



Review: Marxism and Sociology

Reviewed Work(s): Marxist Sociology. by Tom Bottomore: Karl Marx: Economy, Class and Social Revolution. by Z. A. Jordan: Karl Marx on Society and Social Change. by Neil J. Smelser: Marx and Modern Social Theory. by Alan Swingewood

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FEATURE ESSAYS

Marxism and Sociology

Marxist Sociology, by TOM BOTTOMORE. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1975. 78 pp. \$7.00 cloth \$3.00 paper.

Karl Marx: Economy, Class and Social Revolution, edited by Z. A. JORDAN. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975. 332 pp. \$10.00 cloth.

Karl Marx on Society and Social Change, edited by NEIL J. SMELSER. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973. 206 pp. \$12.50 cloth. \$3.25 paper.

Marx and Modern Social Theory, by ALAN SWINGWOOD. New York: Halsted Press, 1975. 248 pp. \$17.95 cloth.

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If we believe, for whatever reasons, that the revolution is imminent, then the immediate issues for Marxists are ones of strategy and organization. In such historical circumstances practice and theory directly affect and inform one another. Just as the organization of class struggle responds to the theory of revolution, so the theory of revolution moves with the class struggle through which it is carried out. Voluntarism and determinism are joined.

Few Marxists regarded the third quarter of the twentieth century as the historical location for such a revolutionary conjuncture, except perhaps in the underdeveloped world. Indeed, as capitalism has expanded it has displayed an astonishing capacity to overcome the crises it generates, to absorb or repel alternatives, and to incorporate change and criticism. Such non-revolutionary conditions have increased the distinctions between the polarities; people "make their own history . . . but under circumstances directly found . . ." (*The Eighteenth Brumaire*)—between voluntarism and determinism; revolution and science; freedom and necessity. For Marx the two perspectives stood opposed; during unpropitious times they develop independent traditions. On the one hand, we look for an explanation for the "appearance" of durability—that what exists is natural and inevitable. In other words, we attempt to construct a theory of ideology. In this view we also look

for patterns of determination which illuminate the trajectories of capitalism, the displacement and condensation of primary contradictions, and the emergence of new classes and with them new contradictions. In short, we search for a Marxist science which will transform the appearances of everyday life into a knowledge of underlying patterns of development and change. On the other hand, we abandon the consolations and discomforts of determinism and "sociological fatalism" and proclaim that the conditions for revolution are indeed ripe. What little attempt is made to explain, call it theory if you must, is justified and validated not by its plausibility but by its purpose. Here we find "messianic utopianism"—Lukács's judgment of his own early work.

Therefore, the first theme I wish to explore in this essay concerns the divergence, within Marxism and in interpretations of Marx, of voluntarism and determinism, particularly as it occurs in periods defined as non-revolutionary. I propose to use the four assigned books to illustrate this thesis and to show how attempts to bridge the gulf lead into a political and intellectual abyss or into discourse outside the Marxist tradition.

The second theme of my discussion concerns the current relevance of Marx's work. Is Marx to be regarded as a grandmaster who shaped the development of sociology but whose thought has been assimilated into the main body of social theory? If so, has he been superseded and are his most trenchant insights limited to the particular era in which he lived? Can sociology continue to benefit from his work in the analysis of advanced capitalism? Or, alternatively, is Marx the founder of an independent tradition which cannot be absorbed into the main body of social theory along with Durkheim and Weber without distortion? Are his theoretical structures incompatible with those of modern social theory? Must Marxism be seen in terms of its own distinctive premises? In other words, in referring to or using Marx's work, are we "for sociology" or "for Marx"? Although none of the four books under review is concerned with recent developments in Marxism, it will nevertheless be necessary to invoke such work in order to arrive at tentative conclusions about the viability of an autonomous Marxist tradition.

Empiricism

Introducing his book devoted to Marxist sociology, Bottomore writes: "the working out of these two themes—science and revolution—constitutes the history of Marxist thought during the past century" (p. 13). Bottomore claims that Marxist positivism has been most significantly advanced in the little translated works of the Austrian school.¹ However, he also stresses the opposition to this positivist tradition from both Marxists and non-Marxists, from the Hegelian tradition with its explicit refutation of positivism, from the dogmatism always haunting Marxism (which has secured a stranglehold over its development in most socialist countries), and from the dominant cultural and educational institutions of capitalism which have always shunned Marxist thought.

What, then, is left of Marxist sociology? Not much, claims Bottomore, dismayed by its failure to fulfill its promise. Influenced by an empiricist tradition, Bottomore is skeptical of determinate or global "laws." He prefers "significant correlations" and "causal explanations" and the final comment of the book is, "the idea of the inevitability of socialism has tended to impoverish and deform Marxist thought" (p. 75). By the same token Bottomore embraces "free conscious activity" which may change those "correlations" and "explanations." Between theory and practice there must be continual interaction, but Bottomore gives us little indication of where and how to begin.

In defining the elements of a Marxist sociology, Bottomore draws upon the later work of Korsch—not long before the latter abandoned Marxism altogether. They are: (1) the primacy of the economic structure (a position which Bottomore seems to reject as being unrealistic, though without any serious con-

¹ By positivism Bottomore understands, "an approach to the social sciences which regards them as being essentially the same as natural sciences, aiming at the formulation of general causal laws, resting their claims to valid knowledge upon the analysis of some empirical reality, not upon philosophical intuition, and thus asserting the unity of scientific method; and which makes a sharp distinction between scientific statements and value judgements" (p. 9). Therefore, Bottomore does not make the distinction within positivism between laws derived deductively (Marxist positivism) and laws derived inductively (empiricist positivism). His conclusion that Marxist sociology is underdeveloped is partly a consequence of defining sociology, and in particular Marxist sociology, as an empiricist positivism.

sideration of what "primacy" might mean); (2) the historical specificity of all social phenomena; (3) the setting of empirical studies within an historical context; (4) the recognition of revolutionary as well as of evolutionary change (though again Bottomore has some misgivings). Needless to say Weber's or even Durkheim's work could be easily absorbed into this notion of sociology; not much, that is, is left of Marxism. In trying to weave the two Marxist traditions together, Bottomore loses sight of all that is distinctively Marxist. He poses the problem but his empiricist epistemological commitment to inductive "correlations" rather than deductive "laws" leads into a cul-de-sac.

Curiously, Bottomore notes early in his book that Marx himself was never able to fuse the positivist and Hegelian elements into a superior synthesis. This does not daunt Bottomore in his own attempts at reconciliation. But it should come as no surprise that he finds himself outside the realm of Marxist discourse. As I suggested earlier, a return to Marx involves a choice rather than a reconciliation; a choice between the primacy of "voluntarism" as in Swingewood's treatment or of "determinism" as in the treatments of Smelser and Jordan.

Voluntarism

In a text touching on a vast range of theoretical issues, Swingewood defines his position unequivocally: "Thus there is a clear link between the development of modern social theory and the works of Marx, between the 'degeneration' of Marxism at the end of the nineteenth century and the revitalisation of sociology in the work of Weber, Simmel and Schutz; and between 'voluntaristic' Marxism and 'voluntaristic' sociology. This book is an attempt to explore this relationship" (p. 9). In Marx's writings, Swingewood claims, lies buried a voluntarism containing many of the insights of the masters of sociology. His arguments in behalf of this claim are not convincing—relying more on dogmatic and cursory illumination than a sustained analysis of either Marx or modern social theory.

Swingewood takes voluntarism to its logical conclusion. Like Bottomore, he will have no part of any determinism, whether Hegelian evanescence or the inevitable crash of capitalism. Where Bottomore lampoons Marcuse for his "stubborn commitment to a subjective, arbitrary interpretation of history which is no longer connected either with a social movement or with a publicly accessible body of knowledge and criteria of validity by which

its assertions might be judged" (p. 46), Swingewood lambasts both Marcuse and Parsons for their different species of sociological fatalism. What is missing from their mechanical analyses, argues Swingewood, is the "dialectic" in which a contradictory movement *always* asserts itself. But, in rejecting one determinism, he immediately falls prey to another.

The dialectical movement, according to Swingewood, is as inevitable as it is ubiquitous. But what precisely is it? It is a method to penetrate "beneath the surface of particular phenomena and disclose its [sic] contradictory movement and structure" (p. 136), "a social analysis consisting of a constant shuttling between the parts and the whole, not simply in one direction but in both" (p. 44). Were Swingewood to develop such notions as "structure," "contradictory movement," "totality," or restrict himself to consistent usage, his analysis would make more progress. In practice, he calls upon the dialectic when confronting any significant antinomy, any apparent paradox. Whenever an important distinction is required, he smudges, blurs, and eliminates it by verbal fiat—introducing dialectics to foreclose prematurely any further discussion.

My objection is not to the use of the dialectic *per se*, but Swingewood's failure to specify its meaning. However, Swingewood is not alone in making up his mind prematurely about the dialectic. Thus, it is slightly surprising to read Smelser's comment, "He [Marx] aggressively embraced the Hegelian principle of dialectic" (p. xii), as if in serene oblivion of the decades of debate within the Marxist tradition on the specificity of the materialist dialectic. Confusion is only compounded when Jordan, in his introduction, writes: "Marx was a naturalist philosopher . . . and not a materialist. Still less was he a dialectical materialist" (p. 10)! Bottomore, who picks his words and concepts carefully, only refers to the dialectic once, when criticizing Gramsci for not specifying its meaning.

But Swingewood is not content to rely on just a spiritual contraceptive. As a final precaution against intellectual germination, Swingewood invokes the more concrete idea of class struggle. Laws of capitalism (what they are is left to the imagination) constitute the objective conditions for change, the potential of which is only realized in class struggle. But what is this? Struggles between classes or struggles which produce classes? What are classes? Are struggles reflected in conflict be-

tween different modes of production or within a single mode of production? What is struggle about, that is, what is the object of struggle? Is it the same for political, economic, and ideological class struggles? Are these different types of struggles or aspects of the same struggles? Are we to conceive of classes as carrying their own distinctive ideologies (in Poulantzas's graphic terms, as football players carry number plates on their backs), the "class-in-itself-class-for-itself" problematique of *Poverty of Philosophy*? If so, class struggles are struggles *between* different ideologies. Or are we to assert, with Gramsci, that classes are inserted into a dominant (hegemonic) ideology, the problematique of *The German Ideology* (the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class)? If so, then class struggles take place within the context defined by the hegemonic ideology. Above all, what determines class struggles—the form they take, the level of struggle and their development? Or are they spontaneous eruptions as unpredictable as earthquakes? Ever since Marx put pen to paper (and indeed before), these issues have been the subject of furious debate, but one wouldn't know it from Swingewood's treatment.

In his introduction to a selection of works by Marx, Jordan displays more sensitivity to these issues. He distinguishes between classes defined sociologically (as sets of places determined by relations to the means of production) and classes defined historically (as social and political forces—agents of change). Like Bottomore, but now in a specific context, Jordan doubts whether Marx ever reconciled these two notions. A Marxist theory of class must confront the problem and not indulge in Swingewood's obfuscation: "Class involved both the subjective factor of consciousness and the objective element of organization, bound together by the relationship to the means of production" (p. 139). Swingewood uncritically adopts the scheme of "class-in-itself-class-for-itself" with the merger conditional on political and ideological factors. He says, for example, "Class consciousness is compounded from the most diverse contradictions embracing the fetishism of commodities, nationalist sentiments, political reformism *and* class identification" (p. 133). However, outside the teleology of Lukács, which Swingewood emphatically rejects, the in-itself-for-itself problematique loses all meaning. By what criterion can we assert an a priori "class-in-itself"? Once we have left Lukács behind, the appearance of a class as a force is not a primordial given, but a conse-

quence, a combined effect of a set of objective structures (political, ideological, and economic) related to one another in ways that have to be explored.

Again, let me stress, I am not saying that class struggles are unimportant; on the contrary they are central to *any* Marxist theory. But classes and struggles do not appear by immaculate conception, either at random or from teleology; like everything else they have to be produced; they are organized and they affect conditions just as they are in turn affected by conditions—all of which require careful study.

Determinism

Marx had not one but two motors of history. In the *Communist Manifesto*, for example, Marx and Engels refer to history as the history of class struggles, while in *Capital* considerable weight is given to competition as a propellant of capitalist development. However, rather than posing the problem of the *relationship* between struggle, which governs relations *between* classes, and competition, which governs relations *within* classes, the authors tend to emphasize one or the other. As we have seen, Swingewood focuses on class struggle as the agent of revolutionary transformation and virtually ignores competition. By contrast Smelser emphasizes competition as the engine of capitalism. In his perspective, classes appear more as carriers of contradictions or laws; their emergence and struggle is conditioned by the development of capitalism. With some qualifications Jordan adopts a similar view: "According to this new conception, society is brought about by natural causes which originate with men but are subject to laws in the same sense as are other phenomena of nature, that is, regardless of what men intend or fail to do" (p. 12).

But what are these contradictions and laws? Where are they to be found? Which structures do they implicate? How do we know they exist? What meaning shall we attach to the concepts in the first place? The four writers take different if not always clearly defined positions. Drawing on an Hegelian idiom, Swingewood employs contradiction, negative and dialectic, in bewildering succession, while Jordan and Bottomore studiously avoid such concepts. Smelser confesses that he finds the dialectic confusing, though he is less perturbed by the concept of contradiction: "Marx's concept of contradiction rests on a certain *relationship* between the mode of production and relations of production" (p. xvi).

Swingewood and Jordan *also* regard this as a central contradiction or conflict examined by Marx. But what precisely is the contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production? Since capitalist relations of production are based on *private* ownership, while the development of the forces of production involves their *socialization* (the rise of the collective worker and the interdependence of productive activities), "contradiction" is conventionally assumed. But why?

At this point it becomes clear that failure to consider developments in Marxism renders obsolete parts of the analyses of Jordan, Smelser, and Swingewood. Whether we have read his works or not, we all have our own Marx—worker and capitalist, student and teacher, journalist and politician. Moreover, we frequently cling to our stereotype so tenaciously that we ignore or peremptorily dismiss the on-going, thriving tradition of Marxist science and scholarship. So, for example, few serious Marxists continue to regard the relationship between the forces of production and relations of production as a fundamental contradiction within capitalism. First, socialization of the ownership of the means of production has not brought changes anticipated by the elimination of a "fundamental" contradiction within capitalism. Nationalization of industry has been incorporated within capitalist relations of production. Despite the prominence given to planning and collective ownership, Bettelheim and Marglin have argued that the driving mechanisms within the political economy of the Soviet Union are similar to those found under advanced capitalism. Second, Braverman, Gorz, Marglin, and others have argued that the forces of production, far from being the dominant element of the principal contradiction, are themselves at least in part subordinated to the relations of production. More specifically, the instruments of production (such as the assembly line) and the division of labor (fractionalization, hierarchy, and so forth) constitute a means of reproducing and obscuring rather than undermining relations of ownership and exploitation. Their thesis dovetails with the views of Marcuse and Habermas that "technology" and "rationality" have been turned into a means of ideological domination within the framework of capitalist relations of production. In other words, the liberating potential embodied in the development of the forces of production is never realized. Far from being "contradictory" the

forces of production and the relations of production constitute a mutually reinforcing pair.

So what are the primary contradictions of capitalism? There are, of course, various post-Marx answers, from the realization crises of Luxemburg to the fiscal crisis of O'Connor. But restricting oneself to Marx's own writings, one can note the resurgence of interest in the "law of the falling rate of profit." Indeed, Smelser himself appears to find the *form* of the dynamics associated with this law as one of the more sociologically attractive parts of Marx's work. Bottomore, Jordan, and Swingewood pay little attention to the falling rate of profit. They refer to it only to reject it as empirically invalid or grounded on false assumptions. We shall return to issues of validity later; for the moment I am concerned with its theoretical significance.

As a result of competition and in order to survive, capitalists are compelled to accumulate profit. In so doing each capitalist also irrevocably contributes to a diminishing overall rate of profit. In other words capitalists are involved in a gigantic Prisoner's Dilemma Game where the interests of the *individual capitalist in his or her own survival* are bound into an inescapable conflict with the common interests of the entire bourgeoisie, that is, with the interests of the *capitalist class in the survival of capitalism*. Here, at last, we have a relatively clear notion of contradiction as a process which irreversibly undermines the requirements of its own reproduction and sows the seeds of its own destruction.

Structuralist Modification of Determinism

The structure of the economy continually propels capitalists into undermining the system as a whole and thereby defines, theoretically, a set of counter-tendencies inscribed in other structures (which we will call the state). The state must absorb the disruptive consequences if the system as a whole is to survive. The manner in which men and women must transform nature in order to live—the mode of production—implies a set of conditions which must exist if production is to continue to be organized in the same way. The structure of economic practices implies (1) a corresponding set of reproduction requirements performed (or not performed) by (a) a structure of political practices which reproduces (or transforms) social relations and (b) a structure of ideological practices which reproduces (or transforms) a specific

type of consciousness, and (2) a set of relations among these three structures. Under the feudal mode of production, the political is *dominant*, whereas under the capitalist mode of production the economic is *dominant*. In both cases the economic is *determinant*, its primacy residing in the fact that it *determines the relations among structures*; it establishes a totality of "structures in dominance," as Althusser says, based on the reproduction requirements of the particular mode of production.

We must take the argument one step further before returning to Smelser et al. Under what conditions will these dominant structures *actually* reproduce the characteristic relations of production? Under what conditions will the system break down? To answer this question, we must return to the conceptual level of class struggles but go beyond Swingewood's spontaneity and Smelser's reductionism. The *capacity* of the state (the political and ideological structures) to preserve the cohesion of the entire system or social formation depends on the level or intensity of economic class struggles. As Glynn and Sutcliffe, Gough, and others have suggested, the level and indeed the success of economic class struggles in Britain are making it increasingly difficult for the state to reproduce capitalist relations of production. Apart from the question of capacity there is the question of *orientation*—will the state even "attempt" to reproduce capitalist relations of production? This is contingent on the level of *political* class struggles, that is, struggles which have as their object the control of the state. In a situation of political class balance the state may move to undermine the dominant mode of production. The study of class struggle permits us to understand the actual *operation* of reproductive mechanisms.

However, these class struggles are themselves structured and organized. In any given conjuncture, economic class struggles are determined *within limits* by the form of economic relations; but these limits may themselves be modified as class struggle in turn affects (again within limits) the form of economic relations. A similar double limiting process takes place between political class struggles and the organization of the state. Then, there is also the problem of conceptualizing the relationship between political and economic class struggles themselves—a subject which excited a great deal of attention in the Marxist literature of the Second International. In summary, the mode of determina-

tion of class struggles operates on the basis of structurally defined limits which themselves may be shifted by the level of class struggle, and conceivably bring the system to the point of collapse. The development of capitalism, that is, the outcome of competition and struggle, is therefore *indeterminate but not arbitrary*. (Przeworski has recently proposed a theory of the relationship between crises, political competition, and economic class struggles.)

The State

Seeds of the above formulation can be found in Smelser's discussion of the state's capacity to "soften the contradictions" (p. xviii), that is, to preserve the system as a whole. Unfortunately he does not relate this to his interpretation of economic primacy or to the intervention of class struggles. But even such a rudimentary characterization of the functions of the state is more sophisticated than Jordan's conventional understanding (misunderstanding?) based on a quote (misquote?) from the *Communist Manifesto*. "The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" is frequently rendered "the state is the executive committee of the bourgeoisie." (Jordan, p. 56, does not make the exact citation, but he certainly adopts and therefore dismisses the instrumentalist view of the state based on his reading of the *Communist Manifesto*.) Moreover, the omission does make a difference.

First, if the state is to protect the *common* interests of the *entire* bourgeoisie, then clearly it cannot side with any one capitalist or group of capitalists in the competition among capitalists or groups of capitalists. That is, the state must be to some degree autonomous from all capitalists. A relative autonomy is inscribed in the very definition of its function. Second, what are the common interests of the entire bourgeoisie, if capitalists are always competing with one another? They can only be the preservation of the capitalist system, i.e., capitalist relations of production. These interests are immediately threatened when the state assumes an "absolute" autonomy, as in circumstances of class balance (*The 18th Brumaire*), or when the state becomes the instrument of a particular "power bloc" within the capitalist class (Watergate?). Far from being an instrument of an economically dominant class for the pursuit of narrow economic interests and the oppression of subordinate classes, the state as Poulantzas has pointed

out, is organized to present the interests of the capitalist class as the interests of all and to insert *all* agents of production (irrespective of their relationship to the means of production) into political and ideological activities as free and equal citizens. In so doing, the state necessarily grants concessions to the subordinate classes but such concessions, as Gramsci says, "cannot touch the essential." This perspective has, of course, been the subject of considerable debate, kindled by the work of Miliband and Poulantzas and elaborated by others such as O'Connor, Offe, and Mandel. Marxist theory of the state is now an arena of thriving discourse.

The Labor Theory of Value and Marxian Dynamics

A major problem with all these characterizations of the capitalist state is that they rest on an unstated (and unknown?) theory of the dynamics of the economy. I propose, therefore, to return briefly to the question of dynamics and in particular the validity of the falling rate of profit. For Jordan the issue is simple: "Since the consequences deriving from the theory of surplus value are disconfirmed by historical developments, the validity of the theory is doubtful and a radical modification or abandonment of it is imperative. . . . The fate of the theory of surplus value does not affect Marx's contribution to the sociology of capitalism" (p. 46). Smelser says much the same, "Many parts of Marx's synthesis—most notably the theory of value—have been discredited and are no longer taken seriously by committed Marxists" (p. xii).² Who, pray, are these "committed Marxists" who can so casually sweep away the foundation of the entire Marxian edifice? They are certainly not the contributors to *New Left Review*, *Monthly Review*, *Economy and Society*, or *Les Temps Modernes*! If Samuelson has to reconsider his position and devote serious attention to the labor theory of value (in connection with the recent "capital controversy" between Cambridge, England and Cambridge, United States), then perhaps the time has come for sociologists to acquaint

² Moreover, the authors do not specify what they understand to be the labor theory of value. Is it a theory of exploitation? A theory of the economy? A particular way of stating that the relations of production determine relations of exchange and distribution? For me it is the postulate that the socially necessary labor time embodied in a commodity bears a definite but complex relation to its price.

themselves with the real issues rather than offer outdated epitaphs. Following Sraffa's path-breaking rehabilitation of Ricardian economics and critique of marginalist economics, other British economists such as Dobb, Meek, and Morishima have injected new life into the labor theory of value. Furthermore, it is increasingly apparent that no other theory of value can account for the distribution of wealth under capitalism. To be sure, the labor theory of value has its problems, the most intransigent being the relationship of price and value—the so-called transformation problem. But even this is solvable in principle.

So what can we say about the falling rate of profit? First, the original formulae were presented in terms of value, whereas subsequent empirical invalidations have been in terms of price. Second, even if Marx's forecasts were wrong, it could be that his inferences were false rather than the assumptions embodied in the labor theory of value. The derivation of dynamics through the three volumes of *Capital* is based on primitive mathematics, using *ceteris paribus* arguments. A rewriting of *Capital*, with more sophisticated mathematics, is now required in order to discover which of Marx's inferences were logically sound and the additional ad hoc assumptions he was forced to make to come to his conclusions. Third, there are a wide range of counter-tendencies, such as reducing the cost of reproducing labor power, which off-set the falling rate of profit. In addition, competition, like struggle, is only determined within limits. It may be mitigated by the formation of coalitions, as in any Prisoner's Dilemma Game, that is through monopolies, but this by no means eliminates competition.

The destiny of the labor theory of value is not only crucial to the dynamics of capitalism and therefore to a theory of the state, but also to the Marxian notion of class. Debates are raging as to what constitutes productive labor; which workers produce surplus value (for example, Gough, Poulantzas, and O'Connor). If certain workers such as police do not produce surplus value can they still be exploited? Are janitors in government offices, schools, and factories members of the same class? Or does this depend on the conjuncture? These theoretical issues have been thrown into prominence by the feminist movement. Is housework productive labor (indirectly productive)? Are housewives exploited or merely oppressed? These are difficult problems and cannot be treated apart from the ideological struggles that contribute to their solution.

Marxism and Functionalism

So far, we have brought together a Marxian dynamics based on competition, Smelser's stabilizing institutions, and Swingewood's class struggles. We are now in a position to consider the relationship between Marxism and structural functionalism. Swingewood's criticisms of Parsons are important but predictable; "The voluntaristic social theory which Parsons announced in *The Structure of Social Action* turns out to be no more than cultural and psychological determinism" (p. 207). In coming to this conclusion Swingewood collapses three very different theoretical structures, developed at different stages in Parsons's career, into a single framework, as if Parsons never changed his mind. (Swingewood does much the same for Marx.) It is true that in the "mature" Parsons, there is little recognition of class struggle and consciousness, and the framework is above all ahistorical. But there are reasons for this. Whereas Marx *both* develops a set of abstract concepts (as in the preface and introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*—mode of production, forces of production, relations of production) *and* examines these concepts in their concrete historical form (*capitalist* mode of production), Parsons confines himself to the development of abstract or general concepts. Parsons has no criterion for periodizing history and never systematically develops a theory involving the concrete application of his abstract concepts, in the sense that Marx had a theory of capitalism. In this regard Smelser's own efforts to specify Parsons's concepts can be seen as retracing the steps of Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Lukács, Hilferding, Gramsci, Thompson, etc.

In his treatment of Marxism and functionalism, Smelser appears as a paragon of circumspection not only against the sniping of Swingewood but also against Parsons's recent dismissal of Marx as an ideologue and apostle of class struggle. (Parsons's Marx is a close kin of Swingewood's Marx.) Thus, Smelser invites Marx into the League of Functionalists. But he makes two provisos, first: "Marxism opting for the primacy of economic relations, functionalism opting for a principle of mutual interdependence of structures"; second: "Marxism giving more emphasis to the destructive impact of a single kind of contradiction, and functionalism, while acknowledging dysfunctions, tending to give more emphasis to the adjustive or reconstitutive processes" (p. xxi). Regarding the first qualification, there is obvious confusion. In writing of pri-

macy, Smelser fails to distinguish between "determination" and "dominance" (see previous discussion) and therefore never arrives at the mutual interdependence of structures which lies at the core of the Marxian social structure. A more interesting focus would have been to compare the *form* of interdependence inscribed in Balibar's "determination in the last instance" on the one hand and in Parsons's hierarchies of control and conditioning on the other.

Implicit in the second qualification is the view that Marx had a theory of social change, the absence of which makes structural functionalism atheoretical. For Parsons has no dynamics; he has no *theory* of social change. In *The Social System* he offers a global array of possible strains that appear in ad hoc, unpredictable, and largely unstructured ways. The social structure is conceived of as a medley of jostling forces in which only chaos can be discerned, but held together by the cement of value consensus. By contrast, Marx's entire theoretical effort is to search for an underlying dynamic which will explain the apparent anarchy. In Parsons's and Smelser's *Economy and Society* (chapter 5) both the source and the consequences of "strain" are not just indeterminate but also arbitrary. In his recent work, Parsons has at best emerged with a set of concepts (differentiation, value generalization, adaptive upgrading, and inclusion) which may be used to empirically describe social change. Why change takes place at all and why it assumes any particular form is not clear.

On one issue both Swingewood and Smelser agree; that neither Marxism nor functionalism can be reduced to simple "conflict" or "consensus" models of society. Yet in pointing to the commonality of the theoretical systems they obscure a fundamental difference, namely the nature of consensus. For Parsons, value consensus is somehow given and primordial, whereas for Marx, it is organized—a consequence rather than a prior condition. For Parsons the "non-contractual elements of contract" are given prior to exchange relations, whereas for Marx consent is a *result* of exchange. The elaboration of this Marxist perspective has been the great contribution of Gramsci—a point Bottomore overlooks in his hasty dismissal of Gramsci (p. 37).

A Marxist reconstruction of Parsons would introduce a structure of the cultural system involving some notion of dynamics, periodization, and possibly contradiction, as well as a totality of structures governed by the conditions for reproducing a specific "cultural

system." Habermas's combination of productive activities based on instrumental rationality and communicative interaction based on consensual norms moves some distance toward such a formulation. But, as Bottomore comments, Habermas, as a member of "the last generation of the Frankfurt School before its virtual dissolution at the end of the 1960s," has "lost any distinctive relation to Marxist theory" (p. 45). Again, our first hypothesis is upheld, namely a synthesis of "objective" and "subjective" components is impossible within the Marxist tradition.

For Marx or For Sociology?

In concluding, I wish to draw together my various references to the rapidly expanding Marxist literature, as it bears upon the viability of an autonomous Marxist tradition distinct from modern social theory. Whereas I have had space to consider only a fraction of current Marxist work in Europe and the United States, Jordan and Smelser have chosen to ignore all such contributions. In their view the major insights of Marx have already been incorporated into the body of sociology. For Jordan, Marx's analysis of the division of labor is one of his most distinctive contributions. For Smelser, what is sociologically valuable is to be found in Marx's "more concrete discussions of the composition, structure, and functioning of societies; and in his empirically informed—'middle range' if you will—analyses of the processes and mechanisms of change" (p. xxxvii). As pointed out earlier, Bottomore's outline of a "Marxist sociology" loses any distinctive relation to Marxist theory. In the light of Bottomore's immense contributions in bringing Marx and Marxism to sociology, it is strange to find him adopting such a negative view. All three are "for sociology."

Only Swingewood is "for Marx": "The task of Marxist social theory is to assimilate the strong side of non-Marxist thought and yet remain Marxist" (p. 227). As a final sentence, it may portend a future work, but in the present volume Swingewood consistently dissociates Marx from Weber, Durkheim, Schutz, and others. If indeed it is the voluntaristic components of sociology from which Swingewood is hoping to borrow, then he may well heed Bottomore's warning that in the merging of Marxist and non-Marxist "subjectivism," such as in phenomenology, "something distinctive has been lost" (p. 48). Where Swingewood sees the potential resurrection of Marxism, Bottomore sees its potential abdication.

One condition for the assimilation of non-Marxist thought, while remaining Marxist, is the definition of what is specific to Marxism, to its method, its theory, and its philosophy. Swingewood makes an attempt in his exposition of the dialectic and totality, but the result is confusing and unconvincing. While both Jordan and Smelser examine Marx the scientist, they are not interested in the distinctiveness of Marxian science in relation to other sciences or even other social sciences. Bottomore is more interested in this question. However, after inveighing against the dangers of dogmatism, he cavalierly dismisses as "an obscure body of thought" (p. 72) the school of French structuralists associated with Althusser, Balibar, Godelier, Poulantzas, and Therborn, and ignores such Italians as Della Volpe and his student Colletti. All these students of Marx are vigorously trying to establish the basis of a Marxist science—a true Marxist sociology.

With a secure epistemological and theoretical foundation, it will no longer be important (if it ever was) to rescue or defend Marx against his detractors—to claim, for example, on the basis of isolated citations from *Theories of Surplus Value* that Marx did indeed have a theory of the destruction and creation of places in the capitalist social structure (Swingewood, pp. 116–117). The analysis of the transformation of the occupational structure under capitalism is long overdue—but can not be done by saying that Marx knew about it all along. The man was human. He is now dead. He doesn't have to be saved. So long as we are true to a Marxist problematic, we can be more humble and less defensive about his achievements.

ON DISCOVERING DURKHEIM

Textes, by EMILE DURKHEIM. *Volume 1: Eléments d'une Théorie Sociale. Volume 2: Religion, Morale, Anomie. Volume 3: Fonctions Sociales et Institutions.* Presentation by Victor Karady. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1975. 512, 512, and 568 pp. No price listed.

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Durkheim buffs the world over—and they seem to be a growing legion—will rejoice at the publication of this three-volume set; this is undoubtedly one of the most important

publication events of the decade for sociologists having more than a passing interest in the figure who, after all, secured the foundations of modern sociology. Durkheim's fame, renown, even notoriety, essentially rest upon four major books, easily available in translation (*The Division of Labor, Suicide, The Rules, and The Elementary Forms*); several courses that he gave have posthumously been published as books, and for the most part are readily accessible also. But there is a much larger output of his writings, which while assuredly of lesser importance than the "big four" sociological symphonies he composed are nevertheless significant in a number of ways: as early drafts or sketches for the later, more polished, mature works; as preliminary and necessary scaffolding for Durkheim's sociological enterprise; as loci of debates he was engaging in with both academic and extra-academic audiences; and lastly, as personal documents which reveal something of the "inner man," whose outer self so totally identified with sociology that Durkheim the total man has yet to be discovered. Victor Karady, research associate of the French Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, has combed high and low to put together in these volumes writings of Durkheim which are not available in book form; left out are Durkheim's essays and extended book reviews which he published in *l'Année Sociologique*, because these have been available in a single volume, *Journal Sociologique*, by Jean Davignaud. The result is an outstanding labor of love and a real service to the profession, since it places at our disposal writings published in journals and annuals which at best only a handful of libraries and collections in the United States have; moreover, there are also unpublished items—such as letters—that have previously not appeared in print.

In *Volume 1* (which Karady has designated by the thematic title of *Elements of a Social Theory*), most of the writings deal with Durkheim's delineations of sociology as a discipline. These include the analytical differentiation of sociology from other social sciences, the relation of sociology to still other disciplines such as philosophy and history, and the state of sociology in France. An important section of this volume, chapter 3, is devoted to writings of Durkheim, done in his early formative period, which pertain to social science studies in Germany. Of particular interest are the two major articles that Durkheim published in *La Revue philosophique* in the 1880s following his study tour in Germany; one can see from these and other items the important