

# LUKÁCS' AND HUSSERL'S CRITIQUE OF SCIENCE\*

by Mihály Vajda

[Telos 38 Winter 1978-9, pps. 104-118]

Marxism and phenomenology show striking parallels in their relation to science. But since there are many phenomenologies and Marxisms, this problem cannot be analyzed in the abstract. Thus, the following analysis will focus on two fundamental works: Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* and Husserl's *The Crisis of European Science*. This selection is not arbitrary. The two books are representative of their respective schools and decisively influenced further developments. Furthermore, both books are products of the decades between the two world wars, and can be considered as typical expressions of the crisis of bourgeois culture.

Philosophy's relation to science is not determined exclusively by its character and development but primarily by the intellectual climate in which it is continually reformulated. Marx's relation to science was necessarily much more positive than that of his 20th-century followers. "The exclusiveness with which the total world view of modern man, in the second half of the 19th century, let itself be determined by the positive sciences and be blinded by the 'prosperity' they produced" — to use Husserl's own phrase — also played a decisive role in Marx's thinking. Though he vehemently criticized both the findings and the procedures of bourgeois social science, especially economics, from a different concept of scientificity, he had no doubts about the value of science as such.

In the 20th century the sciences and their function have lost this sanctity. Modern phenomenology itself was the product of an age whose unconditional faith in science played a conservative rather than a critical role. This explains phenomenology's unambiguous relation to science. Marxism's relation to science is more complicated. One important factor here is the tension between its 19th-century origins and its permanent radicalism. Precisely to preserve its radicalism, the so-called philosophy of praxis, or "Western Marxism," whose main work was Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness*, had to take a very militant stand against the scientism of conservative Marxist schools. This was not only the expression of its political conservatism, but an attachment to orthodoxy in the narrow sense of the word. Lukács, who defined orthodox Marxism as methodology, had to extract the latent critique of science from Marx's own method.

The following will attempt to outline briefly where the two critiques converge. Neither critique attacks science's claim to be scientific. What phenomenology and Marxism criticize in the exact sciences is their claim to

•Translated by David Parent.

1. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, 1970), pp. 5-6.

exclusiveness, which does not and cannot meet scientific requirements. Today's sciences fail to justify their existence: they have nothing to do with the meaning of human existence. Husserl formulates the question very sharply from the beginning: "Merely fact-minded sciences make merely fact-minded people.... In our vital need — so we are told — this science has nothing to say to us. It excludes in principle precisely the questions which man, given over in our unhappy times to the most portentous upheavals, finds the most burning: questions of the meaning or meaninglessness of the whole of this human existence.. . . Scientific, objective truth is exclusively a matter of establishing what the world, the physical as well as the spiritual world, is in fact. But can the world, and human existence in it, truthfully have a meaning if the sciences recognize as true only what is objectively established in this fashion, and if history has nothing more to teach us than that all the shapes of the spiritual world, all the conditions of life, ideals, norms upon which man relies, form and dissolve themselves like fleeting waves, that it always was and ever will be so, that again and again reason must turn into nonsense, and well-being into misery?"<sup>2</sup>

Lukács emphasized this just as strongly: a science that merely discovers "facts" and seeks to determine the laws and structures of our world from these facts cannot guide our activities and actions. "A situation in which the 'facts' speak out unmistakably for or against a definite course of action has never existed, and neither can or will exist. The more conscientiously the facts are explored — in their isolation, i.e., in their unmediate relations — the less compellingly will they point in any one direction. It is self-evident that a merely subjective decision will be shattered by the pressure of uncomprehended facts acting automatically 'according to laws'."<sup>3</sup>

Science can do no more than predict events to which we must adapt. In this sense, they are not a means to self-realization; they make us part of the "objective" world governed by the natural laws they have discovered: they make us objects of transcendence.

This failure of science to carry out the task of human knowledge, i.e., to give meaning to our existence, stems, according to both Husserl and Lukács, from the fact that science is unable to assume the *standpoint of the totality*. Science has been reduced to technique (*techné*), an art of manipulation that rules out meaningful and really human action in favor of limited calculation, since it does not approach human reality as a totality, but only as the sum of "particular facts" governed by "objective" laws. The loss of the totality means at the same time *the abolition of historicity*. "The unscientific nature of this seemingly so scientific method consists," says Lukács, "in its failure to see and take account of the *historical character* of the facts on which it is based."<sup>4</sup>

Husserl formulates the same idea in positive terms. "This we seek to discern

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

3. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London, 1971), p. 23.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

not from the outside, from facts, as if the temporal becoming in which we ourselves have evolved were merely an external causal series. Rather we seek to discern it from the inside. Only in this way can we, who not only have a spiritual heritage but have become what we are thoroughly and exclusively in a historical-spiritual manner, have a task which is truly our own. We obtain it ... only through a critical understanding of the total unity of history — *our* history."<sup>5</sup> What science lacks is precisely this critical understanding of the total unity of our history.

The next common point of criticism is the *critique of total quantification*. The sciences have reduced our qualitative world, the world we live in — the *Lebenswelt* in Husserlian terminology — to mere quantitative relations. The loss of a sense of quality is tied to the loss of meaning for the particular time. For modern science time has lost its quality: it has become just another dimension on the same level as space.

There are numerous other points in common between the Husserlian and Lukácsian critiques of science. In fact, it would be difficult to distinguish the two standpoints since the critique of science in the two works is identical. Not only do they criticize the sciences for not accomplishing the real tasks of human knowledge and for their methodology, but both blame a bad attitude, a *bad rationalism*, for the failure. This crisis of the sciences is also a crisis of man (in Husserl the crisis of European man, the surrender of true teleology; in Lukács the crisis of capitalism — but the two views amount to the same thing: the total reification of man), and has its roots in naturalistic objectivism. "The 'crisis' could then become distinguishable as the *apparent failure of rationalism*. The reason for the failure of a rational culture, however, ... lies not in the essence of rationalism itself but solely in its being rendered superficial, in its entanglement in 'naturalism' and 'objectivism'.<sup>6</sup> And for Lukács, "the salient characteristic of the whole epoch is the equation which appears naive and dogmatic in the most 'critical' philosophers, of formal, mathematical, rational knowledge both with knowledge in general and also with 'our' knowledge."<sup>7</sup> The corollary of this one-sided, formal, objectivistic and naturalistic rationalism is necessarily an irrationalism: the irrationality of the whole. The rationally knowable partial systems, "the principle of rationalisation based on what is and *can be calculated*,"<sup>8</sup> and the world of first and "second" nature obtains within the irrationality of the whole world — a world where man walks as a stranger, homeless and exposed to irrational forces.

This rationalistic objectivism, combined with an ultimately irrational world view, characterizes the whole attitude of modern science and is the distinctive mark of our era. Yet, this dismal failure of the sciences is only a *sign of mankind's vital crisis*, whose causes and practical solutions both

5. Husserl, *op.cit.*, p. 71.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 299.

7. Lukács, *op.cit.*, p. 112.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

Husserl and Lukács seek to discover. In attempting to do so, both trace the history of modern European philosophy; both show how the objectivism of early modern thinking necessarily ended in skepticism; both regard the attempt of classical German idealism to restore the identity of subject and object in transcendentalism as having only half succeeded; and then both show that the solution must be sought in a transcendentalism carried to its logical conclusion.

Yet, the conditions under which this goal is attainable seem at first glance to be diametrically different. The holistic standpoint, which could lead to the recovery of the sciences and of human existence, is seen by Husserl as the true philosophical perspective, and by Lukács as that of the proletariat. In Husserl, the restoration of true humanity is an individual and purely intellectual project, while in Lukács it is the practical achievement of a class. For Lukács the mental reorientation, the recovery of the total standpoint through knowledge, seems to be only a subordinate partial factor of the practical upheaval that is shaking the bourgeois world. One could even say that the following statement by Lukács also characterizes Husserl's position: "The specialization of skills leads to the destruction of every image of the whole. And as, despite this, the need to grasp the whole — at least cognitively — cannot die out, we find that science, which is likewise based on specialization and thus caught up in the same immediacy, is criticized for having torn the real world into shreds and having lost its vision of the whole." In description and goals, Lukács' radical brand of Marxism and phenomenology agree. For Lukács, however, the Husserlian approach is only a partial aspect of what they both criticize and seek to transcend. For Lukács, the Husserlian solution would be only a pseudo-solution since progress in knowledge can occur only as part of progress in social relations. The history of ideas and historical materialism cannot and must not be reconciled. In Husserl it is the mind itself that by itself must rediscover its original path, which emerged in European history, so to eliminate false objectivity, while in Lukács the revolutionary transformation of the bourgeois mode of production is necessary to restructure the human mind.

This simple contraposition of the two conceptions, however, is an unfortunate simplification. The coincidence of critique and goal is unthinkable if the Husserlian conception is reduced to the history of ideas, and Lukács' to historical materialism. No doubt, in Husserl the determining factor of human history is spirit (*Geist*). But if this was nothing more than the attitude of a wide variety of men, which in every concrete historical situation determines their respective activities, then his entire phenomenology would be meaningless and internally contradictory. The psychologistic attitude of the so-called history of ideas was the main object of Husserl's critique in his very first works, and even in the *Crisis* it was still considered the other side of objectivistic science. "Historicism assumes its position in the factual realm

and by absolutizing this realm without quite neutralizing it (since the specific meaning is by nature alien to historical thinking or at least does not influence its general determinations), what follows is a relativism closely related to naturalistic psychologism and entangled in similar skeptical difficulties," he writes as early as 1911 in his famous *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*.<sup>10</sup> The history-of-ideas standpoint was and remained as alien to Husserl as the naturalistic one.

Could the Husserlian "spirit" be the same as Hegel's absolute "Spirit?" An Hegelian interpretation of phenomenology is not at all absurd. Since Husserl never found the final solution to his transcendental phenomenology, the door was left open even for this interpretation. The solution Husserl sought, however, was altogether different. Hegel's absolute spirit, whose development is the totality of human history, reduces every concrete person to a means for the totality. Hegelian philosophy remained the philosophy of human alienation. The Husserlian spirit, on the other hand, is a unity of thought and action whose true development is the real becoming not only of mankind, but of every single human personality. For Husserl, the realization of the attitude of transcendental phenomenology is "the rebirth of Europe from the spirit of philosophy."<sup>11</sup> It is not just a new conceptual attitude, but also a new practical one: a genuinely new spiritual form of life. Of course, he does not explore material preconditions of this new life. Yet, his philosophy does not turn out to be merely a new contemplative attitude. That the unity of theory and practice can and ought to be realized is as much an integral part of Husserlian phenomenology as of Marxism. "For yet a third form of universal attitude is possible (as opposed to both the religious-mythical attitude), namely, the synthesis of the two interests accomplished in the transition from the theoretical to the practical attitude, such that the *theoria* (universal science), arising within a closed unity and under the *epoche* of all praxis, is called (and in theoretical insight itself exhibits its calling) to serve mankind in a new way, mankind which, in its concrete existence, lives first and always in the natural sphere. This occurs in the form of a new sort of praxis, that of the universal critique of all life and all life-goals, all cultural products and systems that have already arisen out of the life of man; and thus it also becomes a critique of mankind itself and of the values which guide it explicitly or implicitly. Further, it is a praxis whose aim is to elevate mankind through universal scientific reason, according to norms of truth of all forms, to transform it from the bottom up into a new humanity made capable of an absolute self-responsibility on the basis of absolute theoretical insights."<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, Lukács' position differs sharply from shallow historical materialism. The standpoint of the identity of subject and object is not merely an advance in thought, but also the total transformation of earlier forms of

10. Edmund Husserl, "Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft," *Logos*, Vol. 1 (Tübingen, 1910-11), p. S23.

11. Husserl, *The Crisis*, *op.cit.*, p. 299.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 283.

association and behavior. It is not at all a matter of a mindless, quasi-automatic upheaval of social relations (and ultimately of relations of production) brought about by natural laws (i.e., arbitrarily) precipitating the attainment of the real standpoint. The social upheaval and the discovery of the true viewpoint are not only inseparable: they are ultimately identical processes. The revolutionary transformation of the world of reification, i.e., of the bourgeois, capitalist mode of production, corresponds with the development of the proletarian class consciousness ascribed to the proletariat (the standpoint of the identical subject-object). This had already been formulated by Lukács in 1919 as follows: "The development of society is a unified process. This means that a certain phase of development cannot take place in any area of social life without exerting an impact on all other areas. Through this unity and coherence of social development it is possible to grasp and achieve an understanding of the same process from the standpoint of one social phenomenon or another. Thus, one can speak of culture in its apparent isolation from other social phenomena, for when we correctly grasp the culture of any period, we grasp with it the root of the whole development of the period, just as we do when we begin with an analysis of economic relations."<sup>13</sup>

If we consider Husserl's and Lukács' critiques of science in these terms, then the fact that Husserl focuses only on the philosophical aspect of the process and concentrates exclusively on the change of spiritual attitude does not affect the similarity of the two conceptions. For the one, the standpoint of the identical subject-object is that of the true philosopher. For the other, it is that of the proletariat. But what prevents the true philosopher's standpoint from also being that of the proletariat, since each standpoint is ultimately formulated as "the philosopher's"?

The true difference between the two standpoints thus does not reduce to that between the history of ideas and historical materialism. Yet, even if, following Lukács' argument, we accept the premise that the essence of a historical period can just as well be understood by its culture as by its forms of production because every age constitutes a historical whole, it remains to be seen whether in Husserl the total lack of analysis of social relations, understood in the broadest possible way, indicates that he cannot explain the sequence of various attitudes, or even that he regards this sequence as needing explanation. It may be useful here to turn to the individual passages in Husserl's book where he speaks outright of the "factual" causes of a change in attitude. For instance, in discussing the formation of the Greeks' original theoretical attitude, he writes that: "Naturally the outbreak of the theoretical attitude, like everything that develops historically, has its factual motivation in the concrete framework of historical occurrence. In this respect one must clarify, then, how *thaumazein* could arise and become habitual." "We shall not go into this in detail," he adds. Thus, for Husserl, the "factual

13. Georg Lukács, "The Old Culture and the New Culture," in *Towards a New Marxism*, edited by Bart Grahl and Paul Piccone (St. Louis, 1973), p. 21.

motivation" of "historical developments" is secondary,<sup>14</sup> as it is for every historical view that does not see the history of mankind objectivistically as a natural event and attempts to grasp every detail of this history. If men have made their own history, i.e., if it was not determined by transcendental powers, then the factual motivations should not be conceived as the causes of the change of attitude. According to Lukács: "The idea that we have made reality loses its more or less fictitious character: we have —in the prophetic words of Vico... — made our own history and if we are able to regard the whole of reality as history (i.e., as *our* history, for there is no other), we shall have raised ourself in fact to the position from which reality can be understood as our 'action'."<sup>15</sup>

Unless one wants to explain human history objectivistically in terms of transcendental causes, one need only follow the inner connection of successive attitudes. If this is the case, the true history of mankind can also be grasped by examining the sequence of changes of attitude. Shallow historical materialism saw history as the evolution of forms of physical activity — first as the result of relations of production, then as the development of the means of production (in both cases, transcendentalism). This evolution includes the sequence of mental attitudes as well.

In this regard there is an important difference between the two conceptions. Both Lukács and Husserl stress the element of consciousness in human development; both analyze the development of philosophical conceptions as expressing the spiritual essence of European history. Both seek a solution to the crisis inherent in the domination of positive science, characterized as objectivistic, naturalistic, and rationalistic in a bad sense. Husserl calls this age of *reification* a false turn of European teleology. But has this era taken a false turn for Lukács as well? Lukács also ascribes a negative value to reification, even when he casts aside the Utopian standpoint of a moral imperative. "Whenever the refusal of the subject simply to accept his empirically given existence takes the form of an 'ought,' this means that the immediately given empirical reality receives affirmation and consecration at the hands of philosophy: it is philosophically immortalized."<sup>16</sup> For Lukács, the question is only whether reification is a necessary precondition for the unreified, unalienated conditions of subject-object identity, or whether it is just a stage of European history which mankind could avoid. While for Lukács the holistic standpoint can be attained only by abolishing the world of fragmentation, Husserl seems to regard the age of the naturalistic attitude as an accidental, intermediary stage.

Although Husserl and Lukács both depict the course of European history from Descartes to classical German idealism in terms of reification, Husserl attributes the entire false development to a single mental step, namely that of Descartes. Here the difference between the two is obvious. Lukács

14. Husserl, *The Crisis*, *op.cit.*, p. 285.

15. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, *op.cit.*, p. 145.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

concentrates on modern social science. When he criticizes science, he usually means economics, law, etc. ; the natural sciences play no specific role in his analysis, although his critique applies to them, too. Husserl likewise condemns the objectivistic, naturalistic attitude of every science. For him, however, this attitude is not a necessary consequence of the scientific method, which he considers one of mankind's most valuable achievements. What is problematic is only the false discussion of the method's meaning. The appropriation of this method by the social sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) is a typical example of this aberration. Efforts to construct a world of the mind analogous to the world of nature created by the natural sciences could only take place if the natural sciences falsely interpret the world of nature. They regard the mind as objective nature and as a technical procedure for objective description. This false attitude emerges as early as Galileo. "Galileo, the discoverer... of physics, or physical nature, is at once a discovering and a concealing genius."<sup>17</sup> And further: "I am of course quite serious in placing and continuing to place Galileo at the top of the list of the greatest discoverers of modern times. Naturally I also admire quite seriously the great discoverers of classical and post-classical physics and their intellectual accomplishment, which, far from being merely mechanical, was in fact astounding in the highest sense. This accomplishment is not at all disparaged by the above elucidation of it as *techné* or by the critique in terms of principle, which shows that the true meaning of these theories — the meaning which is genuine in terms of their origins — remained and had to remain hidden from the physicists, including the great and the greatest."<sup>18</sup> This "having to remain hidden" does not point to historical limitations — which would follow from Lukács' theory — but to the impossibility of devoting oneself completely to this method and at the same time maintaining a critical distance from it. "But the mathematician, the natural scientist, at best a highly brilliant technician of the method — to which he owes the discoveries which are his only aim — is normally not at all able to carry out such reflections. In his actual sphere of inquiry and discovery he does not know at all that everything these reflections must clarify is even in *need* of clarification, and this for the sake of that interest which is decisive for a philosophy or a science, i.e., the interest in true knowledge of the *world itself, nature itself*. And this is precisely what has been lost through a science which is given as a tradition and which has become a *techné*, insofar as this interest played a determining role at all in its primal establishment. Every attempt to lead the scientist to such reflections, if it comes from a nonmathematical, nonscientific circle of scholars, is rejected as 'metaphysical'.<sup>19</sup>

The birth of the natural sciences as such did not necessitate the development of naturalistic objectivism. Yet the successes of the natural sciences blinded modern European man: "The world must, in itself, be a

17. Husserl, *The Crisis*, *op.cit.*, p. 52.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.



rational world, in the new sense of rationality taken from mathematics, or mathematized nature; correspondingly, philosophy, the universal science of the world, must be built up as a unified rational theory *more geometrico*.<sup>20</sup> And, of course, if scientifically rational nature is a world of bodies existing in itself — which was taken for granted in the given historical situation — then the world-in-itself must, in a sense unknown before, be a peculiarly *split* world, split into nature-in-itself and a mode of being which is different from this: that which exists psychically.<sup>21</sup>

Thus we have the world view of exact science, of bad rationality and objectivism: the standpoint which has lost the world as a totality. Lukács could also agree with this description of the development of contemporary thought. This world of rational theory *in the geometric manner* is nothing but capitalism's world of "second" nature, whose essence combines the ever increasing domination of nature with the loss of the totality. The splitting of the world into nature-as-such and the psychic nature of isolated individuals (understood as second nature) corresponds to the world of capitalist reification as described by Lukács. Here "a man's own activity, his own labor, becomes something objective and independent of him, something that controls him by virtue of an autonomy alien to man. *Objectively* a world of objects and relations between things springs into being (the world of commodities and their movements on the market). The laws governing these objects are indeed gradually discovered by man, but even so they confront him as invisible forces that generate their own power.... *Subjectively* — where the economy has been fully developed — a man's activity becomes estranged from himself, it turns into a commodity which, subject to the non-human objectivity of the natural laws of society, must go its own way independently of man just like any consumer article."<sup>22</sup>

For Lukács, the failure to reflect on the true meaning of scientific method is a necessary consequence of those relations of production that are the other side of the totality, including domination by method. Reification, furthermore, cannot be philosophically transcended until it has been overcome in practice. Lukács must be close to Husserl in thinking that Descartes "accomplished the primal establishment of ideas which were destined, through their own historical effects (as if following a hidden teleology of history), to explode this very rationalism by uncovering its hidden absurdity. Precisely those ideas which were supposed to ground this rationalism as *aeterna Veritas* bear within themselves a *deeply hidden sense*, which, once brought to the surface, completely uproots it."<sup>23</sup> Bourgeois thought cannot overcome itself. The holistic perspective can be attained only by the proletariat.

Husserl merely explains what happened with Descartes. "For Descartes, the

20. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, *op.cit.*, p. 87.

23. Husserl, *The Crisis*, *op.cit.*, p. 74.

*Meditations* work themselves out in the portentous form of a substitution of one's own psychic ego for the [absolute] ego, of psychological immanence for egological immanence, of the evidence of psychic, 'inner,' or 'self-perception' for egological self-perception; and this is also their continuing historical effect up to the present day."<sup>24</sup> Once this psychological mis-interpretation was anchored in European thought, total objectification of the subject was necessary to attain subject-object identity. Husserl leaves the question unanswered as to whether this misunderstanding could have been avoided.

Husserl believes that transcendental phenomenology is possible only from the vantage point which the modern, exact science and rationalistic philosophy have surrendered for their rationalistic attitude. In Lukács, the standpoint of the identical subject-object is not at all that of the uninvolved observer. On the contrary, Lukács stresses that only the class which has been most deeply affected by the social conditions of reification and whose fate clearly depends on overcoming the bourgeois attitude can, by a practical and theoretical act, do away with this reification.

To anticipate the result of our analysis: the real difference between Lukács and Husserl lies in their approach to the question of *false consciousness*. For Lukács the holistic perspective is the standpoint of the proletariat, while for Husserl it is that of the true philosopher. This difference has been described here as inconsequential since the proletariat's standpoint is also formulated theoretically in a philosophy and since Husserl does not discuss the sociological relevance of the philosopher's standpoint. The dissemination of knowledge, however, is for Husserl a political struggle, a question of power: "Clearly this leads not simply to a homogeneous transformation of the generally satisfactory life of the national state but probably to great internal schisms in which this life and the whole national culture must suffer an upheaval. Those conservatives who are satisfied with the tradition and the philosophical men will fight each other, and the struggle will surely occur in the sphere of political power."<sup>25</sup> Unlike Lukács, Husserl does not specify the sociological composition of this circle of philosophers.

In light of this discussion, the most important questions of our time seem to be whether we need a total reorientation to overcome the crisis of our era; and whether such a reorientation — be it total or partial — must represent the standpoint of *one* sociologically and concretely delimitable social group (or whether it is attainable independent of such particularity).

Let us return to Husserl's conception of the development from the natural attitude to transcendental phenomenology. "Extrascientific culture, culture not yet touched by science, consists in tasks and accomplishments of man in finitude. The openly endless horizon in which he lives is not disclosed; his ends, his activity, his trade and traffic, his personal, social, national, and mythical motivation — all this moves within the sphere of his finitely surveyable surrounding world. Here there are no infinite tasks, no ideal

24. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 288.

acquisitions."<sup>26</sup> "Now natural life can be characterized as a life naively, straightforwardly directed at the world, the world being always in a certain sense consciously present as a universal horizon, without, however, being thematic as such."<sup>27</sup> This natural attitude, this unity with the socio-cultural world, is the normal mode of human existence. "All other attitudes are accordingly related back to this natural attitude as reorientations [of it]."<sup>28</sup>

On the one hand they have emerged historically from the first, primal attitude; on the other, they remain anchored in the original attitude even after other historically determined generations have forged higher and different attitudes. "The individual men who reorient themselves, as men within their universal life-community (their nation), continue to have their natural interests, each his individual interests; through no reorientation can they simply lose them; this would mean that each would cease to be what he has become from birth onward. In any circumstances, then, the reorientation can only be a periodical one."<sup>29</sup>

The original attitude is practical in its connection with its socio-cultural environment. There are two different possible reorientations toward universality: practical and theoretical. Husserl labels the higher-level practical attitude a religious and mythical one, characterized as consisting in this: "that the world as a totality becomes thematic, but in a practical way." "But all this speculative knowledge is meant to serve man in his human purposes so that he may order his worldly life in the happiest possible way and shield it from disease, from every sort of evil fate, from disaster and death."<sup>30</sup> "But in addition to the higher-level practical attitude...there exists yet another essential possibility for altering the general natural attitude, namely, the *theoretical attitude*."<sup>31</sup> "Man becomes gripped by the passion of a world view and world knowledge that turns away from all practical interests and, within the closed sphere of its cognitive activity, in the times devoted to it, strives for and achieves nothing but pure *theoria*. In other words, man becomes a non-participating spectator, surveyor of the world; he becomes a philosopher..,"<sup>32</sup> This is "the peculiar universality of his critical stance, his resolve not to accept unquestioningly any pregiven opinion or tradition so that he can inquire, in respect to the whole traditionally pregiven universe, after what is true in itself, an ideality. But this is not only a new cognitive stance. Because of the requirement to subject all empirical matters to ideal norms, i.e., those of unconditioned truth, there soon results a far-reaching transformation of the whole praxis of human existence, i.e., the whole of cultural life: henceforth it must receive its norms not from the naive experience and tradition of everyday life but from objective truth."<sup>33</sup> As

26. *Ibid.*, p. 279.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 281.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 283, 294.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 285.

33. *Ibid.* pp. 286-287.

already indicated, this teleology has gone astray in modern objectivism by regarding technique (*technè*) as an art and as truth.

Thus, both critiques of science have no other goal than to rediscover *truth*. Both maintain that the meaning of our history can be grasped only from a holistic perspective. A mankind that seeks to adapt to its own world as something alien surrenders its human essence and fails to realize its teleology. In Lukács' opinion, this teleology consists, ultimately, in achieving a mankind which does not let its norms be dictated by *objective truth*, i.e., which is capable of absolute self-responsibility by virtue of absolute theoretical insights. It is a question of objective knowledge. Lukács says: "the proletariat is... the first subject in history that is (objectively) capable of an adequate social consciousness."<sup>34</sup> "It was necessary for the proletariat to be born for social reality to become fully conscious."<sup>35</sup> Both Lukács and Husserl posit the necessity of total reorientation, the nature of which consists in grasping the totality. This knowledge of the totality is self-knowledge.

Such a radical reorientation means the abolition of the duality of philosophy and science. Lukács: "only by overcoming the — theoretical — duality of philosophy and special discipline, of methodology and factual knowledge can the way be found by which to annul the duality of thought and existence."<sup>36</sup> Husserl: "A definite ideal of a universal philosophy and its method forms the beginning; this is, so to speak, the primal establishment of the philosophical modern age and all its lines of development. But instead of being able to work itself out in fact, this ideal suffers an inner dissolution." "Along with this falls the faith in 'absolute' reason, through which the world has its meaning, the faith in the meaning of history, of humanity, the faith in man's freedom, that is, his capacity to secure rational meaning for his individual and common human existence."<sup>37</sup>

Both thinkers seek the Archimedean point from which the disintegration of human knowledge and life can be reversed and a unified *teleology* of human existence be established, one marked by self-determination. The critique of fragmentation and false objectivism implies the *emancipation* from external determination. This critique of science owes its vehemence to the disenchantment caused by the failure of science and scientific objectivity's promise of freedom. The bourgeois era replaced tradition preserved by God with a new, possibly much more abject servitude to "factual" objectivity, to faceless, crude, merciless "facts." Man was alone, powerless to control a godless world. Exact science promises to guarantee survival, contingent on understanding and adapting to the discovered facts and their laws. Yet a world ruled by anthropomorphic albeit unknowable forces is preferable to this. All radical critiques of science, including phenomenology and Marxism, seek to reveal this scientific world view as false consciousness.

34. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, *op.cit.*, p. 199.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

37. Husserl, *The Crisis*, *op.cit.*, pp. 12 artd 13.

Does the denial of this world view necessarily result in a holistic perspective? Is it *either* total exposure to *or* total power over our destiny? Is the assumption that man must be either master or slave justified? To answer these questions we must raise another: How is it at all possible to grasp historical reality as a totality? What does that mean? The holistic standpoint cannot reside in the totality of the object alone, but presupposes that of the subject as well. Otherwise, the objectivistic world view remains intact. The totality is *ab ovo* the unity of *object and subject*. This is for Lukács and Husserl the unified process of human history. Mankind, the subject of knowledge, is also its object since man has created the objective world he knows, including nature. To conclude from this that man makes solely his own history is to be confined to the Hegelian standpoint. Man remains an *abstract* concept, easily replaceable by the absolute mind. For the flesh-and-blood individual only the knowledge of reality as *his own power* is significant. Prerequisite to this power is the individual's participation in the formation of that reality. *That is what rules out the holistic standpoint*. Both philosophers realize this. Husserl was preoccupied with this problem all his life. He accepted neither the Hegelian solution, in which the individual is sacrificed, nor a solipsistic, and ultimately relativistic, one. He tried to show that the intersubjectivity of the transcendental ego satisfies the requirements of a holistic conception.

Lukács, on the other hand, simply casts aside the standpoint of the individual. "The individual can never become the measure of all things. For when the individual confronts objective reality he is faced by a complex of ready-made and unalterable objects which allow him only the subjective responses of recognition or rejection."<sup>38</sup> "For the individual, reification and hence determinism are irremovable."<sup>39</sup> Lukács finds the subject capable of grasping the totality in the proletariat as a class: "Only the class can relate to the whole of reality in a practical revolutionary way. (The 'species' cannot do this as it is no more than an individual that has been mythologized and stylized in a spirit of contemplation.)"<sup>40</sup> Does this description of an individual having "been mythologized and stylized in a spirit of contemplation" apply only to the species and not to the class? Lukács' answer is clear. In contrast to mankind, hitherto unable to realize its real historical unity, the proletariat is forced to do so. The individual proletarian is the first individual in history who can identify unconditionally with his class, though not with the whole of mankind. Since the self-knowledge of the proletariat entails the self-knowledge of all of society and history, the class-conscious proletarian, as a representative of his class, becomes the real subject of history. To the extent that the class-conscious proletariat ceases to articulate society in terms of classes, Lukács posits, ultimately, *the total absorption of the individual into the species*.

Either total submission or total control? The critique of naturalistic

38. Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, *op.cit.*, p. 193

39. *Ibid.*

40. *Ibid.*

objectivism, the critique of a relentless factual world (the scientism of total bureaucratization) is justified: Man is not subject to rule by persistent, objective facts. The world view of objectivistic science and of bad rationalistic and irrationalistic philosophies must be transcended, but not from the standpoint of the totality. For that would mean not only the identity of subject and object, but also that of the subject as it understands itself in the object: the identity of the individual and the species. That identity signifies the total repression — annihilation is impossible — of individuality.

Philosophy's belief in its ability to suppress its own particularity, and thus every other particularity as well, is a new false consciousness, the attainment of which would result in just as much cruelty and inhumanity as that caused by false objectivism. The real and practical unmasking of the false consciousness of objectivism must also show that the subject never completely becomes an object, that the reification of human relations and human consciousness is only a tendency, which, though dominant in the bourgeois era, never successfully eliminated counter-tendencies.

In the essay "Phenomenology and Bourgeois Society,"<sup>41</sup> I have attempted to outline the possibility of a phenomenological reorientation since the complete isolation of the bourgeois individual as dictated by objectivism is only apparent. This individual never ceased to be a social being. The reorientation, then, must not and cannot be a total one. A total reorientation, replacing objectivism with holism and effecting the repression of individuality, would not solve the crisis of mankind. The crisis can be overcome only *by developing the social character of the individual*.

For it is false that "For the individual, the reification and hence determinism are irremovable."<sup>42</sup> *History and Class Consciousness* is based on the assumption that objectivism is true. Because of this assumption, Lukács can exercise his critique only from the standpoint of a total reorientation. Husserl's ambiguities, however, leave room for a different solution. The standpoint of the totality here is that of the philosopher, whose reorientation is only temporary. "It can have habitually enduring validity for one's whole remaining life only in the form of an unconditional resolve of the will to take up, at periodic but internally unified points of time, the same attitude and, through this continuity that intentionally bridges the gaps, to sustain its new sort of interests as valid and as ongoing projects and to realize them through corresponding cultural structures."<sup>43</sup>

Philosophy represents the standpoint of the totality, or, as Habermas would say, the emancipation interests of mankind. If it subordinates its own standpoint to that of scientificity as in the case of positivistic determinism, then it does indeed abandon its true mission. This holds true not only when it represents the standpoint of the isolated individual, the private man, the

41. See *Phänomenologie und Marxismus*, Vol. 3, *Sozialphilosophie*, edited by B. Waldenfels, J.M. Broekman, A. Pazanin (Frankfurt, 1978), pp. 115-143.

42. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, *op.cit.*, p. 193.

43. Husserl, *The Crisis*, *op.cit.*, pp. 281-282.

bourgeois, but also when it represents another particularity, i.e., the proletariat. The elitism of *History and Class Consciousness* reveals the false consciousness of Bolshevism, its belief that a self-conscious elite can and should represent a class and, through it, all mankind.

Liberation from every particularity can end only in the terror of the general. The standpoint of a specific particularity amounts to the same thing. If there is a solution, it lies only in the mutual recognition of the most different particularities. The holistic standpoint cannot and does not want to be achieved. It does not belong to *one* class or to one specific oppressed particularity, but to all of mankind. Inasmuch as the unity of mankind is a value only to the extent that the different particularities seek mutual recognition instead of annihilation, the standpoint of the totality, philosophy, should not be realized. If the unity of mankind is a value at all, it is so only in the regulative and not in the constitutive sense. What follows from this for science?

If the holistic standpoint is only a point of departure for critique, and not an attainable or desirable reality, we need reject only the universalization of science and not science itself. Habermas writes correctly, but not logically, that "it constitutes the honor of the sciences to apply their method relentlessly without reflecting on the knower's interest. The sciences are all the more certain of their discipline because they methodologically do not know what they do, i.e., methodological progress within an unproblematized framework. False consciousness has a supportive function."<sup>44</sup> Habermas is not logical here, for the consciousness of science is *false only in the sense* that it — inevitably — seeks to universalize its world view. Yet, we cannot subordinate the technical interest attached to it (and the practical one of hermeneutic science, which is always linked with concrete mankind) to the emancipatory one. Such subordination would mean the totalitarian world order we have just rejected. Thus, the consciousness of "objective science" is not, in and of itself, false. "Objective science" represents part of our reality: the impossibility of overcoming all objectivity. Science, moreover, does not have the function of creating meaning. Under no circumstances can the meaning of life stem from knowledge. Any meaning that stems from knowledge is, for us, transcendent.

44. Jürgen Habermas, *Technik und Wissenschaft als 'Ideologie'* (Frankfurt, 1968), p. 165.