

Chapter 2

Marxist Theories of Revolution, Continued

Lenin and Lukács

Least likely of all marxists to accept the spontaneity of the masses as the starting and ending point of the revolution was Lenin. While he was acutely aware of the complexity of social structure and the multiplicity of sociological consciousness,¹ Lenin struggled to create a praxis (nexus of theory and practice) that was able to acknowledge the multiple and conflicting determinations of collective motivation and action, while keeping them at arm's length. The key to this juggling act was the unstated abandonment, for all practical purposes, of the notion that the revolution must be the product of conscious action by the masses based on a collective will. Lenin's theory of the vanguard allowed both consciousness and will, those elements that are most difficult to account for in any large-scale collectivity, to be shifted to a smaller and more easily controlled locus: the party. The party then claims to operate according to, and in the name of, the 'real' consciousness and will of the masses. As a result of the alienating relationships of the capitalist mode of production, this will is sociologically fragmented and must remain so until new conditions of life have been created. Thus, a unitary and consistent consciousness is 'imputed' to the masses but actuated by the party, a strategy that eliminates the usual black boxes used by orthodox marxism to account for revolutionary consciousness, but defers the consequences of the plurality of social psychology thereby revealed to an indeterminate future.

I. Lenin's Compressed Politics

In his primary political works, Lenin consistently provided a powerful but almost cartoonishly simplistic analysis of modern society, based on the reduction of all social phenomena to manifestations of class relations and class struggle. In this he did no more

¹"History generally, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more many-sided, more lively and 'subtle' than even the best parties and the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes imagine." Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder* (New York: International Publishers, 1940), 76. This "popular essay" was written in 1920.

than draw the conclusions suggested by classical marxist theory. At the same time, Lenin's unprecedented commitment to the production of a revolution forced him to apply his practical and organizational genius to the manifest material and social-psychological consequences of a world that could not be shown to revolve exclusively around class. As a consequence, there is in Lenin a Herculean labor unparalleled in modern social and political theory to force disparate theoretical and empirical elements into conjunction, and a complementary willingness to cut the Gordian knot when such efforts failed.² Lenin's heroic (or diabolical, depending on one's point of view) exertions can be described, in terms of the effort to discover a revolutionary theory capable of coping with social-psychological complexity, as a masterful theoretical Ponzi scheme.³ At all times his procedure was to deal with the structural problem of sociological complexity by means of tactical flexibility. Hence, the consequences of bad analysis were, in Lenin's theoretical complex, run up as debts against the future, postponed until a time when the tactical advances made had uncovered a means of coping structurally with structural issues. That such a time could be reached by such means was an existential gamble.

Lenin's theoretical substrate was the presumption that the modern social order is distinguished by a radical dichotomy between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, so that all social relations are fundamentally relations of class. Seldom has a so thoroughly reductive social schema, usually characteristic of the most mediocre propagandists, been so spectacularly deployed.⁴ This procedure was explicitly directed at providing a means of acting decisively in the face of the complexity of social life, and the particular conditions in Russia.⁵ In effect, Lenin was willing to ground his social analysis in a theory that totalized social life (that is, held it to be completely described) in terms of a purely economic definition of class. Class relationships, in turn, were conceived in rationalistic fashion as the direct product of objective interests inherent in the nature of the relationships them-

²Lenin's unwillingness completely to abandon any of the elements of classical marxist aspiration thus distinguishes his approach from those considered earlier.

³Also called a 'pyramid' scheme; a con job in which the profit of each new member is dependent on recruiting several more. This works very well — at the beginning.

⁴Another example of this, Georg Lukács, will be considered below.

⁵"Such a reference [to the complexity of social life] seems 'scientific' and effectively dulls the senses of the average man, obscuring the most important and basic fact, namely, the break-up of society into irreconcilably antagonistic classes." Lenin, *State and Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1932 [1917]), 11.

selves. Thus, for example, "...an essential condition for such an alliance [between Social Democracy and bourgeois democrats] must be the full opportunity for the socialists to reveal to the working class that its interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the bourgeoisie."⁶ The task of socialist consciousness, then, was quite simply to determine correctly the objective interests of the proletariat and to struggle for them against the bourgeoisie's "diametrically opposed" interests.

Again, such reductions were not new to marxism, but Lenin's consistency in applying them was outstanding. If, for example, the social world is entirely described by class conflict, then all conflicts must be instances of class conflict. All politics must be class politics. Consequently, for Lenin all disagreements among socialists and even marxists were class-based. Kautsky, Bernstein, the Mensheviks, and so on became 'agents of the bourgeoisie' in diverging from the bolshevik line, conceived as the true proletarian line. "Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology in any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree means to strengthen bourgeois ideology."⁷ Alliances and accommodations could and should be made with such people, but only in anticipation of sweeping them away with the rest of the bourgeois trash when the time came. This exceedingly literal application of class reductionism to the ranks of socialism itself was a microcosm of Lenin's method as a whole. Whereas for most marxists such narrowness was little more than a polemical tool to be used casually against the adversary *du jour*, with effects ranging from distraction to debilitation, for Lenin it was the foundation for his entire political outlook and the basis for his rethinking of marxist revolutionary theory.⁸

Once Lenin had formulated this enormously restrictive notion of analytical correctness, an extreme purity was required of the proletariat for it to be considered to have attained sufficient socialist consciousness:

Working class consciousness cannot be genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to *all* cases of tyranny, oppres-

⁶Lenin, *What Is To Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement* (New York: International Publishers, 1969 [1902]), 18.

⁷Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*, 41. Lenin's various attacks on 'Economism' and spontaneism, which consume much of *What Is To Be Done?*, and on "the renegade Kautsky" in *State and Revolution*, may be taken as illustrative.

⁸The failure of the theorists to be able to agree among themselves did not suggest a concern about the ability of the proletariat itself to achieve unitary class consciousness, because the bourgeoisie was characterized by internal divisions. Only with respect to the proletariat could they be united.

sion, violence, and abuse, no matter *what class* is affected — unless they are trained, moreover, to respond from a Social-Democratic point of view and no other. The consciousness of the working masses cannot be genuine class-consciousness, unless the workers learn, from concrete, and above all from topical, political facts and events to observe *every* other social class in *all* the manifestations of its intellectual, ethical, and political life; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of *all* aspects of the life and activity of *all* classes, strata, and groups of the population.⁹

In any practical sense, Lenin eliminated the proletariat as the spontaneous producer of its own class-conscious, revolutionary liberation. Consistent with this, he declared that of its own accord the proletariat was incapable of advancing beyond trade-union consciousness, a form of collective action informed by petty-bourgeois aspirations. Only the intellectuals could supply, from outside the proletariat, the theorization of its real interests and required action.¹⁰ They were to be the nucleus of the party.

The party supplied Lenin with the instrument to overcome the fragmentation of the sociological consciousness of the masses. Using the basic principle of the totalization of the world in terms of class conflict as its Rosetta stone, the party was able to extrapolate from the strange hieroglyphics emanating from the masses a coherent picture of its ‘real’ interests. Buried amid the historical babble of the formation of the proletariat was a unitary consciousness requiring only the correct key to decode. The task of the party was to provide a theorization that would channel and compress the basic rebelliousness of the unhappy masses along the lines of the classist totalization. Clamping down the meaning and content of struggle required a centralized organization of tremendous commitment, organization, discipline, and single-minded purpose. Lenin conceived the task in terms of the need to counteract the encircling “petty-bourgeois atmosphere,” a characteristic space-maintainer for the recognition of mass irrationality with respect to ‘socialist reason’.¹¹ Because of his inability to properly theorize this, in his revolutionary theory only a small,

⁹Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*, 69. As always, emphasis in the original.

¹⁰Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*, 31.

¹¹The other red flag of pseudo-analysis was the label ‘transitional’, used to describe situations, structures and class fractions that did not conform cleanly to the classist totalization. See e.g. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York: International Publishers, 1939 [1916]), 40, 81. This particular device was hardly peculiar to Lenin, but his application of it was customarily pure.

disciplined party could supply the uniformity of motivation and action that goal-oriented revolution required.

Hence, in Lenin's theory of revolutionary organization the split between the theorists and the theorized that had always been implicit in marxist practice became explicit and formalized. But this split was carried out only so that a spectacular effort could be made to reunite the two sides as a revolutionary couple, through a praxical accommodation in which the party was supposed to deploy the 'real' consciousness of the workers, who in turn recognized the leadership of the party in the class struggle.¹² This reunification was carried out on two fronts. First, the party was invested with the analytical omniscience that structurally escaped the proletariat itself. Lenin undertook this burden, for example, in the "Preface to the French and German Editions" of *Imperialism*: "In order to depict this objective position [of the ruling classes] one must not take examples or isolated data (in view of the extreme complexity of social life it is always quite easy to select any number of examples or separate data to prove any point one desires), but the whole of the data concerning the basis of economic life in all of the belligerent countries and the whole world."¹³ Second, the party's claims about the involvement of the proletariat were legitimized by mythologizing that fraction of the working class that accepted bolshevik direction as 'the vanguard' of the proletariat, representing the "fullest and unreserved support of the whole mass of the working class."¹⁴

It was not lost on Lenin that this was sociological obfuscation; there was thus in Lenin an enormous tension between what he knew to be true and what he knew to be necessary.¹⁵ In classical marxist terms, Russia was not close to 'objectively' prepared for revolution.¹⁶ The extremely limited penetration of capitalist industry into Russia before World

12On this basis charges of Lenin's 'blanqism', or conspiratorial elitism, have been rebutted.

13Lenin, *Imperialism*, 9-10. It might be argued that with such a standard of omniscience, *only* reductionism is a manageable method. Hence, the introduction of the philosophical category of 'totality' was in fact a way to control insides and outsides.

14Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" *Communism*, 9.

15"We can (and must) begin to build Socialism not with imaginary human material, not with human material invented by us, but with the human material bequeathed to us by capitalism. That is very 'difficult,' it goes without saying, but no other approach to this task is serious enough to warrant discussion." Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" *Communism*, 34.

16Kautsky made this argument at the time in *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, trans. H.J. Stenning (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1964 [1918]).

War II, the consequently small and isolated proletariat, and the need for alliances with the non-proletarian peasantry to achieve any kind of mass movement, thus made Lenin's removal of the element of mass consciousness from the immediate revolutionary agenda politically quite sensible. If his leap paid off, sociology was to be overthrown by praxis.

The forced linkage of the refined theory supplied by the party with the raw material of the potentially revolutionary proletariat could only be welded by praxis. That this linkage could occur was thus an amazing existential gamble.¹⁷ "The art of politics (and the Communist's correct understanding of his tasks) lies in correctly gauging the conditions and the moment when the vanguard of the proletariat can successfully seize power, to obtain adequate support from adequately broad strata of the working class and of the non-proletarian toiling masses, and when it is able thereafter to maintain, consolidate and extend its rule by educating, training and attracting ever broader masses of the toilers."¹⁸ Such attraction could only be exerted by the continued success of the original pact of unity, which in turn required that the party's analyses continued to be pragmatically correct (or, that the mythology of correctness continued to be convincing). Hence, practical success was theoretically self-validating. But since these analyses were nothing more than reductive space-maintainers, adopted to compress complexity and fragmentation in the interest of decisive action, the ongoing accumulation of bad analysis constantly threatened to overwhelm the tactical flexibility that was leninism's primary device — or, to force that flexibility to recoil and overwhelm theory and its goals entirely.¹⁹

Furthermore, the educability, trainability, and attractability of the working masses, in the absence of a fully elaborated theory of the multiplicity of sociological consciousness, was a matter of pure marxist faith supported only by the dubious allegiance of that fraction of the workers who, for reasons that remained unexamined because they were assumed to be known, marched under the banner of bolshevism. Yet, Lenin's most powerful

¹⁷Laclau and Mouffe, in *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy*, discuss the limited leninist notion of hegemony as a space-maintainer (or, as they call it, a suture) to fill the indeterminacy of uncertain class positions and relationships. But this is only part of the story. Lenin's *entire* political complex, including the party and its imputed linkage to the proletariat, the insistence on the class totalization, and the tactical flexibility, *all* filled that space. In Russia, from the standpoint of marxist categories virtually everything was indeterminate; the voids to be filled were enormous.

¹⁸Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" *Communism*, 35. Note that this was written after the revolution (in 1920), when the ongoing portion of the gamble was underway.

¹⁹It is tempting to describe this as the essence of the legacy of stalinism.

move had been to forgo the search for a fully elaborated theory of sociological consciousness in favor of empirical, behaviorist experimentation, driven by reductive social theory and extreme orientation to short-term goals.²⁰ In the process he stripped marxist revolutionary theory of any theorization of the transition to a new consciousness, or rather, deferred that moment of the revolution to an indeterminate future.²¹ While the result was practically effective from the standpoint of the party's seizure of power, it created a tremendous dilemma for those who saw the revolutionization of consciousness as the primary goal of the revolution, or even its content. For them, Lenin's clinical political realism and the technical success of the Russian revolution gradually revealed that the choice was now between the gamble that Lenin proposed and some attempt to develop a non-reductive way to confront and theorize the social-psychological complexity that Lenin's technique was designed to contain and bypass.²²

II. Lukács' Compressed Philosophy

During the few years immediately following 1917 the long odds of the gamble, compounded by the failure of Western Europe to follow Russia into revolution and thus lend it support, only gradually became widely discernible. This was a strange period in the history of marxism, because it was marked by tremendously fertile theoretical enthusiasm, followed almost immediately by disappointment and retrenchment. While disappointment was sufficiently gradual that at no point did a complete break with the leninist accommodation seem necessary, by the mid-1920's the nature of the leninist gamble and the neces-

²⁰Treating this question from the standpoint of marxist philosophy, Merleau-Ponty wrote that Lenin's naturalization of the dialectic "...means closing off any attempt at 'comprehension,' as, on the plane of action, it means replacing total praxis by a technician-made action, replacing the proletariat by the professional revolutionary. It means concentrating the movement of history, as well as that of knowledge, in an apparatus." Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Adventures of the Dialectic*, trans. Joseph Bien (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973 [1955]), 65. Merleau-Ponty also believed that this procedure was a tactical expedient; it then becomes necessary, he remarked, to determine if the tactics are compatible with the strategy they serve (61).

²¹Given the same premises, Kautsky deferred the *revolution* to the indeterminate future. He required the revolutionization of consciousness to be generated out of the class struggle as a condition of the revolution; Lenin did not.

²²Spontaneism of either the sorelian or spartacist varieties technically remained available, but the fascist experiences and the increasing self-definition of the entire left in opposition to fascism tended to delegitimize this option. It is worth pointing out that leninism was not, and is not, considered by many socialists to be a gamble as described here. It seems clear from the material quoted that Lenin himself knew that it was. Lenin's background as a direct inheritor of the Russian anti-tsarist tradition helps to explain why he was willing to give it a try.

sity for it from the practical standpoint were becoming increasingly clear. At the same time, the vulnerability of the Russian experiment forced its leaders to increasingly clamp down party discipline in the attempt to maintain the compression of the political struggle within class boundaries. Under these circumstances, attempts to examine the multi-dimensionality of social life were driven out of official politically-organized marxism, and entered the realm of the academic. They consequently ceased to be relevant to the practical revolutionary effort.

In the intervening period, however, there were numerous attempts to examine the question of revolution from the standpoint of the formation of revolutionary consciousness — or, as it was often put in philosophical terms, of revolutionary ‘subjectivity’.²³ In this optimistic moment, these efforts could be conceived as supplements to leninism, rather than critiques of it. As arguably the most sophisticated of these,²⁴ Hungarian Georg Lukács’ writings on the subject from 1919 to 1925 may thus complete the illustration of the spectrum of marxist attempts to confront social-psychological complexity during the period before the new orthodoxy of the Third International was firmly entrenched.

Lukács’ contribution to the question of revolutionary class consciousness was to think out the most spectacular attempt to merge philosophical and political groundings for proletarian revolutionary involvement. As a direct consequence, he illustrates better than most marxists both the temptation and the dangers of building a theoretical colossus upon the clay feet of a reductive analysis of capitalism.

Lukács’ initial efforts as a marxist, immediately following the Russian revolution, were geared to providing an account of proletarian revolutionary class consciousness. This was to be grounded not, as the orthodox tradition would have it, in economic analysis but rather in the German philosophy with which Lukács was familiar from his pre-marxist days.²⁵ Thus, Lukács wanted to take capitalism as read (as it were), and locate the his-

²³These formulations are not interchangeable, as should become clear.

²⁴Barring, it will be argued, Antonio Gramsci. The confrontation of Gramsci and Lukács is illustrative of the tremendous latitude available within the very narrow space of revolutionary marxism.

²⁵A substantial literature has sprung up around Lukács’ conversion from romantic bourgeois intellectual to dedicated marxist party member around 1918. The best of it reveals what tiny spaces separated apparently conflicting intellectual positions in Europe during the period under discussion. See, for example, Michael Löwy, *Georg Lukács: From Romanticism to Bolshevism*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: New Library, 1979); Laura Boella, *Il giovane Lukács: la formazione*

torical subject which, arising out of capitalism's inner contradictions, would overthrow capitalism and become the first identical subject-object of history, that is, the first class to consciously create the conditions of its own existence. He conceived of his work as building on that of Marx, by pinpointing the mechanism by which capitalism was to be overcome, and by re-importing an activist philosophy of praxis into marxism at a time when it had been all but discarded by Kautsky and other marxists of the Second International.

Much has been made of the fact that the agent of capitalism's downfall at which Lukács arrived — the subject-object of history, the class-conscious proletariat — was in fact little more than a myth constructed out of admittedly brilliant manipulation of marxist theory, conceived as the revolutionary culmination of German philosophy, particularly that of Hegel.²⁶ Little has been said, however, about the correspondingly mythological 'capitalism' that Lukács used as an analytical model and dialectical foil for his class-conscious proletariat. Of these two myths the former is undoubtedly the more exciting and compelling, as well as the more forcefully presented — as well it might be, since it represents the focal point of Lukács' entire project.²⁷ Yet it was the latter, despite the lack of an explicit systematic exposition, that conditioned and acted as the foundation for Lukács' understanding of the way in which the proletariat was to reach class consciousness, and in doing so overthrow bourgeois society. As in Lenin, a spectacularly reductive analysis of modern society, based on the totalization of class relations under capitalism, drove Lukács' theory of revolution. But unlike Lenin, Lukács sought to balance the role of the party as the vanguard of class consciousness with an insistence on the importance of the

intellettuale e la filosofia politica, 1907-1929 (Bari, 1977); and Mary Gluck, *Georg Lukács and His Generation 1900-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1985).

²⁶On this subject, see especially Andrew Arato and Paul Breines, *The Young Lukács and the Origins of Western Marxism* (New York: Seabury, 1979), and Richard Kilminster, *Praxis and Method: A Sociological Dialogue with Lukács, Gramsci, and the Early Frankfurt School* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979). There is really very little argument, especially amongst the writers associated with the journal *Telos*, about the mythological nature of Lukács' proletariat. For a suggestion that a mythology of 'already existing' class consciousness was built into Marx's own system, see Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1971), esp. 239-40; and *Social and Sexual Revolution: Essays on Marx and Reich* (Boston: South End P, 1979), esp. 3-32 (developing his idea that social-psychological 'character structure' acts as a blockage to structural determinism by filling gaps in time between the structural stimulus and the response in consciousness).

²⁷A comparison with Sorel on this point is illuminating. But it is not clear that Lukács could have abandoned the ideal of philosophical rigor to deploy the myth as a pure instrument, as Sorel did.

development of class consciousness as part of the revolutionary process itself. Thus, he sought to supplement leninism in order to avoid the leninist gamble and its consequent deferral of the revolutionization of consciousness to the indeterminate future.²⁸

It will help to establish a working idea of what Lukács actually meant when he said ‘capitalism’, or ‘capitalist society’.²⁹ In Lukács’ discussion there are four key concepts (or categories) that have since become entrenched in the marxist philosophical vocabulary: mediacy and immediacy, reification, and totality. Mediacy and immediacy are essentially categories of knowledge and of praxis: they point to the degree of active human involvement in the production of something — society, for example. For Lukács, the moment of mediation is potentially the moment of class-conscious action (praxis), in that social facts are to be recognized as mediated objective products of the subject’s action. Hitherto in history, humans’ action in producing their society has been unconscious. Thus, within capitalism, facts — that is, the social relations of capitalism — appear as immediately given, as “timeless, eternal categories valid for all social formations.”³⁰ As a result of this apparent immediacy, the historical fact that capitalist relations are simply a particular historical form of relations among men, amenable to conscious control (mediation), remains hidden.³¹

The condition of capitalist immediacy is supported by reification. In Lukács’ conception, reification (‘thingification,’ the alienation of the objects of one’s own production so that they appear as things outside of, or alien, to oneself) is “the necessary, immediate reality of every person living in capitalist society.”³² Within capitalism, each individual pro-

²⁸This project, in the face of Lenin’s impatient dismissal of such concerns in *What Is To Be Done*, was probably naïve.

²⁹The enormous gulf separating the theoretical efforts of Lenin and Lukács should become apparent in what follows. With Lenin, capitalism is totalized and that’s that. Lukács arrived at the same place, but based on a philosophically sophisticated theoretical excursion that produced both a mechanism and a *need* for the development of proletarian consciousness. ⁶The type of analysis necessary for Lukács would be superfluous for Lenin.

³⁰Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971), 9. Contains essays dated from 1919-1922.

³¹On the question of “immediacy [as] a process of mediation not conscious of itself” see Kilminster, *Praxis and Method*, ch. 6; quote, 87. Also, Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 158.

³²Lukács’ discussion of reification closely parallels Marx’s in *The Economic and Political Manuscripts of 1844*, which were not published until ten years later. Obviously Lukács had grasped and reconstructed the philosophical stratum of Marx’s theory; the question was, what to make of it?

ducer is subjected to increasingly rational and mechanized division of labor, so that the actual end product becomes as alien to her as though produced by someone else. The worker loses all control of the objects of her own production, and is reduced to contemplation of ‘facts’ that seem to be externally imposed. Indeed, the worker’s consciousness is forcibly individualized by the modes of capitalist production, and by bourgeois society as a whole, and thus is cut off from the class consciousness that has the real power to mediate social relations. In effect, an understanding of the totality of capitalist relations, necessary to realize their historical mutability, is hidden from the worker by reification and its consequent fragmentation of consciousness.

Totality, then, is the key to class consciousness.³³ For Lukács, capitalism can only be understood if it is understood as a whole, and more, as the structuring whole that dominates all relations among men. Therefore, totality is the analytic category that allows the penetration of the immediacy and fragmentation of capitalist life. For Lukács, it is this insight that makes marxism the revolutionary science, and it is the ability and desire of the proletariat to achieve (or at least aspire to³⁴) an understanding of capitalist relations and their historical specificity, in their totality, that make the proletariat potentially the ‘identical subject-object of history’. When the proletariat becomes conscious as a class of its own position within the totality of capitalist relations, the stage is set for the overthrow of capitalism.

For Lukács, “the whole system of Marxism stands and falls with the principle that revolution is the product of a point of view in which the category of totality is dominant.”³⁵ This point of view provides the proletariat with a science whose method, distinguished by the primacy of the category of totality, is in direct opposition to bourgeois science, characterized by what Lukács called “the attitude that inspires monographs:” the examination by specialized disciplines of isolated areas and specific cases, from which ‘eternally valid

³³Martin Jay, “The Concept of Totality in Lukács and Adorno,” *Telos* 32 (Summer 1977), provides an extended analysis and distinction of no less than five separate usages of ‘totality’ in Lukács’ writings. Jay develops this argument further and on a broader scale in *Marxism and Totality* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984).

³⁴In reality, Lukács realized that requiring knowledge of totality from the proletariat placed that class under an impossibly heavy theoretical burden. Thus, the aspiration to such knowledge is, at least initially, enough. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 175, 198.

³⁵Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 29.

laws' are deduced.³⁶ While Lukács' method promises to provide the proletariat with an Archimedean standpoint from which to lever itself beyond the repressive immediacy of capitalist relations, in Lukács' usage it did so at the expense of the ability to theorize elements of modern society not directly related to the logic of class relations. This is because Lukács' notion of totality required that all the individual manifestations of bourgeois society be scrupulously related to the whole, as the means of revealing the historical specificity of capitalist relations. Consequently, Lukács' theory required that the whole be a definitional unity, that is, that everything be seen as a function of capitalist relations. In essence, Lukács claimed that capitalism was not only the dominant relation between men, but that, in the form of the commodity relation, it had become the only one. "For at this stage in the history of mankind there is no problem that does not ultimately lead back to that question [of laying bare the fundamental nature of capitalist society] and there is no solution that could not be found in the solution to the riddle of commodity-structure."³⁷

This capitalism can only be described as a myth. On the level of empirical knowledge, Lukács knew that capitalism was by no means pure, and indeed he frequently discussed the totalization of capitalist relations as a 'tendency' rather than as a fact.³⁸ However, this only seems to mitigate the mythological character of his model of capitalism, since much space in *History and Class Consciousness* is devoted precisely to the critique of 'facts', understood as the product of the "second nature" of capitalist immediacy.³⁹ Thus, the 'fact' that capitalist relations are by no means empirically totalized is overcome in consciousness by dialectical science, which reveals (analytically) in the totality of real capitalist relations the tendency of capitalism to be totalized (empirically).⁴⁰

Further, Lukács was aware that Marx's analysis of capital, which he took for granted,⁴¹ was what would in weberian terms be called an 'ideal type' (indeed, he chided Marx's and Rosa Luxemburg's critics for failing to realize just this).⁴² "Marx's account

³⁶Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 30.

³⁷Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 83.

³⁸Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 92.

³⁹For more detail on this, see Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 1-24.

⁴⁰Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 182-3.

⁴¹Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 84.

⁴²Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 31. Lukács had encountered Weber during his studies in Germany, but my intent here is to argue for a similarity rather than an influence.

pushes the capitalist nature of all economic forms to their furthest limits, he creates an intellectual milieu where they can exist in their purest form by positing a society ‘corresponding to the theory’, i.e. capitalist through and through, consisting of none but capitalists and proletarians.”⁴³ Nevertheless, this is the model he adopted, and upon which he based his examination of the ideological bases for the overthrow of capitalism. There can be many reasons for choosing such an exaggeration as an intellectual or tactical matter, but in marxism philosophy must always be tied to politics; since Lukács wanted a class-conscious revolution, his tactic had somehow to fit that goal.

The problem Lukács addressed is easily stated. Under what conditions could the proletariat be expected to achieve consciousness of itself as a class, at war with the bourgeoisie and bourgeois society? In looking at Lukács’ response to this question, it will be possible to begin to see why he needed a reductive, totalized capitalism, at least from a theoretical standpoint, as well as to admire one of the classic solutions to a classic problem in marxism. Marxism as a rationalism reached a pinnacle with Lukács. First, we are to understand that capitalist relations have succeeded in completely dominating human life, resulting in the complete fragmentation and reification of the consciousness of the worker. In this state, the worker is unable to perceive that the immediate objects and relations of everyday life are in fact a ‘second nature’ of her own production. Instead, they appear as timeless, eternal categories independent of her will. It should not be difficult to see that the revolutionary, dialectical response to this state of affairs is to become conscious of the totality of social relations and of their basis in human activity. Thus, if the characteristic form of modern capitalism is the commodity relation, with its consequent fragmentation and reification of consciousness, then the way to overcome it is to re-appropriate in consciousness the organic unity, or totality, of the social world as the product of human activity. The consciousness of totality is a consciousness of the mediations by which systems within society are organically inter-related and linked to each other.⁴⁴ Consciousness of the totality of social relations thus forms the basis for revolutionary practice by rendering transparent the historical nature of capitalist reification, and the objective possibility of overcoming reification in practice.

⁴³Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 8.

⁴⁴Istvan Meszaros, *Lukács’ Concept of Dialectic* (London: Merlin, 1972) 63.

It is at this point that the theoretical necessity for the totalization of capitalism occurs. For Lukács, proletarians can take their first step towards consciousness of the totality when the commodity relation becomes the totalized form of social relations. At this point, it becomes possible for the individual worker to become self-conscious by recognizing her own total alienation, and thus to become at least potentially conscious of her own role in the dialectic of labor and capital.⁴⁵ Consequently, the moment of total victory of capitalism, the moment when it succeeds in reducing all social relations to the commodity relation, and when all consciousness is reified, is also the moment when individual members of the proletariat gain the basic knowledge which — again, potentially — can lead to total class consciousness, and to capitalism’s overthrow. “Thus for the worker the reified character of the immediate manifestations of capitalist society receives the most extreme definition possible.... But this very fact forces him to surpass the immediacy of his condition.”⁴⁶

The individual consciousness of alienation that is produced in workers as they recognize their own objectivity as commodities does not, in itself, constitute class consciousness. Nor does any simple combination of workers. But, as Arato and Breines have pointed out, “if the qualitative, living core of one fetishized quantitative relationship is made conscious, is revealed [as happens when the worker becomes conscious of her own alienation], then, according to Lukács, it becomes possible to recognize the fetishistic character of all commodities and to penetrate to the human and social foundations of all of the reified structures of capitalist society.”⁴⁷ The proletariat, because it seeks its own liberation, is thus uniquely capable of moving beyond the immediacy of the reified world and becoming conscious of both its contradictions, and its character as process or ‘becoming.’

This effect of the moment of capitalism’s triumph is the only mechanism that Lukács offered to explain the coming to class consciousness of the proletariat. The problem is that, as Lukács established the terms of the argument, the class-conscious proletariat is a myth. Lukács’ argument does no more than establish a chain of objective possibilities by which class consciousness is to be reached.⁴⁸ Schematically, it is objectively pos-

45Arato and Breines, *The Young Lukács*, 135.

46Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 166.

47Arato and Breines, *The Young Lukács*, 135.

48Arato and Breines, *The Young Lukács*, 122.

sible that intensifying reification under totalized capitalism will force the individual worker to an individual consciousness of her position in the dialectic of labor and capital. This, in turn, creates only an objective possibility that this aggregate of individuals will ever achieve class consciousness; and the practical dynamic of this step is extremely unclear. Furthermore, the solution of the problem of the initiation of class consciousness through the totalization of capitalist reification causes as big a problem as it solves, because, if the worker's consciousness is indeed reified totally, it is difficult to understand how her consciousness could ever arrive at the aspiration for totality. Richard Kilminster, a sociologist, puts his finger on the problem: "It is ironically by stressing the philosophical layer embedded in Marxism that Lukács is driven in exactly the opposite direction from that intended by Marx, i.e. toward mythology.... In arguing from the philosophy of praxis Lukács deploys not sociological but social-ontological categories to theorize the levels of experience arising from the commodity structure of capitalist society."⁴⁹

In other words, reality is not being depicted (the fate of all philosophy, according to Marx in *The German Ideology*). Further, the mythical character of Lukács' class-conscious proletariat is not only the result of a philosophical/ theoretical (rather than sociological/ historical) treatment of proletarian class consciousness, that is, the philosophy of praxis, in terms of objective possibility. This mythology is also necessarily the result of Lukács' almost off-hand adoption of a model of capitalism that is reductive in the extreme. In essence, the only purpose that 'capitalism' served in Lukács' analysis was as a dialectical foil for a proletariat that was assumed to already be on the way to class consciousness. The practical consequences of this are fairly dire. In Lukács' conception, the objective possibility of revolutionary class consciousness is unique to the proletariat because of its ability to mediate the immediacy of capitalist reification through its access to awareness about the totality of capitalist society. But since the 'capitalist society' that Lukács talked about was actually an ideal type, historically a myth, it would appear to be highly questionable whether class consciousness could achieve objective possibility in relation to it.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Kilminster, *Praxis and Method*, 94.

⁵⁰It must be stressed that Lukács did not believe that capitalism actually was the homogenous form of society, or that it could be so. Capitalism's tendency to totalization was sufficient, and the admixtures were to be considered marginal. See, e.g., *History and Class Consciousness*, 242. A fascinating recent instance of a strikingly similar theoretical project can be discerned from William Beatty Warner, "Treating Me Like an Object: Reading Catherine MacKinnon's Femi-

Lukács was not interested in an analysis of capitalism per se, and to some degree this explains the reductive nature of the model he used. Given Lukács' procedure, however, the issue of whether he had capitalism right cannot be a neutral one since, although what he really wanted to talk about was the proletariat, the proletariat is by definition generated by capitalism; and, for Lukács, the class-conscious proletariat is generated by totalized capitalism. The real analysis of capitalism therefore proves to be critical, because as much as Lukács wanted to skip over that to the analysis of the subjectivity of the proletariat, the historical objectivity of real capitalism tripped him up. In essence, what is left is a formal dialectic with no historical content, where an abstract, reified, ahistorical capitalism produces an equally abstract, reified, and ahistorical proletariat, which can overcome it only in theory.⁵¹ It may be that the proletariat can become class-conscious without the mechanism of totalized capitalism, but for Lukács this possibility was hidden by the inability of his model to account for capitalist society's historical totality not totalized by commodity fetishism, a totality sustained by a range of historical relations not reducible to economics. What is revealed here is the pure rationalism of Lukács' notion of totality. The consciousness that results from it, immanent and self-discovering, is little more than Hegel's Reason transported into marxism.⁵²

All of this is fascinating enough as an intellectual exercise, given that in the early part of the period under discussion Lukács clearly felt that the proletariat was empirically well on its way to class consciousness. In this context, his theory had little to do with is-nism," in *Feminism and Institutions: Dialogues on Feminist Theory*, ed. Linda Kauffman (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989). In a way directly analogous to my analysis of Lukács Warner argues that MacKinnon mythologizes a complete reification of women as objects under a totalized patriarchy (Warner is aware of the hegelian dimension of the argument but does not discuss Lukács). Sadly, MacKinnon's claim may be more historically plausible than Lukács', but the compression of politics to gender is no more satisfactory in taking account of dispersed sociological consciousness and its 'deviating' effects than the compression of politics to class.

⁵¹This all provides a specific content for the general recognition of Kilminster that "when reading Lukács we think we are reading about social processes and their development but we are in fact talking in a universe of discourse attenuated from them by several levels," *Praxis and Method*, 90, and of Paul Piccone that "to the extent that Lukács operates throughout at the level of consciousness and ideas, he never penetrates to the living dimension and, as a result, ends up with an imposing metaphysical system only accidentally having anything to do with actual history," in "Dialectic and Materialism in Lukács," *Telos* 11 (Spring, 1972), 126. This is only *not* true of theory if it is linked to historical action, as Marx recognized in the "Theses on Feuerbach."

⁵²It would not be difficult to make the same analysis of Marx's own rudimentary revolutionary theory. But I've chosen not to discuss Marx himself in this study, which in any event is focused on attempts to develop the material of marxism after, and perhaps beyond, Marx.

sues of social-psychological complexity. But increasingly, as the enthusiasm created by the Russian revolution and Lukács' own participation in the Hungarian Soviet Republic⁵³ was replaced by a sense of the long haul, this philosophical apparatus was grafted onto a theory of the party owing a great deal to leninism. What happened was that Lukács became aware that the proletariat's progress toward class consciousness was blocked, a problem he described as "the dead-point of revolutionary progress."⁵⁴ The identical insight had caused Lenin in 1902, in *What Is To Be Done?*, to argue that by itself the proletariat could achieve only trade-union consciousness, and needed the party to advance beyond this. Even so, Lukács was able to say in 1921 that "no one who has dispassionately studied the revolutionary period as it has developed so far can shut his eyes to the fact that the most crucial but theoretically and tactically least expected obstacles to the revolution and its victory are not so much the strength of the bourgeoisie as ideological inhibitions within the proletariat itself."⁵⁵

Lukács now drew the same conclusions that Lenin had. Without abandoning his interest in the philosophical bases of class consciousness, he began to support the same radical compression of analysis and political action to class struggle that was at the heart of Lenin's praxis. It should be clear that from the standpoint of pure theory this was not a great leap for him; he had already carried out an analogous compression philosophically, based on commodity fetishism, to account for class consciousness. And, just as this philosophical compression had been justified in *History and Class Consciousness* by what Lukács took to be the 'actuality' of proletarian consciousness (in the sense of Marx's famous Preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*, that "Mankind thus inevitably sets it-

53Lukács served as Deputy Commissar of Culture and Educational Affairs during the Hungarian revolution of 1918-19.

54Georg Lukács, *Tactics and Ethics: Political Essays, 1919-1929*, ed. Rodney Livingstone, trans. Michael McColgan (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 102.

55Lukács, *Tactics and Ethics*, 100. No more evidence is needed of the depth of the unwillingness or failure before this time for marxists to come to terms with the full implications of Lenin's theory of the party. This makes Lenin's achievement all the more remarkable. It must be said, however, that the bases for optimism that allowed marxists in Western Europe to retain their illusions about the progress of the proletariat were almost entirely lacking in Tsarist Russia. Only with the collapse of the Second International, the abortive revolutionary adventures and party sectarianism of the postwar period, and the rise of the mass Right was such Western optimism definitively smashed.

self only such tasks as it is able to solve”,⁵⁶ so the classist compression of political action was justified by the ‘actuality’ of the revolution.⁵⁷

Lukács was far more deeply entrenched in European philosophy than Lenin, and he was accordingly far more concerned to establish a philosophical analog for the linkages between proletarian class consciousness and the party that in Lenin were essentially political. To this end, he deployed the dialectic as a mechanism to seek to account for the process, or ‘becoming’, by which the consciousness imputed to the class and acted upon by the party would actually come to flower in the proletariat itself. For Lukács, the party occupied the space of uncertainty between indeterminacy and fully unitary class consciousness. By allowing this uncertainty to be transformed into action, the party provided both a means of “severing the knot of the ideological crisis of the proletariat with the sword of action”⁵⁸ and a means of furthering the proletariat’s development of true class consciousness.

Consequently, for Lukács, the problem of ideological fragmentation was not to be understood,⁵⁹ but transcended, both politically and in the class consciousness of the proletariat. The party (and in particular the imputed consciousness of the proletariat that was its chief instrument and source of legitimacy⁶⁰) acted to fill that indeterminacy with decisive action in the interim. This is a far more fully-rounded picture of the revolution itself than Lenin alone provided. Of course, there was no compelling reason to believe that this dialectic would necessarily result in increased class consciousness; the mechanism remained the totalization of class consciousness in terms of class struggle, now with the par-

⁵⁶Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. S.W. Ryazanskaya (New York: International Publishers, 1970), 21. The most amazing extrapolations have been made from this remark.

⁵⁷Georg Lukács, *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thought*, trans. Nicholas Jacobs (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970 [1924]), 12 and *passim*. This actuality of the revolution was to nullify the danger of sectarianism and blanqism, by binding the actions of the party to an objective historical movement.

⁵⁸Lukács, *Tactics and Ethics*, 104.

⁵⁹Lukács employed the usual shorthands: transitional types, intermediate strata, intellectual tutelage, habits of mind, depravity, corruption. These accounts, as usual in Marxist writing, were eclectic and superficial, reflecting the most off-hand application of reductive classism.

⁶⁰Imputed consciousness was the true class consciousness of the proletariat that the mass of the proletariat itself had not yet acquired, but that the party employed on their behalf.

ty to act as an additional level of mediation.⁶¹ Lukács' theory adds to leninism by providing an explicit theorization of the development of proletarian class consciousness. But what Lukács really provided was an elaborate philosophical analog to Lenin's political gamble.

III. Space-maintenance

Gambles were not really what marxists had in mind. The revolution was supposed to be more necessary and predictable than that. The sense of having history in their pocket was one of the most powerful attractions of marxism to its adherents. The discovery that this attraction was a mirage was not the work of a day; a variety of intermediate attempts to restore deterministic certainty were tried.

It should now be possible to go back to the notion of 'space-maintainers' and make some sense of the theorists considered in this chapter. Grant for a moment a visualization of society as a space that bounds the possible trajectories 'it' may follow through time. To avoid the morass of platonism, grant also that whatever the 'real' possible trajectories may be, all we have access to in our thought are possibilities made visible by theory. The simplest such theoretical possibility space is a straight line, and its theory-type is known as determinism.⁶² Only one trajectory is available through such a space, with each point following 'necessarily' from the last. The most successful 'total' determinisms of such radical simplicity are retrospective determinisms like that of the Whig historians.

Faced with even a small expansion of the social possibility space from the straight line, total determinism becomes difficult to maintain. The straight line of essential development then has to be distinguished from those social facts that are inessential, or epiphenomenal. The possibility space now has an inside and an outside.

The 'crisis of marxism' at the turn of the century amounted to the progressive discovery by Marx's followers that, in the theory of capitalist development, Marx had not provided them with the totally deterministic key to interpreting social possibility space. Ac-

⁶¹For Lukács, class consciousness and the class-struggle reduction were identical.

⁶²"Determinism appears within the possibility space picture when the constraints on possibility space are so numerous or so strong for some object that there is one and only one path through possibility space available to it... the possibility space picture allows for the possibility that when *all* the structural constraints have been accounted for a situation is still not constrained to a single pathway. That is, determination may not yield determinism." C. Dyke, *The Evolutionary Dynamics of Complex Systems: A Study in Biosocial Complexity* (New York: Oxford UP, 1988), 19.

cess to this presumptive key had been a source of great confidence and comfort. But the expectation with a total determinism is that prediction will be possible, because each point on the line follows necessarily, or mechanically, from the last. It turned out that Marx had not provided that kind of prediction and that the theory did not work very well as a total determinism.⁶³ The interior logic of capitalist economic development kept getting deformed by outside factors. Each new attempt at certain prediction, as for example the repeated recalculation of the 'inevitable fall of capitalism',⁶⁴ was marred by the emergence of new possibilities in the space that had not been accounted for. The outside overwhelmed the inside, at least with respect to deterministic prediction.

This was demoralizing enough that the first attempts to cope with the discovery of indeterminacy with respect to the theory amounted to little more than insistence on the validity of the determinism as the essential line of history. Nothing was discarded, but the determined outcome was deferred to the indeterminate future. This move characterized the orthodoxy of Kautsky and of a whole generation of immediately post-Marx marxists.⁶⁵ Consequently, this theory had very little to suggest in the way of coherent action, there was a certain drift into the available forms of 'bourgeois' democratic process, and kautskian marxism was fairly dubbed 'opportunism' by its more impatient opponents.

As soon as the material determinism of economic development ceased to bound the space of revolutionary possibility, the revolution became indeterminate. It could be possible without being necessary, it could be unlikely, or it could even be impossible. If it was possible, factors other than capitalist development and class relations could be relevant to its outbreak, success, or failure. If the possibility space was too expansive, there would be no reason to believe that any particular trajectory could be enforced on it. Thus, if the range of the socially possible is a space occupied by a variety of economic and political structures, institutions, traditions, ideas, habits, and whatnot that interact in various ways to act as constraints on the path through them, and if the revolution is only one such possible path, then somehow the complex of constraints on the path had to be managed in

⁶³Marx himself is not the issue here, but it seems safe to say that he never intended to provide predictions in this totally deterministic sense.

⁶⁴The analogy to the recalculation of the Millennium is too easy, especially nowadays, but irresistible nevertheless.

⁶⁵The orthodox side of the revisionism debates is full of examples.

such a way for actions to produce movement along the path and not blockage or deviance. A way of sorting through this indeterminacy, or irrationality from the standpoint of revolution as a rational human pursuit, was needed.

IV. Summary Conclusion to Chapters 1 and 2

As I pointed out in the beginning of this chapter, the particular indeterminacy of greatest concern to revolutionary marxists, interested in humans producing human liberation through their own actions, is human conduct. When marxism as a total determinism was discredited, it was the irrationality of human conduct with respect to rational expectations, based in turn on a particular understanding of historical development and human interests, that came into focus. So this was the chief problem that the new theory had to solve. One obvious strategy was to try to figure out how these ‘outside’ constraints or deformations on the presumed deterministic logic of capitalism work, in effect pulling them ‘inside’ the theorization. This was, I will argue further on, at least in part Antonio Gramsci’s approach.

The approaches taken by Bernstein and Sorel, Lenin and Lukács were different. Rather than attempt in any way to pull an understanding of collective action into marxist revolutionary theory, these theorists all developed strategies to keep it outside, and to maintain the space which that understanding would have filled in the theory with black boxes. To encapsulate, Bernstein’s conclusion with respect to marxist revolutionary theory was that the indeterminacy of the social made enforcing any particular trajectory (e.g. revolution) unlikely, even undesirable. He saw social space as constrained by many factors, none in themselves decisive, and all of them opaque to structural analysis. For him, the irrationality of collective action with respect to revolutionary rationality crushed the revolution as a goal from without, and also persuaded him that the ‘revolution’ would not lead to socialism. What was left was pure process, the navigation of social space from the vantage of short-term, local analyses and accommodations. This strategy of cumulative rationality has little in common with marxist revolutionary aspirations.⁶⁶ Similarly, Sorel welcomed the dissolution of monocausal determinism, and believed that collective irrationality liquidated revolutionary goal-orientation. In its place, he substituted the play of morally-directed irrationality in all its opacity. In both cases, the social space occupied by

⁶⁶Lukács’ critique of Bernstein on this score is illuminating. See Lukács, *Lenin*, 54-5.

collective action was maintained as a sphere of untheorized indeterminacy; both men consequently abandoned long-term goal orientation and the attempt to control history.

For Lenin and Lukács, devoted to the revolutionary goal, such an accommodation was simply impossible. Instead, they took the indeterminacy of collective action and, without any immediate attempt to understand or alter it, constrained and compressed it along lines that were tactically manageable through revolutionary action. As Lukács grasped, the initial step of Lenin's contribution to marxist revolutionary theory was rejection of the economic reduction characteristic of kautskian orthodoxy, according to which capitalism was ultimately to produce the conditions of its own dissolution (perhaps even peacefully) through the logic of its development. For Lenin, the decisive problem with this view was not that it failed properly to forecast the details of capitalist development, but that it was too diffuse to have concrete political content. Lenin's contribution was to dig past the generality of capitalist forms and to lock unswervingly onto their political core: the class struggle.⁶⁷

In adopting class struggle as the space-maintaining reduction base⁶⁸ on which to compress the indeterminacy of collective action into a theoretically manageable form, Lenin discovered a means of keeping complexity contained while enabling directed action. The party was given a fighting chance to act on and control a situation that, through its very complexity and fluidity, was both paralyzingly difficult to grasp on its own terms, and vulnerable to decisive action based on aggressively simplistic analysis.⁶⁹ In the process Lenin created a means to transform marxist revolutionary theory from a philosophy of history with politics as a corollary to a political theory for which the thorny issues were kept outside, and deferred. Lukács, too intellectually enamored of the dialectic of consciousness ever fully to accept the deferral of proletarian self-liberation to distant future moments of the revolutionary process,⁷⁰ nevertheless was entirely in agreement as to the

⁶⁷See Lukács, *Lenin*, 43.

⁶⁸The prime cause from which all others depend. In the terminology developed above, this resolves as a strict, rather than a total determinism. Lenin didn't think things *had* to come down to class, but he thought that they could be *made* to.

⁶⁹The question of how specific this type of situation was to late Tsarist Russia (and is to 'backward' nations in general) is suggestive, but remains moot.

⁷⁰His history in the party can be read as a series of relapses and recantations on this point.

centrality of the classist reduction to the successful compression and management of social-psychological indeterminacy.

All four of these strategies set out from a frank recognition of the breakdown of deterministic certainty and the introduction of uncertainty and irrationality into the calculus of marxist revolutionary politics. As space-maintainers, Bernstein's commitment to democratic process, Lenin's political theory based on the party's management of class struggle, and Lukács' theory of imputed consciousness enabled rationalistically determined action to proceed in despite of the irrationality of the historical material being acted upon, while Sorel's theory of violence similarly enabled moral impetus to carve out a path amidst the non-rational. But in no instance did any of these theorists attempt to fill in the spaces in their revolutionary theories by linking their rationalist (or in Sorel's case, moralist) aspirations to a full appreciation of the irrationality of sociological consciousness with respect to them.