

~~Lucas~~ ^{George Lukacs} -1-11-75
Vintage Books, NY, 1970
George Lukacs: The Man, His Work and His Ideas, ed. G.H.R. Parkinson

Social Ontology (also look at interview in Le Monde, 12-9-70 on
All Problems are Ontological (Georgy Gera))

Georg Lukacs, one chapter, "Dialectics of Labor", published in
Telos, Fall 1970, and another chapter, "The Ontological Founda-
tions of Human Thought and Activity" published in Contemporary
East European Philosophy, Spartacus Books, Bridgeport, Conn.,
Volume III, 1971

cf. L
C.G.P.

Interview

(1) First, the interview: Where Lukacs, in trying
to prove his points, states that whereas in Greek and medieval
philosophy, all philosophers considered existence either in terms
of causality or ~~te~~ teleology: "In the light of Marxist ontology,
it becomes clear that there is no teleology in nature and that what,
among things, distinguishes natural existence from social existence,
is that every event in the social order is the result of a teleo-
logical act." Lukacs claims that Marx's discussion of labor and
surplus labor, not just in economic terms but in terms of the
class struggle, he "by defining ontologically a purely economic
problem, Marx raises the level of the debate." And when the
reporter asks whether that would mean that Marxist ontology there-
by became an ideology, Lukacs answers ideology, as if it were syn-
onymous with philosophy: "If we look, for example, at the history
of modern science, from Machiavelli to Hume and Kant, we see that
scientists and philosophers always try to answer questions raised
by society. Ideology must be considered as part of a pan-his-
torical process. And in such a process, there is no formula capa-
ble of showing us the degree of efficiency of anything."

Ref. history
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Telos

"Dialectics of Labor: Beyond Causality and Teleology"
(p.172) "Thus, Marxian theory of labor as the only existing form
of a teleologically created being is the first to establish the
unique character of the social being." The fact that the laborer
nowhere appears, the complete turnabout, from the revolutionary
conception of labor to its abstract conception ^{where Marx is} the de-
humanization of capitalism, is seen in the "Spartacus" where

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it all gets reduced to SNLT: "Above all, we propose to examine what economic necessity consists of. At the outset, it should be emphasized that this is not a natural, necessary process, though Marx himself, in his polemic with idealism, occasionally used such an expression.

1) In previous economic development, we can see three directional developments, which have, it is well-known, come to pass, often very unevenly, independently of man's desires and knowledge, which also lie at the foundation of our telic projects.

2) First, socially necessary working time, labor-time for human reproduction, tends constantly to diminish. As a general tendency this is not disputed by anyone.

2) Second, this process of reproduction itself became ever more socially intensive... that all the decisive instances of human reproduction (such as nourishment and sexuality) become transformed permanently and essentially into social moments in their own right.

3) Third, economic development creates more and more critical qualitative as well as quantitative relations... at present, one finds realized the greater and greater economic predominance of the international market, already showing at the very least, an economically unified humanity." (pp. 228-229)

All this purely capitalistic, purely market illusory and reified, is the climax to his supposed critique of positivism, which in fact ends up nothing short of genuflecting before Stalinist, that is state-capitalist, positivism. It is the more fantastic when you consider that it's meant to answer the existentialist problems raised by Sartre, in which he is supposed to prove that true subjectivity is first of all in Marx. Marx, of course, "prepared the way, interpreting ontology historically, in contrast to the religious ontologists, by tracing the necessary historical development from the 'bottom', from the simplest, to the 'highest', to the most complicated objectification of human culture." (p. 217)

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Again, Lukacs makes not only production, an abstraction, but consciousness as well: "It is not the perfecting of production which creates the essentially detached moment, but rather the role of consciousness which stops being a mere epiphenomenon of biological reproduction... (p.219) Undoubtedly laboring activity arises as a solution to its needs. If however one were to pass over essence, one would be presupposing an immediate relation." (p.219)

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"Labor consists of telic projects which set the respective causal series in motion... Teleology is a way of projecting, one constantly accomplished by consciousness... every social practice (praxis) if we think of labor as the model, reconciles these opposites." (p.220-221)

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Whatever the telic project means to Lukacs it in no way changes the alienated labor process. On the contrary, suddenly sees the inner dialectic of nothing short of "continual perfection" (whatever that means! RD) of labor while its process is being carried out, and what is the "teleology" of this labor process? It turns out to be nothing but speed-up increased productivity and all the workers know so easily as oppression, not as teleology, certainly not his goal. It is here where Lukacs makes it worse still where the manifoldedness of labor gets reduced to something that "will always be more and more extensively modified and as well as intensively." (p.223) Magical praxis indeed: "In relation to these things mentioned (magical praxis) and because labor is not only the objective, ontological model of all human activity, but also it is the prototype for the divine (!RD) creation of reality, of all things, by means of ..." and when we skip to p. 228 we find that Lukacs is first getting ready to skip over all its actual class struggles:

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"Thus we simply skip over the most important mediating areas bringing out more clearly, at least the most universal connection of the genesis of society and history with their own development."

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*Totality
Mediation*

(4) The article ^{of the} most profound and authentic analysis of Lukacs by his student Istvan Meszaros in the book edited by G.H.R. Parkinson. We must skip Meszaros tracing of the crucial dialectic through Lukacs' work on aesthetics and concentrate on our subject, the 1923 work, Totality and mediation remain the key categories (The ~~Role~~ Role of Morality in Communist Production): (p. 53): "...A certain duality in Lukacs' conception of Ontology. [Even the most recent Lukacs--the author of a massive Social Ontology--insists on a duality, on a dual causality, and on an ultimate autonomy of 'decisions between alternatives'." "The question is not whether one agrees with Lukacs or not. It's rather that on the basis of his Ontology, the positive outcome can only be envisaged as the impact of a 'sollen' ...and ought to change their way of life. (p. 64): "The central categories of Lukacs' dialectics are the closely interrelated concepts of 'totality' and 'mediation'...The direct cult of totality, the mystification of totality as an immediacy, the negation of mediation and complex interconnection can only produce a myth...The early Lukacs was unable to formulate the concept of 'concrete totality' because he was not in a position to envisage those mediations which could transcend the 'details, fragments, isolated things' of the 'immediately given' in the ultimate unity of a dynamic changing dialectical totality." (p. 64, 65, 66)

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Lukacs, pp. 286-7: "Hegel's tremendous intellectual contribution consisted in the fact that he made theory and history dialectically relative to each other, grasped them in a dialectical reciprocal penetration..."

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*then not a mere abstraction;
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Journal articles
SOCIAL SCIENCE

-7-

Finally, back to Telos, only this time the special issue on Lukacs, Spring 1972. There is quite a tremendous difference in Paul Piccone's article here, "Dialectics and Materialism in Lukacs" from the one he wrote in the 1970 issue which had said that Lukacs was the greatest thing in a hundred years. (Incidentally, on the question of the literary essay he quotes one Asor Rosa's beautiful definition as "the typical form of expression of an age in which values no longer live directly in things" even as it is clear that the literary essay was to Lukacs himself an "attempted reconciliation between the expression of life's immediacy (poetry) and abstract form of mediation (philosophy)". Especially significant is his attack on Lukacs' later writings where it is clear that "Lukacs ends up with the positivist totality when he considers socialism as the planning of capitalist society, or he sees proletarian class consciousness as the sum total of bourgeois scientific facts." (p.127) Why he should therefore conclude with a eulogy is clear only from the point of view that it allows him to close up the loopholes by bringing in phenomenology: "What makes Lukacs' History and Class Consciousness so attractive is precisely his critique of science as another expression of bourgeois reification, his transforming into processes of all fixed structures, and his attempt to reinstate the subject as the historical agent--even if he eventually fails in doing all this. What is needed is a reactivation...which will allow a dialectic between the subject and group, a phenomenology..." (p.132)

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Paul Breines: "Significantly, neither Korsch nor Lukacs took part in the discussion opened in 1932 by the first publication of Marx's 1844 Manuscript...essentially, (these) enabled Lukacs to see that his theory of reification and class consciousness was not Marxian enough because it was not really Hegelian enough. That is Lukacs recognized that, unlike Marx, he himself never grounded his critique of alienation in a critical transformation of Hegel's concept of labor as the process through which man realizes himself. As a result Lukacs now saw (the book) ended with a concept of class consciousness which was no more than a purely abstract negation of a totally reified world..." Andrew Arato: "Lukacs' theoretical development, 1919-22, clearly illustrates that his illusory concretization of his theory of praxis and his inability to overcome the antinomy

illusory concretization / praxis + factum = Party work

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of freedom and necessity culminate in a party myth. Notwith-
 standing his correct conclusion he glorifies the theory of reifi-
 cation as "the indispensable part of the dialectic theory of
 society". (p.25) Not only that throughout there is no idea that
 he's not dealing with the laborer, that he is not dealing with
 the process of production, much less with the present period
 in which Arato himself lives and which seems never to have gone
 beyond "advanced capitalism". There is a tremendous quote
 from Hegel however, Phenomenology, p.82: "Mediation of nothing
 but self-identity working itself out through an active self-
 directed process." The relationship to Weber is well worked out
 but again (p. 34-5 especially) where he speaks of Lukacs "fusions"
 the Marxian category of abstract labor with Weber's category of
 formal rationality. All in all, the reduction of quality to
 quantity is handled itself as an abstraction instead of the total
 oppression it is for the worker as if "useful labor" is the ab-
 solute opposite of "abstract labor" disregarding totally that it
 is the concrete laborer who is that absolute opposite, who
 wants not merely to recreate his "utility" and that the only
 way he feels he will overcome abstraction is not merely shouting
 about his miseries but creating totally new human relations
 beginning at the point of production, when, in taking control
 he takes over the means of production and starts on the way to class
 Arato writes: "Lukacs' critique of philosophy is
 the culmination of his presentation of the immediacy of re-
 ification" as if what the proletariat is fighting for is "im-
 mediacy" and not ^{against} oppression.

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as against 28 pages of Section I on the phenomenon of reification, and whereas Section III, "The Standpoint of the Proletariat" ^{61 pages} seems to redress the balance, the truth is that there is nothing ^{in H. Mann} ~~about~~ ^{only} the proletariat, but only deductions from the concept of the proletariat--a perfectly Marxist concept, but Marx's ~~concept~~ ^{concept} wasn't "a deduction" but a return to the process ~~of~~ production where the voice that was "stifled" was heard as well as seen in both its struggles and its attitudes.

Heber?
 Take the most crucial Hegelian category, Mediation, which Lukacs is trying very hard to ^{embed in its Marxist} ~~embed in its Marxist~~ Marxian form. Surely there is no more crucial Hegelian category, ^{more one than mediation} but this is exactly where Marx's concretization meant the proletariat as Subject the proletariat-as-class-struggle, the ~~proletariat~~ ^{freely-associated proletariat} taking destiny into its own hands,

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the ~~f~~ absolute opposite form of workers relations at the point of production and in politics, ~~the~~ the political form at last discovered to work out the economic emancipation of labor". ~~XXXXXX~~ This statement of Marx in the Civil War in France was translated by him in the ~~E~~ French edition of Capital which stressed "the significant addition" to the section on commodity fetishism as "only freely associated labor can remove the fetishism from commodities".

As freely associated labor ^{labor} becomes Subject and its the laborers who ~~will~~ root out the fetishism and destroy the reification. It isn't that Lukacs doesn't "agree"; it is that by now he is so interested in the "universality" of reification that he writes "even his thoughts and feelings become reified" (p.172). ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ How then could the worker destroy reification? ~~What at most~~ ~~the experience of existence~~ "...Once the false manifestation of this unmediated ~~existence~~ ^{existence} are abolished, the true existence of the proletariat as class will begin" (p.172) and at that point then we have "consciousness" and since "consciousness is nothing but the expression of historical necessity" (p.177)]

Necessity and Freedom. They are not only a question of ~~transforming~~ ^{breathing} life into things"; it's a question of transformation of reality. Read over (p.177). Lukacs is so overwhelmed by the question of reification of thought and the need not to stop at mere "facticity", unmediated, to mediation, that "higher reality than empirical fact" (p.181) dominates over new human relations. (p.170)

Lukacs on the other hand is so busy making reification "the immediate reality of ~~every~~ ^{every person} living in capitalist society" (p.197) that becoming conscious seems to be the end-all

even as quantity and quality appears as the absolute contradiction rather than Essence from which we still have to move to Notion, that is to say, to the abolition of the division between Notion and Reality and thence to the unity of theory and practice. Lukacs did save himself by saying "History is at its least automatic when it is the consciousness of the proletariat that is at issue." (p.208) Unfortunatley that was not the beginning but the conclusion *of his complex further reduced to*

Party as the only 76 77

That praxis did not mean the activity of the laborer but only of labor was not to become clear until even to Lukacs until

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TELOS, Fall, 1970 #6 GEORG LUKACS :Dialectics of Labor
"Realization (the result of human praxis in labor) enter into the real world as new forms of obj-ity."
TELOS #11, Spring 1972 - SPECIAL LUKACS ISSUE II.
NB NB NB Arato also dares use Lenin's "copy th. of knowledge"

P7#&p.37 "problem of reification that Lukacs raised from the eco.level to the level of total society"....
Q Lu, p.93: Just as cap/system ..reproduces... THE STRUCTURE OF REIFICATION sinks more deeply, more fatefully & more difinitively into the consciousness of man."

REIFICATION OF CONSCIOUSNES!!! (rd) "De..."
p.50: "The his. process both produces & is produced by the subj. This is how Lukacs interprets the famous demand to grasp & express 'the true not only as substance but as subj.'"

p.55: "Let us review the Hegelian notion of mediation. Mediation is an insight into (OR RELEASE OF) of the dynamic of the (given (immediacy)) ; it is the movement that realizes & externalizes a potential that is explicitly present in the 1st place... (QLu, p.155: 'to go beyond the immediate existence of objects as they are given can be shown to be the structural principles & the real tendencies of the objects themselves.'"

(rd. LABOR TIME Arato speaks, Lukacs speaks as if that were "Marxian" instead of Marx's analysis of CAPITALISM)

Paul Breinas, "Praxis & its Theorists: The Impact of Lukacs & Korsch in the 1920's" in *Petition* (p. 76) "in his 1923 review, BLOCH considered Lukacs & K to be a virtually earth-shaking achievement. With his reconstruction & elaboration of Marx's critical transformation of Hegel's 'obj-subj. dialectics' Lukacs sent human consciousness crashing thru the walls of its own long-standing impasses to do battle with the social-eco. anatonisms that determined those impasses (by 'antinomies').... Bloch.. was ONE OF THE ONLY COMMENTATORS to place Lukacs' th. of 'reification' AT THE CENTER OF THE WHOLE DISCUSSION.. With his critique of 'reification' Lukacs, according to Bloch, had rediscovered Marx's key to the mysteries of this world & to the revolution to its phil. theological, cultural & practical contradictions." Lukacs, Bloch wrote, "liberated thought... the 'human' we unfolds & constitutes itself in the process & prepares for its full realization in prol. rev. p. 85

"the 'new dogmatism' of the official C-ist th., to quote MERLEAU-PONTY again, 'placed the knowing subj. (ultimate Party itself) outside the tissue of his, & accorded it access to abs. being, freed it from the duty of autocritique, dispensed Mxism from applying its own principles to itself & installed dual thought in a massive positivity which dial. thought itself is unable to accept."

Cf. Serge's *Memoirs of Rev. rev.* p. 127. P. 129 Hans Mayer noted "around 1930 it was stylish to speak of reification & to apply Lukacs' theory"

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- "1970's anti-count..."
- "DYNAMICS DETERMINAN..."
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interpretation of the Marxian concept of 'commodity fetishism; to the problems of culture."

"Significantly, neither Korsch nor Lukacs took part in the discussions opened in 1932 by the 1st pub. of Marx's E-P MSS of 1844. ..Korsch by 1930-32 Korsch had come to view both Marx & his own earlier 'Hegelian Marxism' as ideological expressions of obsolete phase of the proletarian movement."

V.G. ~~Reiser~~ p.102: Essentially, the 1844 MSS enabled Lukacs to see that his theory of reification & class consciousness was NOT MARXIAN ENOUGH BECAUSE IT WAS NOT REALLY HEGELIAN ENOUGH. That is Lukacs recognized that, unlike Marx, he himself never grounded his critique of alienation in a critical transformation of H's concept of labor as the process through which man ~~reifies~~ realizes himself. As a result, Lukacs now saw ~~the~~ ended with a concept of class consciousness which was no more than the purely abstract negation of a totally reified world."

RE "ITINERANT MARXISTS"

Beginning in the mid-1950's with the new reconstruction of Hegelian Marxism by some of the Fr. Existentialists & in the early 1960's with the emergence of the 'new left' critique of the old orthodox Marxism & postwar cap. Lu & Korsch's hook were being drawn back into the center of yet another fundamental confrontation over the whole situation of contemporary Marxism.

Handwritten notes:
- "These new left projects are not a 'Dir. labor' in actuality as indicated by the debate."
- "Finally human language instead of 'DJ' babbling."
- "Dial. rel. of the Pr can only be free democracy in practice."
- "Ald's in/infinite consistency."
- "Marx's 'anti-humanist' theoretical."
- "human 'ontology' moves to be a objectified only a ..."
- "T.U. debate" (circled)
- "Marxism" (circled)
- "who at all CULTURE as SF DIRECTION" (circled)
- "HH 30 to mind -> escape reality" (circled)
- "SNPT" (circled)
- "Korsch's hook" (circled)
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- "of yet another fundamental confrontation" (circled)
- "over the whole situation" (circled)
- "of contemporary Marxism" (circled)

Georg Lukacs

"In the case of labor, there is also the possibility of its higher development, which it ontologically imparts to it by man acting. Already in this way, but wholly as a consequence of the transformation of the mere reactive-passive adaption of the reproductive processes in the environment, through its conscious and active metamorphosis; labor does not become merely a fact, in which the new type of social being attains its expression, but quite ontologically arrives at a model case of a wholly new form of being."

"Labor consists of telic (teleologischen) projects, which set the respective causal series in motion." (220)

...we propose to examine what economic necessity consists of. At the outset, it should be emphasized that this is not a natural necessary process, though Marx himself, in his polemic with idealism, occasionally used such an expression.

In previous economic development, we can see three-directional developments, which have, it is well-known, come to pass, often very unevenly, independently of men's desires and knowledge, which also lie at the foundation of our telic projects.

First, socially necessary working time, labor-time for human reproduction, tends constantly to diminish." (228)

Second, this process of reproduction itself became ever more socially intensive." (228)

"...that all the decisive instances of human reproduction (such as nourishment and sexuality) become transformed permanently and essentially into social moments in their own right."

Third, economic development creates more and more critical qualitative as well as quantitative relations...At present one finds realized the greater and greater economic predominance of the international market, already showing, at the very least, an economically unified humanity." (229)

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Eco. Necessity

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