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Edited by Saulius Jurga & Konstantinos Kavoulakos

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Lucien Goldmann Redivivus: Categories, History, and Praxis in Lukács and Heidegger

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ABSTRACT. In this paper, I first argue that Lucien Goldmann's attempt to confront Heidegger and Lukács, though it deserves to be revitalized, remains ultimately insufficient. Second, I propose that a more fruitful reading of Heidegger and Lukács should be based on three aspects: first, Lukács' concept of social totality should be related to Heidegger's concept of world. Second, the more meaningful way to confront Lukács and Heidegger on the level of praxis is not the everyday dealings with ready-to-hand things (as Goldmann argues), but, instead, the second division of *Being and Time* in which a political concept of subjectivity and action comes to the forefront. Third, a proper approach to Heidegger's and Lukács' philosophies should be based on their respective appropriation of the concept of categories.

KEYWORDS. Heidegger; Lukács; Goldmann; Categories; Totality; Being; Praxis

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1. Introduction

The French Marxist Lucien Goldmann has largely disappeared from contemporary discourses in Critical Theory and Marxist scholarship, though his thinking skillfully moved between structuralist psychology (Piaget), Lukácsian Hegelianism, literary theory, and philosophy of culture, thereby mediating traditions that usually appear as separate intellectual domains. He was well received by philosophers in the tradition of the Frankfurt School, such as Adorno and Marcuse.¹ He remains best known for his (unfinished) work and lectures on the relationship between Heidegger and Lukács, being the first scholar who claimed that the two passages in *Being and Time* in which Heidegger refers to the term “reification” [*Verdinglichung*] in fact are a direct response to Lukács. As has been argued before, we can assert with a high degree of certainty that this claim is false since the use of this term is more likely employed in response to Husserl, who used the expression “reification of consciousness” in his 1912 article *Philosophy as Rigorous Science* among other places.² In addition, the most obvious concepts that could be used for a Lukács-Heidegger confrontation, namely, alienation and modern “homelessness”, seem to have their sources, for Heidegger, in the Western metaphysical tradition. Furthermore, given that Heidegger does not understand reification as a societal phenomenon, it is highly unlikely that he had Lukács in mind, and even beyond these philological issues it seems that Heidegger did not turn to Marxism before the end of WWII. Indeed, it is only at that time that Heidegger refers positively to Marx and the concept of alienation in his 1946 *Letter on Humanism* which, in turn, led to a response by Lukács in his 1946 essay *Heidegger Redivivus*. Interestingly, Goldmann, at least to my knowledge, never refers to this essay nor does he discuss Lukács' at times polemic rejection of Existentialism as a moment of what Lukács conceives of as the modern “destruction of reason”. Instead, Goldmann focuses on the following

1 For this, see ADORNO 2019, 32; GOLDMANN 1977; 1984; MARCUSE 1978, 30.
2 JURGA 2019, 11.

claim:

Perhaps Heidegger's importance was to create a language and then give a reactionary theory of elements Lukács had developed. But there is an extraordinary kinship between Heideggerian Sein and the Lukácsian totality, [...] between the 'Zuhandenheit' and 'Vorhandenheit' described by Heidegger and the praxis Lukács opposes to objective presence, and between Heidegger's traditional ontology and the perception of Sein and Lukács' distinction between traditional and dialectical philosophy.³

As Lukács himself proposes, one could read Heidegger as a "fetishized" and therefore reactionary response to capitalist modernity and its communist overcoming; however, Goldmann's claims about the relation between Heidegger's concept of Being and Lukács' concept of totality as well as his claim that the distinction between ready-at-hand and present-at-hand points to Lukács' concept of praxis are more central, insofar as these claims deal with more systematic issues in Heidegger's and Lukács' respective philosophies.

In what follows I will demonstrate why these claims remain ultimately insufficient, since even on the basis of a superficial reading of Heidegger, it is almost impossible to argue that Heidegger had something like "totality" with "being" in mind, especially given that the entire examination in *Being and Time* is developed for the purpose of re-opening the question of being and to leaving the response to the "meaning of being" question unanswered. In short, "being" appears to be *the least* dialectical term in Heidegger's linguistic universe. Three aspects need to be reconsidered for a proper confrontation between Heidegger and Lukács:

[1] First of all, it is difficult to understand why Goldmann does not work through the more obvious relation between Lukács' concept of social totality and Heidegger's concept of world, especially if we take

into account that Lukács' concept of reification no longer refers to the economic sphere, but is instead developed and employed in order to grasp *culture* as a whole.⁴ Moreover, both culture and world are concepts that are introduced on the basis of the concept of meaning (*Sinn*), and it is precisely this "semantic" shift that turns Marxist political economy into a theory of *society*, making 20th Century "Western" Marxism possible. Given that Heidegger's concept of world is, because of its temporal, historical and intersubjective unity, something like a network of significant relations that can become transparent as a "whole" in authentic *Das Sein*, we would do well to confront Lukács and Heidegger on this level. Ironically, this comes close to Goldmann's own take on the concept of totality, which he defines, admittedly in functionalist terms⁵, as «meaningful structure»⁶ that can be laid out in terms of his genetic structuralism via explanation and understanding.⁷

[2] Second, regarding the claim about praxis, it is certainly true that the everyday world and the understanding of the ready-to-hand surrounding world is established as an attempt to break through the subject-object relation and the "reified" present-at-hand positioning towards the world⁸, however, the more meaningful way to confront Lukács and Heidegger on the level of praxis is not intersubjective recognition (Honneth), but the interpretation of the second division of *Being and Time* as a theory of practical subjectivity in which not only an ethical⁹, but also a political horizon shines through. That such a reading is possible, is most visible in the appropriation of Heidegger in Marcuse's early essays in which Marcuse works with Heideggerian vocabulary for dealing with the concept of revolutionary praxis phenomenologically and critically.

4 For this, see FEENBERG 2014, ch.4.

5 GOLDMANN 1980, 42.

6 GOLDMANN 1971, 112.

7 GOLDMANN 1976, 207.

8 Which Honneth used for his further development of the concept of reification in HONNETH 2008.

9 For this, see LOTZ 2005.

[3] Finally, a third issue that seems to permit a sympathetic reading of Lukács and Heidegger is their relationship to Neo-Kantianism and Emil Lask's philosophy, which is acknowledged by Goldmann¹⁰ especially in regard to the concept of category that both philosophers develop in their respective philosophies.¹¹ As I have elsewhere shown, the concept of reification in Lukács is taken to be the key term for describing capitalist objecthood in general, which, in turn, leads to a categorical approach to reality in his thought.¹² Similarly, though in a different context, already as early as in his 1916 *Diuis Scotius* book Heidegger deals with the concept of category. In this essay, however, I will focus on Heidegger's 1924 lecture course on Aristotle instead, as we find here the most extensive phenomenological appropriation of the concept of categories during Heidegger's Marburg years.

In what follows, I propose to offer a framework that takes its main lines from Goldmann while pushing his claims into a different direction, namely, for thinking about this lecture course towards the ultimate goal of building – admittedly fragile – bridges between the phenomenological and Marxist traditions. I will leave Heidegger's relation to Fascism and Lukács' relation to Stalinism aside, as otherwise the concepts presented will immediately lose their philosophical force. To be certain, my sympathetic reading of both philosophers might be upsetting for those readers who tend to follow Lukács' generally distorted and dogmatic treatment of Existentialism as well as for those who remain convinced that Marxist philosophy should reject phenomenological philosophy as bourgeois ideology, with the consequence that *Being and Time*, according to Lukács, is «nothing else» (*sic!*) than a «pre-fascist»¹³ «document that expresses the way in which a class thinks and feels».¹⁴ In contrast to this sociological and party-line reductionism, I submit that we should think with Lukács against Lukács, as this will allow us to see that

10 GOLDMANN 1991.

11 For this, see KAVOULAKOS 2014; 2018.

12 LOTZ 2020.

13 LUKÁCS 1951, 161.

14 LUKÁCS 1951, 48.

Lukács' idea of orthodox Marxism as something «that exclusively refers to *method*»¹⁵ can equally be used for phenomenology understood as a «set of philosophical glasses» through which social reality can be accessed, analyzed and revealed in its phenomenological content.¹⁶

In other words, what I am proposing here is to take the fundamental conceptual and theoretical problem of a philosophy that remains faithful to Marx more seriously, by demonstrating the centrality of the project of illuminating that social categories, such as commodity, money, and capital are *in fact* the determining aspects of capitalist social reality. For example, we are unable to simply *argue* that capital is the underlying *objective* determination and that it is therefore a way to grasp the *reality* of our world; rather, at crucial points of our theorizing we need to *reveal* that determinations such as capital are non-arbitrary determinations; which is not only an eminent *phenomenological* task through which theory and experience can be coupled with each other, but also our only chance to show why a Marxian view of political economy and social reality is superior to those theories and philosophies that have given up the task of grasping social totality ontologically.

2. Goldmann on Lukács and Heidegger

Lucien Goldmann's definition of reification, as he outlines it in *Cultural Creation*, is straightforward: he assumes that in capitalist societies [1] economic life and its reduced forms of rationality invade all corners of human life¹⁷, [2] economic life reduces «the fundamental human dimension of the possible»¹⁸, [3] economic rationality leads to an «individualistic, atomized vision of men's relations with other men and with the universe»¹⁹, in which, finally, [4] a «type of man arises

15 LUKÁCS 1971, 1.

16 For this, see LOTZ 2021a; 2021b.

17 GOLDMANN 1977, 79.

18 GOLDMANN 1977, 58.

19 GOLDMANN 1977, 43.

whose psychic structure is essentially passive, who is estranged from all responsible decisions, and who is oriented essentially toward consumption». ²⁰ Though it is certainly true that Lukács' treatment of reification in *History and Class Consciousness* remains vastly more complex than can be summarized in these four points, we can see nevertheless that Goldmann focuses on two main elements that tacitly guide his interpretation of the Lukács-Heidegger relationship, namely, on the one hand, the question of how reification causes the destruction of praxis as something that escapes economic activity and, on the other hand, the question of how reification leads to the passivity of modern agents who no longer conceive of themselves as subjects and naturalize themselves and their socio-historical world as an unchangeable given. Instead of focusing on the epistemological and methodological aspects of the concept of reification, such as the commodity form, calculation, and rationality as abstraction, Goldmann is particularly interested in the notions of praxis and history. This focus, in turn, also determines his understanding of the Lukács-Heidegger relationship. In his *Lukács and Heidegger: Towards a New Philosophy*, Goldmann steers our attention to two primary topics among others: the relation between being and totality, as well as the relation between praxis and the ready-at-hand. I shall briefly outline these two issues in the next sections.

2.1. Being, Totality

Goldmann's claim about the relationship between Being and totality is straightforward: «Lukács will speak about 'totality' where Heidegger will use the term 'Being'». ²¹ With respect to Heidegger's concept of Being, Goldmann goes on to say that Being «is not a concept, but a basic reality from which the *Dasein* questions. Its character is *temporal, meaningful, and historical*». ²² He then compares Being with Lukács' concept of totality, arguing that «totality is no longer a given». ²³

²⁰ GOLDMANN 1977, 85.

²¹ GOLDMANN 1979, 10.

²² GOLDMANN 1979, 40.

²³ GOLDMANN 1979, 40.

Although Goldmann is correct to claim that for both Heidegger and Lukács the main concepts developed do not refer to something that is (positivistically and empirically) given, but to a historical process, he does not see that Heidegger makes a distinction in *Being and Time* between "Being" and the "Being of Dasein," claiming that the latter must be analyzed before the first, broader question can even be raised. This quasi-transcendental approach to the question of Being is then geared towards revealing what it means "to be" for that entity that asks the question of the meaning of Being. Accordingly, it is very clear from the onset of *Being and Time* that Heidegger does not identify "history", "time" or "meaning of the whole" with "Being;" rather, the task of *Being and Time* is to reveal how *Dasein* exists historically, temporally, and worldly and how *Dasein* itself understands its own way of existing. As we know, the rough result of this investigation leads Heidegger to two main conclusions: [1] *Dasein* does not "know" in any reflective, theoretical or subject position of its own "how of existence" and [2] history, time, world, etc. are not some given aspects or properties of it as an entity; instead, Dasein makes itself intelligible through what Heidegger calls "Existentialia" in *Being and Time*. We can certainly see that in Heidegger's analysis some kind of reification is in play (addressed by Honneth), namely, that reification is related to a distorted understanding of our own being as something factual "in" space or "in" time. Heidegger even assumes that there is a "tendency" in *Dasein* to understand its own being as something *that it is not*. However, this basic insight into Heidegger's philosophy in *Being and Time* has almost nothing to do with Lukács' concept of totality which he introduces in *History and Class Consciousness* in the following way:

We repeat: the category of totality does not reduce its various elements to an undifferentiated uniformity, to identity. [...] [T]he objective forms of all social phenomena change constantly in the course of their ceaseless dialectical interactions with each other. The intelligibility of objects develops in proportion as we grasp their function in the

totality to which they belong. This is why only the dialectical conception of totality can enable us to understand reality as a social process.²⁴

In contrast to Heidegger, Lukács' task is to show how social reality is a concrete whole in which all functional aspects of it are interrelated through categories that *methodologically* help us to understand social reality as one united whole. As Lukács himself says, «the idea of totality which we have come to recognize as the presupposition necessary to comprehend reality is the product of history in a double sense». ²⁵ In this way he argues that society as a totality is itself the result of historical developments (e.g., before capitalism agents did not live in a totally unified "society") and that therefore theoretical reflection needs to operate with the concept of totality, since otherwise it will fail to grasp the world in which we live and the social-political praxis that leads to changing it. Moreover, under no circumstance can the "dialectical interactions [*Weselselwirkungen*]" that Lukács has in mind be applied to the concept of Being which, for Heidegger, is not something that could be grasped with logical or dialectical categories. As Adorno recognized, the unmediated character of "Being" seems to make it a concept that can either be interpreted (from the viewpoint of Adorno's critical theory) as an inverted form of positivism or as an Absolute in the idealist tradition: «Being, in whose name Heidegger's philosophy increasingly concentrates itself, is for him [...] just as immediate, just as independent of the mediations of the subject as the facts and the sensory data are for the positivists». ²⁶

2.2. *Ready-At-Hand, Present-At-Hand, Reification*

Goldmann's understanding of the relationship between ready-to-hand and praxis is equally straightforward: he claims that we find a «close relationship between Lukács's historical world of the close unity

24 LUKÁCS 1979, 12.

25 LUKÁCS 1979, 22.

26 ADORNO 2005, 9.

between theory and practice, and Heidegger's world in which Being-*there* is involved and in which reality has with it a relation of «manipulability». ²⁷ Goldmann even goes as far as to say that «collective praxis, without which there is no hammer», ²⁸ is mediated by «perception and behavior» and that, as such, it determines Heidegger's description of concern in the surrounding world of everyday life. Goldmann seems to ignore completely the methodological aspect of why Heidegger analyzes the famous hammer in *Being and Time*, the details of how significance is constituted in everyday life, as well as the larger historical connectedness that is contained in the apperceptions of things that we take care of in pre-reflective concern in the world and towards others. Goldmann goes even further:

Heidegger [...] will only tell us that the spontaneous consciousness tends to understand 'Being-there' (man) on the basis of the world of *Vorhanden*, which is none other than the Marxist and Lukácsian analysis which tells us that, in reification, human reality and social facts are understood as things. ²⁹

Even if we leave Goldmann's problematic identification of Heideggerian *Vorhandenheit* with Lukácsian *Verdinglichung* and his uncritical use of "consciousness" aside, Goldmann's observations do not really treat the core of the problem. Whereas in Heidegger the ontological confusions about the being of *Dasein* occur because we do not show philosophically the *genesis* of how things in the world begin to show up for us as isolated and abstract spatial entities with properties that we can in a theoretical and reflective attitude relate to, Lukács's concept of reification finds its root in the commodity form that introduces a calculative form of rationality and the equalization of all things through abstraction which, in turn, introduce an opaqueness

27 GOLDMANN 1979, 18.

28 GOLDMANN 1979, 36.

29 GOLDMANN 1979, 12.

in our social life that no longer allows us to see how the fetishized reality as a sum of isolated things and facts goes back genetically to the commodity form. In Goldmann's words,

[d]etermined by this reification, the world is represented as a spectacle, as an object studied from the outside, with man as one of the elements of the world, a given fact in it, who can be studied at the level of positivist sociology. This reification concerns not only the world, 'the object,' but extends to psychic structures which are not only considered as facts (*Vorhanden*), but, in some of their aspects, disappear and appear as the property of things.³⁰

Similarly, in his book on reification Honneth claims that «Heidegger and Lukács share the intention of subverting or 'destroying' the prevailing conception of an epistemic subject who neutrally encounters an external world, and they do so to such an extent that they are both compelled to present an alternative view».³¹ Though Goldmann and Honneth are certainly correct in claiming that the transition from readiness-to-hand to a relation with isolated things and facts is crucial for Heidegger's analysis of concern and thrownness, they miss the connection that Heidegger draws between his analysis of the surrounding world and the second division of *Being and Time* in which the "wholeness" of *Dasein* and its historical constitution is at stake. This transition is indicated by Heidegger in his claim that the significant network of our pragmatic dealings in the world and being-with can be linked to what he calls the "for-the-sake-of-which": «In *Dasein's* Being, the context of references or assignments which significance implies is tied up with *Dasein's* ownmost Being – a Being which essentially can have no involvement, but which is rather that Being, *for the sake of which Dasein* itself is as it is».³² It is important to note here that Heidegger argues that that for which *Dasein* exists as

³⁰ GOLDMANN 1979, 33.

³¹ HONNETH 2008, 30; for this, also see GOLDMANN 1979, 37.

³² HEIDEGGER 1985, 160.

a whole should no longer be conceived as the practice of concern; rather, it emerges only as a whole when *Dasein* encounters itself as historical being. Only *this* and *not* the world of concern and readiness-at-hand, as Goldmann claims, is the level at which we can think about praxis in Heidegger. As Heidegger says in section 31, whenever *Dasein* understands itself primarily out of the for-the-sake-of-which, it exists as itself.³³

The connection between the for-the-sake-of-which and praxis is further worked out in division two of *Being and Time* wherein Heidegger not only tries to reveal the conditions of authenticity and possible action, but also indicates that only on this level of how *Dasein* understands its own being is *Dasein* "collective" insofar as it can bring the entire historically constituted world into the light of a different temporality which, in turn, makes total change possible. This, however, presupposes two concepts of Heidegger's philosophy that Goldmann does not consider, namely, on the one hand, the concept of worldhood (which is Heidegger's phenomenological concept of totality) and, on the other hand, the concept of resoluteness as the openness towards change. Both concepts, taken together, *could* be interpreted as the level of *praxis* in Heidegger. "Resoluteness" has often been overlooked by critiques of Heidegger because it is too hastily identified with his fascist turn, decisionism, or with an individualistic concept, which, as I will outline in the following, is incorrect. Goldmann himself seems to dismiss the relation between authenticity and history in Heidegger.³⁴ Importantly, resoluteness is not a psychological concept; rather, it is a particular type of understanding that temporally modifies being-with, being-alongside-with, and being-ahead-of-itself and, accordingly, resoluteness is what renders "action" possible.

³³ HEIDEGGER 1985, 186.

³⁴ GOLDMANN 1967, 171.

3. Goldmann Redivivus

To sketch a different approach to Lukács and Heidegger that does not reject but expands Goldmann's perspective, we need to briefly consider the relation between being-in-the-world, worldhood, and history in Heidegger. As we will see, for Heidegger the reified world is related both to the disappearance of history as something we belong to (modifying Goldmann's thesis that totality equals "being") as well as to praxis as resoluteness (modifying Goldmann's thesis that praxis takes place on the level of ready-at-hand).

Though Heidegger introduces his concept of worldhood and being-in-the-world while discussing our pre-reflective concern with ready-to-hand "things" and "equipmental totality," [*Zeugganzheit*] and though he introduces worldhood as a network of significant relations and as the never fully objectifiable condition of the possibility of encountering isolated things and facts in the world, the more important part of his account for my purposes here appears within the second division of *Being and Time*. As we know, the main point is to think of world as something that makes an objectifying relation to things that emerge as present-at-hand possible and to reject thinking about "world" as a spatial container or a sum of entities. Though it can be difficult to differentiate between "world" and particular "worlds" in Heidegger's analysis of the surrounding world, it becomes clear that with the question of how *Dasein* can exist as itself and as (a) "whole" the questions related to world and totality become question about what it means to be a historical entity. On the level of authenticity, *Dasein* understands its own being as "who" it is. Heidegger indicates the move from average being-in-the-world to *Dasein* as a whole in the following manner:

To say that in existing, *Dasein* is its 'there', is equivalent to saying that the world is 'there'; its *Being-there* is Being-in. And the latter is likewise 'there', as that for the sake of which *Dasein* is. In the 'for-the-sake-of-which', existing Being-in-the-

world is disclosed as such, and this disclosedness we have called 'understanding'. In the understanding of the 'for-the-sake-of-which', the significance which is grounded therein, is disclosed along with it. The disclosedness of understanding, as the disclosedness of the 'for-the-sake-of-which' and of significance equiprimordially, pertains to the entirety of Being-in-the-world. Significance is that on the basis of which the world is disclosed as such. To say that the 'for-the-sake-of-which' and significance are both disclosed in *Dasein*, means that *Dasein* is that entity which, as Being-in-the-world, is an issue for itself.³⁵

The most important aspect here is that Heidegger claims that the "for-the-sake-of-which" ultimately constitutes all significant relations and the "entirety of Being-in-the-World;" the last element in the chain of purposes is *Dasein* itself, specifically, the question of whether it understands its being as that which it is or as that which it is not. The entirety of Being-in-the-World gets disclosed in what Heidegger calls "care", insofar as care unifies *Dasein*'s main aspects, which are existentiality or "being-ahead-of-itself", facticity or "being-already-in-a-world", and falling or "being-alongside" entities within the world. The meaning of care constitutes how *Dasein* is understood in terms of past, present, and future, whereby inauthenticity implies a reified relation to past and future, whereas in authenticity past and future become intelligible and articulated as belonging to the "present" [*Gegenwart*]. As a consequence, «temporality reveals itself to be the sense of authentic care». In Heidegger's words:

The transcendence of the world has a temporal foundation; and by reason of this, the world-historical is, in every case, already 'Objectively' there in the historicizing of existing Being-in-the-world, without being grasped historically. And because factual *Dasein*, in falling, is absorbed in that with

35 HEIDEGGER 1985, 182.

36 HEIDEGGER 1985, 326.

which it concerns itself, it understands its history world-historically in the first instance. And because, further, the ordinary understanding of Being understands 'Being' as presence-at-hand without further differentiation, the Being of the world-historical is experienced and interpreted in the sense of something present-at-hand which comes along, has presence, and then disappears.³⁷

History – on average forgotten behind the veil of everyday absorption alongside pragmatic activities – becomes in resoluteness visible and intelligible as that in which we *already* participate, and it is only because *Dasein's* existence shows up in being resolute as properly historical, that the historicity of *Dasein* can be either affirmed or modified (both of which are forms of "repetition"). Again, this shows clearly that Goldmann is wrongheaded to identify ready-to-hand and present-at-hand as the proper levels for finding reification in Heidegger. Instead, reification takes place as long as *Dasein* does not find itself in a situation of becoming transparent in its *being-historical*; i.e., the reification of past and future become *retroactively* clear once *Dasein* opens up the possibility for true praxis. *This moment of historicity as intelligibility of the whole of existence is the condition of the possibility of praxis in Heidegger*, and it seems to me that Lukács and many other Marxists never really take into account that the "practical moment" that these Marxists have in mind – as revolution, praxis, social change, actions, etc. – has its own conditions under which this moment is intelligible as a practical moment. These conditions can only be revealed with the help of a phenomenology of practical subjectivity.

When Heidegger introduces the (temporal) concept of care, he remarks that *Dasein* usually understands its own existence through the «dimming down of the possible as such»,³⁸ since everyday *Dasein* understands its own existence out of the world and out of things.

37 HEIDEGGER 1985, 441.

38 HEIDEGGER 1985, 239.

«From this world», as Heidegger puts it, «it takes its possibilities, and it does so first in accordance with the way things have been interpreted by the 'they'»,³⁹ so that, he concludes, «the average everydayness of concern becomes blind to its possibilities» and «no new possibilities are willed». In other words, usually in average life we understand our being in terms of logical possibilities through which we conceive practical possibilities and possible actions as something that can either be there or not be there. These possibilities are conceived of as "properties" of a "subject." They do not come with any necessity or practical force. *Dasein* is not resolute in these cases, as its being-in-the-world has neither been understood as a whole nor as the one for-the-sake-of-which it exists.

For Heidegger resoluteness is not a psychological state; rather, it is a way in which *Dasein* (passively) opens up towards its own situation as a historically constituted situation and as one in which past and future become intelligible as horizons of and *in* this situation. As Heidegger has it,

The resoluteness which comes back to itself and hands itself down, then becomes the *repetition* of a possibility of existence that has come down to us. *Repeating is handing down explicitly* – that is to say, going back into the possibilities of the *Dasein* that has-been-there. The authentic repetition of a possibility of existence that has been – the possibility that *Dasein* may choose its hero – is grounded existentially in anticipatory resoluteness; for it is in resoluteness that one first chooses the choice which makes one free for the struggle of loyally following in the footsteps of that which can be repeated.⁴¹

The point is that resoluteness is not a way in which a subjective will is psychologically determined; rather, as Heidegger tries to show, resoluteness is a form of disclosure of *Dasein* as a whole that

39 HEIDEGGER 1985, 239.

40 HEIDEGGER 1985, 239.

41 HEIDEGGER 1985, 437.

establishes a temporal horizon *in which* action *can* occur.⁴²

Resoluteness implies handing oneself down by anticipation to the 'there' of the moment of vision; and this handing down we call 'fate'. This is also the ground for destiny, by which we understand Dasein's historicizing in Being-with Others. In repetition, fateful destiny can be disclosed explicitly as bound up with the heritage which has come down to us. By repetition, Dasein first has its own history made manifest.⁴³

By fate, then, Heidegger does not mean some objective way in which we are pre-determined or mythologically bound without reach; rather, in resoluteness as a mode of understanding, projection, and thrownness we discover ourselves as belonging to a shared project that we can either affirm or reject (change). «The resoluteness in which Dasein comes back to itself», Heidegger says, «discloses current factual possibilities of authentic existing, and discloses them *in terms of the heritage* which that resoluteness, as thrown, *takes over*».⁴⁴ We need to remember that being near to things, being with others and being oneself are equiprimordial (equally original), for Heidegger. One cannot be modified without the other dimensions; this is most visible in the resolute understanding of our being-historical which in this understanding becomes transparent to us as something that *lays in our hands* and from which we can no longer neutrally distance ourselves. Again, Goldmann's focus on ready-to-hand as praxis does not go far enough, insofar as true de-reification takes place in what Heidegger calls resoluteness. Only in resoluteness is the entirety of the historically significant world disclosed as a whole. This does not mean for Heidegger that we know in a reflective form about the unity of world; rather, the wholeness is disclosed in certain affectively projected states (such as anxiety) through which the temporal situation changes. Whereas in our normal life activities past and future

42 For this, see Lotz 2005.

43 HEIDEGGER 1985, 438.

44 HEIDEGGER 1985, 435.

appear to us as "objective" events that can be placed on a linear timeline; i.e., the past is understood as something that *we are no longer are* and the future is understood as something that *we are not (yet)*, in resoluteness past and future moments of time are disclosed as *belonging to the present*; i.e., as moments that are subject to shared action (insofar as the aspect of being-with is part of the existential constitution of *Dasein*). Accordingly, past and future are disclosed as being part of a *shared* present. Resoluteness, then, is not identical with getting lost in the present; rather, it is a certain detachment from the present that allows one's situation as a *historical* situation to become intelligible *in* the situation. Our situation, we might say with Heidegger, is no longer something that is "external" to us; instead, we bring ourselves *into* the situation once we understand what it means to be (*Dasein*) out of a repeatable past and an already arriving future: «Resoluteness brings the Being of the 'there' into the existence of its Situation».⁴⁵ Put differently, in the moment of authenticity history becomes a field for action!

Let us take our current environmental crisis as concrete example of how history can be a field for action: once we recognize that we can no longer "go on as before" and as soon as we have projected our existence as a for-the-sake-of-which (say, saving the planet) and have understood the urgency to act, for example as being part of the Fridays for Future Movement, we will also understand that we are *sharing* the present with (in this case) all other living beings on earth and we will be forced to acknowledge the occurring environmental destruction through our social practices as *destiny* that determines the present horizon of *possible* actions. Moreover, becoming a member of the Fridays for Future Movements will also change the intelligibility of the future insofar as the future is now understood as something that is already *arriving in the present* and can no longer be understood as some kind of neutral or disconnected state of the world; i.e., as something that could take place or could not take place. For example, after the recent devastations that weather changes and flooding produced, even

45 HEIDEGGER 1985, 347.

conservative German politicians acknowledged that something needs to be done *now* in order to reach climate neutrality before the officially agreed dates; i.e., these politicians understood that the future is not an “objective” date on a timeline; rather, the future is something that *already* is part of the “now” and it is *only because* of this temporal change that action suddenly becomes possible. We might add that this can also include choosing Greta Thunberg as the hero of our movement. Put differently, in resoluteness the temporal horizons will be unified within one horizon and the present situation will be conceived of as one in which we *can act* in solidarity and *Fürsorge*. The heritage as something that we *share* is thereby seen in a different light: «the actual freeing up of a heritage takes place in resolution».⁴⁶ Accordingly, freedom is the result of resoluteness (which is its condition) and as such those interpreters of *Being and Time* who want to read Heidegger’s fascism into these pages are *philosophically* wrong, as they do not understand that the core of his analysis can equally be used for left and rightwing theorizing. Though it is true that Heidegger determines the discovery of a shared destiny as the destiny of a people (and not, as Lukács, as destiny of a party and class), his analysis can equally be applied to left revolutionary thought and, as I have indicated, to contemporary global calls for radical change. In Marcuse’s words (about Heidegger),

He has revealed man’s theoretical modes of behavior to be ‘derivative,’ to be founded in practical ‘making-provision,’ and has thereby shown praxis to be the field of decisions. He has determined the moment of decision – resoluteness – to be a historical situation and resoluteness itself to be a taking-up of historical fate. Against the bourgeois concepts of freedom and determination, he has posed a new definition of being free as the ability to choose necessity, as the genuine ability to grasp the possibilities that have been prescribed and pre-given; moreover, he has established history as the sole

⁴⁶ PAINTER & SHEEHAN 1999, 65.

authority in relation to this ‘fidelity to one’s own existence.’⁴⁷

Heidegger’s phenomenology can help us reveal the conditions of the possibility of what Marcuse calls in his early essays “radical act”: «Human freedom is fulfilled in grasping its own necessity, in the will to that immediate historical existence that realizes itself as the radical act in the revolutionary historical situation».⁴⁸

Let us apply the foregoing analysis to the situation of the Lukácsian revolutionary communist militant who discovers, by joining the communist movement, that the rejection of the past is a task that needs to be actualized in the present moment as something *to come*. She discovers herself with the decision to join the communist movement as belonging to a shared “path” towards the revolutionary goals set by the movement. By accepting this task she also accepts a certain destiny and fate of the movement and the party that she can no longer “observe” from a neutral or unpolitical standpoint; rather, the political engagement asks the revolutionary communist to accept the shared destiny as something that pushes the whole movement forward, with the understanding that this can be achieved within the near future and as a practical possibility. Here is what Lukács says about commitment in *History and Class Consciousness*:

Hence every human relationship which breaks with this pattern, with this abstraction from the total personality of man and with his subsumption beneath an abstract point of view, is a step in the direction of putting an end to the reification of human consciousness. Such a step, however, presupposes the active engagement of the total personality. [...] We said then that the discipline of the Communist Party, the unconditional absorption of the total personality in the praxis of the movement, was the only possible way of bringing about an authentic freedom. [...] The question of discipline is then, on the one hand, an elementary practical problem for the party,

⁴⁷ MARCUSE 2005, 15.

⁴⁸ MARCUSE 2005, 10.

an indispensable precondition for its effective functioning. On the other hand, it is no mere technical and practical question: it is one of the most exalted and important *intellectual* problems in the history of revolution. [...] Without an at least instinctive understanding of the link between total personality and party discipline on the part of every single party member this discipline must degenerate into a reified and abstract system of rights and duties and the party will relapse into a state typical of a party on the bourgeois pattern.⁴⁹

Though Lukács' language is influenced by Fichte's "*Tathandlung*" and is characterized by an idealistic and moral undertone, it is also deeply existentialist,⁵⁰ insofar as Lukács interprets the decision to enter the Communist party and to become a revolutionary based on a different "instinctive understanding" of the situation *as a whole* in which the freedom of the individual appears as the freedom of everyone and in which one's existence as a whole gets entangled in the *historical* task that is at stake. This explains why Lukács speaks of a «total personality» as well as «the demand for total commitment»,⁵¹ both of which are needed for *praxis*.

4. Lukács and Heidegger on Categories

I have dealt with aspects of Heidegger's and Lukács' concept of categories before,⁵² mainly in relation to the concept of reification in Lukács and its relation to Emil Lask's philosophy of categories and to Heidegger's transformation of Lask's idea in his 1916 Habilitation *Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus*.⁵³ In what follows, I want to examine a slightly different aspect of the problem on the basis

49 LUKÁCS 1971, 319-20.

50 For this, see ENGSTER 2015.

51 LUKÁCS 1971, 339.

52 For this, see LOTZ 2017; 2020.

53 Partial translation in HEIDEGGER 2002.

of what Heidegger unfolds in his 1924 Marburg lecture course on Aristotle.

In this lecture course, Heidegger presents a reading of Aristotle that stunned his students not only because of the contemporary force that Heidegger unfolds in his reading, but also because of how Heidegger brings Aristotles' philosophy within the purview of his own phenomenology. The two most important aspects of the lecture course are Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's concept of *pathos* and his treatment of the relation between *logos* and categories. Heidegger characterizes this relation in the following way:

Κατηγορία is a speaking insofar as I speak of κατηγορία τῷ ὄντι, that which addresses a being to each in a certain way, such that it speaks of it, that it is this or that, specifically that it is. Κατηγορία: *modes of addressing beings in their being*. Therefore, the categories are the basic modes in which beings that are there are uncovered there, with regard to definite possibilities of being-there and modes of being-there. This is not to say that the categories are already explicit in natural speaking, in the λόγος of the everyday. Rather, the fact of the matter is such that all λέγειν already operates in, and is guided by, definite categories. They do not mean just any forms that I can bring into a system, nor principles for the classification of statements, but they must be understood in accordance with what their name means, on the basis of what λόγος itself is in its distinctive mode: *the being discovered of the world, which is constitutive in such a way that this discoveredness shows the world in its basic respects*. If one has, to a certain extent, a vital understanding of the being-there of the world, one will be cautious about laying down a definite number of categories.⁵⁴

What Heidegger says here in this passage is the following: "categorization" is a way of speaking of and addressing beings in their being whereby categories are not understood as "subjective" concepts

54 HEIDEGGER 2009, 205.

that are mentally or otherwise applied to beings but are understood as the basic modes in which these beings exist. Accordingly, categories should be identified on the level of being. Thought as the activity of making sense of beings, *already* moves in these categories, the consequence of which is that categories are the condition for making world in certain respects [*Hinsichten*] intelligible. As such, being, now identified as the categorial aspects of beings, makes the *intelligibility* of beings possible. The concept of reification in Lukács functions exactly the same way.⁵⁵ For Heidegger, this means that beings are not intelligible as societal beings, but, instead, can be encountered as determinate beings in the surrounding world. However, in contradistinction to Lukács, Heidegger is aware that the *logos* is related to language as the way in which the intelligibility of beings is already and always has been articulated. The primary way in which the being of beings is transparent in and for our everyday understanding is through speaking. As Heidegger puts it, «[w]hen Aristotle designates the categories simply as *διωρέσεις*, he means that they are that speaking that makes the beings that are there of the world visible in basic possibilities, as what can show itself».⁵⁶

Categories, then, are *already* embedded in everyday language, and speaking of things indicates beings in the surrounding world [*Umweltsein*] that show themselves in such a way that they are understandable and can therefore be theorized by philosophical reflection. According to Heidegger, theoretical reflection is possible because the philosopher is just the “spokesperson” of *Dasein* whose task is to find the “proper” expressions and interpretations for unlocking the already existing pre-reflective intelligibility of the world. As Heidegger further outlines,

Even in German, the expression ‘addressing’ [*Ansprechen*] is used with a definite meaning, as when we say of an instrument ‘it addresses’ [*er spricht an*], ‘it answers,’ ‘restores’

⁵⁵ For this, see Lotz 2020.

⁵⁶ HEIDEGGER 2009, 209.

in the sense of restoring something to its call. Λόγος in the sense of access: to exhibit a matter in such and such a way, to call it in such and such a way. In addressing, the matter thus called addresses; in exhibiting, it appears as it is. It depends on how a matter is called, so that it addresses itself from itself in the right mode. Λόγος taken with this second meaning is to address, the concrete content that a matter yields to a call.⁵⁷

Turning our attention to Lukács, it seems at first glance that Heidegger is miles away from Lukács’ philosophy, which is certainly true if we focus exclusively on the absence of societal reflections in Heidegger. However, if we look more closely into the methodological structure of both Heidegger’s and Lukács’ respective philosophies, we can see that Heidegger’s phenomenological understanding of categories and of the general constitution of beings and world is not too far away from Lukács.

Nevertheless, Lukács (erroneously) believed himself far away from Existentialism and Heidegger, which is visible in the following passage from his 1951 essay *Heidegger Redivivus*:

The economic categories are for Marx: ‘forms of being [*Daseinsformen*], determinations of existence (it is perhaps superfluous to underline that these words should not be interpreted in an existentialist sense). Everything towards which such ‘basic experiences’ [*Grunderlebnisse*] of humans in capitalist society intend, is uncovered by their actual, objective forms of objecthood [*Gegenständlichkeit*]. Of course, in this case the direction does not point from the intention to the object; rather, the objective recognition of the historically characterized object gives us, whenever necessary, an explanation of the intention. [...] All intentional experiences of the phenomenologists are constituted [*vollziehen sich*], like all subjective experiences, within the horizon of the bourgeoisie in

⁵⁷ HEIDEGGER 2009, 143.

the imperialist age, as false consciousness.⁵⁸

It is disturbing to see not only how Lukács' philosophical hybris and his dogmatic concept of ideology leads to a reduction of *all* (!) intentional experiences within our age to false consciousness, but also that he ignores in *Heidegger Redivivus* that Heidegger, whatever the "objective historical" (Adorno) content of his philosophy might be, refuses to identify phenomena with "experiences" in the psychological sense.⁵⁹ In addition, as we have seen above and which is largely visible even with a surface reading of *Being and Time*, the concept of categories that Heidegger develops in exchange with Duns Scotus and Aristotle are, in contrast to Dilthey's, explicitly *not* subjectively constituted if we mean by this "psychological" or "intentional". Given the topic of this paper, I am unable to discuss Lukács' misunderstanding of intentionality as a "psychic" phenomenon at this point (for this, see Westerman 2019). The methodological assumptions in Lukács and Heidegger are very similar, insofar as Lukács needs to assume that the categories of capitalist society are constituted historically, i.e., that they are constituted *with* the emergence of capital, value, and the dynamics that it unleashes and determines. For how else are the categories that Lukács talks about to be found? Consequently, Lukács presupposes, without explanation, that the categories as objective determinations of social reality *present themselves* as objective determinations *to* the theoretical gaze. If we do not want to fall back on constructing these categories out of thin air, then we *must* assume that we have access to them – and this access cannot be metaphysical-logical in Hegel's sense, since they are, as Lukács underlines, historically specific categories. Accordingly, we are back to Lask's proposal in his book on categories (which both Heidegger and Lukács studied), namely, that we need to assume that beings are constituted *with* and in-themselves categorically. Furthermore, since these categories cannot be metaphysically

58 LUKÁCS 1951, 166; my translation.

59 For example, see HEIDEGGER 1985, 72, 155, 226.

deduced, we need to "read them off" from out of where they emerge and constitute reality.

Marx achieves this through his genetic approach to categories of political economy, which involves a historical tracing back of value, money, capital, etc. to their respective historical fields from which they stem, such as their emergence within primitive accumulation. In addition, Marx begins *Capital* in a quasi-phenomenological manner by pointing to the fact that the world seems to show up in our everyday experience as «an immense collection of commodities».⁶⁰ Accordingly, before Marx is able to deduce the social form of things that we encounter in capitalism in his further investigation of the capitalist mode of production, he refers to something that is *given* from which he can begin and then further develop. This implies that the categories that he develops theoretically need to be "wrung from" the (historical) reality and in this process they are turned into and treated as *phenomena* which allows us to unfold their assignments and references [*Verweisungen*]. The capitalist social reality that Marx intends to understand *must* somehow be experienced *in its own self-showing* if it is not to be confused with empiricism or constructivism, and this is precisely the point that Heidegger takes from Lask.⁶¹ In his rants about Existentialism Lukács does not seem to acknowledge the closeness of all of the aforementioned to his own thinking.

5. Conclusion

Heidegger's approach to categories can give us what is missing in Marx and Lukács, namely, a method of how to *generate* the basic concepts needed for critical theory. As Heidegger has it in his lectures on Aristotle,

[c]oncept-formation is a matter of characterizing determinate

60 MARX 1976, 125.

61 For this, see CROWELL 2001.

concepts. The primary thing is to determine the respects according to fundamental characters. Every concept formation is, insofar as it is genuine, distinguished by the fact that, in the cultivation of the concept, it opens up anew the subject-matter in the fundamental character of its being. *Genuinely productive concept-formation* lies in the opening up of the concrete character of the subject-matter, so that the entire conceptuality of the region of being becomes visible, not only in such a way that touches on the matter, but also the *how*.⁶²

What Heidegger has in mind here is that the concepts for understanding the matter in question cannot be merely subjective, insofar as these categories need to both “open up” the matter as well as be *proper* in the process of opening up the issues themselves. Maybe surprisingly for some readers, Lukács is not far away from this idea: for example, in a central passage in his late interviews in which Lukács refers to the main insights that he took over from Marx, he argues that reality in itself is categorially constituted and that because of this they can only be grasped theoretically with concepts that grasp, interpret and express these relations. Because the passage is so important, I am quoting it here in full:

Marx established – and in my estimation, this is the most important part of Marx’s theory – that historicity is the fundamental category of social being, and as such of all being [*Sein*]. In the *Paris Manuscripts*, Marx says that there is only one science, the science of history, and he even adds, ‘a non-objective essence is not an essence’ [*ist ein Unwesen*]. This is to say, something [*Sache*] without categorial attributes cannot exist. Existence means, therefore, that something exists as a determinate form of objecthood [*Gegenständlichkeit von bestimmter Form*]; i.e., the determinate form of objecthood makes up the category to which the essence in question belongs. [...] Nothing can exist which is not in some sense

62 HEIDEGGER 2009, 222.

category. In this respect there is an extraordinarily sharp difference between Marxism and earlier world-views. In Marxism the categorial being of a thing constitutes its being, whereas in the old philosophies categorial being was the fundamental category within which the categories of reality were constituted. It is not the case that history unfolds within the system of categories; rather, history is the changing system of categories. The categories are therefore forms of beings [*Seinsformen*]. To the extent that they also become ideas, they become mirror forms of reality; however, primarily they are forms of being. In this way completely different groups of categories with their various contents come into being.⁶³

Two things are important in this dense passage: [1] Lukács assumes that nothing can exist without it existing in a *specific way*; this specificity is indicated by its categorial aspect; and [2] the categorial aspects make up history so that history can then be conceived of as the development of the way in which beings exist. Compare Lukács’ thought about beings and categorial being to one of the important statements right at the beginning of *Being and Time*: «Being lies in the fact that something is, and in its Being as it is; in Reality; in presence-at-hand; in subsistence; in validity; in Dasein; in the ‘there is’». ⁶⁴ It is certainly true that the claim that history is ultimately constituted by changing categorial relations goes beyond Heidegger’s early philosophy (though one could think here of Heidegger’s later concepts of event and his claim that metaphysics is a changing system of “how Being shows up”), but this problem of how to escape both a subjectivist and an objectivist take on categories and concept-formation remains intact for Lukács. It is therefore consequent when Lukács argues in the recounted quote that “all being” shows up, without our construction, as *constituted* in the following two ways: “all being” shows up in a certain determinate form that makes being *these* beings and not other beings, and this determinate form constitutes at

63 LUKÁCS 1983, 142.

64 HEIDEGGER 1985, 6.

the same time its historical specificity.

Given all this, we should come to the conclusion that both Goldmann and Honneth do not scratch the surface of the real underlying problems of concept generation in theory. Whereas Goldmann remains committed to a somewhat unclear concept of “meaningful structure” (without offering an explanation of what “meaning” is or how we approach it socially), Honneth seems to remain committed to Weber’s concept of ideal types.⁶⁵ Both avenues into the methodological problem of how we access the social “facts” or phenomena need to be rejected from the perspective of critical social theory if we want to uphold the idea of social totality and its categorial constitution. As Adorno indicated in his late lecture course *Philosophical Elements of a Theory of Society*, “[s]ystems regress to what they were before philosophical dialectics, to mere modes of representation that organize their material from without, making systems of little compartments without understanding the matter itself – which would be possible only if the categories unlocked the phenomena themselves”.⁶⁶ Accordingly, a phenomenology of capitalist social reality via a phenomenology of social categories remains a task to be addressed.

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⁶⁵ For this, see HONNETH 2009, ch.3.

⁶⁶ ADORNO 2019, 120.

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