventually he closes by describing his vision of an advert for a gun dealer. The slogan: ‘Be your own murderer!’ (Kraus 1984, 47). In this, Kraus dissects the ‘hidden’ meaning behind advertising posters – what is only available to him in a dream – in order to expose the ways in which they work to conceal reality from us when we are awake.

Benjamin and Adorno’s assessment of Kraus and his method is mirrored by what Marcuse writes about him in *One-Dimensional Man*. For Marcuse, what is important is that Kraus shows us ‘how an “internal” examination of speech and writing, of punctuation, even of typographical errors can reveal a whole moral or political system’

(Marcuse 1991, 200). ‘The crimes against language, which appear in the style of the newspaper, pertain to its political style’ (ibid.). The style appears on the surface, displayed in a single piece of writing that can be attributed to the individual: but in it, an entire supra-individual system of ideas can be read (Marcuse 1991: 201).²⁵ Think for instance of a contemporary example such as the use of the phrase ‘officer-involved shooting’ in American newspapers. Thus, to give one example of a headline from the *New York Times*: ‘An armed man who entered a Southern California church in between Masses died on Sunday after an officer-involved shooting, the authorities said’ (Frazier 2020): or, in lay terms, a man entered a church with a gun and the police responded by shooting him dead. The widespread usage of this euphemism can be seen to be symptomatic of a regime which refuses to hold the actions of law enforcement to account – to the point that it can’t even describe them in honest terms.

Though there is no escape from language, what Kraus teaches us is that we can only properly understand ‘ordinary’ discourse, ‘ordinary’ life if we assume something like an ‘extra-linguistic’ perspective. Ordinary language philosophy must therefore reside in the realm of the political, of the moral – or at the very least the aesthetic (Marcuse 1991, 202).

This perspective ‘outside language’ is only – Marcuse clarifies – *superficially* an external one, as really it concerns the ‘internal development of meaning’ (ibid.). Analytic ordinary language philosophers give us John Doe and Richard Roe, x and y, in completely abstract situations – completely divorced in fact from the world of ‘ordinary usage’. ‘The real universe of ordinary language’, Marcuse proclaims, ‘is the struggle for existence’ (Marcuse 1991, 203). The ‘good’ sort of ordinary language philosophy is able to show up, to cast judgement on, this struggle – as I will proceed to show in [section 4](#).

4. Philosophical therapy from the standpoint of redemption

In *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse’s identification of a ‘good’ sort of ordinary language philosophy is then immediately followed by his identification of a way in which philosophy as therapy might be made to serve the interests of emancipatory critique.

Marcuse’s remarks on this score are, unfortunately, rather sketchy and programmatic. But the general thought here takes its cues from the idea that the ‘clarification of concepts’, associated with ordinary language philosophy, can sometimes be genuinely useful. We do indeed inhabit ‘an ambiguous, vague, obscure universe, and it is certainly in need of clarification’ (ibid.). Presumably, given that this must be done by an ‘ordinary language philosophy’ with a specifically emancipatory purpose in mind, the idea here is that we ought to ‘clarify’ concepts by showing how their subjective meaning, how they appear from the perspective of ‘subjective reason’, fails to match up with how things ‘objectively’ are.

Adorno’s work is replete with examples of this sort of critique: take, for instance, the aphorism ‘The Health Unto Death’ from *Minima Moralia*, where he clarifies how the pursuit of what we call ‘health’, is in fact making us sick.

When we think of ‘healthy’ person, we might think (in 1940s California just as today) of someone physically fit, with full thick hair and nice white teeth, ‘outdoors-y’ (with a ‘healthy’ sun-kissed glow to their skin), mentally ‘stable’ and calm. But as Adorno notes,

this image of ‘health’ is one entirely bound up with an accompanying conception of ‘normality’ – with the ‘normal’ those who are best able to conform to a society that we know is, ultimately, sick. The ‘healthy’ are thus those who, *subjectively*, rationally choose to go along with an order that is, *objectively*, deeply and fundamentally irrational.

“The libidinal achievements demanded of an individual behaving as healthy in body and mind, are such as can be performed only at the cost of the profoundest mutilation... The regular guy, the popular girl, have to repress not only their desires and insights, but even the symptoms that in bourgeois times resulted from repression” (Adorno 2005, 58).

“All the movements of health,” Adorno writes, “resemble the reflex-movements of beings whose hearts have stopped beating” (Adorno 2005, 59). “The very people who burst with proofs of exuberant vitality could easily be taken for prepared corpses, from whom the news of their not-quite-successful decease has been withheld for reasons of population policy” (ibid.).

To underscore the interrelation between ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ reason that Adorno is highlighting in this passage, he writes:

“The only objective way of diagnosing the sickness of the healthy is by the incongruity between their rational existence and the possible course their lives might be given by reason” (Adorno 2005, 59).

Such ‘emancipatory’ clarification, Marcuse comments, ‘may well fulfil a therapeutic function, and if philosophy would become therapeutic, it would really come into its own’ (Marcuse 1991, 203). The proper therapeutic task of philosophy is, again, a ‘political’ one (ibid.). Philosophy approaches its ‘therapeutic’ goal:

“[...] to the degree to which it frees thought from its enslavement by the established universe of discourse and behaviour, elucidates the negativity of the Establishment, [...] and projects its alternatives” (ibid.).

Any effect of philosophy doing this will be felt ‘in thought only’. ‘It is ideology, and this ideological character is the very fate of philosophy which no scientism and positivism can overcome’. Nevertheless, this ‘merely’ ideological effort ‘may be truly therapeutic’, insofar as through it philosophy will be able ‘to show reality as that which it really is, and to show that which this reality prevents from being’ (ibid.).

I have two main comments on this. The first is that what this makes clear, is that Marcuse’s criticisms of Wittgenstein’s version of ‘philosophical therapy’, are really just directed at his choice of patient. Traditional Wittgensteinian therapy tends towards quietism, because it acts as if the problem is the philosopher, and *not* their world. A different sort of philosophical therapy, however, could help us clarify how all sorts of delusions, all sorts of ‘pseudo-problems’, emerge not internally to philosophy but outside of it – as a result of how we have been ideologically conditioned to see the world. The ‘good’ sort of philosophical therapy in fact aims at essentially the same thing as the ‘bad’

version did: it seeks to *get reality in view*. The appropriate therapeutic exorcism of *philosophy*, then, is one which clarifies, to the philosopher, that it is from the present emergency that they ought to be taking their cues.

As philosophy, of course, this will not necessarily lead to any *particular* course of action – but it might help inform the actions of those whose vocation is to take it.²⁶ To invoke a contemporary example: philosophy might take its cues from the climate crisis. Its task then would be to clarify what the climate crisis is, what ‘nature’ is, what ‘the human’ is, how ‘the human’ ought to relate to non-human nature, how we ought to think about ethical duties across generations, and so on and so forth. None of this need imply any particular course of action, or even entail that any meaningful action was possible any longer – but it might help both oneself and others re-conceive how they relate to the planet; how they might then be able to take action to combat the climate crisis, and so on and so forth.²⁷

The second main comment I have is that, as with the use of ordinary language analysis to ‘clarify’ certain concepts above, it strikes me that Adorno is doing something very similar in *Minima Moralia*. This can most obviously be seen on examination of the opening ‘Dedication’ and ‘Finale’ – the two sections which bookend the work.

In ‘Dedication’, Adorno tells us that in each of the three parts of his book, ‘the starting-point is the narrowest private sphere, that of the intellectual in emigration’ (Adorno 2005, 18). His reason for grounding his analysis in the narrowest possible subjective sphere is that, while for Hegelian reasons it remains true to say that isolated subjectivity is anathema to objective truth (Adorno 2005, 16), our world today is so bad, so wrong, that ‘the large historical categories are no longer above suspicion of fraud’ (Adorno 2005, 17). The idea then is that by attending to subjective experience, one might find some way of doing what Marcuse tells us the ‘philosophical therapist’ ought to be doing: freeing thought from its enslavement by the ‘established universe’ in order to see reality as it really is. Hence, the sort of ‘ordinary language philosophy’ that Adorno undertakes in an aphorism such as ‘The Health Unto Death’; hence, the full scope of *Minima Moralia* more generally, with its meditations on things like tact, astrology, housing, car doors, slippers – and so on and so forth.

Meanwhile, in ‘Finale’, Adorno tells us that:

“The only philosophy that can be responsibly practised in the face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption.[...] Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light. To gain such perspectives witho’ut velleity or violence, entirely from felt contact with its objects – this alone is the task of thought” (Adorno 2005, 247).²⁸

This effort, Adorno writes, is ‘the simplest of all things’ – for the reason that ‘the situation calls imperatively for such knowledge’. But it is also, he remarks, ‘the utterly impossible thing, because it presupposes a standpoint removed, even though by a hair’s breadth, from the scope of existence’ (ibid.). It is therefore something that we might only

strive for: the ‘standpoint’ of redemption is never something that we can know directly, with apodictic certainty that we have assumed.

In this passage, then, we see how the ‘philosophical therapy’ that Adorno is pursuing in *Minima Moralia* (or, perhaps better: that we can attribute to the Adorno of *Minima Moralia*) is not *only* aimed at the clarification of what is ‘really’ there. Rather, it aims at just what Marcuse tells us the true therapist should: to clarify what is really there, *in order* to be able to grasp how it might otherwise be.

It is thus entirely plausible, in my view, to suppose that Adorno – and other FGFS thinkers – were, at least at times, engaged in the therapeutic analysis of ‘ordinary’ language and experience, clarifying the true meaning and significance of our everyday experience of the world in light of some ‘objective reason’ that is itself linguistic in nature, grounded in some notion of the human species analogous to that which Wittgenstein names with the idea of the human ‘form of life’. Philosophical therapy is good, worthwhile, and it works – it’s just that society, not the philosopher, needs to be the patient.²⁹

5. Conclusion

This has been an article about the Frankfurt School, elaborating on the idea that it might be productive to read them through certain notions from the history of analytic philosophy. I have argued that it is indeed productive to attribute to the FGFS a method analogous to that of the later Wittgenstein, as well as the likes of Ryle and Austin – so long as we construe the notions of ‘ordinary language philosophy’ and ‘philosophical therapy’ the right way.

But this is also an article that has achieved, I hope, something else in addition to that. The Frankfurt School is, after all, something other than a historical curiosity – Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Benjamin were engaged in an endeavour that remains urgent and vital today. Understanding what they were doing can thus help us understand how philosophy *ought* to be done right now. In this article, I have sketched the model of a *non-quietistic form of philosophical therapy*. My hope is that this model can be lifted from this article, and from the specific context of the early Frankfurt School, and be applied more generally.³⁰

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Notes

1. Indeed: in correspondence he has distanced himself from it very firmly!
2. Freyenhagen links what he is doing in his article to other work on Wittgenstein and the Frankfurt School, in particular Crary 2018; Demmerling 1994.

3. The ‘fourth’ being Walter Benjamin – relegated numerically by dint of never having been an official member of the Institute for Social Research. If we’re numbering the rest of them, then Adorno is first – as his philosophical work is the deepest and of the most lasting importance.
4. For more on this problem and its history, see [Tom 2019](#).
5. Freyenhagen calls it a ‘neglected or maligned’ text, and indeed speaks generally as if most scholars recognise it as being ultimately a bit incoherent ([Freyenhagen 2023a](#), 129).
6. The connection is made more explicit in a related article, [Freyenhagen 2023b](#).
7. Not everyone would agree with this reading, of course. I can offer no detailed defence of it here. Hopefully, however, the discussion of the ‘linguistic turn’ in FGFS can help show us why, as a reading, it is *prima facie* plausible.
8. Note that, while Freyenhagen primarily cites *Eclipse of Reason*, this is far from a thought that is anathema to the rest of Adorno and Horkheimer’s work. Something like this distinction is operative from *Dialectic of Enlightenment* all the way through to *Negative Dialectics*.
9. For more on this (and why I think this objection to ethical naturalism doesn’t work), see [Tom 2018](#).
10. Benjamin will re-appear in this article as part of the discussion of Kraus in [section 3](#).
11. For this, see Freyenhagen 2014.
12. I would not go so far as to claim that this is *always* a useful thing to do – I do not think that Adorno would accept everything Marcuse wrote in *An Essay on Liberation*, for example. It is just a useful assumption to operate under for my purposes here. As will also be seen, Adorno briefly invokes Karl Kraus against Wittgenstein in a very similar way to how Marcuse does in his ‘Introduction’ to *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*.
13. The reference is to *Investigations* part 1, s. 60.
14. See [Adorno 2005](#): 290ff.
15. This mirrors Wittgenstein’s own discussion of the phrase: Wittgenstein notes the curiosity of the fact that we might make – might even *paradigmatically* make – such an observation intending a specific behavioural response (*Investigations* part 1, s. 60).
16. One major scholarly criticism of Marcuse would be that he fudges Austin, Ryle and Wittgenstein into a single homogenous tradition – where in fact, Austin in particular could be very dismissive of the later Wittgenstein himself (see [Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman 2022](#), 168–9).
17. See, for instance, the overall thrust of his treatment of Kant in his lectures on *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*.
18. There are of course many different ways of interpreting the later Wittgenstein – here I will largely stick to reporting Marcuse’s view.
19. As yet of course, Marcuse’s specific way of putting this point has only committed him to the idea that language conceals objective *unreason*, not ‘reason’ as such. But if we cross-reference Adorno, and his ‘meta-ethical negativism’ as Freyenhagen calls it ([Freyenhagen 2013](#), 3 ff) and ‘negative Aristotelianism’, we can probably argue that the two amount to the same thing: objective reason is implied, if not directly, by its opposite.
20. The most readily-available collection of his writings that I know of is the 1984 reader *In These Great Times*, edited and translated by Harry Zohn (himself also a prominent translator of Benjamin).

21. To extend the blogger comparison: perhaps it is possible to think of Kraus as an early-20th century Austrian Mark Fisher. As a satirist, skewering the excesses and hypocrisies of his day, he is often compared to Jonathan Swift.
22. Unfortunately, he does not provide a citation.
23. Perhaps the time is ripe for major interest in Kraus to suddenly flower in English: certainly to me, from my position in the UK, this quote feels almost uncannily timely.
24. Adorno does not develop these remarks much further (his discussion gives way to a comparison of Kraus and Freud). But Marcuse was present at some of the *Positivist Dispute* discussions in Heidelberg in 1963 – so there is clear evidence of cross-pollination here (others may be better-placed to determine with whom this understanding of Kraus may have originated).
25. Notably, the quote from the 1941 letter from Adorno to Horkheimer, quoted by Freyenhagen and quoted by me (from him) in [section 1](#) above, continues: ‘When it serves the status quo, language must therefore find that it consistently contradicts itself, and this is evident from individual linguistic structures themselves’ ([Freyenhagen 2023a](#), 136).
26. Those people might be philosophers *too*, of course. The FGFS tend more to insist on philosophy being able to operate autonomously from practice, than they do on a strict division of labour between philosophers and activists. But no philosopher should be *forced* to be an activist, either.
27. Compare Freyenhagen’s discussion of this point in his [2023a](#), 144ff.
28. For those who, like me, have never come across the word ‘velleity’ elsewhere beyond this translation: apparently it means ‘a wish or inclination not strong enough to lead to action’.
29. It is beyond the scope of this article to consider the question of how closely this notion of philosophical therapy matches Wittgenstein’s own understanding of such. But for more on this, including the possible influence of Marx on Wittgenstein, see [Lovibond 2022](#).
30. For more on this, including the possibility of bringing Marx into the discussion, see [Tom 2022](#).

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