

object, the unity of theory and practice, the historical changes in thought, etc.—are absent from our knowledge of nature.¹³⁸

Lukács was, to be sure, correct in protesting Engels' naive assimilation of history to nature, but he himself erred in the opposite direction by separating them too categorically.

Restricting dialectics to history and society was, however, essential for his argument: only by doing so could Vico's *verum-factum* principle be invoked as the answer to the antinomies of bourgeois thought. Otherwise, Lukács would have been forced to confront the fact that Kant's distinction between noumena and phenomena had referred to objects in the natural world, which could not be construed as objectifications of a creator—subject. Hegel had been able to assume that they were such objectifications because of his pantheistic objective idealism. Lukács, contrary to some interpretations,¹³⁹ could not, with the result that nature outside of man was reduced to a kind of residual status in his system and one that was abandoned to a positivist methodology. When nature did affect man, Lukács could only see it filtered through the same methodology that applied to the study of society and history. In his 1925 review of Wittfogel's *The Science of Bourgeois Society*, Lukács sternly repeated this point:

For the Marxist as an historical dialectician both *nature* and all the forms in which it is mastered in theory and practice are *social categories*; and to believe that one can detect anything supra-historical or supra-social in this context is to disqualify oneself as a Marxist.¹⁴⁰

That man might be construed as being rooted in a natural reality, as well as capable of transcending it through history, Lukács chose to ignore. Focusing solely on the "second nature" that was reified history, he neglected to probe the role of the "first nature" in human life, a mistake for which Western Marxists of very different persuasions were to take him to task.¹⁴¹ With

138. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 24.

139. Alfred Schmidt, *The Concept of Nature in Marx*, trans. B. Fowkes (London, 1971), pp. 69–70. Schmidt takes Lukács ambiguous remark that "nature is a social category" to mean that the subject of history actually creates nature. For a defense of Lukács against this charge, see Arato, "Lukács' Theory of Reification," p. 41, and Feenberg, *Lukács, Marx and the Sources of Critical Theory*, p. 205. Feenberg offers a suggestive improvement of Lukács' weak position on nature in the last two chapters of his book. It is similar to that offered in another recent consideration of the problem: Fred P. Dallmayr, *Twilight of Subjectivity: Contributions to a Post-Individuist Theory of Politics* (Amherst, Mass., 1981), chapter 3.

140. Lukács, *Political Writings, 1919–1929*, p. 144. Wittfogel's position seems to have been more subtle than Lukács had understood. See G. L. Ulmen, *The Science of Society: Toward an Understanding of the Life and Work of Karl August Wittfogel* (The Hague, 1978), p. 48f.

141. The realization among Western Marxists that Lukács had handled the question of nature inadequately began immediately in the work of Gramsci and Korsch. See Gramsci, "Critical Notes on an Attempt at Popular Sociology," in *Selections from the Prison Note-*

the exception of Ernst Bloch, who adopted the neo-Hegelian belief that nature could itself ultimately be seen as a subject, they generally chose to emphasize the non-identical dialectic of subject and object that encompassed both history and nature. The consequences of this shift for their concepts of totality will be discussed later in our narrative.

Lukács' hostility to the dialectics of nature and his inability to mediate nature and history in a non-idealistic way reflected in part that critical attitude towards science evident in his pre-Marxist works. As we have seen, in *Soul and Form* he had denigrated works of science in comparison with works of art for being infinite, open, instrumental and formless. In criticizing scientific psychology, he had attacked its posing of an infinitely regressive series of motivations rather than understanding the immanent meaningfulness of a monumental gesture. He was no less hostile to bourgeois sociology for the same reasons. Science, in short, was incapable of grasping reality as a totality. In *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács added the further reproach that science was an inherently contemplative enterprise, the witnessing by a detached observer of a process outside of his control. Once again Engels was singled out for special criticism in this regard:

Engels' deepest misunderstanding consists in his belief that the behavior of industry and scientific experiment constitutes praxis in the dialectical, philosophical sense. In fact, scientific experiment is contemplation at its purest. The experimenter creates an artificial, abstract milieu in order to be able to *observe* undisturbed the untrammelled workings of the laws under examination, eliminating all irrational factors both of the subject and the object.¹⁴²

For Lukács, to view society through the eyes of the scientist was thus to be complicitous in its reification; for such an allegedly neutral point of view was incompatible with the engaged practice that would overthrow the dualism of subject and object and create a normative totality.

In his 1967 preface, Lukács specifically retracted the equation of science with contemplation,¹⁴³ but he still insisted that Marxism was irreducible to the methodology of the natural sciences. In his posthumously published *The Ontology of Social Being*, Lukács conceded that

books, trans. and ed., Quinon Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York, 1971), p. 448. The editors try in an unpersuasive footnote to rescue Lukács from Gramsci's charge. See Korsch, "The Present State of the Problem of 'Marxism and Philosophy': An Anti-Critique" in *Marxism and Philosophy*, trans. with intro. Fred Halliday (New York and London, 1970), p. 122.

142. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 132.

143. *Ibid.*, p. xx.

Above, all, social being presupposes in general and in all specific processes the existence of inorganic and organic nature. Social being cannot be conceived as independent from natural being and as its exclusive opposite, as a great number of bourgeois philosophers do with respect to the so-called "spiritual sphere."¹⁴⁴

But he then added immediately thereafter that

Marx's ontology of social being just as sharply rules out a simple, vulgar materialist transfer of natural laws to society, as was fashionable for example in the era of "social Darwinism." The objective forms of social being grow out of natural being in the course of the rise and development of social practice, and become ever more expressly social. This growth is certainly a dialectical process, which begins with a leap, with the teleological project in labor, for which there is no analogy in nature. . . . With the act of teleological projection in labor, social being itself is now there.¹⁴⁵

This leap out of nature into social being, the "retreat of the natural boundary," as Marx put it,¹⁴⁶ remained for Lukács the crucial step for mankind. It justified his continued stress on the applicability of the dialectical method, with its mediation of subject and object, primarily to history alone.

Lukács' privileging of history over nature, his emphasis on subjective consciousness over objective matter, his premature confidence that the proletariat would emulate its most radical wing, and his reliance on an expressive view of totality to resolve the antinomies of bourgeois culture were all obvious indications of the euphoric mood engendered by the events of 1917 and their immediate aftermath. To some, and Lukács seems to have been among them, the end of the realm of necessity was close at hand and the beginning of the realm of freedom not far behind. When the euphoria ended, by 1923 or 1924, theoretical revisions were inevitable. The later essays in *History and Class Consciousness*, with their shift to a more "realistic" appraisal of the role of the vanguard party and their critique of "organic" theories of revolution, already registered a subtle transformation of Lukács' position. By 1926, he had left behind virtually all residues of his "infantile leftism."¹⁴⁷ In the intervening three years, Lenin had died, the German revolution shared the unsuccessful fate of the Hungarian, all attempts to establish workers' councils had miscarried, the Comintern had concluded that capitalism had entered a period of

144. Lukács, *The Ontology of Social Being: Marx's Basic Principles*, trans. David Fernbach (London, 1978), p. 7.

145. *Ibid.*

146. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 9.

147. For good discussions of Lukács' development in the mid-twenties, see Michael Löwy, Georg Lukács, and Ferenc Feher, "Lukács in Weimar." Arato and Breines agree with Löwy's general argument, but want to push the date of reconciliation back before 1926. See their discussion, p. 199.

"relative stability," and Stalin's doctrine of "socialism in one country" had displaced any thoughts of a "permanent revolution." Lukács himself had completed his move away from the adventurist Béla Kun, whom he accused of fostering bureaucratic degeneration within the Hungarian Party,¹⁴⁸ to the more moderate Jenő Landler. His defense of the German Party's ill-fated "March Action" of 1921 was his last major expression of support for a radical, maximalist policy on the international scene.¹⁴⁹

In direct political terms, Lukács' move rightward was most explicitly demonstrated in the so-called "Blum Theses" of 1928—Blum was his Party name—which were a draft program for the Hungarian Party.¹⁵⁰ Following the lead of Landler, who had recently died, Lukács argued for a democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants based on the moderate slogan of "the republic." Unfortunately, his timing was inopportune as the Comintern, stung by its defeats in China and England, suddenly shifted leftward in the following year. All united-front policies, whether from above or below, were denounced, and the Social Democrats were branded "social fascists." Although Lukács had no use for this new maximalist turn, he accepted the rebuke of the Executive Committee of the Hungarian Communist Party and gave up active politics for what proved to be almost three decades. He would later cite the example of Korsch's ostracism from the KPD and his own (very dubious) belief that staying within the Communist movement was the only way to fight Fascism to explain his self-criticism.¹⁵¹ But unlike his earlier turn away from Left sectarianism, this new shift, he contended, had been for tactical reasons alone. The basic impulses of the Blum Theses were continued in the literary criticism that occupied him during the remainder of the Stalinist period.¹⁵² To

148. Lukács' movement away from Kun's position began as early as 1919 with his implicit criticism of bureaucratization in his essay "Party and Class," reprinted in *Political Writings, 1919–1929*. Here his criticism may be seen as still leftist in origin. By 1922, in the essay "The Politics of Illusion—Yet Again!" reprinted in *Political Writings, 1919–1929*, Lukács had added the rightist epithet "adventurist" to his denunciation of Kun's policies. Lukács was not alone in shifting from an extreme left position to a more moderate one. According to Tókes, other "survivors of the Szamuelly-led left opposition" (p. 215) were among the members of the Landler faction.

149. See his essay of 1921, "Spontaneity of the Masses, Activity of the Party," reprinted in *Political Writings, 1919–1929*.

150. Lukács, *Political Writings, 1919–1929*, p. 227f.

151. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. xxx. What makes this argument less than compelling is the fact that the left turn of the Comintern during these years meant that Communists were more hostile to the Social Democrats than to the fascists. The disastrous policy of "after Hitler, us" meant that they were far more interested in undermining the Weimar Republic than in preventing a Nazi takeover.

152. Löwy, *Georg Lukács*, p. 201. For a modification of this argument, see Russell Berman, "Lukács' Critique of Brecht and Ortwahl: A Political Account of an Aesthetic Debate of 1931–1932," *New German Critique* 10 (Winter 1977). Berman argues that Lukács' up-

what extent he compromised with Stalin solely out of tactical considerations has been debated ever since, although as Löwy has argued,¹⁵³ he felt most comfortable when Stalin followed a popular front strategy close to his own inclinations.

Theoretically, Lukács' movement away from *History and Class Consciousness* can be traced in four short works written in the aftermath of its controversial reception: *Lenin, A Study in the Unity of His Thought*, a review of Bukharin's *Historical Materialism*, a longer review of a new edition of Lassalle's letters, and an extended essay entitled "Moses Hess and the Problems of Idealist Dialectics."¹⁵⁴ In these works, the expressive use of totality so central to the argument of *History and Class Consciousness* and, accordingly, to the origins of Western Marxism, was quietly set aside in favor of a more complicated, but ultimately less coherent, alternative. Although it is arguable that Lukács returned to certain of the attitudes expressed in *History and Class Consciousness* shortly before his death,¹⁵⁵ the revised position he had formulated by 1926 remained more or less a permanent part of his mature work.

Lenin was hastily written in February, 1924, to commemorate the loss of "the greatest thinker to have been produced by the working-class movement since Marx."¹⁵⁶ It was also probably designed to head off the accusations of heresy stimulated by *History and Class Consciousness* that Lukács saw coming. Virtually all residues of his ultra-leftist sectarianism were purged from the argument; instead, Lenin's "Realpolitik" (a term, to be sure, Lukács had approvingly used as early as 1920)¹⁵⁷ was invoked as an antidote to the utopian musings of the Left sectarians. Instead of "revolutionary culturalism," which reduces politics to a means, Lukács firmly asserted the primacy of the political. The role of the state, he argued, was far more important than any ideological agitation in the class struggle. He praised Lenin's theory of the vanguard party with few of those Luxemburgist qualifications evident in at least the early essays of *History and Class Consciousness*. Although the soviets were still lauded as the locus of dual power under a bourgeois regime and the means by which the split

between economics and politics was overcome, they were severed entirely from any notion of majoritarian democracy, for "it must always be remembered that the great majority of the population belongs to neither of the two classes which play a decisive part in the class struggle, to neither the proletariat nor the bourgeoisie."¹⁵⁸ This generalization, clearly based on the Russian experience but not entirely wrong for Germany either, may have been a subtle acknowledgement of the fact that the soviets were themselves only an expression of an "aristocracy of labor," the skilled workers who were to be swamped by the mass of unskilled labor brought into the factories by the changes in capitalist production introduced in the 1920s.¹⁵⁹ But it was clearly at odds with the theoretical basis of *History and Class Consciousness* with its premise of the proletariat as an immutably universal class. In the long run, so Lukács expected, it would achieve that status, but for the present, its class consciousness was still too inchoate to allow it to realize the role of subject and object of history.

Lenin, however, was by no means a clean break with *History and Class Consciousness*. Lukács, for example, chose to ignore entirely Lenin's grudging reflection theory of consciousness in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* and interpreted Leninism instead as a "hitherto unprecedented degree of concrete, unschematic, unmechanistic purely-praxis-oriented thought."¹⁶⁰ He further argued, as he had in "What is Orthodox Marxism?," that "Historical materialism is the theory of the proletarian revolution. It is so because its essence is an intellectual synthesis of the social existence which produces and fundamentally determines the proletariat; and because the proletariat struggling for liberation finds its clear self-consciousness in it."¹⁶¹ And most importantly for our purposes, he praised Lenin for grasping the concrete totality of social relations, without having known of Lenin's wartime reading of Hegel. Lukács sensed a strong Hegelian element in his political practice.

But Lukács' view of Hegel and the notion of totality had undergone a subtle revision. In *Lenin*, he did, to be sure, retain his earlier belief in a longitudinal totality:

158. Lukács, *Lenin*, p. 66.

159. Piccone, p. 115. It should be noted here that the term "aristocracy of labor" was first used by Lenin to describe those elements of the working class bought off by the benefits of selective capitalist amelioration. In fact, in the revolution of the immediate post-war era, it was this group that tended to be most radical. See E. J. Hobsbawm, "Lenin and the 'Aristocracy of Labor,'" in *Revolutionaries: Contemporary Essays* (New York, 1973) for a discussion of Lenin's usage.

160. Lukács, *Lenin*, p. 88.

161. Ibid., p. 9. In his 1967 Postscript to *Lenin*, Lukács singled out this belief as demonstrating "the prejudices of the time" (p. 90).

153. Löwy, p. 202.

154. Georg Lukács, *Lenin, A Study in the Unity of His Thought*, trans. Nicholas Jacobs (Cambridge, Mass., 1971); the three essays are all reprinted in *Political Writings, 1919-1929*.

155. Löwy, p. 205f.

156. Lukács, *Lenin*, p. 9.

157. See the essay "Opportunism and Putschism" reprinted in *Political Writings, 1919-1929*, p. 76.

For every genuine Marxist there is always a reality more real and therefore more important than *isolated* facts and tendencies—namely, *the reality of the total process*, the totality of social development.¹⁶²

But no longer did he try to equate that totality with the objectifications of a creator—subject. Perhaps anticipating Josef Reval's pointed observation in his 1924 review of *History and Class Consciousness* that if only the proletariat was the subject and object of history, there could not have been an original creator—subject of the historical process,¹⁶³ Lukács disentangled his longitudinal view of totality from his earlier expressive one. In accepting Lenin's realistic assessment of the need to forge alliances between oppressed groups, an assessment that led to the success of the Russian Revolution in contrast to its Hungarian counterpart, Lukács moved to what might be best called a modified "decentered" or non-genetic view of totality. No longer was the proletariat the meta-subjective totalizer of history.

Not surprisingly, his recent structuralist critics would find in *Lenin* a significant advance over *History and Class Consciousness*.¹⁶⁴ That this new concept of totality with its implicit jettisoning of Vico's *verum-factum* principle cast into doubt Lukács' resolution of the antinomies of bourgeois culture, neither he nor his later structuralist opponents remarked. Nor did Lukács himself immediately recognize the tension between his assertion that "historical materialism is the theory of the proletarian revolution" and his admission that the revolution was not a purely proletarian one. In his later work, as his 1967 postscript to *Lenin* made clear, Lukács did recognize that a choice had to be made, and he made it in a way very different from those who, like Korsch or the Council Communists, remained wedded to the belief that theory reflected practice:

Without orientation towards totality there can be no historically true practice. But knowledge of the totality is never spontaneous; it must always be brought into activity 'from the outside,' that is theoretically.

162. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

163. Reval's important review has been translated with an introduction by Ben Brewster in *Theoretical Practice* 1 (January, 1971). Merleau-Ponty recognized the significance of Reval's objection in *Adventures of the Dialectic*:

The proletariat "projects" a subject into the past which totalizes the experience of the past and undoubtedly projects into the empty future a subject which concentrates the meaning of the future. This is a well-founded "conceptual mythology," but a mythology, since the proletariat is not truly able to enter into a precapitalist past or a postcapitalist future. The proletariat does not realize the identification of subject or history. It is nothing but the "carrier" of a myth which presents this identification as desirable. This extension offered by Reval reduces Lukács' philosophical effort to nothing because, if the proletariat is only the carrier of a myth, the philosopher, even if he judges this myth to be well-founded, decides this in his profound wisdom or unlimited audacity, which becomes a court of last appeal. (p. 54)

164. Jones, "The Marxism of the Early Lukács," p. 50f. See also Robin Blackburn and Gareth Steedman Jones, "Louis Althusser and the Struggle for Marxism," in Howard and Klare, eds. *The Unknown Dimension*, p. 281.

The predominance of practice is therefore only realizable on the basis of a theory which aims to be all-embracing. But, as Lenin well knew, the totality of being as it unfolds objectively is infinite, and therefore can never be adequately grasped.¹⁶⁵

These admissions were a far cry from the optimistic assumptions underlying *History and Class Consciousness*. Even the notion of "imputed class consciousness," which salvaged the theoretical consistency of that book, was replaced by a more realistic confession that theory did not express practice, even on the level of "objective possibility," but led it instead. As we will see, the Western Marxists were sharply divided over the implications of this position, implications which Lukács himself had not yet fully grasped in 1924.

Lenin was written at a time when Lukács still thought Bolshevism and a variant of Hegelian Marxism were comparable. In his critique of Bukharin's *Theory of Historical Materialism*, which appeared in the *Grünberg Archiv* in 1925, Lukács expressed his continued adherence to a philosophically informed Marxism on essentially Hegelian lines. Like the review of Wittfogel that was published in the same issue of the *Archiv*,¹⁶⁶ the essay was directed against a scientific Marxism that naturalized the dialectic and overemphasized the autonomy of technological factors in the historical process:

The closeness of Bukharin's theory to bourgeois, natural-scientific materialism derives from his use of "science" (in the French sense) as a model. In its concrete application to society and history it therefore frequently obscures the specific feature of Marxism: that all economic or "sociological" phenomena derive from the social relations of men to one another. Emphasis on false 'objectivity' in theory leads to fetishism.¹⁶⁷

The political implications of this position, Lukács hinted, were passive and fatalistic: "Bukharin's basic philosophy is completely in harmony with a contemplative materialism."¹⁶⁸ Lukács did not notice that *The Theory of Historical Materialism* was in fact written in the fall of 1921 when, as Stephen Cohen points out,¹⁶⁹ Bukharin was advocating radically activist "war communism" programs. And oddly enough, by 1925, Bukharin was identified with the more gradualist wing of the Soviet lead-

165. Lukács, *Lenin*, p. 99.

166. Reprinted in *Political Writings, 1919-1929*.

167. Lukács, *Political Writings, 1919-1929*, p. 136. For a defense of Bukharin against Lukács (and Gramsci), see Maurice A. Finocchiaro, "Philosophical Theory and Scientific Practice," *Studies in Soviet Thought* 21, 2 (May, 1980).

168. Lukács, *Political Writings, 1919-1929*, p. 142.

169. Stephen F. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography, 1888-1938* (New York, 1973), p. 109.

ership, advocating a coalition with the peasants in a manner very similar to Lukács' own argument in his later "Blum Theses."

What makes Lukács' review of Bukharin particularly important for our purposes is its critique of Bukharin's attempt to interpret Marxism as a general sociology:

As a necessary consequence of his natural-scientific approach, sociology cannot be restricted to a pure method, but develops into an independent science with its own substantive goals. The dialectic can do without such independent substantive achievements; its realm is that of the historical process as a whole, whose individual, concrete, unrepeatable moments reveal its dialectical essence precisely in the qualitative differences between them and in the continuous transformation of their objective structure. The *totality* is the territory of the dialectic.¹⁷⁰

What Lukács was asserting here was the distinction between historical and philosophical versions of Marxism, which were based on the idea of totality, and sociological ones, which substituted the notion of system, often understood as an analogue of a biological organism. Bukharin's book had, in fact, developed an equilibrium theory of society that saw social systems tending towards stability in a manner similar to biological adaptation.¹⁷¹ Outside of the Bolshevik movement, other Marxists, most notably the neo-Kantian Austro-Marxists around Max Adler,¹⁷² had contended that Marxism was a sociology. In this review, Lukács began a long tradition of Western Marxist attacks on the sociologization of Marxism, a tradition to which Korsch, Gramsci, the Frankfurt School, and Lefebvre made perhaps the most notable contributions.¹⁷³ All later attempts to find parallels between Marxist notions of totality and such sociological positions as the functionalism of Talcott Parsons were ignorant of the critique Lukács and other Western Marxists had made of Bukharin and his successors.¹⁷⁴

In 1925 Lukács also reviewed for the *Grünberg Archiv* Gustav Mayer's new edition of Ferdinand Lassalle's letters. The concept of totality played only a very marginal role in Lukács' argument, which was aimed primarily at discrediting Lassalle as "the theoretician of the bourgeois revolution."

170. Lukács, *Political Writings, 1919–1929*, pp. 139–140.

171. Cohen, p. 116.

172. See, for example, Adler's essay "The Sociological Meaning of Marx's Thought" in *Austro-Marxism*, trans. and ed. Tom Bottomore and Patrick Goode (Oxford, 1978).

173. Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy, passing; Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 243–45, 425–430; Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell and others (New York, 1972), p. 190f; Henri Lefebvre, *The Sociology of Marx*, trans. Norbert Guterman (New York, 1968), pp. 3–24.

174. For a discussion of this issue, see Alan Swingewood, *Marx and Modern Social Theory* (New York, 1975), chapter 8. Swingewood rejects the identification of Marxism with functionalism, but tries to salvage its non-philosophical, scientific status. For an attempt to rescue sociology from the contention that it is inherently anti-dialectical, see Alvin W. Gouldner, *For Sociology*.

tion."¹⁷⁵ The reason for this judgment, Lukács contended, was the extent of Fichte's influence on Lassalle's philosophical development. Rather than emphasizing the progressive moments in Fichte's activist philosophy, as he had done in *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács now attacked him for being naively utopian and believing that the Idea was active in history. In contrast, Hegel was praised for being far more aware of the concrete relations of his own epoch:

The Hegelian notion of "reconciliation," the culmination of the philosophy of history in the present, implies—for all that it is politically reactionary and ends up philosophically and methodically in pure contemplation—a more profound connection between the logical categories and the structural forms of bourgeois life.¹⁷⁶

Here for the first time Lukács emphasized the idea of "reconciliation" with reality, which was to be a frequent theme in much of his later work. Although he always maintained that this idea should be understood as contradictory, he nonetheless insisted, as he put it in *The Young Hegel*, that "the dialectical core of this view is always the recognition of social reality as it actually is."¹⁷⁷ No longer stressing the subjective dimension of totalization in Fichte's sense, he now emphasized Hegel's objective totality of existing reality. Accordingly, when he invoked the category of totality in the essay on Lassalle, he did so only to debunk the primacy of subjective consciousness:

The collective fate of a class is only the *expression* in terms of consciousness of its socio-economic situation and is conditioned *simultaneously* by its correct totality-representation to the whole society and to the historical process both really and cognitively.¹⁷⁸

Lukács' move away from Fichtean activism towards the Hegelian notion of "reconciliation" was given its classic formulation in his major essay of 1926, "Moses Hess and the Problem of Idealist Dialectics." Here the Young Hegelians, most notably Hess, Cieszkowski, and Bauer, are described as regressing to Fichtean idealism and Feuerbachian moralism, while Marx is credited with grasping the concrete, mediated totality of existing relations through his own reading of Hegel. Lukács' attribution of a direct relationship between Marx and Hegel was helped by his insistence that Hegel's thought was already deeply imbued with the economic

175. Lukács, *Political Writings, 1919–1929*, p. 177.

176. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

177. Georg Lukács, *The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relations Between Dialectics and Economics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London, 1975), p. 70.

178. Lukács, *Political Writings, 1919–1929*, p. 163.

categories of the classical economists, an argument he was to make even more extensively in *The Young Hegel*. Thus, whereas the Young Hegelians were mesmerized by the idealist elements in Hegel's philosophy, Marx was able to recover its materialist dimensions.

Curiously, Lukács blamed Hess's deficiencies in this regard on his non-proletarian background:

Hess philosophizes from the standpoint of the revolutionary *intelligentsia* sympathetic to the coming social revolution. The sufferings of the proletariat form the starting-point of his philosophizing; the proletariat is the *object* of his concern and his struggle.¹⁷⁹

Anticipating the later Marxist critique of his friend Karl Mannheim's notion of a "free-floating intelligentsia," Lukács added the explanation:

The fond belief that he inhabits a sphere above all class antagonisms and all egotistical interests of his fellow-men is typical of the intellectual who does not participate—directly—in the process of production and whose existential basis, both material and intellectual, seems to be the "whole" of society, regardless of class differences.¹⁸⁰

How Marx, or Lukács himself for that matter, had avoided this situation and come to "participate—directly—in the process of production," Lukács did not choose to explain. Insofar as virtually all of the Western Marxists were like Hess in this regard, this omission was an important one. What it indicated was a certain willingness on Lukács' part to subordinate the autonomy of the intellect to the allegedly superior wisdom of those who participated in the production process. This "workerist" attitude, as it became known, was, however, counterbalanced by his belief that in non-revolutionary times theory had to be in advance of practice. The compromise he reached to reconcile these extremes was to subordinate his personal intellectual autonomy to the wisdom of the party, which supposedly was rooted in the working class, if in advance of it theoretically. Few other Western Marxists would find this a very satisfactory solution.

In any event, what was clear in "Moses Hess and the Problems of Idealist Dialectics" was the distance Lukács had travelled since the days when he wrote *History and Class Consciousness*. The only real residue from that period in the essay was the argument that for Hegel, alienation and reification "cannot be overcome either epistemologically or in ethical-utopian fashion; only by self-sublation in the identical subject-object of history can they attain their resolution."¹⁸¹ But Lukács significantly did not use this formula to describe Marx's method as well, which he claimed was

a "theory of a completely different kind (albeit profoundly connected with the Hegelian dialectic): *the critique of political economy*."¹⁸² And although Lukács then went on to refer the reader in a footnote to the essay, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," he carefully avoided any reference to the subjectivist emphasis of that work.

In short, by 1926 Lukács' use of the concept of totality had altered in essential ways, most importantly through the weakening of its expressive and Fichtean dimensions. Although Lukács still continued to stress praxis, subjectivity and consciousness, these emphases were countered by a new appreciation of the inertial force of the objective elements in the totality. It is inaccurate to argue then, as one commentator has, that "the Lassalle and Hess essays, like the criticism of Bukharin, indicate that on the theoretical plane he did not retreat a step from his earlier anathematized position."¹⁸³ Michael Löwy's conclusion that the essay on Hess "provided the methodological basis for his support for the Soviet 'Thermidor'" is closer to the truth.¹⁸⁴ And, as we will see in the chapter on Goldmann and Marxist aesthetics, it also provided the philosophical foundation for Lukács' highly influential writings of the 1930s on culture and literature, writings in which the concept of totality continued to play a critical—but changed—role.

Lukács' tortured later history is as much a part of "Eastern" as Western Marxism, if not more so. To detail it at any length would thus be beyond the scope of this study. What will interest us instead is the subterranean influence of *History and Class Consciousness*, which, despite all of its author's second thoughts, launched the problematic we are examining in this study. Lukács had not, to be sure, been alone in challenging the philosophical and political assumptions of the orthodox dialectical materialists. Accordingly, his concept of totality was not the only one the Western Marxists were able to adopt. Karl Korsch, Antonio Gramsci, and to a lesser extent Ernst Bloch were the other members of the first generation of Western Marxists who contributed to the debate about holism. It is to their work that we now must turn.

182. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

183. Breines, "Praxis and its Theorists: The Impact of Lukács and Korsch in the 1920s," p. 88.

184. Löwy, *Georg Lukács*, p. 196.

179. *Ibid.*, pp. 196–7.

180. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

181. *Ibid.*, p. 214.