

Marxism, Philosophy and Science*

Michael Burawoy

**Engagement without science is blind;
Science without engagement is empty.**

As professional sociologists we suffer from a trained incapacity to reflect on who we are and what we are up to. These are subjects for the sociology of knowledge and the philosophy of science, and as such relegated to the margins of the discipline or, if possible, to other disciplines. They enter into our prefaces, our acknowledgements, our footnotes--anywhere but the main body of our texts. Or so we like to think. Occasionally a high priest will pass an edict on the meaning of our enterprise but it is not for public discussion. In short, self-reflection is a privilege accorded to the notables of our profession, for the rest of us it is a sign of scientific immaturity.

The *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* is to be congratulated for breaking the taboo on reflexivity. This symposium opens up disciplinary boundaries and challenges professional shibboleths. In such a short essay, I cannot do justice to all of the diverse and revealing perspectives brought together in this volume. My purpose is to reply to critics who drew attention to an imbalance in my original essay, namely its emphasis on engagement at the expense of science. To avoid replacing one-sided view with another, my response maps out the horizons of possible sociologies (Part I), defines the ground where I stand between those horizons (Part II), amplifies and illustrates that position (Part III), and defends it against actual and potential critics (Part IV).

I. The Horizons of Sociological Possibility

Sociologists exempt themselves from being the object of the very sociological examination they inflict upon others. We are given to believe there is something obscene and incestuous about the sociologist who studies what his or her own community is really up to. It is an act of betrayal. Accordingly, methodology, which should deal with what we do and why we do it, is reduced to technique--participant observation, survey analysis, archival work, experiments in social psychology and demographic procedures. Techniques are then evaluated for their bias, their distortion of reality. This restricted vision of methodology suppresses the *social relations* within which technique is carried out and the *diverse criteria of rationality* by which the product can be evaluated. But such suppression

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has consequences! Silencing the social conditions and the philosophical premises has the effect (intended or not) of presenting one particular conception of sociology as the only, the natural, the inevitable conception. Let me elaborate.

Why Philosophy?

Since sociologists don't hesitate to ask *others* who they are and what they are up to, the repression of self-interrogation is elitist and hypocritical. But more important it is self-serving. The definition of sociology as a profession rests on its claim to the monopoly of objective insight into the working of society. Since everyone is a sociologist, i.e. everyone has theories about their day to day life, this claim to privileged knowledge is always precarious--and the more precarious it has become, the more it has sought to emulate the hard sciences, particularly physics. In this regard the models of philosophers have defined what it means to be a true science. In the past they successfully colonized the less adored sciences with astoundingly unreal conceptions of the hard sciences. But the rise of historicist and relativist understandings of science have muddled the demarcation between science and non-science and thrown the philosophy of science into turmoil. While this does not affect the natural scientists, who couldn't care less what philosophers think they are up to, it does affect the social scientists whose legitimacy rests on following the reigning philosophical image of science. The more wide ranging the disputes within the philosophy of science, the more threatened sociology has become and, for the most part, the more determined its gatekeepers repress any discussion of its scientific status.

Rather than upholding a view of science as detached and objective, philosophy, therefore, debunks the pretensions of pure thought by revealing its premises and its interests. Philosophy reveals the range of possibilities of what we might be up to and therefore compels us to think about who we are. It lays the basis of a *sociology* of knowledge, an examination of the social conditions under which we choose and then carry out one of a variety of methodologies.

By opening Pandora's Box, philosophy threatens to bring down sociology's scientific scaffolding, subverting its claim to professional status. It threatens to let in those who otherwise would be shut out: varieties of feminism, Marxism, conservative as well as critical theory. On the other hand, holding down the lid only intensifies attacks on the bastions of the profession. As the embattled, and increasingly ignored, professional journals lose intellectual hegemony so the debates about who we are and what we are up to move into such journals as *Theory and Society*, *Feminist Studies*, *Critical Sociology* and, of course, *The Berkeley Journal of Sociology*. This symposium highlights the point. As Loïc Wacquant says, it would be nearly unthinkable in a professional journal. When do

you ever see a debate in the *American Sociological Review*, let alone one about the foundations of sociology!

The pre-history of my original exchange with Erik Wright speaks even more directly to the interests at stake. The debate grew out of a required course on methodology, which I taught to first year sociology graduate students at Berkeley in the Fall of 1986. When I was first asked to teach the course in 1984 I was only too aware of student hostility to its conventional form, which reduced methodology to a series of techniques and bracketed questions about their unstated assumptions. I developed an alternative, which directly posed the question: Is sociology a Science? It raised consternation in professional quarters of my department. What was objectionable was not my answer--about which no one cared--but daring to pose the question. When introducing methodology to graduate students it is illegitimate and unprofessional to ask who we are and what we are up to. Predictably, a number of my colleagues agitated against the course. It was pronounced inappropriate as an introduction to methodology, first, by an external review committee which deemed it "philosophy of science" and then by a departmental methods committee which deemed it "sociology of knowledge"!

Readers can judge for themselves the relevance of philosophy to methodology, since I summarize the course below. I trace its construction of possible sociologies in order to first provide the context of and clarify my differences with Wright, and second, set the stage for developing, illustrating and defending my own position in subsequent parts of the essay.

From Science to Hermeneutics and Back

To ask whether sociology is or should be a science requires an examination of the possible meanings of science. Since sociology represses examination of its scientificity we have no alternative but to turn to philosophy. Accordingly, the course began with Comte's hierarchy of knowledge and Ogburn's studied inductivism, moving to its philosophical representation in the logical positivism of Nagel and Hempel, from there to Popper's falsificationism, Feyerabend's epistemological anarchism, Polanyi's personal knowledge and finally to Kuhn's paradigms and Lakatos' research programs. We studied these models not as better or worse approximations to natural science but as they appeared, often in confused form, in the work of different sociologists. We saw also how each image of science emerged to patch problems in its predecessor but in doing so created new problems of its own. One can understand the sequence of these models as a movement from the search for *the scientific method* to an historical analysis of the *growth of scientific knowledge*, from an abstract philosophical account of the relationship

between theory and data to a concrete sociological examination of the scientific community.

Unpacking these six models of science served several purposes. It systematically questioned the assumptions and conventions of what it is to do "science." It laid out different ways of thinking about what we may be up to as social *scientists*. Just as important it shed light on those who reject the idea of sociology as a science. For they, no less than the defenders of sociology as a science, ignore the possible meanings of science. This became clear in the final part of the course when we examined the visions of "interpretive sociology."¹ It turns out that their "anti-science" *rhetoric* reduces science to its most primitive variant while their "interpretive" *practice* often relapses into that same denounced primitive science—only poorly executed because unexplicated. The abolition of the scientific dimension proves impossible, so we had better decide what sort of science we want.

Since this may be controversial let me explain. Although the great Max Weber himself had a very naive view of the natural sciences against which to formulate his own notion of the cultural sciences, nevertheless, like Kuhn, he recognized the necessary coexistence and interdependence of explanation and interpretation. On the one hand, the development of causal explanation requires observers to be clear about their own values as well as the values of the participants they study. On the other hand, an ethically responsible commitment to specific values requires a causal analysis of the consequences of their adoption. Such consequences, while not determining value commitment, certainly have to be taken into account. Value commitment and science are mutually indispensable.

In his celebrated book, *The Idea of Social Science*, Peter Winch argues against Weber's causal analysis by reducing it to a primitive Humean science of statistical correlations. Since human beings are not rocks but rule followers, their behavior cannot be reduced to "laws." Social scientists should limit themselves to revealing those rules. So, Winch concludes, we must strip ourselves of our biases and unravel the participant's perspective. Only a philosopher could make such an astoundingly unreal proposal. Which participant's perspective do we select—Brahmin or untouchable, worker or manager, doctor or patient, teacher or student? Since they are often mutually incompatible we have to choose and thus violate our original intent. What do we make of discrepancies between norms and behavior, between what people say they

1. In the middle part we discussed videotaped interviews with selected faculty, prepared by members of the seminar in groups of three. Here faculty seemed willing to wrestle with who they were and what they were about. To be sure some were more articulate and self-reflective than others. What was amazing was their diversity—a diversity that had been largely eclipsed by disciplinary exigencies.

do and what they actually do? What happens when those we study change their mind over time as to what they believe, the rules they follow? Which self-understanding do we adopt? To deny these questions is to deny the very enterprise of sociology, the rules and norms that identify *us*. Complexity of human life is what we seek to unravel. And this project calls for causal explanations.

Moreover, can we ever strip ourselves of our prejudices without resigning our role as sociologists? When we come back from the field, having studied the participants' view, don't we write for other sociologists in a language of our own? Doesn't that distort the participant's perspective? To abolish this enterprise altogether would be tantamount to committing suicide as philosophers, not just as sociologists. So the next logical move in interpretive sociology, represented in our course by Paul Rabinow's *Reflections on Field Work in Morocco*, takes our prejudices as a point of departure and regards social research as a process of recognizing them through interaction with "Other." We thus enter into dialogue with those we study to further mutual self-understanding. Neither perspective prevails over the other, and the goal is to reach a higher ground, although more usually we retreat into our respective worlds. Even if we confine our attention to formulating "alternatives," aren't we still concerned with their feasibility and their viability, their conditions of possibility? Don't we have to make and evaluate causal claims?

In any event, what sort of dialogue is this which Rabinow recommends? A dialogue among equals? As sociologists we do in the final analysis produce knowledge, define what is important, what is normal, and reveal about others what we wouldn't reveal about ourselves. Social research, insofar as it is not contested by those who are its subjects, presupposes a relationship of domination. In *Discipline and Punish* Michel Foucault takes this to an extreme. Social science is irrevocably an exercise of power. Once more we are at impasse: sociological knowledge is not just impossible it is immoral. Should we simply abdicate the political terrain that defines the field of sociology? Is it better to let social science exercise its rule than be tainted ourselves? Is there no emancipatory knowledge? And if so why did Foucault write about asylums, prisons, and sexuality? How does he know that all knowledge is power? Isn't that after all a substantive causal claim about *effects* of knowledge?

Whichever way we turn we cannot escape the scientific dimension. The humanist alternative to science proves to be internally contradictory: it claims to have freed itself from causal explanation but each time causal explanation rears its head. As Habermas reminds us in *Knowledge and Human Interests*, social scientists have an irreducible interest in control as well as in understanding. The two must coexist. If we are to undertake

the critique of society we cannot substitute the hermeneutic for the scientific dimension, what I call the post-modernist strategy, but equally we cannot eclipse the hermeneutic component--the positivist strategy.

Wright versus Bellah

Against this background students evaluated either Robert Bellah et al's *Habits of the Heart* or Erik Wright's *Classes*. They were chosen as examples of the repression of the scientific dimension and of the hermeneutic dimension respectively. Since both books study the American middle class and both base their analysis on interviews, their divergent methodologies are thrown into relief.

Those who wrote on *Classes* found Wright's rigor, care and technical self-consciousness as constraining as it was impressive. The essays expressed a profound unease with Wright's clinical dissection of class categories, his measures of class consciousness and his adjudication between competing theories. Students called for an interpretive turn that would locate his work in its historical context, for an engagement with the world that was more than the multiplication of categories and the construction of abstract coherence. Surely Marxism went beyond a merely contemplative relation to the world. Ironically, Bellah et al. made such an active engagement central to their enterprise of turning sociology into public philosophy. In this case, students called for a scientific turn, for greater attention to justifying claims about the nature of American society, its traditions and the corrosive effect of individualism. They found *Habits of the Heart* marred by methodological inconsistency, ad hoc arguments, undefended causal claims and tendentious interpretations of data. The simplistic critique of social science disguised poor social science. Those essays would have provided a veritable feast for our conventional methodologist.

In sum, the essays seemed to be arguing that neither the scientific nor the hermeneutic dimension can be repressed or isolated. Just as the interrogation of interpretive sociology calls forth science, a careful examination of the meaning of science leads toward interpretive sociology. Students had tried to unearth the political and philosophical premises buried in *Classes* but with limited success. So they turned their essays into pointed questions which became the basis for Wright's reflections in the *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*. When he then sent me a draft of his "reflections" I was delighted and dismayed: delighted because as ever he was so clear and honest, dismayed because he seemed not only to have retreated behind his computer terminal but had then set about justifying it. He defended a spectator theory of science. Engagement with the world one studies is inimical to its comprehension: science and revolution were unhappy bedfellows. Science requires skepticism and objectivity while revolution requires the opposite.

commitment and involvement. This seemed to me to be a thinly veiled rationalization of academic detachment and so I began my reply.

Critique and Anti-Critique

I argued that Wright missed equally the scientific moment of revolution and the revolutionary moment of science. Just as revolution calls for a willingness to change strategy in the light of an accurate reconnaissance of the balance of social forces, so the development of scientific understanding comes through *commitment* to a research program and *engagement* with the world one is studying. I claimed that Wright had no way of verifying the underlying mechanisms he proposed and that all knowledge was irrevocably the product of specific engagements with those one studies, the survey no less than the participant observation study. Where he regarded the inescapable relationship between participant and observer--what I have called the *hermeneutic* dimension--as a source of distortion or bias, I regarded it as the condition for the very possibility of sociological knowledge. Thus, the polemical context of our debate led me to focus on this hermeneutic dimension at the expense of the *scientific* dimension, that is, the commitment to a research program as an equally necessary part of the advancement of knowledge.

Not surprisingly, therefore, a number of my critics accuse me of collapsing theory and practice, of sliding into relativism and irrationalism. In this essay my purpose is to respond to these criticisms, particularly those of Ümit Yalcin, by specifying the relative autonomy of science. I will argue that on the one side, engagement of a particular kind is a *condition* and not a definition or a substitute for the advance of knowledge. *Without engagement, science is empty*. On the other side, engagement has to be *disciplined* by a steadfast commitment to the development of a research program. *Without science, engagement is blind*. In other words, the hermeneutic and scientific dimensions are orthogonal and interdependent.

How do those who accuse me of conflating theory and practice propose to give theory its autonomy? The mischievous Arthur Stinchcombe defends conventional science but with an unconventional strategy. He turns my argument inside out: instead of reducing all research to its context of production he reinterprets my participant observation studies as a species of survey analysis: instead of Wright, it is now "history" that poses questions to people. History's questions have the advantage of contextual specificity and relevance whereas Wright's questions have the advantage of comparability across contexts. In this way he brings us back to the debate over the introductory methodology course, evaluating techniques rather than methodology.

Others are simply vague. Dick Walker writes that "better means truer, in the sense of explaining the world more fully or deeply" (p. 123). He repeats this formula throughout his friendly critique as if it were obvious when one theory is deeper or broader than another theory. How would he demonstrate that Marxism is "truer" than neo-classical economics or Weberian theory? Ben Agger is even more elusive. He calls on us to suspend exegesis and to disavow what he calls propositional Marxism. Instead he wants us to develop "empirical theory--theory that addresses the world" which helps us in "cracking the codes of bourgeois mystification" (p. 203). Although my critics accuse me of not granting autonomy to theory, in their own accounts that autonomy is left unexplicated. Let me see if I can do any better.

II. Marxism as a Historical Phenomenon

As must be already clear, I wholeheartedly endorse Yalcin's appeal to social scientists that they learn from philosophy. But I in turn would ask philosophers of social science to pay attention to what social scientists actually do. Philosophy of social science without sociology of social science is hollow. As should become apparent, this is a problem with some of Yalcin's criticisms--careful, detailed and sustained though they are. He takes me to task for (1) relegating questions of truth and reality to the problem of changing the world in the way one desires, (2) being inconsistent on the question of commensurability of theories, (3) denying criteria for adjudication among commensurable theories and (4) rejecting the thesis of verisimilitude and (5) providing no evidence that theories are prisms which construct rather than spotlights which select what we observe. I will respond to each point in turn, and in the process spell out my view of Marxism.

Relativism and Rationality

For me Marxism is an *historical phenomenon*. It is a sequence of theories, built on a *hard core* of premises. The exact composition and arrangement of the hard core changes over time but we can think of it as a family of elements from which Marxists draw. The contents of any such core is subject to debate but let me tentatively propose the following: (1) an anthropology, according to which human beings have a potential to develop rich and varied talents, including the practical capacity to creatively make things and the moral capacity to treat others as ends; (2) a politics based on the possibility of a society known as communism where individual creativity will be realized through association with others; (3) an epistemology which regards knowledge as rooted in and reflecting the social relations through which the material world is transformed; (4) a periodization of history based on modes of producing the material means of existence, each "mode" being considered from the point of view of its capacity to transform nature (forces of production)

and its property relations (relations of production which also define class relations); and finally, (5) a metatheory of social change based on the internal dynamics distinctive to each mode of production and on class struggle which propels the transition from one mode of production to another. Communism is a classless society where collective ownership of the means of production not only liberates individuals but, for the first time, allows history to be made consciously. There is a common thread which binds these elements together, namely the emphasis on transformative activities which are potentially creative and social relations which are potentially moral. Nevertheless, we can distinguish the political and philosophical premises (1,2,3) from the body of theory with its axioms (4) and its empirical claims (5).

According to the "procedures" we call the *negative heuristic* of a research program, the hard core is defended at all costs. Its theoretical components, in particular, are defended against apparent refutations by the development of belts of auxiliary theories. The *positive heuristic* contains models and exemplars for constructing theories and a strategy for deciding which anomalies are the most important. We can think of Marx's *Capital* as one model and the *Eighteenth Brumaire* and *Class Struggles in France* as providing another model. The Marxist research program develops in response to history's refutations of its core theory. German Marxism can be understood as a response to the capacity of capitalism to absorb crises and mollify class struggle. Perhaps the most important advance made by German Marxism, before the aborted revolution of 1919, lay in the constellation of theories about democracy and its relationship to capitalism. Russian Marxism, on the other hand, addressed the anomaly of a rising radical working class within an economically backward country. It extended Marx's analysis of capitalism to the international arena in Trotsky's theory of combined and uneven development and in Lenin's theory of imperialism. Lenin also transformed Marxist theories of the party and the state, spelling out more clearly than ever before their role in the transition to socialism. Western Marxism responded to the defeat of the working class and later to the failure of socialism by reconstructing the Marxist core as well as developing new theories of subjectivity and ideology (Lukacs, Frankfurt School and Gramsci). Finally, Third World Marxism returned to the Russian concern with the uneven character of capitalist development and its implications for politics. These, one might say, are Marxism's *progressive* branches but there are also *degenerate* branches, most notably Soviet Marxism which, as a ruling ideology, suppressed anomalies or dealt with them in an ad hoc manner.

In this view, Marxism is a body of scientific theory built on a moral, political and philosophical base. I choose to be a Marxist rather than a neo-classical economist (or a rational choice theorist or a Durkheimian) first, because of Marxism's emancipatory project and second, because of

the progressive development of its theories. In principle, I might surrender Marxism if its theories degenerate or are uncoupled from the hard core *and* there is a more "progressive" alternative whose hard core is as attractive as Marxism's. In practice to discriminate between research programs on the basis of their overall "degeneracy" proves to be so difficult that I can't imagine this as the sole reason for abandoning my allegiance. So it comes down to this: I would forsake Marxism if I found its moral or political premises unacceptable.² Although abandoning Marxism cannot be reduced to a scientific process of adjudication, that is not to say it is either arbitrary or irrational. So yes, I do relegate truth to emancipation but I am none the less interested in truth. Let me say more about this truth.

Incommensurability

Transcendental or metaphysical realists, such as Wright, believe there are underlying mechanisms which both explain the phenomenal world and in principle can be known. The power of his theory is measured by its capacity to explain as wide a range of phenomena as possible. For him *Marxism is class analysis*. Its superiority lies in the capacity of class to explain the general trajectory of history. His task has been to discover that conceptualization of class, subject to certain programmatic constraints, which best explains the world. Like Parsons' use of the AGIL scheme, Wright recognizes few restrictions on what he can explain. It can be used as well to explain income distribution, attitudes, or voting. It can be made to compete with Goldthorpe's theory of class, with human capital theory, with status attainment theory, with Bell's post-industrial thesis, with Poulantzas' theory of the new middle class. He is happy to set up his own theory to compete with any contender. The champion theory is the one that is victorious in the greatest number of bouts, and

2. This is a very abstract presentation of the case. To be sociologically honest I would have to say that Marxism defines so much of my life--political, social, personal as well as intellectual--that it is difficult to contemplate defection. Participation in an intellectual tradition as rich and complex as Marxism requires such a high investment that, other things being equal, the likelihood of transferring allegiance falls over time. For an earlier generation of Marxists, other things were never equal. Their allegiance was to an institution, to History, to a particular line or to immediate salvation on earth. They were, therefore, vulnerable to the persistent and shattering violation of their fantasies by the practice of Communist Parties, expressed in such enormous tragedies as Kronstadt, the liquidation of the Soviet peasantry, the purges and show trials of the 1930s, the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939, the repression of the Hungarian revolt in 1956, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the declaration of martial law in Poland in 1981, and, as I write, the massacre of students and civilians in Beijing. These, as well as other atrocities, became the occasion for intellectuals to abandon Communism which they identified, together with Marxism, as "the illusion of the epoch." When my generation adopted Marxism it was with fewer illusions and fewer attachments. Standing outside the Communist Party, our commitment was usually less fanatical and the exodus less dramatic. Marxists were more likely to become post-Marxists rather than ex-Marxists or anti-Marxists.

in relation to the greatest variety of dependent variables. There is no question of incommensurability. Marxism is an all purpose tool.

My own position, as I argued in the original essay, is very different. I am not interested in whether Marxism is better able to explain "the world," explain this or that piece of legislation, voting pattern, income distribution, or array of attitudes. Marxism poses a set of questions and offers some tentative answers which are revised in the light of anomalies, that is in the light of discrepancies between the answers and the world we inhabit. These include, in particular, the defeat of the Western working class, the durability of capitalism and the failure of socialism to realize its promise. *With respect to these anomalies* I do indeed undertake adjudication, that is decide which of a possible set of auxiliary theories best explain them. Adjudication takes place, therefore, among solutions to specific puzzles *within* research programs. In this perspective it does not take place *between* research programs.

Where Wright obsesses about the independent variable and is relatively cavalier about the dependent variable, I obsess about the dependent variable, about the abiding anomalies of Marxism. He is competing with other theories whereas I believe the battle is with reality. Now who is the realist?

Adjudication

In my commentary on Wright's triumph over Poulantzas I argued that Poulantzas could always invoke some additional mechanism to turn the tables on Wright. Yalcin rightly points out, just because we can always invoke some auxiliary hypothesis to save a theory that does not mean that all auxiliary hypotheses are equal. Indeed, some increase the empirical content of the research program and some reduce it. For example, limiting the scope or allowing exceptions to our research program reduces its empirical content.

I would invoke the following criteria to evaluate an auxiliary hypothesis created to deal with an anomaly. First, the hypotheses should be consistent with the assumptions of the theory they seek to defend. Second, the combination of the new hypothesis and the old theory should explain everything that the latter explained without the new hypothesis. Third, they should explain the anomaly. Fourth, it should be more than a patching operation, the auxiliary hypotheses should lead to new anticipations, new facts. Fifth, some of these new facts should be corroborated. These very stringent criteria represent the ideal solution. They can be and often are loosened.

Let me illustrate with an example from my own work. For the last five years I have been trying to understand why the first working class

revolution took place in a state socialist society (rather than advanced capitalism), why it was welded together by religious, nationalist and above all anti-Marxist ideology, and why it nevertheless pursued a project that was clearly socialist. In brief, why did Solidarity appear in state socialism rather than advanced capitalism and why in Poland rather than another state socialist country, such as Hungary? There are, of course many possible answers. One argues that the specific history of Poland--oppression by Prussia and Russia and the historic role of intellectuals and the Church in resistance movements--accounts for Solidarity. Another argues that Solidarity is an expression of a rebellion of civil society against the state, found equally in the West and the East. I would be hard pressed to fit either of these theories into the Marxist research program which would stress Solidarity's working class base and its relation to the political economy of state socialism. So from the standpoint of Marxism these two theories are indeed ad hoc.

Within Marxism one set of theories argues that Soviet societies are state capitalist and that Solidarity is but the expression of the inevitable formation of a revolutionary working class. These theories have little to say about why state capitalism rather than capitalism, why Poland rather than Hungary. Another set of Marxist theories regards the emerging class structure of Soviet societies as polarized between a bureaucratic elite or a rising class of intellectuals and workers. This perspective explicitly denies the revolutionary potential of workers without the leadership of intellectuals. Solidarity remains an anomaly. My own theory returns to the specific way production in state socialism engenders a working class critique of state socialism for failing to live up to its socialist ideals. This radical class consciousness gives rise to class mobilization when channels for individual mobility are blocked and there exist organizations around which working class solidarity develops. This view predicts that Solidarity movements could develop increasingly in Hungary with the development of political parties and falling opportunities for individual advancement. In advanced capitalist countries we are less and less likely to find working class movements than social movements whose base lies outside production and whose critique is of democracy for failing to live up to its ideals.

This example illustrates what it means to adjudicate within a research program. It involves a commitment to a core, in particular the primacy of production, which is defended through the thematization of a new concept--regime of production--which mediates between labor process and class formation to explain the differential trajectories of the working class in the East and the West. It reconstructs Marx's theory of the coincidence of tendencies toward collapse and class struggle in capitalism and argues that it is more applicable to state socialism. It anticipates the development of working class movements for socialism wherever civil society opens up spaces for working class organization.

Verisimilitude

The thesis of verisimilitude argues that we can arrange theories according to their approximation to the truth, in Wright's case to underlying mechanisms. The methodology of research programs does not embrace such a copy theory of truth. The succession of theories that make up the research program are not to be understood as an ever closer approximation to some underlying reality. It is quite possible that a new theory T_2 is closer to reality than an older theory T_1 in the sense of explaining more, but that T_2 is not progressive with respect to T_1 in the sense of generating corroborated new facts. For example, it is quite possible that Wright's theory of the middle class explains more of the variance in each of a wide range of "dependent variables" than Poulantzas' but that the latter is more successful in predicting new and unexpected events.

Here lies the relevance of the phenomenon of barking up the wrong tree. According to Yalcin so long as Wright does better than say Goldthorpe, that is explain more of the variance in a set of dependent variables, that's all that matters. The trouble is that both Wright and Goldthorpe may be scrambling around in the foothills, thinking that there lie the highest peaks, oblivious to the mountain range ahead because it is enshrouded in cloud. So long as they adopt a contemplative relation to the world they can continue with their unreal explorations but if they are concerned with changing the world--this is a recipe for disaster. The way to evaluate our theories is to put them to the test, forcing them to make predictions and repairing them when they are wrong. We cannot afford to keep on barking up the wrong tree.

The development of the research program, depends on predictive success. This criterion is explicitly repudiated by many realists. On the one hand, empirical realists of the logical positivist school reduce prediction to explanation. Explaining what we know and predicting what we don't know are logically indistinguishable. On the other hand, transcendental realists, such as Wright and Bhaskar, deny the possibility of prediction in the social sciences because we are dealing with a multiplicity of causes in an open system.

I simply don't understand how a Marxist can abandon prediction. A research program that is concerned with changing the world and not just spectating must be concerned with the consequences of interventions into that world. To deny the importance of prediction is to reject the hard core of Marxism. What made Marx, Engels, Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky, and Gramsci central figures in the Marxist tradition was their abilities to use Marxism to predict outcomes of immediate strategy and to prophesy the contours of the future. Without prediction we have only

only a passive, contemplative relation to the world around us. To be sure we may often be wrong but that only creates anomalies which propel the research program forward. We are compelled to ask why our anticipations were wrong and to fashion a theory more in touch with the world we study.

Distortion

Yalcin says that I provide no evidence that theories construct facts rather than select from among them. Within the philosophy of science this is a hotly debated issue but in the practice of sociology it plays second fiddle to the prior problem of measurement--that the instruments of intervention shape the world we measure, albeit within limits. Wright knows that his data is the effect of the "conditions of observation" as well as of the "underlying mechanisms" he seeks to discover. If in principle he recognizes this problem, in practice he suppresses it and *assumes* that his results are meaningful.

Unable to separate out reality from distortion Wright processes his data as if there were no distortion. Whereas he ignores the context of the production of knowledge, I focus on it as the very possibility of comprehending the world we inhabit. Far from blocking access to reality the interaction between participant and observer is a lifeline to reality. As I explained in my original critique, I try to dismantle the barriers between researcher and researched--barriers erected in the name of "objectivity" and professional "neutrality." Engagement with those one studies avoids the self-referential pursuit of abstract truth. Given a commitment to a particular research program, such engagement decides which anomalies to pursue as well as which solutions are meaningful. It continually puts one's analysis to the test. Science without engaging the participants is empty.

III. The Case of Revisionism and Revolution in German Marxism

Imre Lakatos would have a fit if he saw what I have done with his methodology of scientific research programs. In crucial respects I have violated all he stood for. He emphatically rejected Kuhn's conception of scientific revolution in which scientists shift from one paradigm to another according to "extra-scientific" considerations. Lakatos sought to provide scientific criteria for abandoning one research program for another but without invoking a correspondence theory of truth. He claimed that *progressive* research programs, whose belts of theory responded to anomalies by leaping ahead to successfully predict new facts, would displace *degenerating* research programs which always lagged behind the facts. Lakatos never satisfactorily responded to his critics who argued that such a supra-program rationality fell short both as prescription and as description. On the one hand apparently degenerate programs can

and do make surprising comebacks with new belts of progressive theory. On the other hand, although one might surmise that powerful heuristics are more likely to generate progressive problem shifts, this remains a matter of dispute. One can only evaluate the success of a research program in the light of its past record which offers no guarantee as to its future trajectory. I, therefore, consider as extra-scientific but not irrational the choice of research programs and the switch from one to another.

Second, rather than distinguish between progressive and degenerate research programs I am more interested in comparing progressive with degenerate branches *within* a research program. Here I reformulate Lakatos' distinction between "internal" and "external" history. Internal history refers to the unfolding logic of discovery which is evaluated in terms of conformity to the methodology of research programs while external history is invoked to explain deviations from a progressive program. If science develops according to a progressive program then, according to Lakatos, scientists are being "rational" and nothing needs to be explained. But if the internal history of science deviates from such rationality then we can draw on extra-scientific factors to explain its particular trajectory. In my view "external" factors operate not just in relationship to degenerate but also in relation to progressive programs. The social scientific process is inescapably and simultaneously hermeneutic, and the problem is to understand the form of relationship between participant and observer that is conducive to progressive as opposed to degenerating science.

Third, Lakatos presents a very static picture of a research program's hard core and positive heuristic. In my view the core is made up of a family of elements. Particular branches of a research program may leave out some elements and include others as well as recompose the relationship among them. Although the core may change over time, at any one time its composition should be inviolate and subject to consensus, at least within a given branch of the program. Equally, the positive heuristic, which contains models and guides to theory construction, does not appear ready made but develops over time as successes point to new ways of digesting anomalies.

Fourth, Lakatos, like Popper and Polanyi before him, used his theory of research programs to damn Marxism's claims to science. Specifically he designated Marxism as a pseudo-science with a degenerating research program.

Has, for instance, Marxism ever predicted a stunning novel fact successfully? Never! It has some famous unsuccessful predictions. It predicted the absolute impoverishment of the working class. It predicted that the first socialist revolution would take place in the industrially most developed society. It predicted that socialist society would be free of revolutions. It predicted that there will be no conflict of interests between socialist countries. Thus the early predictions of Marxism were bold and stunning but they failed. Marxists explained all their failures: they explained the rising living standards of the working class by devising a theory of imperialism; they even explained why the first socialist revolution occurred in industrially backward Russia. They 'explained' Berlin 1953, Budapest, 1956, Prague, 1968. They 'explained' the Russian-Chinese conflict. But their auxiliary hypotheses were all cooked up after the event to protect Marxian theory from the facts. The Newtonian programme led to novel facts; the Marxian lagged behind the facts and has been running fast to catch up with them.³

Failing to examine the actual history of Marxism, Lakatos disregards Marxism's successes, for example: Marx's prediction that competitive capitalism could not survive and his view of capitalist democracy as a precarious institution; Trotsky's anticipation in 1906 of the Russian revolution and its denouement; Lenin's theory of the way imperialism would incorporate fractions of the working class in advanced capitalist countries while generating anti-colonial struggles in the periphery; his anticipation of the bureaucratization of socialism; Luxemburg's anticipation in 1915 of the rise of fascism in Germany; Kautsky's anticipation of a period of "ultra imperialism;" Gramsci's prophecy that the frontal assault on the state was no longer viable and had to be replaced by war of maneuver. What research program in the social sciences comes anywhere near such a record of success?

Like so many ex-communists Lakatos reduces Marxism to its most degenerate branch, namely Stalinism. Ex-communists perform an important service in not letting Marxists forget about the darker side of the dialectic, the atrocities committed in the name of Marxist "science." But to understand the nature of Marxism and not just "communism," the Stalin school of falsification has to be compared with a progressive branch of Marxism. To this end I will consider the revisionist debate within German Marxism.

3. Lakatos, *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 5-6. Equally unenlightened statements can be found in the work of his disciple, John Worrall. See, for example, "The Ways in Which the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes Improves on Popper's Methodology." Pp. 55-7 in Gerard Radnitzky and Gunnar Andersson (eds.), *Progress and Rationality in Science* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1978).

Bernstein: Revising the core

In 1895 Engels wrote what proved to be his political testament. The changing political scene--the strengthening of the repressive machinery of the state and the extension of suffrage--called for new *tactics* for socialist parties. He and Marx were wrong to see the socialist revolution as a frontal assault on the state carried out by a minority of the population. Rather, Engels argued, socialist parties should use elections to measure their strength and to propagate socialist ideas. By virtue of the inherent dynamics of capitalism, the working class will continue to increase in size and so the forward march toward socialism was unstoppable. History was on the side of socialism.

No sooner had Engels been buried than his erstwhile disciple Eduard Bernstein began calling for a much more thorough overhaul of Marxist *theory*. He argued that the premises of Marxism were lagging behind the practice of the social democrats who were daily becoming more reformist, as trade unions expanded and the popular classes made gains within capitalism. Thus began the famous revisionist debate which continues to divide socialists to this day. Rosa Luxemburg defended Marxist premises and called for a change in political *practice*--a return to revolutionary strategy. Karl Kautsky stood on the disappearing middle ground, endorsing both theoretical orthodoxy and reformist practice, putting off revolution into an ever more distant future.

Both sides of the debate had to confront two sets of anomalies in the Marxian scheme--anomalies presented by German society which Bernstein would formulate most clearly. The first set concerned the thesis of capitalism's tendency toward *self-destruction* through the working out of the laws of accumulation and the falling rate of profit. The availability of credit, the formation of employers' organization and the expansion of middle-sized enterprises counteracted the anarchy of the market, leading to the diminution rather than deepening of crises. The second set of anomalies queried the tendency toward *class polarization*. The expansion of the number of shareholders, the growing strength of trade unions, the development of intermediary strata undermined class struggle.

To this day Marxism has had difficulty in digesting these two challenges to its premises. Bernstein's revisionist strategy was to change the core in a dramatic manner so that it fit better with the reformism of the Social Democratic Party. He redefined socialism as equalizing patterns of consumption achieved through the consummation of liberal democracy. Gone was the idea of communism in which each would be able to develop his or her varied talents through association with others. He replaced the law of concentration and centralization of capital--the one Marxian law that history has so far upheld--with the ineluctable extension of democracy into all arenas of society. He assumed that such

an expansion of political equality would erode social inequalities. In the realm of theory the future becomes a projection of immediate empirical trends and in the realm of politics the "ultimate aim of socialism is nothing, but the movement is everything."

Luxemburg: Defending the core

When events fly in the face of core premises one can either revise the core (Bernstein) or one can hope the anomalies will disappear of their own accord (Kautsky) or one can protect the core by building a new belt of theory that absorbs the anomalies. Luxemburg sought to do the latter. She recognized with Bernstein that capitalism had indeed entered a new period which neither Marx nor Engels had fully anticipated. In her famous essays published under the title *Reform or Revolution* she tries to refute Bernstein's rejection of Marxist premises by reinterpreting the anomalies.

First, Bernstein's advocacy of the just redistribution of wealth brought about through reform removes the question of socialism from the domain of production to the domain of relations of fortune, between rich and poor. He fails to recognize that capitalist relations of production and not the restricted character of political democracy set the limits on redistribution. Class domination does not rest on rights but on real economic relations which reproduce themselves of themselves. The expansion of trade unions does not bring about socialism but keeps capitalism from forcing wages below the minimum necessary for survival. Socialism comes only with the abolition of the capital/labor relationship. Second, cartels and credit as well as small scale enterprises help the *individual* capitalist to survive. But Bernstein doesn't address the survival of capitalism conceived of as an economic *system*. Luxemburg argues that these modes of individual adaptation act as lubricants and thereby generate ever deeper economic crises, although only much later will she elaborate exactly how this will happen. Third, Bernstein's faith in the ineluctable expansion of democracy within capitalism is unfounded. Capitalist democracy is a much more fragile and contradictory order than he appreciates. Here Luxemburg defends Marx's view that capitalist democracy is both an obstacle to and the only possibility of socialism. When the capitalist class finds democracy threatening they will destroy it.

But to argue against Bernstein involves more than the recitation of the homilies of the core, namely that, despite appearances, capitalism is sowing the seeds of its own destruction, the class structure is polarizing between capital and labor, and reforms cannot transform capitalism into socialism. Affirmation of the core without generating new belts of theory was Kautsky's strategy of dealing with anomalies. He assumed they would simply evaporate in time. Luxemburg, on the other hand, met the

Bernsteinian challenge head on by rewriting large chunks of Marxist theory.

In *The Accumulation of Capital*, published in 1913, she developed her own theory of the limits of capitalism which recast the anomalies to which Bernstein had earlier drawn attention. She reexamined Marx's analysis of the extended reproduction of capitalism, revealing its inner contradiction which compelled capital to search for new markets. Out of this she developed her theory of colonialism--the relentless pressure of capital to undertake primitive accumulation in all areas of the globe. How different was Bernstein's view which endorsed colonialism as in the German national interest, devoid of any contradictory or destructive tendencies. According to Luxemburg, when the globe had been conquered by imperialist orders with no new regions to plunder, capitalism would engender militarism as imperial nations embarked on wars against each other. However, if the degeneration of capitalism was inevitable, socialism was not. Luxemburg saw two possible trajectories beyond capitalism: socialism or barbarism. The preparedness and organization of the working class would determine which outcome prevailed. Her theory of the state and of class struggle were shaped by this concern.

Bernstein was as blind to the negative aspects of bourgeois democracy as he was to the negative features of colonialism. Luxemburg's theory of the capitalist state thematized its inner contradictions. Capitalist democracy was democratic in form but capitalist in content. It thus protected capitalist relations of production at the same time as it provided the conditions for the deepening of class struggle. She endorsed democracy, no matter how limited and with all its contradictions, as necessary in the preparation for socialism, but was not sanguine about its durability. Because democracy was not won through struggle in Germany, as it was in England and in France, she feared its roots were weaker and it could be more easily dislodged. Already in 1915 in the *Junius Pamphlet* she anticipated the possibilities of a repressive fascist order in Germany.

In her *Russian Revolution* she applauded the Bolsheviks for seizing the moment and carrying through a revolution in the most adverse of circumstances. But she warned them not to make a virtue out of a necessity, not to turn their seizure of power into a model for future revolutions. In particular, she criticized the Bolsheviks for their demolition of parliamentary democracy. She warned that with the repression of political life in the country as a whole, life in the soviets must also become more and more crippled. Seventy years later Gorbachev and his followers have begun to take her advice.

Luxemburg is often remembered for what her detractors call "spontaneism." Her theory of class struggle gave greater weight to the

elemental forces of the working classes than would the other leaders of the SPD. In *The Mass Strike*, an interpretation of the Russian Revolution of 1905, she shows how, in moments of crisis, political and economic struggles fuse and feed on one another to stimulate revolutionary momentum. Since she was writing for a German audience she sought to draw general lessons from the prosecution of working class struggle in Russia. Nevertheless she also understood the specific circumstances--absolutism, war and a stifled capitalist economy--which had unfurled the working class in Russia in 1905, circumstances that would repeat themselves in 1917. There can be no doubt that Luxemburg overestimated the revolutionary temper of the Western working class while underestimating its deep rooted inertia as well as the appeal of nationalism. It would be another Marxist--Antonio Gramsci--who would come to terms with the revolutionary passivity of the Western working class and reformulate the Marxist theory of ideology and consciousness.

From Philosophy of Science to Sociology of Knowledge

What would Lakatos make of this debate? If he set aside his fervent anti-communism he could not look unkindly on Luxemburg. Her theories of imperialism, democracy and class struggle emerged because of and not despite her commitment to a Marxist core. They are not simply backward looking patching up operations as Kautsky's often tended to be. They increase the empirical content of the research program absorbing some anomalies, creating new ones but also making successful predictions. And Bernstein? Undoubtedly he produced a new body of prophetic (if not profound) theory which was assimilated by social democratic parties. However, his revision of the core required him to jettison Marx's positive heuristic, the exemplary character of Marx's account of the dynamics of capitalism and of politics. Bernstein began a new tradition which, although it has persisted, is not clear how far it has advanced.

Be that as it may, German Marxism as a whole exhibits all the marks of a progressive branch where Stalinism equally clearly is a degenerating branch. Why the difference? One could pretend that Soviet Marxism is not Marxism, that it abandoned the hard core. That's too easy a solution. Instead I examine the contrasting social conditions under which German and Soviet Marxism were produced. Not surprisingly, the different choices Wright and I make in the realm of philosophy of science now reappear in our sociology of knowledge. Wright might point to the importance of a plurality of competing theories among which to adjudicate whereas I would point to the responsiveness of knower and to known, of observer to participant, party to public. Both of us would draw sustenance from the superiority of German over Soviet Marxism. The former encouraged debate and Marxists, whether for reformist or revolutionary ends, were responsive to the mood of workers whereas the latter foreclosed debate and the party theorists dictated to the people.

One given to dialectical thinking might resolve our differences by arguing that there is an "interactive effect" between competing theories on the one side and responsiveness of theorist to theorized on the other. Certainly, I would agree that in *state socialism* opening up political discussion to competing perspectives can bring leaders in touch with the led, the party in touch with the people and, as we have learnt over the last year, with dramatic consequences. That was precisely Luxemburg's point when she appealed to the Bolsheviks not to forsake parliamentary democracy. But in *advanced capitalism*, pluralism of theories is based on the exclusion of public participation. "Adjudication" is the prerogative of intellectuals, technocrats, and politicians. Academic freedom and university autonomy are mobilized to insulate theories from the theorized. So I would maintain that the potentially explosive effects of *pluralization* in state socialism find its counterpart, in advanced capitalism, in the *repoliticization* of public life, making the university and more generally the polity accountable to their publics. But this conclusion calls for a more detailed examination of our present situation.

IV. Whither Marxism?

Today we could not be further from turn of the century Germany when Marxism had already entered its golden era. It was the proclaimed ideology of a working class party, which was daily gaining strength through an expanding trade union movement and increasing electoral support. Capitalism had just emerged from a long depression and it was heading toward another crisis, although it proved to be a crisis of its self-transformation rather than self-destruction. Socialism did capture the imagination of a significant proportion of the urban classes--it was, as we say, really on the agenda. The revisionist debate, which absorbed so much energy at party congresses, did seem to herald something significant. Socialism seemed to be gaining not just national but international momentum.

The situation today is very different. We have passed through the euphoria of the first socialist revolutions. Despite their achievements under the most adverse of circumstances, socialism has not delivered its promise. Although it has brought some equality and security, it has been the harbinger of neither democracy nor efficiency. Socialist planning has been discredited and in both East and West the market appears to have achieved unparalleled ideological force as well as economic domination. Marxism has been poisoned by its association with atrocities committed against workers, peasants, students, and other intellectuals.

Capitalism's record is hardly something to boast about. It happily lives off and engenders monstrous repression, particularly in the Third World. Wherever it spreads it creates poverty and ecological disaster

alongside extravagant wealth. It continues to harness racial and gender oppression in the pursuit of private profit and public squalor. Yet it can also claim certain achievements. In advanced capitalist countries certain fractions of the working class maintained a certain standard of living. It managed to weather crises of enormous proportions through technological and organizational revolution. It showed itself able to compromise with the enemies it creates, and to obliterate alternatives by successfully presenting itself as natural and inevitable. It successfully implanted the view that socialism has an ignominious past and no future.

No longer does Marxism need to be exorcised. It is dying a silent death--the object of pervasive cynicism in the Soviet Union and China and half-hearted vilification in the advanced capitalist societies. Throughout the world Communist Parties have faltered as they have tried to grapple with the changing context. For the time being Marxist intellectuals have either beaten a retreat into the university or quietly abandoned their allegiance. Only in a few Third World countries and in pockets of Southern Europe does it still have any mass appeal.

Nevertheless, even here in the United States there are still Marxists--people who believe in the possibility of a society which eliminates material uncertainty for all, which treats its members with dignity and allows them to develop their individual potentiality; people who regard such freedom as impossible under capitalism, even a capitalism which daily creates, nay expands the material conditions of emancipation. Conditions may be fundamentally different but the choices we face are similar to the protagonists of the German debate: to abandon, revise or renew commitment to the Marxist core; to reiterate old theories and hope the anomalies will disappear or to create new theories to fit the new circumstances. The range of alternatives can be found among the contributions to this symposium.

Post-Marxism

The Old Left abandoned Marxism with rancor. Ex-communists became anti-communists and identified Marxism with totalitarianism. The New Left, on the other hand, began by discriminating among Marxisms, so that withdrawal has been more gentle. It has gone beyond Marxism to become "post-Marxist" without being anti-Marxist. Post-Marxism is the descendent of Bernstein. Its clarion call is "democracy," its arena is "civil society" and its target "the state." It recognizes a plurality of identities, sites of domination, and movements of resistance with none given privileged status. It appeals to all oppressed classes, races, nationalities and genders--juggling discourses to forge some unified social movement. In reifying language it loses touch with lived experience, with the limits of the possible. The movement of the moment becomes the movement

of the future. Post-Marxism is locked into the same empiricism as Bernstein: high on exhortation but weak in analysis.

Among the foregoing essays Alan Wolfe's comes closest to post-Marxism. While applauding Wright's intervention into sociology he worries that the focus on political economy eclipses sources of solidarity and community. He calls our attention to civil society and the life world--the locus of rich, ambiguous, emotional and complex human relations. Like Habermas in his *Theory of Communicative Action*, Wolfe invokes sociology as a defense against theories of the state and the economy. Like Habermas, he abandons Marx's critique of capitalism from within the economy in favor of a critique from outside. Like Habermas, he leaves the system world untouched and forsakes those who are locked into its relentless rhythm. Communicative action in the life world is meaningless if production and the struggle for survival absorbs one's every fibre. While I wholeheartedly endorse Wolfe's objections to the ascendancy of methodological individualism, rational choice theory and neo-classical economics, this is no reason to abandon the state and economy as preeminent arenas of human strife. The interests of intellectuals are only thinly veiled behind the rhetoric of civil society, the public sphere and new social movements.

In some ways, Linda Collins and Judith Stacey come close to realizing Wolfe's project. In their socialist-feminist "twofer," they doubt whether Marxism or feminism can deliver an adequate account of the worlds they study. They claim to be playing in a different stadium, opting for a more eclectic and flexible approach which recognizes class, race and gender. Because they discover no single identity to be dominant they too veer toward currently fashionable "posties"--post-feminism, post-Marxism, post-structuralism, post-modernism. But in grounding their work in the lived experience of their subjects, they are saved from being absorbed in an abstract disquisition on discourses.

Post-Marxism is tempting because it liberates one from the strictures of a research program. Instead of an opportunity for reconstruction, the inadequacies of Marxism become a rallying cry for leaving it behind. Post-Marxism opposes all forms of domination and injustice without giving priority to one. It softens Marxism's hard core and jettisons its theories. It is, if you will, a research program against research programs. Post-Marxists no longer have to defend the possibility of communism, a view of history rooted in the transformation of nature, the centrality of the economy and of class, categories such as forces and relations of production. They no longer have to be concerned with Marxism's internal contradictions or its anomalies--the durability of capitalism, the mollification of class struggle, the failure of socialism. Post-Marxists regard all this ballast as too much of a burden. But when it is thrown overboard they lose sense of direction. Everything becomes complex and

nothing surprises. There are no guiding questions and no way to bring coherence to fragmented lived experiences, or to multiplying discourses. Post-Marxism twists this way and that according to ephemeral changes in academic fashion. Unable to distinguish between the possible and the impossible, it is unable to develop any notion of strategy. Without science, engagement is blind.

Analytical Marxism

While post-Marxism seeks to broaden the audience of radical thinkers, analytical Marxism seeks to narrow its audience, withdrawing into the higher reaches of the university to reformulate the Marxist core with the tools of analytical philosophy and neo-classical economics. Like Karl Kautsky, the pope of scientific socialism, analytical Marxists remove themselves from the fray below in the name of truth and clarity. In debating with the high priests of the academy, they lose touch with the subjects of their theories, until their theories have no subjects. It is no accident that methodological individualism--the doctrine that all social phenomena are explicable in ways that only involve individuals--becomes the (metaphysical) foundation for their treatises. Indeed, in the hands of that brilliant troika of Jon Elster, John Roemer and G.A. Cohen, *methodological* individualism degenerates into *mythological* individualism--mythological in two senses. First, the individuals who appear in their books are abstracted from any context, stripped of the concrete social relations that determine who they are and what they do. Second, they abstract *themselves* from any determining social relations. Their lofty status in the university encourages the denial of social constraints and their propulsion outside history. They leap over the history of Marxism to start *de novo* a true Marxism which will be rigorous, clear and scientific. Between themselves and Marx is a yawning abyss into which every Marxist has vanished--presumed guilty of dogmatism or orthodoxy and purged without trace.

They proclaim themselves committed to advancing Marxism, to tackling its abiding anomalies yet they touch neither their own nor the experiences of others. Believing themselves to be arguing in a vacuum, they produce vacuous theories. Marxism without engagement is not degenerate. It is empty.

New Class Marxism

If post-Marxism and analytical Marxism retain only the flimsiest allegiance to the working class, New Class Marxism seems to abandon it altogether. Faced with the growing irrelevance of Marxism, Wacquant and Manza throw us back to the context in which we work: the

university.⁴ They return us to the question: who are we and what are we up to? Loïc Wacquant locates the Wright-Burawoy debate in the quite specific context of the American university--a product of the field of sociology removed from the society it describes. It would be unintelligible in France where public intellectuals have not yet disappeared and where Marxists have not been so thoroughly academized. But having plotted out the field, it is not clear in which direction he would want us to go.

Jeff Manza carries the torch, which owes more to Alvin Gouldner than to Pierre Bourdieu. Shrugging his shoulders at Wright and myself, Manza wonders what we are bickering about: we are after all both intellectuals and Marxism was always an ideology of radical intellectuals. The quiescence of the working class and the retreat of Marxism into the university simply makes this plain. The working class has failed in its historic mission, i.e., emancipation of the intellectuals, so we (radical intellectuals) have to shop around for another agent. The middle class base of New Social Movements makes them attractive but their potential is limited. So Manza announces that our post-industrial world is turning intellectuals into a powerful class in their own right. The university is to become the headquarters for a "revolutionary project," based on its monopoly of the production of knowledge. Therefore, he argues we should abandon our fascination with the working class and proclaim our true identity as the New Class. After all, it's much easier to organize ourselves and not be bothered with lethargic workers--although we might still need them as an ally in our quest for power. Less absorbed by the pursuit of material interests than they, we are better equipped to sustain the altruism and commitment necessary to make the transition. But transition to what? Once in power we will reward everyone according to their skill/knowledge--a Durkheimian meritocracy, a Comtean priesthood, a Bakuninian nightmare, but socialism? Any New Class Marxism must grapple with this problem, namely the class character of a society run for and by intellectuals.

So why would a New Class theorist retain an attachment to Marxism? Manza tells us it has no rival for the understanding of social change! Tough. If it has no rival, it is because it takes the standpoint of the working class, the oppressed and the down-trodden in society and not the privileged intelligentsia. It regards private property and wage labor and not the distribution of knowledge as the primary axis governing the dynamics of capitalism. Whether the working class is a revolutionary subject or not, Marxism discloses the secret of capitalism from the perspective of the working class and not from the perspective of the intelligentsia. I enter the working class, not to become identical with it

4. Jeff Manza's essay, "Marxism as New Class Analysis", was withdrawn from the symposium after I had completed my own contribution.

as Manza and others assume, but to comprehend its class situation as a privileged source of anomalies. I don't become a machine operator to "organize" or bring "truth" to the "unenlightened" but to subject myself to their ways of life, to their truths, and above all to remind myself that the interests of workers and intellectuals are opposed. New Class Marxism is a contradiction in terms. We can defend Marxism *or* the New Class project but not both. For my part I prefer Marxism, plain Marxism.

Plain Marxism

Manza would make a virtue of a necessity, turning the producers of Marxism into its revolutionary agent. He gets in his own light when he equates the position of the intelligentsia in the university with the position of workers in the factory. Edna Bonacich regards this as a self-serving delusion. For her, academics are members of the "professional middle class," occupying leading positions within a capitalist institution. The university has a class character in two respects: internally it is a site of capitalist domination and externally it serves to reproduce capitalist relations throughout society. She struggles against both, against the university's cheap labor practices, against its complicity in destroying communities, against the production of success ideology, against normalization through grading. Far from defending or expanding the privileges of a New Class of self-styled radical intellectuals she seeks to commit class suicide and identify with the interests of the oppressed. This is pursued first and foremost through participation in their struggles in and against the university.

Like Rosa Luxemburg, Bonacich responds to an anomaly by a change in political practice. If Marxism shows no life outside the university then struggles have to be waged within the university. But what struggles? Struggles over tenure, expansion of university autonomy, protection of academic freedom, more funds for research--that is, struggles which defend the culture of critical discourse, the interests of the New Class? Or struggles against the university as an employer of cheap labor, as propagator of capitalist ideology, as promoter of class inequality, as servant of a military industrial complex--that is, struggles against capitalism? From Bonacich's standpoint the latter obviously take precedence, calling for theories which shed light on the class character of the university.

Given how easy it is to be absorbed into professional careers, departmental factions, or administrative bureaucracies; given how easy it is to endow universality to being on one's own side, immersion in disinherited communities outside as well as inside the university can animate a wider consciousness, critical of the New Class and its pretensions. Once more we need to know who we are and what we are

up to--not as free floating intellectuals but in our institutional context with all its contradictions. Here Pierre Bourdieu is more useful than Alvin Gouldner. As a devotee of plainitude, I seek a Marxist theory of the New Class, not a New Class theory of Marxism.