

# TESTIMONIES

On the reception and impact of  
*History and Class Consciousness*

with

Anita Chari

Rüdiger Dannemann

Ágnes Erdélyi

Andrew Feenberg

Antonino Infranca

Konstantinos Kavoulakos

Michael Löwy

Michael J. Thompson

Miguel Vedda

## Introduction

This is a series of short interviews with scholars who have engaged with Lukács's work and provided invaluable contributions to its reception across the globe. They were asked to recount their first encounter with *History and Class Consciousness* and to reflect on the aspects of the book that struck them the most, on how it impacted their intellectual or political trajectory, as well as on its relevance and limits for the present time.

The truly fascinating responses give us insight not only into the interviewees' individual stories and particular theoretical interests, but also paint a very colorful picture of the book's collective reception within different generations, disciplines, countries and social-political circumstances. The common thread cutting across all testimonies is the extraordinary impact of *History and Class Consciousness* as an experiment in anti-dogmatic Marxism – a work that, despite appearing for the first time one century ago, has not stopped showing its potential for theoretical innovation and for renewing our political energies.

The interviews were conducted via e-mail in January and February of 2024. The reader will find a short biography and the main publications of the scholars after each interview. The testimonies are reproduced here in their original language (English, German, Italian, Portuguese or Spanish – to which it would have been necessary to add Hungarian and modern Greek) as a marker of the diversity of perspectives therein represented.

*Mariana Teixeira*

# Anita Chari

*Eugene, USA*

**Mariana Teixeira:** *When and how did you first come into contact with *History and Class Consciousness*?*

**Anita Chari:** I was first introduced to *History and Class Consciousness* by Moishe Postone, who I was studying with at the time. I was very immersed in the Frankfurt School and Western Marxism in general, and Moishe had us read “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat” in his Critical Theory seminar. It was an essay that changed my intellectual course completely.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *What aspects of the book struck you the most at the time?*

**Anita Chari:** Unlike many of the works of the critical tradition that I had studied until then, whether Hegel, Marx, or Kant, when I first read Lukács, my interest in his ideas, particularly the reification concept, was immediately existential and subjective, not only political or intellectual. The way he spoke of reification as a form of consciousness that corresponded to the commodity form in capitalism struck me as a meditation on a certain form of dissociation, a way of relating to the social world as a passive subject, with no involvement in constituting that world, perceptually or practically. I understood this both as a problem of the depoliticizing trajectory of capitalist society, as

well as a profound reflection on the theory praxis problem. Reification provokes a loss of the capacity for emphatic, transformative experience. I felt this loss within myself, and Lukács inspired me to dignify something that I had always sensed within me, perceptually and even emotionally, as a philosophical and political issue.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *How did the book impact your intellectual trajectory and/or political activism (and maybe your life in general)?*

**Anita Chari:** I ended up writing my dissertation on the concept of reification, which became my first book, *A Political Economy of the Senses* (Columbia University Press, 2015). But *History and Class Consciousness* led me in directions far beyond my scholarly interests in critical theory. Through this work, I began to investigate the relationship between reification and embodiment. I began to see reification (perhaps idiosyncratically) as a loss of capacity for a certain form of sensate, tactile experience. And that in fact, critical theory had not reckoned with the ways in which its methodologies were reinscribing the dissociation and *Teilnahmelosigkeit* (to use Axel Honneth's formulation) that are central to the pathology of reification. While I was continuing this intellectual investigation in my scholarly work, I was simultaneously engaged in training as a somatic practitioner in perceptual, touch-based, trauma-informed, and movement-based practices that allowed me to learn about the sensate capacities that might be necessary for dereifying praxis, both in knowledge production as well as in political action and organizing. I began

to incorporate these practices into my work as a prison educator, and to train others in organizing and education on how to work with sensate practices as critical educators. I created an organization called *Embodying Your Curriculum* to bring this work to others in higher education, as well as to healthcare workers and unions. *History and Class Consciousness* and its engagements with the theory-praxis problem were fundamental for my exploration of how to move critical theory out of the hermetic space of academia and into spaces of organizing and care. My second book, *A User's Manual to Claire Fontaine* (Lenz Press, 2024) extends my inquiry about reification and dereification into the field of contemporary art through a study of the feminist conceptual artist Claire Fontaine, and views their work as a prototype for a type of critical theorizing that can grasp the reification concept as a means for cultivating the capacities for perception necessary to creating spaces for liberatory practice in neoliberal society. Throughout it all, *History and Class Consciousness* has been an inspiration for practicing critical theory in a way that dares to allow knowledge practices to be “useful” – to try to discover a horizon of use beyond its opposition to exchange.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *A century after its first publication, what is for you the main contribution of History and Class Consciousness that is still relevant? And what do you think has changed since?*

**Anita Chari:** I think it is crucial that we, as critical theorists, engage with our beloved influences not as fossils, but as living inspirations that reveal new facets to us with the passage of time

and with the shifts that we see in the terrain of domination and liberation. I think Lukács himself said as much, though later in his life. I don't think we speak enough about the ways in which the knowledge industry causes us to reify texts and concepts themselves. In all of our scholarly rigor, we fail to capture the praxical spirit of texts such as *History and Class Consciousness*. For me, understanding the centrality of form is a crucial legacy of this text, understanding that the forms in which we articulate critique must themselves be part of our reflection.

February 2024

**Anita Chari** is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Oregon and a political theorist, somatic practitioner, and writer. Her research focuses on the Frankfurt School, Western Marxism, and the relationship between Critical Theory, contemporary art, and embodied practices.

She is the author of *A Political Economy of the Senses: Neoliberalism, Reification, Critique* (Columbia University Press, 2015) and *A User's Manual to Claire Fontaine* (Lenz Press, 2024). Her research on embodied practices and political theory has appeared in venues including *Contemporanea: A Glossary of the XXI Century* (MIT Press, forthcoming, 2024), *Bodies in Politics: Explorations in Somaesthetics and Somapower* (Brill, forthcoming, 2024), *Dispositif: A Cartography* (MIT Press, 2023), *Theory and Event, New Political Science, Philosophy and Social Criticism, Contemporary Political Theory*, and *Somatic Voices in Performance Research and Beyond* (Routledge, 2020).

She is co-founder of Embodying Your Curriculum™, an organization that supports academics, educators, and social justice leaders to bring embodiment practices into higher education.

# Rüdiger Dannemann

*Essen, Germany*

**Mariana Teixeira:** *Wann und wie kamen Sie zum ersten Mal mit Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein in Kontakt?*

**Rüdiger Dannemann:** Schon als Gymnasiast bin ich mit Lukács' Werk in Kontakt gekommen und zwar im Kontext des Auschwitz-Prozesses Mitte der 60er Jahre. Ich habe 1966 das bei Fischer erschienene Taschenbuch *Von Nietzsche zu Hitler oder Der Irrationalismus und die deutsche Politik* verschlungen, später den in der Werkausgabe publizierten Gesamttext von *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft*. Hintergrund war da sicher das Verdrängen der Vergangenheitsbewältigung der NS-Zeit und kritiklose Anknüpfen an Nietzsche und Heidegger an meiner humanistisch-altsprachlichen Schule. Als ich dann um 1968 die Lukács-Raubdrucke und die legale Neupublikation von *GuK* erwarb, war der Grundstein für eine lebenslängliche Faszination gelegt.

Nach einem kurzen Intermezzo im als Jurastudent, der sich immerhin damit trösten konnte, dass auch Marx und Lukács ähnlich angefangen haben, begann ich mit dem Studium von Philosophie und Germanistik in der neugegründeten Reformuniversität Bochum, an der sich namhafte Wissenschaftler wie der Soziologe Urs Jaeggi, der Historiker Hans Mommsen, der Philosoph Otto Pöggeler eingefunden hatten. Im ersten Seminar, einem Bloch-Seminar bei dem jungen Privatdozenten Heinz Kimmerle, traf ich Axel Honneth, gleich

das zweite, sehr gut besuchte, sehr lebhaftes, natürlich auch von mit Spartakisten sowie streitenden SDS-Aktivisten mitgeprägtes Seminar widmete Kimmerle *GuK*. Genauer dem großen Verdinglichungsessay, der faszinierte, zu Widerspruch herausforderte, dessen großer philosophiehistorischer zweiter Teil uns damals überforderte, dessen Passagen über das hegelianisch-gedeutete Proletariat als identisches Subjekt-Objekt viele irritierte. Das neue 1967 verfasste, inzwischen klassisch gewordene Vorwort wurde ganz unterschiedlich bewertet, befeuerte die Debatten weiter. Hier schrieb ich meine erste Lukács-Arbeit. Aus dem studentischen Kreis um den auch am Hegel-Archiv in Bochum tätigen Kimmerle bildete sich eine sehr plurale Dialektik Arbeitsgemeinschaft, deren Arbeits- und Denkweisen das später erschienene publizistische Produkt *Modelle der materialistischen Dialektik von Marx bis Althusser* dokumentiert. Zu den Autoren zählte auch Andreas Arndt. Dass mit Leo Kofler ein Marxist und Lukács-Adept zum Nachfolger Urs Jaeggis werden konnte, war ein, leider aber der einzige Erfolg der linken Bochumer Studentenschaft. Erst später kam es zur Gründung des Arbeitskreises Rote-Ruhr-Uni.

Es war klar, dass ich nach meinem Studium über *GuK* bei Heinz Kimmerle meine Promotion schreiben wollte. In Frank Benseler, dem Herausgeber der großen Lukács-Werkausgabe, fand ich den zweiten Betreuer meines Dissertationsprojekts, nachdem ich ihn bei Besuchen in Borchen nahe Paderborn von mir und meinem Konzept, das große Thema der Verdinglichung sowohl genetisch, also als durchaus konsequente Entwicklung seiner lebensphilosophisch-neukantianisch-weberianischen Anfänge,



wie auch als *sensus rerum* von Lukács' Gesamtwerk zu erweisen, hatte überzeugen können.<sup>1</sup> Nach einer Unterbrechung durch meinen Zivildienst in Frankfurt, wo ich Vorlesungen von Alfred Schmidt besuchte und Habermas sowie dessen Entourage begegnete, begann ich, nach Bochum zurückgekehrt, mit meinem durch ein Graduiertenstudium geförderten Promotionsprojekt 1975.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *Welche Aspekte des Buches haben Sie am meisten beeindruckt?*

**Rüdiger Dannemann:** Es kann kein Zweifel daran bestehen: Für mich war der erste Teil des Verdinglichungssessays eine Art Erweckungserlebnis. Wie da auf wenigen Seiten eine der bedeutendsten Zeitdiagnosen des 20. Jahrhunderts entfaltet wird, hat mir nachhaltig Eindruck gemacht – theoretisch wie auf der Ebene eigener Alltagserfahrungen. Ich hatte sogleich den Eindruck, dass hier dem Marxismus bzw. der Marxschen Theorie eine trag- und ausbaufähige Grundlage für die Kritik auch der spätkapitalistischen Gesellschaft geliefert wird. Dass viele meiner Kommilitonen und Kommilitoninnen sogleich „weiter“ wollten zu Adorno und Marcuse, zu Habermas oder Althusser (oder wie Heinz Kimmerle selbst zu Derrida), hat mir nicht eingeleuchtet.

Den Teil über die Antinomien des bürgerlichen Bewusstseins las ich als eine Rekonstruktion der großen neuzeitlichen Philoso-

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1 Dass in diesen Tagen Matthew J. Smetona in *Recovering the Later Georg Lukács: A Study on the Unity of His Thought* (Cambridge/MA: The MIT Press, 2023) Ähnliches versucht, habe ich nicht ohne Genugtuung registriert.

phie seit Descartes, die über die üblichen, nicht selten sterilen theorie- und ideengeschichtlichen Annäherungen im Philosophiestudium hinausführte, aus den Fallstricken philologischer Repetition und praxisfern bleibender Debatten. Dass das im Fall von *GuK* eine ganz andere Art von Philosophieren war, bewies in meinen Augen der dritte Teil über den Standpunkt des Proletariats, der Entwurf einer Praxisphilosophie, die sich von dogmatischen Marxismen (für die Dogmatiker war Lukács *der* Revisionist) wie dem Philosophieren vom Typus der freischwebenden Intellektuellen vorteilhaft abhob. Ich erinnere mich, wie stark mich neben dem Verdinglichungsaufsatz *Taktik und Ethik*, die ein paar Jahre zuvor veröffentlichte Sammlung kleiner Interventionen Lukács' im Umfeld der ungarischen Revolution, beeindruckte. Dass ethische Reflexionen bei Lukács dauerhaft eine bedeutende Rolle gespielt haben, auch wenn sein Projekt einer marxistischen Ethik Fragment blieb, hat mich immer beeindruckt. Im Antideterminismus von *GuK*, seiner Betonung des Moments der freien Entscheidung des Proletariats für die Revolution, hat der ethische Diskurs des frühen Lukács seine Spur hinterlassen, in der *Ontologie* in seinem Konzept der unvermeidlichen Alternativentscheidungen.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *Welchen Einfluss hatte das Buch auf Ihre intellektuelle Laufbahn und/ oder ihren politischen Aktivismus (und vielleicht auf Ihr Leben im Allgemeinen)?*

**Rüdiger Dannemann:** Um mit dem letzten Aspekt zu beginnen: *GuK* hatte und hat einen immensen Einfluss auf mein Leben und zugleich meine intellektuelle Laufbahn. Ich hatte

mein Promotionsprojekt über Lukács' „Prinzip Verdinglichung“, wie Frank Benseler vorausgesagt hatte, nicht schnell abschließen können (Benseler hatte von einem „Lebensprojekt“ gesprochen). Hilfreich waren Aufenthalte im Lukács Archiv, wo mir Laszlo Sziklai freundlich, aber mit einem gewissen Misstrauen begegnete, ich mich mit Julia Bendl, György Mezei und später mit Miklós Mesterházi anfreundete. Erst im Januar 1988 wurde ich promoviert – und zwar in Rotterdam (Heinz Kimmerle war inzwischen dorthin gewechselt) unter Mitwirkung von Benseler, in Anwesenheit auch von Axel Honneth und Willem van Reijen. Zu dem Zeitpunkt hatte ich bereits eine Tätigkeit als Gymnasiallehrer angenommen. Ich hatte keine Chance gesehen, unter Beibehaltung meiner Überzeugungen in der Hochschullandschaft der BRD nach dem „roten Jahrzehnt“ zu arbeiten, zumal ich nicht bereit war, auf die opportunen bzw. noch geduldeten Positionen à la Habermas etc. zu wechseln, und miterlebt hatte, dass selbst die in die Emigration vertriebenen Mitglieder der Budapester Schule an deutschen Universitäten nicht Fuß fassen konnten. Dass ich dennoch kontinuierlich wissenschaftlich weiterarbeiten konnte, verdanke ich neben einigen Zufällen und der Unterstützung meiner Familie einer Reihe von Personen, die ich im Folgenden knapp und ohne den Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit nennen möchte. Schon während meiner Arbeit am *Prinzip Verdinglichung* hatte ich Kontakt mit den Mitgliedern der Budapester Schule aufgenommen, vor allem mit Ágnes Heller, und mit ihr über unsere Deutung von *GuK* korrespondiert.<sup>2</sup>

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2 Dazu vgl. Rüdiger Dannemann, „Der Augenblick der Sezession: Georg Lukács und Ágnes Heller“. In: Michael Haase, Amália Kerekes, Anna Zsellér (Hgg.), *Parallelen, Korrespondenzen und Nachwirkungen: Beiträge zur Rezeptionsgeschichte des Werks von*

Ihren ersten bei VSA erschienenen Band *Instinkt, Aggression, Charakter* hatte ich redaktionell betreut.<sup>3</sup> Bernd Wagner, den Chef des Sandler Verlags, traf ich bei der Frankfurter Buchmesse und wir realisierten in seinem Verlag drei Buchprojekte: neben dem *Prinzip Verdinglichung*<sup>4</sup> den Sammelband *Jenseits der Polemiken*<sup>5</sup> und die erste im Westen erschienene Ausgabe von Lukács' Demokratisierungsschrift.<sup>6</sup> Frank Benseler, später Werner Jung ebneten mir (natürlich neben meinen Veröffentlichungen, 1997 hatte ich bei Junius recht erfolgreich *Lukács zur Einführung* publiziert) den Weg zu Publikationen und Tagungen nicht nur im deutschen Sprachraum. 2011 lud mich Volker Caysa nach Lodz ein, wo ich – ein wahrer Glücksfall – Dirk Braunstein,<sup>7</sup> Frank Engster, Konstantinos Kavoulakos,<sup>8</sup> Patrick Eiden-Offe, Mihály Vajda traf bzw. wiederbegegnete. Bereits 1997 wurde die Internationale Georg-Lukács-Gesellschaft (IGLG)

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Georg Lukács. Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2023, S. 217–227.

3 Ágnes Heller, *Instinkt, Aggression, Charakter: Einleitung zu einer marxistischen Sozialanthropologie*. Redaktion von Rüdiger Dannemann. Hamburg: VSA, 1977.

4 Rüdiger Dannemann, *Das Prinzip Verdinglichung: Studie zur Philosophie Georg Lukács*. Frankfurt/Main: Sandler, 1987.

5 Rüdiger Dannemann (Hg.), *Georg Lukács – Jenseits der Polemiken. Beiträge zur Rekonstruktion seiner Philosophie*. Frankfurt/Main: Sandler, 1986. Für den Band konnten neben den Mitgliedern der Budapester Schule Axel Honneth, Michael Löwy und Nicolas Tertulian als Mitarbeiter gewonnen werden. Mit Löwy habe ich 2015 im HKWM 8/II den Artikel „Lukács-Schule“ verfasst.

6 Georg Lukács, *Sozialismus und Demokratisierung*. Mit einer editorischen Nachbemerkung von Frank Benseler und einem Nachwort von Rüdiger Dannemann. Frankfurt/Main: Sandler, 1987.

7 Im Dezember 2019 nahm ich mit Dirk Braunstein an einer großen Lukács-Konferenz in Beijing teil, ein Gegenbesuch (am IfS in Frankfurt) der KollegInnen aus Nanjing erfolgte wenig später.

8 Ich hatte Konstantinos schon Jahre zuvor bei einer Lukács-Konferenz in Bochum kennen- und schätzen gelernt.

gegründet. Frank Benseler, Werner Jung und ich bildeten den Vorstand. Nach Jungs Ausscheiden und Benselers altersbedingtem Rücktritt wurde ich 2012 zum Vorsitzenden der IGLG gewählt und auch Herausgeber des *Lukács Jahrbuchs*. Die Zahl der Einladungen zu Publikationen, Tagungen, Interviews wuchs, auch die der Publikationen als Autor oder Herausgeber.<sup>9</sup>

Politisch habe ich mich stets zur undogmatischen Linken gezählt, habe nach der APO-Zeit lange mit dem Sozialistischen Büro in Offenbach sympathisiert, dessen theoretischer Kopf Oskar Negt kürzlich verstorben ist, in den Gründungsjahren der Partei mit den Grünen (Anti-AKW-Bewegung, Friedensbewegung), später mit der Linken (vor allem im Rahmen der RLS und der Hellen Panke gearbeitet). Bei allem Respekt für Lukács' Lenintreue habe ich die rätedemokratische Linie seines Denkens favorisiert, ohne die Notwendigkeit von organisiertem politischen Handeln zu negieren.

***Mariana Teixeira:*** *Ein Jahrhundert nach der Veröffentlichung, was ist für Sie der wichtigste Beitrag von Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein, der immer noch relevant ist? Und was hat sich Ihrer Meinung nach seitdem verändert?*

**Rüdiger Dannemann:** In der gebotenen Kürze zu antworten, ohne zu übervereinfachen, ist schwierig. Es hat sich extrem viel verändert seit 1923, zugleich ist extrem viel gleichgeblieben. Wir

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<sup>9</sup> Rüdiger Dannemann, Axel Honneth (Hgg.), *Ästhetik, Marxismus, Ontologie: Ausgewählte Texte*. Berlin: Suhrkamp 2021; Georg Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*. Faksimile des Arbeitsexemplars. Mit Transkriptionen und Erläuterungen der Lukács-Marginalien von Rüdiger Dannemann. Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2023; Rüdiger Dannemann, Gregor Schäfer, Hans-Ernst Schiller (Hgg.), *Staat und Revolution bei Georg Lukács*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2023.

leben immer noch in jener Welt, die *GuK* als die der Verdinglichung aller Menschen beschrieben hat. Der Totalitarismus der kapitalistischen Warenproduktion ist auch unter den Bedingungen des digitalen Zeitalters ungebrochen, entgegen allen Beteuerungen derjenigen, die von der Existenz unterschiedlicher, ganz heterogener sozialer Logiken in unserer global gewordenen Welt ausgehen, auf die es identitätspolitisch zu reagieren gelte. Auch das Epitheton „imperialistisch“ ist, wie die Kriege unserer Tage zeigen, keineswegs ein vernachlässigbares Relikt der Vergangenheit.

Ganz anders ist die Situation, insofern *GuK* in einer Periode des revolutionären Pathos verfasst wurde. Die Bedingungen für eine Philosophie der Praxis, für die Lukács zusammen mit Gramsci der wichtigste Stichwortgeber war und ist, haben sich dramatisch verändert. In den Zentren des Westens wird der Abwehrkampf gegen neue Formen des Faschismus geführt<sup>10</sup> (leider nicht gegen die Remilitarisierung), weltweit der gegen Kolonialismus und Rassismus unter schwierigen Bedingungen. In seinen letzten Lebensjahren machte Lukács den Versuch, sich der Bedingungen der Möglichkeit einer verändernden Praxis auch unter den Bedingungen einer wenig revolutionären Zeit zu versichern. Die *Ontologie* ist eine Art Bestandsaufnahme dessen, was heute gerne Anthropozän genannt wird: Er möchte sich und seinen Lesern verständlich machen, was die Eigenart unserer Gattungsgeschichte ausmacht, dabei die „humanen“, d.h. universalen, auf

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10 Schon Ende der 60er Jahre gab es den Kampf gegen die faschistoide, allerdings weniger erfolgreiche NPD.

Entverdinglichung und Abbau von Fremdbestimmung bzw. Entfremdung zielenden, Möglichkeiten der Gattung erfassen.<sup>11</sup>

Anders als *GuK* konnte er in der *Ontologie* sein Projekt nicht mit einer konkreten Praxisperspektive krönen, die für den Aufbau des 1923er Werks konstitutiv ist und den nicht verblassten Reiz dieser wichtigsten philosophischen Reaktion auf die Oktoberrevolution ausmacht.

February 2024

**Rüdiger Dannemann** is President of the International Georg Lukács Society. He studied philosophy, German and history in Bochum and Frankfurt/Main. He received his doctorate in Rotterdam for *Das Prinzip Verdinglichung*.

His numerous publications cover social philosophy and political philosophy, especially on Lukács, Western Marxism and Critical Theory, as well as on literary studies and music aesthetics. He is editor of the *Lukács Yearbook* since 2012 and of Lukács's selected works (*Georg Lukács Werkauswahl in Einzelbänden*, Aisthesis Verlag). His publications include *Georg Lukács: Jenseits der Polemiken* (ed., Sendler Verlag, 1986), *Das Prinzip Verdinglichung* (Sendler Verlag, 1987), *Georg Lukács zur Einführung* (Panorama Verlag, 2005; Junius Verlag, 1997), *Lukács und 1968: Eine Spurensuche* (ed., Aisthesis Verlag, 2009), and *Staat und Revolution bei Georg Lukács* (ed., with H.E. Schiller and G. Schäfer, Nomos Verlag, 2023).

He also co-edited a selection of Lukács's essays on *Ästhetik, Marxismus, Ontologie: Ausgewählte Texte* (with A. Honneth, Suhrkamp, 2021) and a volume with the facsimile of Lukács's working copy of *History and Class Consciousness* with transcriptions and explanations of Lukács's marginalia (with B.G. Mosóczi, Z. Mosóczi, Aisthesis Verlag, 2023).

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11 Gegenwärtig arbeite ich an einer Neuausgabe des Entfremdungskapitels der *Ontologie*, die in diesem Herbst im Mangroven Verlag Kassel erscheinen soll.

## Ágnes Erdélyi

*Budapest, Hungary*

**Mariana Teixeira:** *When and how did you first come into contact with History and Class Consciousness?*

**Ágnes Erdélyi:** I finished my studies in philosophy in the late sixties of last century at the Eötvös Lorand University, Budapest. Already in the last university years I joined a group of young scholars who belonged to the younger generation of the Lukács School (also called the Budapest School) and who were referred to by the nickname “Lukács Kindergarten”.

In 1968 or 1969 I received an exemplar of the photomechanical reprint of the original 1923 edition (published by Verlag de Munter Amsterdam in 1967) from a young German philosopher who visited the members of the Lukács School in Budapest. By then I had already heard (and also read) much about the book and its enormous influence in Western Europe, but the book itself was at that time practically unavailable in Hungary (the first Hungarian edition was published in 1971).

Although, like most members of the group, I started to distance myself from Lukács very early – already in the first half of the seventies –, my early attachment to the Lukács Kindergarten left a mark on my intellectual and political decisions throughout my career.



**Mariana Teixeira:** *What aspects of the book struck you the most at the time?*

**Ágnes Erdélyi:** At the time of my first encounter with the book I was strongly interested in (and maybe also influenced by) the student movements of 1968 and the ideas of the Prague Spring. In short, I was interested in the possibility of changing the established conditions, both there and here. Accordingly, the parts dealing with revolution and the connection between class consciousness and the revolution struck me the most at that time (at least, as far as I can remember...).

**Mariana Teixeira:** *How did the book impact your intellectual trajectory and/or political activism (and maybe your life in general)?*

**Ágnes Erdélyi:** The book probably had a role in turning my interest towards the philosophy of history, dealing with, teaching (and translating into Hungarian) 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophers like Wilhelm Dilthey or Lukács himself (since the late 1980s, the “Reification” chapter has been part of the philosophy of history curriculum). As for political activism, it wasn’t the book itself, but rather the belonging to the “Lukács Kindergarten” that influenced my later political choices, starting with opposing the “official Marxism”, up to joining to the so-called “democratic opposition” before 1989.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *A century after its first publication, what is for you the main contribution of History and Class Consciousness that is still relevant? And what do you think has changed since?*

**Ágnes Erdélyi:** I think, its main and timelessly relevant contribution is its enormous influence on 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy. And finally: I won't undertake to list what has changed since its first publication...

January 2024

**Ágnes Erdélyi** is Professor Emeritus at the Institute of Philosophy of the Eötvös Loránd University, in Budapest, and was a member of younger generation of the Budapest School (the “Lukács Kindergarten”). She currently serves as the President of the Lukács Archive International Foundation.

She is the author of *Max Weber in Amerika: Wirkungsgeschichte und Rezeptionsgeschichte Webers in der anglo-amerikanischen Philosophie und Sozialwissenschaft* (Passagen, 1992). She has translated many works by Max Weber, Wilhelm Dilthey and others into Hungarian, including Georg Lukács's *On Particularity as the Category of Aesthetics*.

# Andrew Feenberg

*Vancouver, Canada*

**Mariana Teixeira:** *When and how did you first come into contact with History and Class Consciousness?*

**Andrew Feenberg:** I went to France to study in 1963. I was twenty years old. René Girard was my teacher in the United States and he encouraged me to go. He gave me a list of the hot scholars of the day, which included Roland Barthes, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Jean Hyppolite, and Lucien Goldmann. Goldmann was my favorite. His class was in a special institute which later became the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. There were about thirty or forty students in the class, most older than me. I was intimidated but Goldmann was a friend of Girard and he helped me out. Goldmann was a Marxist and a famous literary critic. He assigned Lukács's *Theory of the Novel* and *History and Class Consciousness*, which had recently been translated into French. I recall the shock of reading these fascinating but extremely difficult books. The *Theory of the Novel* became my philosophy of life and *History and Class Consciousness* my politics.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *What aspects of the book struck you the most at the time?*

**Andrew Feenberg:** *History and Class Consciousness* interested me especially because it made Marxism a form of continental philosophy. I had been studying phenomenology and existentialism in college and could see the connections to Marxism through Lukács. The theme that registered most strongly was the “unity of theory and practice”. I had been concerned with the gap between theory and practice in philosophy and in my personal life. I recall writing papers in graduate school on Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*, Aristotle’s ethics and politics, and Petrarch’s religious writings, in each case attempting to understand the relation of theory and practice. With *History and Class Consciousness* I had a way of bringing this theme into the public sphere which at the time was reaching the boiling point. Remember, this was the beginnings of the student movement, the anti-war movement, and the civil rights movement.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *How did the book impact your intellectual trajectory and/or political activism (and maybe your life in general)?*

**Andrew Feenberg:** This is a complicated question. American society was depoliticized in the 1950s and early 1960s. The dominant anti-communist conformist culture was nearly universal. I grew up in a scientific household and science was seen by the mass of Americans as alien. As an outsider I adopted an ironic stance that was later to be called “post-modern”. The *Theory of the Novel* fit perfectly with that stance, but soon the War in Vietnam made it impossible to stay on the sidelines. Marxism in the form Lukács gave it offered an alternative. I spent about ten

years doing political work while continuing my studies. Those studies mainly involved a thesis on Lukács I wrote for Herbert Marcuse. I was also active in several journals. We produced an anti-war journal called *Alternatives* at the university, and I wrote and edited for *Telos*, a Western Marxist journal that had a certain importance in bringing European Marxism to the US. Years later, during my first sabbatical, I wrote a first book on Lukács and the Frankfurt School. That was really the beginning of my work as a philosopher.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *A century after its first publication, what is for you the main contribution of History and Class Consciousness that is still relevant? And what do you think has changed since?*

**Andrew Feenberg:** Two huge changes have taken place since 1923: the weakness of proletarian resistance to capitalism in the advanced countries, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is no longer possible to think of politics as Lukács understood it. At least in Europe, the US, Japan and South Korea, the rich countries that were supposed to make the revolution, that political world is gone. I was present during the last social movement in an advanced country that attempted to play out a revolutionary scenario: the May Events in France. Nothing like it has happened since. Instead we are dealing with virulent fascist movements everywhere. So what do I think is the point of studying *History and Class Consciousness* today? Despite the political failure, it still offers the most sophisticated *philosophical* basis for understanding modern societies. The theory of reification is still valid. It makes sense of the new politics of technology that con-

tinues the struggle under these new conditions. I have written about this in several books that develop Lukácsian themes around contemporary forms of resistance to capitalism.

January 2024

Before his retirement, **Andrew Feenberg** was Canada Research Chair in Philosophy of Technology in the School of Communication, Simon Fraser University, in Vancouver, where he directed the Applied Communication and Technology Lab.

He is the author of *Lukács, Marx and the Sources of Critical Theory* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1981; Oxford University Press, 1986), *Critical Theory of Technology* (Oxford University Press, 1991), *Alternative Modernity* (University of California Press, 1995), *Questioning Technology* (Routledge, 1999), *Heidegger and Marcuse: The Catastrophe and Redemption of History* (Routledge, 2005), *Between Reason and Experience: Essays in Technology and Modernity* (MIT Press, 2010), *The Philosophy of Praxis: Marx, Lukács and the Frankfurt School* (Verso, 2014), *Technosystem: The Social Life of Reason* (Harvard University Press, 2017), and *The Ruthless Critique of Everything Existing: Nature and Revolution in Marcuse's Philosophy of Praxis* (Verso, 2023).

His works have appeared also in other languages, including, in Portuguese: *Tecnologia e modernidade* (Inovatec, 2015), *Entre a razão e a experiência: Ensaios sobre a tecnologia e modernidade* (Inovatec, University of Brasilia Press, 2019) and *Construtivismo crítico: Uma filosofia da tecnologia* (Scientiae Studia, 2022).

# Antonino Infranca

*Tivoli, Italy*

**Mariana Teixeira:** *Quando e come è entrato in contatto con Storia e coscienza di classe?*

**Antonino Infranca:** Ho letto per la prima volta *Storia e coscienza di classe* nel 1979 per preparare la mia tesi di laurea presso l'Università di Palermo. Mi laureai nel 1980 con una tesi sul *Concetto di lavoro in Lukács*, che con il passare del tempo e l'approfondimento dei miei studi è diventata la mia prima grande monografia su Lukács.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *Quali aspetti del libro l'hanno colpito di più all'epoca?*

**Antonino Infranca:** *Storia e coscienza di classe* mi apparve come una sorta di introduzione all'*Ontologia dell'essere sociale*. Forse ero influenzato dall'allora contemporanei studi hegeliani; come è noto la *Fenomenologia dello spirito* è un'introduzione al sistema filosofico hegeliano, dispiegato nelle altre opere di Hegel. Questo aspetto l'ho sviluppato nel mio libro *Il concetto di lavoro in Lukács*, soprattutto nel capitolo "La fenomenologia del lavoro: *Storia e coscienza di classe*".

**Mariana Teixeira:** *Che impatto ha avuto il libro sulla sua traiettoria intellettuale e/o sul suo attivismo politico (e forse sulla sua vita in generale)?*

**Antonino Infranca:** In generale il pensiero di Lukács ha influenzato profondamente il mio sviluppo intellettuale, radicalizzando la mia adesione all'universo intellettuale del marxismo. All'interno di questo mio sviluppo intellettuale *Storia e coscienza di classe* mi ha sensibilizzato alle teorie del lavoro alienante ed estraniante. Lo studio e la traduzione delle opere di Ricardo Antunes hanno ancor più approfondito questa mia sensibilità intellettuale. Contemporaneamente ho conosciuto l'analisi filologica delle opere economiche di Marx da parte di Enrique Dussel, dove il problema dell'alienazione e dell'estraniamento è sempre al centro della sua analisi. Influenzato dall'*Etica della liberazione* di Dussel ho iniziato a concepire il problema dell'estraniamento come un problema centrale nella filosofia della fine del Novecento. L'estraniamento è il capitolo finale dell'*Ontologia dell'essere sociale*, che è una riproposizione approfondita del tema dell'estraniamento in *Storia e coscienza di classe*. Quindi ho sempre considerato *Storia e coscienza di classe* l'introduzione all'*Ontologia dell'essere sociale*, come ho scritto sopra; questo lavoro di analisi critica dell'epoca contemporanea e di proposta di un'etica marxista, secondo il mio modo di pensare, si conclude con l'*Etica della liberazione*. ss

**Mariana Teixeira:** *Un secolo dopo la sua prima pubblicazione, qual è per lei il contributo principale di Storia e coscienza di classe che rimane ancora attuale?*



**Antonino Infranca:** L'aspetto più attuale di *Storia e coscienza di classe* è la critica alla reificazione. La mercificazione del lavoro vivo riduce l'essere sociale a una cosa. Lukács mette in valore questa concezione che è sostanzialmente marxiana, ma egli è capace di estendere questa concezione allo stesso processo di produzione, al processo lavorativo dentro la fabbrica secondo i canoni del taylorismo. Come dicevo prima, è essenziale che l'essere umano venga estraniato da se stesso per essere ridotto a una cosa. La sua forza-lavoro è gestita dall'esterno, indipendentemente dalla volontà del lavoratore, come se fosse un'appendice della macchina, un semplice strumento di lavoro. Il meraviglioso film di Charlie Chaplin, *Tempi moderni*, offre una rappresentazione visiva di questo processo di reificazione dell'essere umano. Il film di Chaplin è del 1936 e non so se Chaplin abbia letto o meno *Storia e coscienza di classe*, però il tema della reificazione era un tema del tempo, tant'è che Simone Weil lo analizza direttamente nella propria esperienza di operaia della Renault, in quello stesso periodo.

Per conversazioni con amici operai la reificazione non è affatto scomparsa e, come ha notato Ricardo Antunes, il toyotismo è una radicalizzazione del taylorismo, in quanto quest'ultimo riesce a reificare anche la coscienza del lavoratore. L'estraniamento, come Lukács indica nell'*Ontologia dell'essere sociale*, non si limita all'ambito del processo lavorativo, ma si estende a tutta la vita quotidiana dell'essere sociale, come aveva già denunciato in *Storia e coscienza di classe*, a causa dell'applicazione della manipolazione fordista sia al lavoratore che al consumatore. Antonio Gramsci si era reso conto del

processo di espansione della manipolazione fordista, ma Lukács ha vissuto molto più a lungo di Gramsci e lo ha visto estendersi all'intera vita quotidiana, anche nei paesi del socialismo realizzato, come ho potuto constatare personalmente, essendo vissuto per due anni nell'Ungheria comunista. Quindi considero ancora attuali le concezioni della mercificazione, della reificazione e dell'estraneazioni contenute in *Storia e coscienza di classe*.

January 2024

**Antonino Infranca** graduated in Philosophy from The University of Palermo (1980), and specialized in Philosophy at the University of Pavia (1985). He obtained his PhD at the Hungarian Academy of Science (1989) and the University of Buenos Aires (2017). In 1989 he received the Lukács Medal for his philosophical research at the Lukács Archive in Budapest.

He is the author of *Giovanni Gentile e la cultura siciliana* (L'Ed, 1990), *Tecnecrate: Dialogo* (Arlem, 1998; Praxis 2004; Herramienta 2004), *L'altro occidente: Sette saggi sulla realtà della Filosofia della Liberazione* (Antídoto, 2000; Harmattan 2004; Aracne, 2010; Praxis 2014), *I filosofi e le donne* (Topía 2006; Manifestolibri 2010), *Lavoro, individuo, storia: Il concetto di lavoro in Lukács* (Herramienta, 2005; Mimesis, 2011; Boitempo, 2014), *Apocalisse* (Asterios, 2020), *Crisi* (Acro-polis, 2024), *Etica e politica in Lukács* (Punto Rosso, 2024). He is also the author of many essays on Lukács, Bloch, Gentile, Gramsci, Croce, Kerényi, Heidegger, as well as on the philosophy of liberation and the history of Sicily.

He has translated and edited Italian editions of books by Ricardo Antunes and Enrique Dussel, and has edited numerous editions in Spanish and Italian of books by Lukács.

# Konstantinos Kavoulakos

*Thessaloniki, Greece*

**Mariana Teixeira:** *When and how did you first come into contact with History and Class Consciousness?*

**Konstantinos Kavoulakos:** When I was in high school I read Plato, Marx and Marcuse (who was the only relatively well known representative of critical theory in Greece at that time). After high school, in the second half of the 1980s, I studied sociology at the first Greek Department of Sociology in Athens (opened in 1983). For Greece, sociology was something very new and very progressive, it was a part of the wider democratization the country experienced at that time. Although Marxism was an essential part of my sociological and philosophical training, Hegelian and critical versions of it were not included in the curriculum. After my studies in sociology I started a PhD in social philosophy in the early 1990s with a thesis on Habermas's notion of reason. This is when I met Lukács's works for the first time. I read parts of *History and Class Consciousness* in this context, but without really understanding its true significance. After all, in the literature I read at that time the work was briefly presented as a part of the prehistory of critical theory that was supposedly overcome by later developments in the field. Even though I was more attracted to the "old Frankfurt School" than to its second generation communicative theory, I didn't question this standard understanding of Lukács's early Marxism.

In the late 1990s I had the good fortune to find a position as a lecturer for social and political philosophy at the University of Crete, which proved to be a very dynamic and open-minded academic environment. Among other things, I taught critical theory in its different versions and did research in this field. In my lessons, *History and Class Consciousness* was a standard reference as a theoretical presupposition of critical theory. Then a coincidence led me to delve deeper into this work. In the early 2000s there was still only an old Greek translation of it from 1974, which was very inadequate, and at many points even incomprehensible. So I started correcting some central paragraphs to use them in my courses. But I realized that I could do better if I translated it from scratch. So I translated the reification essay (which is of course the most philosophical one) into modern Greek. I also prepared an introduction on its philosophical and political significance and a commentary on the theories and concepts mentioned in it. Hence a new edition of this part of the book was published in 2006.

But what was more important for me by this time was that I realized the fact that the standard readings of the work I studied to write my introduction were somehow obviously misplaced in my eyes. That means I realized that there was something like a convenient story about Lukács and his book that everybody had kept repeating during the last forty years without seriously interpreting the text itself – with only a few, although important, exceptions among its commentators. This was how I came to rethink Lukács's *magnum opus* from the beginning without

taking any part of the standard reading for granted, with the aim of writing a new book on *History and Class Consciousness*.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *What aspects of the book struck you the most at the time?*

**Konstantinos Kavoulakos:** I think, apart from the socio-theoretical pervasiveness of Lukács's theory of reification – that had obviously influenced critical theory as a whole –, what struck me the most was the power and clarity of the section on the “Antinomies of Bourgeois Thought” and the specific way it connects philosophy and its problems with real life and the postulate of social and political revolution. Reconstructing modern philosophy and especially classical German philosophy on the basis of the “problem of irrationality” seemed particularly exciting and inspiring to me and made me want to learn more about how Lukács himself arrived at this idea. I felt that this *Problemggeschichte* offered by him in the antinomies section gives Marxism a philosophical depth that is not very common. And also that his allusions to the concept of totality – often taken as an unquestioned Hegelian element in the relevant literature – should only be interpreted through the spectacles of this reconstruction and not as a naïve espousal of the notion of “expressive totality” and of idealist philosophy in general. It was only many years later that I became able to explain in detail that Lukács's “problem history” was a result of the neo-Kantian influence to which he was exposed in his pre-Marxist period. One can say that it was part of an intellectual tradition Lukács

ingeniously reformulated, radicalized and transformed in a revolutionary Hegelian-Marxist direction.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *How did the book impact your intellectual trajectory and/or political activism (and maybe your life in general)?*

**Konstantinos Kavoulakos:** On an intellectual and academic level *History and Class Consciousness* was literally the all-determining event in my trajectory. Maybe because it took me so long to understand it anew in confrontation with its standard readings (such as Adorno's, Althusser's, Habermas's, Honneth's etc.), i.e. to interpret it in a more fruitful way, it merged with my own ways of thinking in such a way that I cannot separate my own thinking from my interpretation of this work. My solid conviction is that this book contains the potential for renewing critical thought today, especially if one succeeds in connecting its dialectical ontological orientation with Lukács's ontological reflections of his late period. This is something I'm interested in contributing to in the future.

Even more so because a whole period in which a leftist questioning of the established order seems to have come to an end in Greece and we'll need new conceptual tools to rethink this defeat. I was "fortunate" that the period of my research on the early Lukács was one of an acute multifaceted crisis that led to spontaneous mass mobilization (movement of the "squares", mass strikes and demonstrations etc.) and to an unprecedented crisis in and overturning of the political system in Greece. On a mass psychology level these years were characterized by a con-

stant fluctuation between hope and frustration. But this unstable psychology had a conceptual counterpart, the growing awareness of the “iron necessities” (brutally imposed by the political decisions of the “Troika” that openly turned Greece into a debt colony). Such necessities called for an organized social resistance and left party politics able to challenge the dominant bourgeois party politics – something that proved to be feasible. In *History and Class Consciousness* one finds all these elements of a period of social and political turmoil, all the dilemmas and possible answers to them. One may not find ready solutions, of course, but there is certainly a lot of food for thought in the context of a radically destabilized system and the need for radical leftist politics. Lukács’s analyses helped me understand crisis as an opportunity for emancipatory praxis, a necessary practical demand that must be collectively addressed through political organization at the correct time. This was a lesson for me, since by then I had one-sidedly preferred more grass-roots oriented politics and was always suspicious towards political parties. The recent outcome of this whole period, the deterioration of the radical left party SYRIZA that played a leading role during the crisis and even managed to seize power for a while, must also be understood as an effect of the theoretical shortcomings in its political and ideological self-understanding.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *A century after its first publication, what is for you the main contribution of History and Class Consciousness that is still relevant? And what do you think has changed since?*

**Konstantinos Kavoulakos:** In the context of the contemporary revival of Marxism, Hegelian Marxism can undoubtedly form a distinct contribution. Lukács represents a theoretical resource for rethinking critical thought in the 21st century, as his approach is far more sophisticated and fruitful than his critics suggested. The power of his thought consists in showing the deeply problematic character of the rationalization process that has meanwhile become global. It systematically produces phenomena of crisis because of its formalist and idealist, i.e. repressive, character. At the same time its claim to universality is tantamount to the obfuscation of its social-historical determination so as to appear as an inevitable fate. The urgency of the current ecological crisis culminating in climate change puts a renewed critique of formalist rationality at the top of the must-do list of contemporary critical theory and social movements. Thus, Lukács's theory of rationalization and of the phenomenon of reification is of central importance for us today.

What has changed since Lukács's time is well known. The development of organized capitalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century radically changed the conditions of class struggle by mitigating the old antagonism between bourgeois class and working class. Also the system's means of social control have proliferated on all levels of control over human behaviour. Social rationality reasserted its manipulative role by disintegrating the unity of the oppositional social class. This is why the third part of Lukács's reification essay and, more generally, his allusions to the revolutionary role of the proletariat in the whole book are usually considered an outdated element of his theory. But one should not forget



that for Lukács, too, the unity of the revolutionary subject was more a demand and a problem than a given reality...

Overcoming the destructive tendencies of the current neo-liberal rationalization wave equates to releasing the concrete human freedom that is possible today from its constraints. However, although it is clear that freedom is only possible in practical resistance, it remains unclear how a social and political synthesis of oppositional powers rising from beneath can be achieved in an effective way and on a global scale. The Greek case clearly shows the difficulties: a temporary, half-way political overturn became possible only in a tiny capitalist state of the periphery, lacking strong bourgeois and technocratic social and political powers and a robust productive infrastructure, a country that proved to be particularly vulnerable to the wider impact of the international debt crisis of 2007–2008. Although there were similar phenomena of destabilization also in other countries of the European South, Greece finally remained an exceptional case due to the effective mobilization of the EU bureaucratic apparatus. Civil society and the left political parties proved to be ill-prepared and desperately weak against the system. But still, the fight will never end as long as we live on.

*January 2024*

**Konstantinos Kavoulakos** is Professor of Modern and Contemporary Philosophy at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. His research focuses on an investigation of the twentieth-century tradition of critical social thought.

His books include *Georg Lukács's Philosophy of Praxis: From Neo-Kantianism to Marxism* (Bloomsbury, 2018), *History and Praxis: Georg Lukács's Philosophy*

*of Praxis* (Topos, 2018, in Greek), *Ästhetizistische Kulturkritik und ethische Utopie: Georg Lukács' neukantianisches Frühwerk* (Akademie Verlag/de Gruyter, 2014) and *Tragedy and History: The Critique of Modern Culture in the Early Work of Georg Lukács (1902–1918)* (Alexandria, 2012, in Greek). He edited special issues on Lukács for *Metodo: International Studies in Phenomenology and Philosophy* (2021), *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* (2014) and *Hypomnema* (2007, in Greek), and translated *Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat* into Greek (Ekkremes, 2006).

# Michael Löwy

*Paris, France*

**Mariana Teixeira:** *Quando e como você entrou em contato pela primeira vez com História e consciência de classe?*

**Michael Löwy:** Descobri a existência de *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* por volta de 1958, como estudante em Ciências Sociais na USP, através do livro de Lucien Goldmann, *As Ciências Humanas e a Filosofia*, que apresentava *Historia e consciência de classe (HCC)* como “uma verdadeira enciclopédia das ciências humanas” e como a mais importante resposta marxista à sociologia burguesa (Durkheim, Weber, etc.). Procurei em vão encontrar este livro misterioso no Brasil mas era evidentemente uma missão impossível... Desautorizado por seu autor, não havia sido reeditado desde 1923. Uma tradução não autorizada para o francês começou a circular em 1960; imediatamente adquiri esta obra na livraria francesa de São Paulo e comecei a devorá-la com impaciência. (Finalmente, depois de muita pressão de seu editor, Lukács aceitou que uma reedição fosse publicada em 1968, com um novo prefácio no qual ele manifestava suas críticas aos “desvios” do livro).

**Mariana Teixeira:** *Que aspectos do livro mais te impressionaram na época?*

**Michael Löwy:** Eu era – e aliás, ainda sou – um partidário convicto e confesso de Rosa Luxemburgo. Portanto comecei a leitura pelo capítulo intitulado “Rosa Luxemburgo, marxista”, que me confirmava na minha orientação decididamente “luxemburguista”. Nunca vou esquecer a primeira frase deste capítulo: “Não é a predominância dos motivos econômicos na explicação da história que distingue de forma decisiva o marxismo da ciência burguesa, mas o ponto de vista da totalidade. [...] *O reino da categoria da totalidade é o portador do princípio revolucionário na ciência*”. Foi uma verdadeira “iluminação profana” (para usar um termo de Walter Benjamin). De um só golpe, com uma só frase, Lukács nos livrava do peso de chumbo do economicismo e do materialismo vulgar, e abria um imenso novo horizonte de dialética revolucionária, graças à categoria da totalidade. Era uma nova maneira de entender o marxismo, a história, o conhecimento, o método das ciências humanas. Pouco depois escrevi para um boletimzinho de Ciências Sociais da USP um artigo sobre “A categoria da totalidade nas Ciências Sociais”.

Meu amigo Roberto Schwarz partilhava meu entusiasmo e jogamos com a ideia de tentar iniciar uma correspondência com Georg Lukács. Não o fizemos, mas organizamos uma brincadeira em 1960: Roberto escreveu, em alemão, uma carta imaginária de Lukács dirigida a mim, elogiando muito os nossos trabalhos de sociologia que lhe havíamos enviado. Eu levei a carta ao Seminário do Capital que frequentávamos nesta época, onde ela foi lida e comentada: alguns desconfiando, outros nos felicitando e outros até com inveja. Não vou citar nomes... Naturalmente revelamos que era uma invenção.

Algum tempo depois publiquei na *Revista Brasiliense* (no. 42, 1962) um artigo sobre “A teoria marxista do partido”, onde discutia Lenin, Rosa Luxemburgo, etc., e Lukács. Era uma discussão muito limitada, só me referia aos capítulos de *HCC* que apresentavam sua concepção do Partido revolucionário (uma espécie de síntese entre Lenin e Rosa Luxemburgo); mas parece que este artigo é a primeira referência no Brasil a *Historia e consciência de classe*.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *Como o livro impactou a sua trajetória intelectual e/ou ativismo político (e talvez sua vida de modo geral)?*

**Michael Löwy:** Não creio que tenha impactado diretamente meu ativismo político, que tinha por principal referência, nos anos 1960, a Revolução Cubana, e, a partir de 1968, a Quarta Internacional (Ernest Mandel, Daniel Bensaïd).

Mas para minha trajetória intelectual, foi um livro *decisivo*. No curso dos anos 1960, me dediquei ao estudo da *Teoria da revolução no jovem Marx*, tema da tese que redigi em Paris sob a direção de Lucien Goldmann e que defendi na Sorbonne em 1964. Do ponto de vista metodológico, este trabalho era baseado fundamentalmente nas categorias de *História e consciência de classe*, a começar pela categoria da totalidade: era uma tentativa de analisar a evolução do jovem Marx (1842–48) em relação com a totalidade social, cultural e histórica em que se situava, isto é, a sociedade capitalista da época, os inícios do movimento operário, as correntes de esquerda intelectuais. Por outro lado, a tese buscava analisar a relação entre a teoria de Marx e as experiên-

cias de luta do proletariado nascente através do conceito lukácsiano de “consciência atribuída” (*zugerechnetes Bewusstsein*), ou, para utilizar o termo de Lucien Goldmann, “o máximo de consciência possível” da classe.

Quando a tese foi publicada em 1970 (Editions Maspero), eu mandei uma cópia a Georg Lukács, com uma dedicatória, reconhecendo minha dívida com as teses de *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*. Eu conhecia suas autocríticas da obra de 1923, mas achei que devia assim mesmo enviar meu livro.

Em 1972 comecei uma nova pesquisa, para meu segundo doutorado (“Thèse d’Etat”), sobre a evolução política do jovem Lukács (1909–1929), na qual, evidentemente, HCC ocupava um lugar central. Georg Lukács e Lucien Goldmann já haviam falecido. No contexto desta pesquisa, visitei Budapeste, onde consultei o arquivo Lukács e tive longas conversas com seus discípulos, em particular Ágnes Heller e Ferenc Fehér, que na época eram marxistas dissidentes. Numa visita ao apartamento de Fehér, descobri na biblioteca dele um exemplar de meu livro *A teoria da revolução do jovem Marx*, com a dedicatória a Lukács! Perguntei a ele como este livro, que eu havia enviado ao autor de HCC, tinha chegado em suas mãos. Ele então me contou o seguinte: um dia, em 1970, visitando Lukács, o mestre lhe havia entregue este livro, com o seguinte comentário irônico: “Mais um que ainda acredita em *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*. Você vai gostar deste livro”. É o único comentário de Lukács sobre minha obra, e fico muito orgulhoso por ele...

No curso da pesquisa mantive correspondência com vários pensadores que se interessavam por Lukács, como o jovem revoluci-

onário Rudi Dutschke, e entrevistei, em 1974, Ernst Bloch sobre sua relação com o autor de *HCC*. Nesta entrevista, que mais tarde publiquei, ele afirmava que no início dos anos 1920, ele e Lukács “tínhamos um tão grande acordo sobre tudo, que tivemos que inventar uma ‘reserva de espécies selvagens’ para preservar alguns desacordos”. Defendi a tese em 1974 e a publiquei no ano seguinte na Presses Universitaires de France com o título um pouco desajeitado *Por uma sociologia dos intelectuais revolucionários: A evolução política de Lukács, 1909–1929* (traduzido poucos anos depois no Brasil). Neste trabalho tento analisar a evolução das ideias de Lukács, partindo do romantismo anticapitalista dos primeiros escritos para chegar, em 1918, ao marxismo e à participação na Revolução dos conselhos operários da Hungria em 1919. *História e consciência de classe* representa, na minha interpretação, o ponto mais alto do marxismo de Lukács e do pensamento dialético revolucionário no século XX.

Não há dúvidas, portanto, de que meu itinerário intelectual dos anos 1960 e 1970 esteve iluminado por esta brilhante estrela do firmamento marxista que se chamava *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*.

Meu livro sobre Lukács foi traduzido para o italiano, espanhol, português, sueco e inglês. Entre as resenhas e críticas, a mais importante foi a de Raymond Williams, o fundador dos “cultural studies” marxistas. Comentando a tradução inglesa do livro, que tinha por título *Georg Lukács: From Romanticism to Bolshevism*, Williams considerou importante minha análise do romantismo anticapitalista na obra do jovem Lukács, mas se queixou de que o título dava a entender que para aderir ao marxismo, um pensa-

dor tem de abandonar as teses românticas, o que lhe parecia um equívoco. O argumento de Williams me impressionou bastante e nos anos seguintes passei a estudar a relação entre marxismo e romantismo anticapitalista.

A tradução brasileira foi publicada em 1979 e, graças a ela, me tornei amigo de dois eminentes “lukácsianos” brasileiros, Leandro Konder e Carlos Nelson Coutinho, que encontraram nos escritos do grande filósofo marxista húngaro uma arma preciosa para combater o positivismo, ideologia das classes dominantes e dos militares no Brasil, que também contaminou a esquerda, inclusive o Partido Comunista Brasileiro, do qual os dois eram militantes naquela época. Nunca em falta de ironia e imaginação, meus dois amigos tinham inventado um samba que celebrava a épica vitória de Georg Lukács contra Augusto Comte, o fundador do positivismo...

Embora meu trabalho intelectual tenha tomado novas direções, com a descoberta de Walter Benjamin por exemplo, *História e consciência de classe* continua sendo uma referência essencial, uma fonte de inspiração inesgotável.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *Na sua opinião, qual a principal contribuição de História e consciência de classe que se mantém atual um século após sua primeira publicação? E o que você acha que mudou desde então?*

**Michael Löwy:** Não tenho dúvidas de que a categoria “dialética da totalidade”, isto é, a compreensão de que os fenômenos econômicos, sociais, políticos e culturais constituem um todo histórico em movimento, e que é impossível entender um destes



aspectos sem relacioná-lo com os demais, continua sendo uma ferramenta metodológica essencial. Esta visão dialética permite superar tanto o idealismo filosófico ou culturalista quanto o materialismo economicista.

Outro momento da obra que guarda toda sua atualidade é a análise da *reificação* (*Verdinglichung*), a transformação de todas as atividades e relações humanas, de todas as qualidades humanas, em relações, atividades e qualidades da mercadoria; o poder total da mercadoria transforma em “coisas” o conjunto da vida econômica, social, política ou cultural. A crítica da reificação em *HCC* inspirou os escritos de Lucien Goldmann, da Escola de Frankfurt e de Guy Debord, e continua sendo uma peça indispensável de qualquer análise séria do capitalismo.

Enfim, as reflexões de Lukács sobre a consciência de classe do proletariado como fundamento epistemológico de um conhecimento adequado da realidade social, e sobre o papel do fator subjetivo (consciência e organização) no processo revolucionário não perderam sua pertinência, mesmo em períodos de regressão social como o que vivemos atualmente.

O que mudou desde então é a importância central que tem hoje em dia para o marxismo a questão ecológica, a luta em defesa da Mãe Terra contra a mortífera dinâmica destrutora da civilização capitalista industrial, o combate para salvar a humanidade da catástrofe da mudança climática incontrolável. Se trata da questão política, social e ética fundamental de nossa época, mas ela ainda não se colocava como tal em 1923, porque o processo de destruição capitalista do meio ambiente estava ainda em sua

etapa inicial. O marxismo do século 21 tem de se tornar um “eco-marxismo”, o que não era um tema para Lukács em *História e consciência de classe...*

January 2024

**Michael Löwy** was born in Brazil in 1938 but has lived in France since 1969. He graduated in Social Sciences at Universidade de São Paulo in 1960 and received his doctorate from the Sorbonne in 1964. He was awarded the CNRS (French National Center of Scientific Research) silver medal in 1994 and was a visiting professor at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.

His many books include *Georg Lukács: from Romanticism to Bolshevism* (Verso, 1981), *Redemption and utopia* (Stanford University Press, 1992; Companhia das Letras, 1989), *Romantismo e messianismo: Ensaio sobre Lukács e Benjamin* (Perspectiva/Edusp, 1990), *A evolução política de Lukács* (Cortez, 1999), *Revolta e melancolia* (with Robert Sayre, Vozes, 1995; Boitempo, 2015), *The Theory of Revolution in the Young Marx* (Brill, 2003; Vozes 2002; Boitempo 2012), and *Revolutionary affinities* (with Olivier Besancenot, PM Press, 2023; Unesp 2016).

# Michael J. Thompson

*New York City, USA*

**Mariana Teixeira:** *When and how did you first come into contact with History and Class Consciousness?*

**Michael J. Thompson:** My first encounter with *History and Class Consciousness*, as well as with the very name of Georg Lukács, came when I was an undergraduate studying literature and languages. I had come across Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* and his references to Lukács, in particular to *History and Class Consciousness*, were new and exciting to me. One reason for this was Marcuse's invocation of Lukács's idea that labor, cooperative human praxis, was capable of creating novel and new forms of life and worlds. In this way, he was linking Lukács with the creative elements he found in Freud's concept of *eros* but also with Schiller's idea of "play" (*Spiel*).

This was incredibly emancipating for me since it offered a first glimpse into the ways that Marxist theory could connect itself with aesthetic experience but also offer a concrete aspirational ethos for radical politics. I immediately acquired a copy of the book and when I started reading it I knew right away that a whole new way of thinking had opened up for me. Initially, I had planned to study medicine after graduating university, but after reading *History and Class Consciousness* it became clear to me that philosophy and the development of a critical mode of consciousness was something to which I had to dedicate myself.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *What aspects of the book struck you the most at the time?*

**Michael J. Thompson:** I think most importantly it was the very idea that consciousness was a central category for understanding political transformation as well as expanding and cultivating the development of critical reflection and capacities on the part of political subjects. For me at the time when I discovered the book, a student of classical languages, particularly Latin and Greek, who was attracted to the philosophy and political ideas of the democratic Greek *polis* as well as the ideals of republican Rome, I saw in my own time a serious pathology of political and civic consciousness: one that lacked critical awareness of social domination, of the processes of cultural subjugation, and the dulling of their own critical agency. Although I had always been aware of this cultural and political malaise, it was reading Lukács, in particular his idea of reification but also his idea that a dialectical form of consciousness was intrinsically transformational and that it required us to engage with the actual processes of life, that gave me a conceptual vocabulary to diagnose this and gain insight into how to confront it. In this way the book still retains a powerful, even explosive potential as consciousness has only continued to be the central domain of political struggle in contemporary society.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *How did the book impact your intellectual trajectory and/or political activism (and maybe your life in general)?*

**Michael J. Thompson:** For me *History and Class Consciousness* opened up the very question not only of consciousness but also of the idea of *praxis*. What I saw to be a solution to the problems that plagued the intellectual life of my time – particularly that of postmodernism and poststructuralism – was the dialectical synthesis of consciousness and the objective world via that of *praxis*. In this way, I came to see the entire trajectory of critical theory, in particular that of the Frankfurt School After World War II, as leading us in various ways toward theories that were deeply unsatisfying. Not only the defeatism of Adorno’s *Negative Dialectics* but also the return to Kant by people like Habermas and his followers and also the de-Marxification of critical theory via the return to Hegel by thinkers like Axel Honneth and the theory of recognition. What was so powerful and distinctive about the potentiality of Hegelian-Marxism, what Lukács had essentially established as a new paradigm in thinking, was being gradually washed away as critical theory sought to be acceptable to bourgeois philosophy and academia. In this way it made me think much more critically about what critical theory is and what it could be and what it can still contribute to political action as well as philosophy.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *A century after its first publication, what is for you the main contribution of History and Class Consciousness that is still relevant? And what do you think has changed since?*

**Michael J. Thompson:** There’s very little question for me that the category of consciousness and its dialectical relationship to self and world and to human social activity is at the core of

Lukács's book. But, perhaps even more importantly, he constructs a philosophical argument for a more rationally grounded theory of self-consciousness, one that focuses on the ontological categories of praxis and cooperation, in other words, a dynamic social totality that has as its essence our own creative and cooperative powers. We have lost contact with this, and hence fall into a form of alienation. In this way *History and Class Consciousness* is still relevant.

Of course, its limit lies in the fact that it is a product of the historical epoch in which it was composed. What I mean here is that class politics has today essentially disintegrated, there is no "proletariat" in any self-conscious, self-organizing sense of the word. Working people, the working class, is no longer organized and there are fewer and fewer political parties that can be understood as workers parties, let alone genuinely socialist parties. This means that the question of consciousness that Lukács raised in the book is even more essential today. For today we are confronted by the problem of the disorganization and under-organization of working people and of the dissolution of the political element that gave Marxism its foothold in real politics. Of course, Lukács was speaking to a world where that was not the case: in other words, he was seeking to intervene in a time when actual socialism could and had appeared in political form not only in its Soviet variety but also in other forms such as in Austro-Marxism.

But I think the key today lies in the understanding that consciousness is central for organization, that consciousness has to be shaped and changed, that is has to be defended against the

incessant onslaught of the culture industry and of technical manipulation, that philosophy must migrate more into the actual ethical life of real people. Therefore, Lukács's ideas about consciousness and its relation to social-ontological questions remains a crucial pathway forward for all theoretical and philosophical ideas that wish to see genuine social transformation and the realization of a socialist *res publica*. This is, to my mind, the true legacy of Lukács's masterpiece.

February 2024

**Michael J. Thompson** is Professor of Political Theory in the Department of Political Science, William Paterson University.

He is the author of numerous books, including *The Politics of Inequality: A Political History of the Idea of Economic Inequality in American Political Thought* (Columbia, 2007), *The Domestication of Critical Theory* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), *The Specter of Babel: A Reconstruction of Political Judgment* (SUNY, 2020), *Twilight of the Self: The Decline of the Individual in Late Capitalism* (Stanford, 2022) and *Descent of the Dialectic: Phronetic Criticism in an Age of Nihilism* (Routledge, 2024, in press).

He is also editor of *Georg Lukács Reconsidered: Critical Essays in Politics, Philosophy and Aesthetics* (Continuum, 2011), *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Theory* (Palgrave, 2017), and *Georg Lukács and the Possibility of Critical Social Ontology* (Brill, 2020).

## Miguel Vedda

*Buenos Aires, Argentina*

**Mariana Teixeira:** *¿Cuándo y cómo entró en contacto por primera vez con Historia y conciencia de clase?*

**Miguel Vedda:** Si no recuerdo mal, mi primero contacto con los “Estudios de dialéctica marxista” tuvo lugar a fines de 1987 o comienzos de 1988. En aquel momento, me encontraba en los primeros años de la carrera de Letras en la Universidad de Buenos Aires, y la teoría literaria entonces hegemónica tenía una fuerte impronta postestructuralista. Lo usual era reconstruir la historia de la crítica como un proceso que se inicia con el formalismo ruso, que continúa luego con autores como Mijaíl Bajtín, Jan Mukařovský y Yuri Lotman y que encuentra finalmente su consumación en autores como el Roland Barthes tardío, Julia Kristeva o Jacques Derrida. Dadas las particularidades sociales y culturales de Argentina, esta línea era complementada, de un modo teóricamente problemático y precario, con ciertos componentes de un marxismo entendido de manera un tanto superficial y ecléctica. Esta orientación hegemónica, en sí históricamente explicable, representaba ciertamente un avance frente al oscurantismo positivista dominante en las universidades argentinas durante la última dictadura cívico-militar (1976–83). Pero tenía como base un formalismo que relegaba lo político y que ofrecía pocas respuestas a la realidad social, cultural y – específicamente – literaria de Argentina. Estas falencias no



podían subsanarse mediante el agregado más o menos arbitrario y casual de ingredientes marxistas. En ese contexto, marcado por este estado de cosas y por mi propia militancia de entonces, me encontré con una de las dos compilaciones de escritos de Lukács coordinadas por Peter Ludz, *Sociología de la literatura* (el título le provocó un enorme fastidio a Lukács, como se sabe), traducida y editada en España. Los pasajes de *Teoría de la novela* que se incluyen allí me parecieron abrir la perspectiva hacia un tipo de reflexión más cercano al que buscaba en aquella época. Esto ocurrió durante la segunda mitad de 1987. Meses después, comencé a leer *Historia y conciencia de clase*, en la traducción de Manuel Sacristán.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *¿Qué aspectos del libro le impactaron más en su momento?*

**Miguel Vedda:** Hasta donde recuerdo, fueron tres los aspectos que más me impresionaron. En primer lugar, la orientación general antidogmática del libro. La propuesta de ver la esencia del marxismo en la orientación heurística, exploratoria propia de una dialéctica inspirada en Hegel y Marx y no en la repetición de principios universales me pareció fundamental a la luz de los marxismos partidarios “verdaderamente existentes” en aquellos años – y en estos. *Historia y conciencia de clase* venía a decir, en contra de lo que sugerían los manuales, periódicos y cursos partidarios, que el marxismo – y cito aquí las palabras con que Merleau-Ponty comenta, en *Las aventuras de la dialéctica*, el libro de 1923 – “debe ser una filosofía revolucionaria precisamente por-

que se niega a ser una filosofía dogmática de la historia”. En segundo lugar, me pareció iluminador el funcionamiento que en el libro tenía la categoría de totalidad. Pensaba entonces, y pienso ahora, que no se necesitaba demasiada perspicacia para entender que el empeño en totalizar promovido por Lukács tenía muy poco que ver con una totalidad estática o con el totalitarismo – tal como venía proponiendo Lyotard. De acuerdo con un proceder académico habitual en las últimas décadas, la sentencia de Adorno “La totalidad es lo no verdadero” era repetida como una suerte de letanía o máxima edificante, sin hacer justicia a la complejidad que esconde el enunciado y sin desarrollarlo a través del arduo trabajo del concepto. Sin tener en cuenta, sobre todo, que el propio Adorno ha insistido en vincular su propio concepto de dialéctica con un esfuerzo siempre renovado para entender cada elemento a partir de la función que cumple dentro de su respectiva totalidad. Así, por ejemplo, en las lecciones de *Introducción a la dialéctica*:

[El todo significa] que la verdad no consiste en definir un concepto cualquiera en su aislamiento y en su aislamiento tratarlo como si fuera un mero sector, sino verlo en su relación con la totalidad en la que está [...]. Solo cuando llevan ustedes a cabo esta reflexión sobre el todo pueden entender correctamente lo individual. Entonces, esta necesidad de ver cada fenómeno muy precisamente en su separación pero sin quedarse en esta separación, sino, al mismo tiempo, extrapolándolos, entendiéndolos dentro de la totalidad de la que reciben su determinación: esta es, en principio, la directiva más esencial contenida en el postulado de Hegel de que el todo es lo verdadero; y yo creo que entre los puntos mejor fundamentados que hacen posible a alguien, frente a las ciencias meramente positivas, elaborar un concepto

dialéctico del conocimiento, este punto es el primero destacable (Adorno, Th. W. *Introducción a la dialéctica*. Trad. y pról. de M. Dimópulos. Buenos Aires: Eterna cadencia, 2013, p. 69).

Años más tarde iba a encontrar una confirmación para mis vagas intuiciones de estudiante en los análisis de Fredric Jameson (por ejemplo, en *Valencias de la dialéctica*), que subrayan que, en Lukács, “totalidad” no remite a una realidad existente de hecho, susceptible de ser captada por nuestra mente, sino un esfuerzo constante de totalización, única vía para entender y transformar una realidad de otro modo inaprehensible como lo es la del capitalismo. El tercer aspecto es, previsiblemente, la teoría de la cosificación. Suponía, entre otras cosas, una lectura totalmente renovadora de la crítica de la economía política de Marx, que permitía entender tanto dimensiones de la sociabilidad capitalista como algunas de las filosofías más importantes e influyentes de la Modernidad.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *¿Cómo influyó el libro en su trayectoria intelectual y/o en su activismo político (y quizá en su vida en general)?*

**Miguel Vedda:** *Historia y conciencia de clase* tuvo un papel importante en mi tesis de doctorado (dedicada a analizar concepciones de lo sublime en un conjunto de teóricos de lengua alemana entre 1730 y 1850); particularmente, en el capítulo dedicado a la *Crítica de la facultad de juzgar* de Kant, pero también en la sección metodológica con la que se inicia la tesis. También para analizar temas de literatura alemana y comparada, a lo largo de los años. Junto con elementos de Bloch y Kracauer,

la teoría de la cosificación me resultó también muy productiva para examinar fenómenos de la literatura de masas. Muchas ideas de Lukács están tan ligadas con mi forma de pensar y reaccionar ante la realidad contemporánea que me resulta difícil especificarlas individualmente. En todo caso, veo un cierto desplazamiento, con el correr de los años. En mi juventud, me interesaba la filosofía temprana de Lukács como expresión de un “marxismo cálido” que ponía el énfasis en el factor subjetivo y en el papel de la conciencia; participaba de esta disposición general el interés en Ernst Bloch y, en una medida mucho menor, en Karl Korsch. Con el tiempo, el interés por el “marxismo de los años veinte” fue cediendo ante una atención mayor por el Lukács tardío – el de la *Estética* y la *Ontología* –, pero también, sobre todo, por el Marx maduro y tardío. Creo que aquí se encuentran herramientas insustituibles, no solo para entender en general el capitalismo en sus más diversas manifestaciones, sino también, en particular, la fase neoliberal que aún estamos atravesando.

**Mariana Teixeira:** *Un siglo después de su primera publicación, ¿cuál cree que es la principal aportación de Historia y conciencia de clase que sigue siendo relevante? ¿Y qué cree que ha cambiado desde entonces?*

**Miguel Vedda:** Creo que los aspectos históricamente más rebasados son los agitatorios y organizativos, vinculados con un optimismo fundado en la perspectiva escatológica de una escalada de la ola revolucionaria a nivel mundial. También hay puntos muy problemáticos, como una teoría de la organización

partidaria que, en los últimos ensayos del libro, y sobre todo en el último, presenta rasgos netamente sectarios, como traté de mostrar en el prefacio que escribí para la edición brasileña del *Lenin*. Esto no impugna la actualidad del libro, que es considerable y puede verse en múltiples particularidades. Entre ellas se encuentran motivos ya mencionados, como el posicionamiento metodológico antidogmático o la propuesta de un horizonte de totalización. Pero se podrían mencionar además otras cuestiones. Así, ligado a su antidogmatismo se encuentra el “giro autorreflexivo” del marxismo lukácsiano, vinculado también con el énfasis sobre el presente como punto de partida para todo análisis y toda praxis. Esta idea aparece en varios lugares del libro, pero sobre todo al comienzo, donde se dice que el marxismo “ha de ser, constantemente aplicado a sí mismo [...]. Ello implica al mismo tiempo una toma de posición material, de contenido, respecto de los problemas del presente, pues a consecuencia de esa concepción del método marxista el objetivo más destacado de estos trabajos es el conocimiento *del presente*”.

Otra dimensión que podría ser recuperada para el análisis crítico de la actualidad es la teoría de la cosificación como herramienta para entender las formas de conciencia correspondientes a un capitalismo como el neoliberal, que no en vano ha sido definido como la era del consumismo indiferenciado. Rüdiger Danne-mann ha insistido en varios contextos en que los aportes lukácsianos para el análisis de la “estética de la mercancía” no han sido hasta ahora suficientemente explorados. La centralidad que volvieron a tener categorías marxianas como las de “fetichismo” y “mistificación” evidencia peculiaridades del capitalismo de

nuestro tiempo que podrían ser abordados con ayuda de la teoría de la cosificación.

Febrero 2024

**Miguel Vedda** is full Professor of the chair of German Literature and Director of the Department of Literature of the University of Buenos Aires, as well as Principal Investigator of Argentina's National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET). He was President of the Latin American Association of German Studies and a member of the Marxist collective "Herramienta".

His recent publications include *La irrealidad de la desesperación: Estudios sobre Siegfried Kracauer y Walter Benjamin* (Gorla, 2011), *Placeres de la melancolía: Reflexiones sobre literatura y tristeza* (Gorla, 2014), *Lukács: Estética e Ontología* (Alameda, 2014, with Ester Vaisman), *Leer a Goethe* (Cuadrata, 2015), *Cazadores de ocasos: La literatura de horror en los tiempos del neoliberalismo* (Cuarenta Ríos, 2021) and *Siegfried Kracauer, or, The Allegories of Improvisation: Critical Studies* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2021).

He has translated and edited works of Goethe, Marx and Engels, Kafka, Lukács and Siegfried Kracauer, among other authors, and was the co-editor of *Anuario Argentino de Germanística* and the *Ibero-amerikanisches Jahrbuch für Germanistik*.