**After the Marxian work: the Marxists**

The transition from an evaluatively negative concept of ideology to a neutral one, where it is more or less equivalent to “class consciousness”. The specific role of Lenin in this. The support that this move finds in certain Marxian texts and the importance of the fact that the *German Ideology* remained yet largely unknown at that time.

The crucial question: what is the relationship of the discussion on class consciousness with the pair truth-falsity, and what is the relationship between marxist theory and proletarian class consciousness.

**Lukacs**

Lukacs is considered to be the founder of the so called “Western Marxism”, i.e. the multiform currents within Marxism that are alternative to what is termed “Marxism-Leninism”- the “official Marxism” established in the USSR under Stalin. More specifically, he is considered as the first figure in the brand of “Hegelian” or “humanist” Marxism, which was to be opposed by the “anti-humanist” Marxism of Althusser

His seminal work that we deal with here: *History and Class Consciousness* (1923)

This work constitutes a landmark in the journey of the concept of ideology within Marxism after Marx and Engels, because it disturbed the neglecting of the problem of ideology within the prevailing, at least up to then, economistic understanding of Marxism. And this took place in the framework of Lukacs’ effort to affirm the philosophical importance of Marxian thought. In the  *History and Class Consciousness*  we have a neutral concept of ideology, equated to “class consciousness” (following Lenin), but also a negative one. In this latter version ideology is conceived as related to “reification”, on which more below.

Lukacs follows Lenin in many ideas, but differs from him in the idea that Marxist theory is a science, for he is a strong critic of the science of his time. His fundamental idea that the “orthodoxy” of Marxism does not lie in certain doctrines, notably the doctrine of the determinant role of the economic process, but it lies in the “method”, and this method consists in the category of totality, the conception of society as totality. What lies behind this method is that Marxist theory is the “theoretical-ideological expression” of the proletarian class consciousness.

Reification: the starting point for Lukacs are the Marxian analyses around the “commodity fetishism” in *Capital.* But Lukacs expands upon these analyses and gives to the “commodity form” very big dimensions. This form concerns all the fields of capitalist society and underlies the whole range of its problems.

The further aspects that he sees in this overarching, all embracing phenomenon of reification: the dominance of formal rationality (influence from Max Weber), of the contemplative-passive stance towards reality, of the transformation of quality into quantity, of the fragmentation of reality and thinking.

The, according to him, critical function of the viewpoint of totality: its role in de-naturalising and historicizing.

The asymmetry of the class standpoints with respect to the viewing of totality: the bourgeois standpoint is inherently incapable of conceiving the social totality, as opposed to the proletarian standpoint.

His argumentation on this and the invoking of Marx and Engels in their early work *The Holy Family*: for the proletarians, their self-consciousness as a class is a vital necessity, and this self consciousness or self-knowledge is just the other side of the knowledge of society in its totality. The core of his argument is that the proletariat is the class that for the most part suffers from the phenomenon of reification, since the workers are reduced to things.

However: Lukacs makes a very significant distinction: between the “empirical” class consciousness of the proletariat, which is far from free from reification, and what he calls “imputed class consciousness”, which he considers to be an “objective possibility” and connects it to extraordinary , revolutionary times. This latter one is the one related to the view point of totality.