

## Introduction

Contemporary social theory is at least one hundred years old. This is not to say that there have been no significant developments — the feminist revolution(s) and the decolonization of theory chief among them. But the ‘postmodern’ process of decentering of which feminism and postcolonial thought are especially powerful instances began before the end of the last century, if not earlier. Something is always needed to ‘jump the ruts’, so to speak, to shift the theoretical standpoint off center and focus critical attention on normalcy, that which ‘should’ be taken for granted.<sup>1</sup> But the margins of critical engagement are always subject to historical remapping. Yesterday’s borderlands can be today’s metropolises, in thought as in geopolitics.

“Thinking from the margins” is the stuff of which deep, challenging critical social thought has always been made. What has changed is the kind of marginality that has been able to gain access to legitimate high theorizing. Where celebrated contemporary social theory is written by women, people of color, postcolonial subjects, and queers, celebrated “classical” social theory was written by Jews, provincials, pinkos, and neurotics. In this book, Antonio Gramsci is the provincial pinko (he was also physically challenged, by virtue of his humped back), Emile Durkheim the provincial Jew, and Max Weber the neurotic (Marx, the original neurotic provincial pinko Jew, is a looming presence not directly addressed).

This book is not about these marginalities or their histories. But margins are frames for centers, and marginality is the frame within which this book’s picture is painted. From their respective margins Gramsci, Durkheim, and Weber help to frame the conceptual scope and limits of the field of European social thought late in the 19th century and early in the 20th.

In particular, I notice that they help to frame the limits of Reason as an account of human motivation and action. This book is about their and others’ attempts to account theoretically for the complex dynamics of large masses of people, especially how groups

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<sup>1</sup>Of course, the center can be hard to find once we start considering the universe of possible demerits from perfect privilege. The classic statement of this is Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (New York: Touchstone/Simon and Schuster, 1963). Every core has periphery within it.

act and what motivates them.<sup>2</sup> In the period from 1890 to 1935 theorists of politics and society began to develop some of the first systematic attempts to find apparently irrational action intelligible.<sup>3</sup> Further, what it might mean to say that action is ‘rational’ or ‘irrational’ became at this time a matter of ongoing discussion. In the early 20th century, rationality became visible as a problem. And because rationality is one of the key organizing ideals of modernity, to find it problematic is to bring postmodernism into view.

As one of the greatest 19th-century rationalisms, marxist revolutionary theory makes a great test case for the pre-postmodernist problematization of rationality. Classical marxism was a theory of society coupled with a philosophy of history in which a determinate developmental rationale, or sense of rational progress, is predominant. Marxists generally suppose that classes, the main social actors for marxism, have readily discernible rational interests *vis-à-vis* the dominant mode of production and the historical process. Revolution is supposed to be a rational step in the development of the world. In short, marxists believe they know what is best for people. And indeed, marxists were initially insulated by their general sense of having a grasp of the logic of history from the widespread sense of “psychological *malaise*” and “impending doom” that struck the best ‘bourgeois’ social thinkers in the last decade of the 19th century, driven by their increas-

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<sup>2</sup>Rather than making a show of justifying my interest in high theory, I will pragmatically assume that it is shared by anyone who has bothered to pick up and open up this book. For us, then, Dominick LaCapra offers a pleasant ideology, proposing that the ‘great’ texts be studied because “in them the use of language is explored in an especially forceful and critical way — a way that engages us as interpreters in a particularly compelling conversation with the past.” “Rethinking Intellectual History and Reading Texts,” in *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives*, ed. Dominick LaCapra and Steven L. Kaplan (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982), 51. The political economy of academic fashion and disciplinary subfields does tend to make such statements into marketing slogans, where they may range from cynically strategic to merely naïve. I personally find the conversations generated by ‘history from below’ equally compelling in their own way, but that is not the field this book will explore.

<sup>3</sup>Freud, Pareto, Mannheim, Reich, Ortega y Gasset, and the first generation of *Annalistes* were just a few of the social theorists who confronted collective irrationality over the course of this period. The classic account of this intellectual phenomenon remains H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930*, rev. ed. (New York: Vintage, 1977 [1958]). Philosophers like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, working in what throughout the 19th century was becoming a tradition distinct from systematic social theory, had anticipated the trend. In 20th century literature and philosophy, Bergson, Musil, Woolf, Mann, Kafka, and Pirandello, among many others, provided penetrating insights into collective action that was far from straightforward rationality.

ing awareness of the ‘irrational’ dimension of action in society.<sup>4</sup> The doom impending could initially be interpreted positively by marxists as capitalism’s; only after 1922 did this doom take on forms that were troubling for marxism as well.<sup>5</sup>

In this sense, the histories of marxist and non-marxist social theory were conceptually ‘out of sync’ between 1895 and 1922.<sup>6</sup> This spread is what makes comparison of marxist and ‘bourgeois’ social thought at the time so powerfully diagnostic.

During this period marxism was under tremendous and increasing stress from historical developments spanning the stabilization and renewed vigor of capitalism; its evolution on a world scale into imperialism; the first world war; two revolutions in Russia and unsuccessful post-war attempts in Germany and Hungary; mass politics and fascism; and the post-revolutionary struggles of the bolshevik regime against external and internal crises. These events scrambled the picture of historical development painted in the late 19th century by the orthodox reading of Marx and contributed to a creative explosion of marxist attempts to reframe the problem of revolution.<sup>7</sup> During this period any number of marxist variants, including parliamentary socialists, spartacists, revisionists, Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, syndicalists, kantian marxists, the orthodox and the ‘left-wing’, all had

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<sup>4</sup>This is H.S. Hughes’ characterization of the experience of European social thinkers in the generation preceding the Great War, in *Consciousness and Society*, 14.

<sup>5</sup>The fascist seizure of power in Italy began in October, 1922.

<sup>6</sup>Or perhaps more accurately, marxism remained in sync with the remnants of a positivism growing increasingly conservative and divorced from the world in bourgeois social science, but was left behind by the ‘cutting edge’.

<sup>7</sup>On this basis I would argue that while marxism came a little late to the issues discussed by H.S. Hughes in *Consciousness and Society*, the results are still worth examining. Hughes defensibly excludes marxism from his study, based on the residual positivism of the orthodoxy at the turn of the century and on its critique by Croce and Sorel. Croce indeed had a substantial catalytic effect in the revisionist controversy, although his critique of marxism was ‘outside’ and had little impact on committed revolutionaries. Sorel, as Hughes points out, was himself hardly mainstream. But the ‘mainstream’ in marxism became a cloudy issue between the revisionism controversy and the moral collapse of the Second International occasioned by World War I (when internationalism proved no match for nationalism), and with a little patience one can discover the same tensions visiting marxism from 1917 to 1930 that had been visiting ‘bourgeois’ thinkers since twenty years prior. Rather than as a “psychological *malaise*,” however, some marxists experienced this moment in intellectual history as a practical challenge to their unshaken political commitments, with correspondingly distinctive results. Hence, this study may be seen as supplementing Hughes’ study by exploring the eruption of the irrational into marxism during the later part of the period he surveys.

claims to the ‘correct’ line of marxist revolutionary theory and practice. Since then, only leninism and maoism have had the power authoritatively to make that claim.<sup>8</sup>

## I. Revolution

Insofar as marxism is distinctively a political theory and not just a mode of social analysis, revolution is marxism’s central concern. Revolution is the point on which all of the analytical elements of the theory focus and at which they become demandingly practical. Here, all doctrinal disputes must be distilled to action. At this point all is revealed. While this political dimension of marxism has been widely stripped away over the course of the 20th century, in 1890 such a detachment would have been inconceivable.<sup>9</sup>

But marxism entered the 20th century as a revolutionary theory without an adequate theory of revolution.<sup>10</sup> After the death of the founder, marxists increasingly struggled to couple Marx’s powerful critique of the contradictions of capitalism with a practical understanding of how revolutionary practice could grow out of that critique.<sup>11</sup> To complicate matters, the theory as Marx left it was a huge and uncharted space, fully worked out only in parts, suggestive but incomplete in others. Later marxists were left to navigate this space, describing trajectories through it that depended on a variety of factors including their prioritization of the material available; their experience; their tactical and strategic considerations; their responses to political and social pressures and involvements; their audience; their intellectual inclination; their exposure to other theoretical traditions; and so on.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>The German Social-Democratic Party (SPD), though frequently subject to the departure of splinter parties, held out a little longer, until Hitler’s seizure of power.

<sup>9</sup>This is not to suggest that there were not then ‘dabblers’ in marxism, but that what united *marxists* properly so-called was a commitment to revolution. Perhaps this distinction could still be made, but to do so would now appear rather farcical.

<sup>10</sup>The distinction is between theory as analytical tool and theory as guide to action, in the sense of Marx’s famous eleventh thesis on Feuerbach: “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.” Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977), 158.

<sup>11</sup>Leszek Kolakowski addresses this issue in *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Origins, Growth, and Dissolution, 1: The Founders*, trans. P.S. Falla (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1978), esp. 416ff, in the context of a discussion of leninism’s relationship to marxism; it is a persistent theme throughout his study.

<sup>12</sup>I take seriously Foucault’s agnostic position toward causality and explanation in intellectual history: he found “the traditional explanations... more magical than effective.” Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. of *Les Mots et les choses*

Under these circumstances, the need for political and theoretical legitimacy understandably dictated that marxists engage in rhetorical attempts to link up with some ‘true’ marxism. The resulting doctrinal variations and disputes combined with the general historical turmoil of the turn of the century to create relatively open possibilities for the exploration of revolutionary theory and politics in Europe. Because this study concerns the history of marxism after Marx, my procedure will be to bypass the issue of what Marx himself ‘really’ meant in order to explore such appropriations of the marxian material that were more or less promising from the standpoint of the one central marxist concern, making a revolution.<sup>13</sup>

Despite internal maneuvering, European marxists also displayed striking unity of basic conception and a certain political compactness almost until World War II. Thus, in the late 19th century the Second International provided the organizational means for marxism to exert a dominant influence on European revolutionary socialism, which it maintained thereafter.<sup>14</sup> At the theoretical level, two basic premises define the shared conceptual space within which revolution could be envisioned and discussed at this time. First, marxists understood human life to be something that humans themselves produce, although historically they have been unaware of this.<sup>15</sup> Making, or labor, was for marxists

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(New York: Vintage, 1970 [1966]), xiii. In place of *explanations* of given conceptual ‘events’ I seek to identify factors that may have contributed to *enabling* them, and to establish the spaces that were available and the trajectories through them that were possible at a given moment. As to why exactly one possible trajectory was taken rather than another, who can say? Nevertheless, my focus does not penetrate to the unconscious rules of discourse that attracted Foucault’s attention.

13I use ‘marxian’ to mean ‘of Marx’; ‘marxist’ to mean ‘of the theoretical tradition based on Marx’. A great deal of confusion will be avoided by the careful reader who keeps present that unless he is specifically named, *not* Marx but particular historical marxisms are under discussion here. Also worth remembering is that it is not always clear who had access to what Marx texts when, since it was during and after this period that some of Marx’s most significant unpublished works first began to appear (e.g. the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, first published in Russian in 1927, German in 1932, English in 1959; the *Grundrisse*, first published in any form in 1939-41, in an available German edition in 1953, English in 1973). What we now know of Marx was not necessarily what was available to marxists before mid-century.

14The Second International was a loose federation of mainly European marxist socialist or ‘social-democratic’ parties founded in 1889. By far its most powerful member was the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), which by virtue of its relative domestic success and militant compactness was able to dominate the organization. One of its *raison d’être* was to counter bourgeois nationalism; consequently, the nationalistic response of most socialists to the outbreak of war in 1914 was a deathblow. It was replaced by the Third, or Communist International, based in Russia, in 1919. See James Joll, *The Second International 1889-1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

accordingly the most basic human activity.<sup>16</sup> The social relations governing this production constitute the fundamental relationships in human history. Consequently, liberty and human dignity can only be achieved when the class that actually does the producing (the proletariat) shakes off the class domination of the non-producers (the bourgeoisie) and takes collective control of the production of human life, making it conscious.<sup>17</sup> Second, it followed that, in order for the proletariat (or their representatives) to completely change the world, they had first to understand how it worked, through an understanding of the mode of production and the human behaviors related to it. The specific nature of the capitalist mode of production was to prepare the way through its own contradictions for this liberating revolution by developing humanity's productive powers to the point where scarcity and the consequent historical basis for class domination could be eliminated.

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<sup>15</sup>Marx's rescue of this fundamental humanist insight from Hegel's abstraction is a commonplace. See George Lichtheim, *Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study* (New York: Columbia UP, 1964), 41-50. For a more extended treatment of the Marx-Hegel relationship, see Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1968). One of Marx's classic statements of the proposition is to be found in the Preface to *The German Ideology*: "Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion, or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life." In *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan, 160.

<sup>16</sup>This premise was taken over by fascist corporatism for rather different political purposes.

<sup>17</sup>'Production' has been a confusing and misleading concept throughout the history of marxism. In a strictly economic sense, production refers to making *things*, like lampshades, rubber chickens, and other necessities of life. In this sense the factory is the characteristic site of capitalist production. But the factory and its products also embody a set of relationships between humans, in which the capitalist owns the factory and the workers work for her, selling their labor power as a commodity, alienating their products, thus being exploited, etc. These relationships are also *produced*, one might say, by the factory, and the factory is produced by the relations. For Marx, the production of *things* was fundamental, but only because of the social relations embodied in the 'mode of production'. Consequently, "...for Marx the basic unit of reality is not a thing but a Relation." Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1971), 71. This is at the core of the argument in *Capital*, as for example in the discussion of commodities: "The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labor as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things." Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1977), 164-5. Furthermore, "[t]he veil is not removed from the countenance of the social life-process, i.e. the process of material production, until it becomes production by freely associated men, and stands under their conscious and planned control." *Capital*, 173. A variety of relationships that Marx is often supposed to have nothing to say about can be illuminated through sensitive reading of his complex concept of 'production' as the production of human life and 'labor' as all of the work that goes into it. 6666

The two elements of theory (the understanding or conception of the world) and practice (the actions of humans in producing the world) provided the inseparable content of marxist revolutionary *praxis* (theory-based practice).<sup>18</sup> For a revolution to be made, action had to be taken — and it had to be the right action, based on correct assessment of the social world that humans actually created and the ways they actually behaved. The world that had been made unconsciously throughout history had to be remade consciously for humans to be free. On all of this marxists agreed.

## II. Consciousness

*Consciousness*, the way people understand the world and think about what they are doing, was thus at the very heart of marxism as a revolutionary theory and as an aspiring theory of revolution. Socialist consciousness was the element capable of making human labor free.<sup>19</sup> This suggests that in order to make the transition from revolutionary

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<sup>18</sup>These two elements correspond roughly to the distinction drawn between ‘scientific’ and ‘critical’ marxism in Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms: Contradictions and Anomalies in the Development of Theory* (New York: Oxford UP, 1980). Gouldner’s argument is that within Marx’s theory there is a conflict between the democratic, voluntarist, ‘critical’ side and the analytical, elitist, determinist, ‘scientific’ side, tendencies that are both to be found in Marx’s own writings, with the former tending to dominate in works not published by Marx and the latter in works he did publish. All of this, for Gouldner, made Marx “a paradoxically idealistic materialist who suppressed his own idealism,” 33. The history of marxism is then marked by figures who were attracted more or less radically toward one pole or another; or more interestingly, struggled to maintain both elements of the theoretical complex and to resolve their tension in practice. See 155 for other formulations of the same thesis.

<sup>19</sup>‘Consciousness’ is a general term that, for marxists, only has meaning when given a specific content based on degree of awareness of the basic conditions of social life. ‘Class consciousness’ will be used here to denote elementary awareness of relative position in the relations of production; thus, for the proletariat, class consciousness is based on awareness of exploitation, and basic antagonism toward the exploiting class. It is one consciousness among many in the group in question and even in the individuals who make the group up; but it is not necessarily the dominant one. ‘Socialist’, or ‘revolutionary consciousness’ will be used to capture the stage at which the elementary economic class consciousness of the proletariat is coupled with the political will to struggle collectively to overthrow the class dominance of the bourgeoisie. Here, class consciousness is ‘totalized’ as the source of motivation; it is at *u7,77least* dominant, and tends to utterly displace all other fragmentary consciousnesses. At this stage the action of the proletariat corresponds to ‘socialist reason’. Confusion arises easily because the need to distinguish class and socialist consciousness was not apparent to those marxists who were confident that the logic of capitalist development would create economic and political consciousness in the proletariat simultaneously, or that party intellectuals could supply socialist consciousness ‘organically’. The decoupling of economic (class) and political (socialist) consciousness (corresponding to union consciousness and party consciousness in Lenin, for example) is one of the defining features of marxist theory in this period.

theory to theory of revolution, from why to make a revolution to how, the theory on its own terms seemed to mandate a detailed understanding of the actual formation of proletarian consciousness. The proletariat had to be conscious as a class of its fundamental position in the making of the world to make a new one, but how was this consciousness to come about? Was proletarian class consciousness to be a relatively straightforward result of the developmental logic of capitalism, or were intermediate or supplemental steps necessary? Did all of the proletarians have to achieve revolutionary consciousness at once, or could their potential to do so be represented by a ‘vanguard’? What were the obstacles to class consciousness and revolutionary commitment? Marxists were slow to grasp the full importance of these questions. The discussion first became acute during the revisionism debates at the turn of the century and gained renewed urgency a few years later, when World War I, the October Revolution, the dissolution of the Second International, and the emergence of fascism reshaped the social and political landscape that confronted marxists.

Chapters 1 and 2 explore distinctive attempts to confront the question of revolutionary consciousness: Karl Kautsky’s formulation of orthodox marxism in the 1890’s and the approaches to class politics and revolution offered by Eduard Bernstein, Georges Sorel, Georg Lukács, and V.I. Lenin. Despite the fact that in the marxist tradition the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a new, classless society were to rely upon the class consciousness and collective action of the proletariat, 19th-century marxists had done very little thinking about the social elaboration of consciousness. The theory’s strength was its promise to penetrate to the core of social relationships and expose their deep structure, to provide a basis for understanding the driving forces behind all relationships among human beings. But it also provided its adherents with the means to ignore or dismiss those elements of individual and mass consciousness — what might be called ‘sociological consciousness’ or social psychology — that were not directly attributable to class relations (or relations of production in a strictly economic sense).<sup>20</sup> Consequently,

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<sup>20</sup>‘Historical consciousness’ better captures marxism’s insistence on the historical, ‘in-process’ character of social phenomena, but such formulations are often used by marxists to dodge specific and detailed examinations of how things look *right at the moment*, which is a crucial question for those who wish to act right at the moment and is the element I wish to capture. This being said, the terms will hereafter be used more or less interchangeably. ‘Social psychology’, while not free of positivistic impediments, will be used when the specifically marxist form of the discourse in terms of consciousness needs to be evaded or supplemented. I am also sensitive that this term has a specific meaning within the field of American sociology, and hope I will be forgiven by the

marxist orthodoxy at the turn of the century was ill-equipped to analyze the complexity and fragmentation of mass consciousness, its deep and intertwined roots in traditional beliefs and patterns of obligation, or its consequences in conflicting motivations and obstacles to solidarity.<sup>21</sup> But it was only in this period that the entry of the masses into official political culture throughout most of Europe preemptively brought these issues to the foreground, creating a theoretical tension that required marxists to find a rapid resolution if they were to take advantage of what appeared to be widespread opportunities for revolution under unexpected conditions.<sup>22</sup>

Bernstein, Sorel, Lukács, and Lenin appear in Chapters 1 and 2 as examples of marxist attempts to struggle with these issues during the period from the end of the 19th century to the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution. My argument is that these thoughtful men recognized the importance of sociological consciousness to the revolutionary dynamic, but nevertheless were still unable to confront it directly as a central problem for the marxist theory of revolution.<sup>23</sup> Instead, they assigned sociological consciousness to a ‘black box’. I have borrowed this useful term from electronics to denote a situation in which input enters an unknown region (the black box) in one form, and thence issues in another form, in a predictable manner, while the mechanism of alteration remains unknown. This procedure allowed them to leave the multiple formations and manifestations of sociological consciousness, the way people actually thought about their world, out of their analytical framework.

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shades of Mead, Blumer and Goffman for the peculiar appropriation. I also have in mind Benjamin’s third Principle of the Weighty Tome: “Conceptual distinctions laboriously arrived at in the text are to be obliterated again in the relevant notes.”

21Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe point out rather literal-mindedly that the language of fragmentation can have meaning only within a discourse that presumes unity to be normal. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985), 43, note 15. Classical marxism was, however, based on such a presumption. This was a position against which Gramsci struggled, but that fundamentally he still accepted.

22For the same issues from a different perspective, the impact of the vast changes in European political culture on the politics of European elites, see Charles S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade After World War I* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975).

23I believe that they provide evidence calling into serious question — at least with respect to time-frame — Marx’s famous dictum from the Preface to *The Critique of Political Economy* that “Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve.” Of course, if tasks can only be recognized through their solutions then the whole point collapses into retrospective tautology (as in “You always find things the last place you look”).

### III. Space

In the place of such an analysis, I argue, their theories of revolution offer what I call ‘space-maintainers’.<sup>24</sup> This term derives from the image used earlier of Marx’s theory as a vast ‘space’, which in turn depends on picturing society as a ‘space’. In this image, the social space is defined or *delimited* by all of the interlocking functions, structures, protocols, and relationships that go on within it. Each of them occupies part of the overall social space, and together they make it up, just as the walls, roof, and contents of a house define the house’s space and limit it.<sup>25</sup> Thus, theories of society may be seen as attempts to identify the limits of the social space (what can possibly fit within it, what is outside of it), the location, boundaries, overlaps, and interrelationship of its parts, and perhaps their dynamic through time.<sup>26</sup>

This image should make it possible to visualize what a theoretical space-maintainer is, and why it might be necessary. Since one of marxism’s core principles is that to change the world requires understanding it, marxists have consistently recognized a need to claim that their descriptions of the social space include all of its important subspaces (or spheres), and the ways they interact. So the space of marxist theory purports to mirror, in all important respects, the social space itself.<sup>27</sup> The determinate arrangement of the various social subspaces constrains the dynamic of their interactions, and is the basis for the attempt to forecast and control resulting rearrangements — or, in other words, to

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24A black box, of course, encloses a particular type of theoretical space.

25This discussion is assimilable to Pierre Bourdieu’s insistent use of the metaphor of space as a way of getting at the vastness, multidimensionality, and yet boundedness of given social formations. Bourdieu engages marxism most directly on the subject in “Social Space and the Genesis of ‘Classes,’” (1984) now in *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1991).

26This metaphor must be handled carefully as a description of marxism, which is most attractive to many of its adherents as a theory not of static structures but of the dynamics of their development, change, and transformation. It must be kept in mind that for marxism part of the ‘space’ of societies, etc. is their historicity, so that the contours and boundaries of social space and its subspaces (or ‘fields’, as Bourdieu calls them) are in a constant process of reproduction *and* redefinition. In contrast, a conservative social theory of the type marxists criticize as ‘bourgeois science’ starts by positing a given arrangement of the social space as eternally given (for example by starting from a fixed ‘human nature’ and deriving from it universal social hierarchies, economic behaviors, etc.). Then again, this procedure has not been altogether foreign to marxism.

27This is but one variant of marxism’s complex aspiration to totality as anatomized in Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984). For a rather different but equally comprehensive critique of ‘mirroring’ as a metaphor for certain knowledge, see Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979).

make social changes of any kind and in particular to consciously make a revolution. If the arrangement of any one of the important subspaces, such as the actual historical consciousness of the proletariat, remains *indeterminate* or unknown, then a random (or contingent) element is introduced into the revolutionary dynamic.<sup>28</sup> When that subspace contains one of the crucial sources of historical motion, as the class consciousness of the proletariat does in marxism, then movement from revolutionary theory to theory of revolution — and ultimately, revolutionary action — requires that space in the theory to be filled, either with actual understanding of its contents or with a space-maintaining device that simulates them for practical purposes.

I argue that this second route, expedient but dangerous, was taken in different ways by each of the marxists to be considered in Chapters 1 and 2.<sup>29</sup> As late as 1897-98, the ‘revolutionary consciousness’ space in the revolutionary theory of the Second International had been filled by a combination of straightforward economic determinism and rational political education: the proletariat, brought to elementary class consciousness by its experience of intensifying capitalist exploitation, would be further educated in socialist consciousness by carefully supervised and controlled involvement in party activity. Within just a few years, the rapidly accumulating impact of surprising capitalist resiliency, and the spasmodic character of the entry of the masses into official political culture forced the ‘revolutionary consciousness’ space open again in marxist revolutionary theory. A space that to orthodox marxists had seemed, in theoretical terms, *determinate* — fully known and predictable (or mapped) in terms of its formation, limits, and relationship to other features of the social space — became *indeterminate*.<sup>30</sup> The marxists considered in

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<sup>28</sup>Such indeterminacy may not necessarily be incompatible with marxism, but marxists in the period under discussion generally were unwilling to accept it at all explicitly; in a sense, this characterized them and was the watershed for the transformation of marxism in Western Europe after World War II, in which the rediscovery of Antonio Gramsci played a significant part.

<sup>29</sup>“For death was only the logical negation of life; but between life and inanimate nature yawned a gulf which research strove in vain to bridge. They tried to close it with hypotheses, which it swallowed down without becoming any the less deep or broad.” Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain* 1111.

<sup>30</sup>I intend the terms ‘determinism’, ‘determinate’, and ‘indeterminate’ as I deploy them within the metaphor of social and theoretical space to provide an image that supplements, rather than replaces, the conventional uses of these terms. The conventional metaphor of determinism is of ‘mechanism’, in particular the clock. This beautifully captures determinism’s lockstep sense of regularity, predictability, and even inevitability, but misses the sense of possibilities and alternatives *lost* or hidden that I seek to capture with the image of space.

Chapters 1 and 2 noticed this problem, sought to fill this indeterminate space with a space-maintainer, and in effect de-emphasized proletarian consciousness as an immediate feature of the revolution. The other alternative was to approach the problem of sociological consciousness as central both to the issue of the need for a revolution, and to the theory and practice of making one: thus, as a space in need of careful exploration.

#### IV. Gramsci as Focal Point

Moving beyond the partial solutions that satisfied most marxists in the early 20th century, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) attempted fully to come to grips with the problem of revolutionary class consciousness, understood as a subset of the problem of human action and motivation in general. Gramsci was not the only marxist of the early 20th century to notice that working-class consciousness was a fragmented and unreliable basis for a revolution.<sup>31</sup> But he was one of the first to combine willingness to examine sociological consciousness as a central problem of marxism with commitment to collective participation in the remaking of the world and with a somewhat open mind about the rigid class categories that hindered other marxists' analyses.<sup>32</sup>

Gramsci was not a dogmatic thinker, and he was able to observe social phenomena from a relatively more open standpoint than were other marxists. Early in his career, he rejected the economic determinism that he took to be characteristic of marxist revolutionary theory and social analysis in general.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, Gramsci was prepared to notice

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<sup>31</sup>Henri De Man, one of the first to explore the significance of Freud for marxist theory, approached these issues from such a heterodoxical standpoint (his 1929 book was entitled *Beyond Marxism*, and he became a fascist during the 1930's) that he has generally been read out of the history of marxism and does not appear in any of the major surveys. Gramsci took him seriously enough to devote several notes to him in the *Prison Notebooks*, though hardly in praise. See, e.g., SPN 197.

<sup>32</sup>Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919), of orthodox marxists the closest to Gramsci in her willingness to make theoretical space for sociological consciousness, was interested neither in understanding it organically or in abandoning rigid class analysis of it. She was, however, of an older generation. For a relevant discussion of her position, see Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, esp. pp. 8-14. However, see also Norman Geras, *Discourses of Extremity: Radical Ethics and Post-Marxist Extravagances* (London: Verso, 1990) for a driven and, to committed marxists, convincing rebuttal of their argument. Geras has written extensively on Luxemburg.

<sup>33</sup>"The Revolution Against *Capital*" (1917), *PWI* 34-37; *AGR* 32-36. The piece praises the Bolsheviks for making the Russian revolution despite the lack of advanced capitalist relations in Russia. Gramsci's position was significant because it created space within his version of marxism for consciousness to be other than a direct reflection of economic relationships. The Russian revolutions disrupted many European marxists' notions of historical stages and causation.

the variety of motivations that drive human action in societies. These may include nationalism, religion, local patterns of deference, obligation and loyalty, and traditional or contextual modes of thought and conduct. From the standpoint of the rational marxist assessment of collective interest, these phenomena had always been characterized in terms of irrationality, ideology, false consciousness, or doomed remnants of prior historical eras fit only to be swept away by the intensification of capitalism.

Gramsci, himself the product of a provincial background, was unprepared to treat as simply irrational the social psychology he had grown up in. He recognized the strength and durability of social relationships and patterns of conduct that were not the direct product of class interests, and he attempted to factor them into his understanding of the development of revolutionary consciousness. It is on this basis that Gramsci's attempts to reorient marxist revolutionary theory will be compared in Chapters 5 and 6 to the work of bourgeois sociologists Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, who like Gramsci were attempting to account for social action that did not fit conventional theoretically-mandated categories of rationality.<sup>34</sup> By making this connection, the second half of the study will frame Gramsci's work in terms of the problems, contours, and limits of European thinking about social order in the period from 1890 to 1935.

## V. Tools

As an intermediate step in setting up this comparison, Chapter 4 will examine Gramsci's 'fit' with the tradition of political theory known recently as classical republicanism, civic republicanism, or republican virtue, of which it has been argued marxism is one variant.<sup>35</sup> Theorists are limited in the problems they can confront and in the solutions they can offer by the conceptual space they occupy and by the theoretical or linguistic tools that space contains. For each theorist it is therefore helpful to know the tradition or traditions in which she operates, and the tools these make available.<sup>36</sup> Marxists at the

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<sup>34</sup>Durkheim (1858-1917), French, and Weber (1864-1920), German, are generally considered to be the founders of modern sociology.

<sup>35</sup>Jeff Weintraub, *Freedom and Community: The Republican Virtue Tradition and the Sociology of Liberty* (forthcoming: California), Chapter IX.

<sup>36</sup>This is as unfancy a way as I can think of to say what has been discussed very fancily indeed by at least two key recent methodological movements of great significance to intellectual historians: the more radical centered on Frenchman Michel Foucault, and his notions of 'epistemes' (overarching structures of meaning that condition the entire discourse of an era) and the 'positive uncon-

turn of the century were working from a very limited conceptual toolbox where proletarian consciousness was concerned; the rapid alterations of the political landscape that the first twenty years of the century tossed up left them to fall back on dogma or to improvise with tools not immediately available in marxism itself.<sup>37</sup> This is another way of thinking about the ‘space-maintaining’ strategies discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

One supplemental toolset available to Gramsci to cope with the indeterminacy of social psychology and the inadequacy of a marxist toolbox laden with the implements of determinism belonged to the Italian tradition of civic republicanism most famously represented by Niccolò Machiavelli.<sup>38</sup> A central feature of this tradition, as Gramsci understood it, was its insistence on the active consent of the people (or ‘national-popular will’) as the foundation of the social and political order (or ‘state’). This insistence provided a conceptual buttress for marxism’s somewhat more abstract approach to collective participation in

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scious’ (that which is taken for granted); and that represented by English historians of political theory Quentin Skinner and J.G.A. Pocock, based on a notion of available normative languages limiting the authorial intents that can be constructed from them (readable as an attempt to salvage liberal rationality and the sanctity of the author from the more seriously centrifugal implications of postmodernism). Serious distinctions can be and have been drawn, in particular about the ‘level’ at which the study is focused, but for the nuts-and-bolts practice of intellectual history the insights are strikingly similar. See: Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, esp. the Foreword to the English edition and the Preface; Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978), esp. the Preface to Volume One; and J.G.A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985), esp. the Introduction. Hayden White entered much the same theoretical space with his notion of ‘tropes’, in *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe 1414* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1973); and if it can be said to have ‘levels’, the *Annalistes’* theory of *mentalités* also fits. Obviously they must all be right, or they wouldn’t all be saying the same thing.

37I am aware that in using the metaphor of the toolbox I flirt with an image that is historically gendered. At least I didn’t use sports. But nowadays women know plenty about using tools — and they can dunk. The usage is not unprecedented, and has been common in the modern French intellectual tradition: Gilles Deleuze, in a 1972 conversation with Foucault published as “Intellectuals and Power,” argues that “a theory is exactly like a box of tools,” and as such has value only insofar as it is useful as an instrument of power. Now in Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977), 208. Lucien Febvre used the metaphor beginning in the 1930s; and Durkheim used it to describe the social categories, or basic ‘collective representations’, that supply the initial mental equipment of every person in society. Students of pragmatism will have many other examples in mind. Any toolbox, by the way, is itself a space containing a variety of more or less useful gadgets — and *not* containing others.

38The failure of this theoretical tradition to have a concrete impact in its bourgeois form on the history of Italy was to provide Gramsci with the subject of lengthy reflection in his *Prison Notebooks*. See *SPN* 44-120; and also 123-205 for Gramsci’s characterization of the communist party (albeit non-explicitly, due to prison censorship) as “the modern Prince.”

the construction of the polity. The resulting expanded theoretical space linked up with Gramsci's own formative experiences in peasant Sardinia and *biennio rosso*<sup>39</sup> Turin (discussed in Chapter 3) to enforce a depth of attention to social psychology as a problem *sui generis* that was lacking in other marxists of his generation.

My interest in framing Gramsci as a theorist of republican virtue is not *directly* to make him comparable to non-marxist theorists. Rather, by shifting attention off-center from the limited marxist problem-solving toolbox with respect to sociological consciousness and social psychology, it should be possible to extract Gramsci from the insularity so often inflicted in historical writing on the marxist tradition. Accordingly, as an intermediate step, I will explore the areas of marxist theory that provide a stimulus to direct sociological reflection, and the supplemental factors that acted on Gramsci's approach to revolutionary theory. The argument of Chapters 3 and 4 is thus that Gramsci was more immediately committed to the marxist goal of radically democratic willed community than most marxists and, consequently, was driven further afield in his examination of the obstacles in social psychology to a successfully emancipatory revolution.

Chapters 5 and 6 then draw Gramsci, as a particularly advanced marxist, into the broader discursive space of European social and political thought, by comparing his efforts toward constructing a marxist theory of revolution with the advanced 'bourgeois' sociologies of Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Max Weber (1864-1920).<sup>40</sup> I consider these theorists to have been advanced because each, in his own way, tested and pushed the boundaries of rationalist social science, without giving in to passivity, irrationalism, or vulgar empiricism. Each of them created a conceptual toolbox for the examination and analysis of social phenomena that did not fall back on assumptions about the rational basis of human motivation and action shared by liberalism, classical marxism, and positivism. This

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<sup>39</sup>The 'red two years' following the end of the first World War were marked by mass organization, strikes, and the occupation of the factories by workers in Turin, one of the centers of Italian industry. The tremendous enthusiasm and solidarity generated by worker militancy at the time contributed to the wide belief that this was a revolution *manqué*, a question that is still debated. See Paolo Spriano, *The Occupation of the Factories: Italy 1920*, trans. 15 Gwyn A. Williams (London: Pluto, 1975).

<sup>40</sup>'Scare quotes' are sometimes helpful on the term 'bourgeois' to distinguish my usage from a marxist one. The notion of class determinism that assumes intellectual products of members of the bourgeoisie to be inescapably deformed by class politics is one of the issues for this study, so it can hardly be assumed. Yet, it is also not appropriate to blithely compare what to marxists are apples and oranges without acknowledging the tension.

required a delicate juggling act between the reason that makes analysis possible and the irrational or non-rational forces at work in the social processes being analyzed. Thus they were, I believe, among those “few thinkers... who while fighting every step of the way to salvage as much as possible of the rationalist heritage decisively shifted the axis of that tradition to make room for the new definition of man as something more (or less) than a logically calculating animal.”<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to insist too strongly on the particular genius of these particular writers. Their selection was hardly casual, but it was only indirectly based on their individual merits. In this study Weber and Durkheim serve well in comparison with Gramsci because they ideally represent a range of the familiar and legitimate (or ‘inside’ in the history of ‘bourgeois’ social theory), just as Gramsci represents something unfamiliar and heterogeneous (or ‘outside’) with respect to this conventional category. Of course, the positions are symmetrically reversed when the conventional category in question is marxism. Durkheim and Weber consequently represent frontiers, or boundaries to a conventional conceptual space that Gramsci, representing the boundary to a different space, can be shown to intersect. Here, it is these boundaries that are the ultimate focus, mediated by the theorists who in part described them.

Furthermore, there are conceptual spaces that regularly intersect a variety of apparently distinct boundaries, serving to draw them together. An example of this is the republican virtue tradition of social and political thought discussed in Chapter 4.<sup>42</sup> In Chapter 5 I argue that Gramsci and Durkheim shared elements of the republican conceptual toolbox and were consequently already adjacent in at least that respect. Yet, Weber’s thinking did not fit the pattern of republicanism. Accordingly, the comparison of Gramsci with Weber in Chapter 6 demonstrates that, while the pressure on Gramsci to modify his

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41H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society* 17. In fairness I should acknowledge that my argument differs from Hughes’ not just in focusing on the marxist tradition, but in centrally positioning Durkheim. Hughes explicitly excludes the latter from the pantheon of the greats, 19 and *passim*. Hughes returns briefly to this judgment of Durkheim, caught, in his view, between positivism and idealism, in *The Obstructed Path* (1967) now in *Between Commitment and Disillusion: The Obstructed Path & The Sea Change, 1930-1965* (Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 1987); he also acknowledges Durkheim’s profound, though not necessarily salutary, impact on a generation of French intellectuals.

42Another classic way of approaching such conceptual phenomena is in terms of ‘styles of thought’, as discussed in Karl Mannheim, “Conservative Thought,” in *From Karl Mannheim*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (New York: Oxford UP, 1971). To each generation its characteristic images...

thinking about social processes came in part from within marxism, and specifically from its republican component, the patterns of action that this forced him to notice directed his thinking toward trajectories characteristic of an even broader range of European social thought at the time.

I intend the image of multiply-intersecting boundaries and trajectories across them consequently to confute any simplistic attempt to foreclose the complexity of intellectual history by categorizing, segmenting, and tracing out ‘influences’. Nor will *specific* contexts receive much attention here; the details of (say) Weber’s life may explain many things about Weber, but they contribute little to understanding how he could have shared his conceptual orientation with someone whose life was quite different in its details. It is in part because Gramsci, Durkheim, and Weber did *not* share a political viewpoint or life details that the intersection of their conceptual spaces reveals so much about the conceptual resources, or tools, becoming available to European social theorists in the first third of the century.

## VI. Rationality and Rationalism

I argue that the central insight shared by Gramsci, Durkheim and Weber was that human social action is not readily accounted for by any one overarching model of ‘rationality’. It might, therefore, be helpful to establish in a *preliminary* fashion what I mean by ‘rationality’, while at the same time leaving open the likelihood that it was used in different ways by the figures under study. The term presents enormous difficulties, not least of which is general uncritical use based on everyone’s sense that they know exactly what it is to be rational. Such idiosyncratic usages tend to be normative, involving an overt or covert presumption that given a set of circumstances, one set of actions is *correct*, or rational, and all others are *incorrect*, or irrational. This will be the basic sense of rationality used here, distinct from the technical sense of reason as an instrument of thinking (as in: to reason something out).<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Kolakowski offers a somewhat different but directly relevant sketch of rationalism as “an intellectual attitude which drew its strength from Cartesianism”: “Rationalism, thus understood, consists of creating simplified, abstract patterns of thought and making them do duty [or maintain space] for the real, complex world.... Rationalists also believe that all actions are governed by rational motives, and they thus blind themselves to the real-life complexity of psychological differences, the importance of tradition and custom, and the role played in social development by biological (particularly sexual) and many other factors.” à17,1717 *Main Currents of Marxism, 2: The*

Beyond such idiosyncratic usages, normative notions of rationality can be built into the foundations of the broadest traditions of social and political theory (what Gramsci called “conceptions of the world” and I have called conceptual spaces). For example, the dominant variants of liberalism were based on the presumption that given a market (economic or political), each rational actor will seek to maximize (or optimize, in more recent variants) her resources (or utility) by acting in her own self-interest.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, marxists tended to suppose that under conditions of the objective exploitation of one class by another in the relations of production, it is rational for the two classes to struggle irreconcilably. In both of these instances, the claim was that the theory sufficiently penetrates to the real causes of social phenomena to be able to determine what is correct and incorrect conduct with respect to them.<sup>45</sup> Thus, in the example of marxism, the space of rational motivation and action was filled with the relations of class determined by the mode of production; all other motivations were *outside* of this space, and hence, irrational.

As a simple normative concept, rationality does no more than indicate a *desideratum*. It is when the normative reflects back into the analytical that problems crop up. In such instances the result is an overt or covert philosophy of history, here to be called rationalism, in which the rational is conceived as tending to realize itself, and historical events are seen as instances of rationality seeking to triumph. Deviations from rationality are then not simply lamentable, they are incomprehensible — but also doomed to extinction, and therefore, unworthy of attention. It is almost trite to mention that marxism has repeatedly proved vulnerable to this temptation, in part because of its roots in Hegel. But

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*Golden Age*, 156-7. Appropriately, this passage is part of his explication of Sorel, explaining the reference to cartesianism. Descartes was hardly the issue in Germany, e.g., where rationalism took a more idealist form (Kant, Hegel).

<sup>44</sup>Obviously, in any extensive theoretical tradition, such assumptions will take strong forms and weak forms. An instance of the former in liberalism was Bentham. Later liberals like J.S. Mill attacked Bentham’s narrow rationalism in favor of more nuanced appreciation of the moral worth of the individual and her complex relationship to the community. C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1962), 2. Macpherson finds liberal rationalism to be grounded in a notion of the social in which “the individual was seen neither as a moral whole, nor as part of a larger social whole, but as an owner of himself,” 3. This sort of attempt to describe the general characteristics of ‘human nature’ independent of historical context is another key feature of rationalist social theories.

<sup>45</sup>Such instances can be called ‘deductive’, as proper or rational conduct is deduced from a prior general principle, or concept of normal social function or process. This sense of the term is suggested in Stephen P. Turner and Regis A. Factor, *Max Weber and the Dispute Over Reason and Value* (London: Routledge, 1984), 36.

rationalist presumptions haunted all of the great social and political theories of the 19th century, so the interesting points of focus at the turn of the century are those theorists who were able (at least partially) to escape normative rationalism for a more nuanced appreciation of the complexity of human motivation and action.<sup>46</sup>

Although I am not comfortable with coinages and do not believe I can enforce mine outside the covers of this book, I will refer to Gramsci's, Durkheim's, and Weber's efforts along these lines as 'sociologies of rationality'.<sup>47</sup> I mean by this to call attention to the importance for their approaches of flexible notions of relative 'reasonableness' rather than one or another fixed standard of 'rationality'.<sup>48</sup> The coinage is necessary to provisionally describe a conceptual space that can encompass the intersections of the conventional spaces occupied by the three. As such, the category of sociology of rationality serves to connect the first and second parts of the study, and accordingly discussion of it occupies the 'Procedural Interlude' between Chapters 4 and 5. In addition, it has been customary to take Gramsci at the anachronistically literal meaning of his word in his consistent rejection of 'sociology' as a mechanical, degenerate form of social thought. This interlude will consider such prejudices in terms of an analysis of Gramsci's use of the term 'sociology' (for which 'positivism' could easily be substituted in most cases).

## VII. The Pre-History of Post-Modernism

To the modern mind, rationality is the instrument of humans' mastery of the world. But what rationality is that? Is it the strategic rationality of Verdun, or of Dresden? Is it the efficient rationality of the Nazi death camp bureaucracy? The scientific rationality of the invention of dynamite and, later, the atom bomb? The progressive rationality of the sweat shop and the belching smoke stack? The humanist rationality of Stal-

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<sup>46</sup>Romanticism, though difficult to define and hardly a coherent body of social theory, still might plausibly be mentioned as an exception. It is also dangerous to skip lightly over national borders here; what looked rational to German liberals often did not look rational to French liberals, and so on. What is at issue, however, is not the content of rationality but its centrality as both a normative and analytical element in given conceptions of social action.

<sup>47</sup>In contrast, Nietzsche thought coinages preferable to received conventions because the latter recycle received wisdom, stifle independent thought, and discourage fresh perspectives. Then again, he sold a bare handful of his books during his lifetime and died a lunatic.

<sup>48</sup>For another application of the rational/reasonable distinction, see Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992 [1990]) esp. 198-201.

in's support in the West? In past times, armies fought to the death, each convinced that God was on their side. How can both sides in a modern war be rational?

Reason's promise of universality has so far been a very tenuous replacement for the traditional faiths: irrationality (or the *conflict of rationalities*) in the 20th century has scuttled every one of the great 19th-century rationalist dreams. Liberals, socialists, scientists, believers in progress, humanists, all wear permanent bruises and look over their shoulders for the next attack. Postmodernism completes the critique meted out by history by turning suspiciously on any claim to rationality as an effort of domination. Postmodernists seek to neutralize claims to rationality's power by relentlessly dissecting their specificity and transience, fragmenting them into their smallest personal and impersonal components and showing their inadequacy to their own claims of universality. But this pluralistic critical strategy offers little to replace the lost unities — however fictional they may have been.

This essay can be read as part of the literature of interpretation of the 'western' marxist Antonio Gramsci. But I argue that Gramsci was not an isolated figure: marxism was only one of the intellectual contexts relevant to him and to which he was relevant. In a broader sense, this essay is about the pre-history of post-modernism, an elusive moment of transition from the tenuous certainty of modern reason to a more intellectually moderate confidence in the constructive possibilities of particular rationalities. Respect for the 'locality' of rationality without surrender either to some new absolute or to anarchic relativism is the distinctive position between modernity and postmodernity occupied by some of the most interesting thinkers of this century.<sup>49</sup> It is a difficult position to hold consistently or even to communicate, as critics from both sides do not tire to point out.

Gramsci, Durkheim, and Weber belong together because in their best moments, they understood what is often taken to be a discovery postdating them: that the world is made up of inherently uncertain and complex collective constructs, and action in it is always a gamble. The experiences of modernism, postmodernism, and this difficult interme-

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<sup>49</sup>James Livingston surveys another part of this field in *Pragmatism and the Political Economy of Cultural Revolution*. He finds that a whole cast of characters in the early 20th century, including leaders of the labor movement, feminists, Royce, James, Dewey, Cooley, Mead, etc., argued "that rationality and its correlate in 'character' were not the effects of abstraction or abstention from social context and purpose but the effects of implication in and engagement with particular communities, solidarities, and traditions. In short, they proposed to substitute the 'social self' for the 'man of reason'" (81).

diate position have been permanent features of the intellectual life of the 20th century, very often of the daily intellectual life of individuals. Occupants of the tense space between rational certainty and the 'deconstruction' of reason have their own history in this century. The pre-history of post-modernism is ongoing.