

Helmut Reinicke, *Revolt im bürgerliche Erbe: Gebrauchswert und Mikrologie*. Giessen-Lollar; Achenbach Verlag, 1975. 223 pages. DM 14.

This study of literary figures of the first half of the 19th century takes its methodological inspiration from Marx' ways of interrelating economic forms and forms of consciousness in his critique of political economy. Reinicke pursues the question of the relation between the possibilities of social knowledge available in the medium of art and the specificity of social forms by investigating the content and literary strategies in the works of Lichtenberg, Jean Paul, and Heine as a revolt against the growing commodification of people and nature.

This period from 1800 to 1850 was one of spreading commodification which took place within a form of production in which the subsumption of labor was "formal" rather than "real." Marx terms the subsumption of labor by capital "formal" when small arisans and other "free" laborers are organized under the control of capitalist or capitalists without radically altering their techniques of producing, as in manufacture, while under "real" subsumption of labor by capital Marx understands the industrial organization of production around machinery. The "formal" subsumption of labor in the period under investigation can be considered inadequate to the concept of capital because it fails to carry out the logic of surplus value production. That the *commodity* form blossoms in this period while the *capital* form is only budding is important to the argument in this review because the commodity form, as opposed to the capital form, does not contain the *immanent* possibility of oppositional forms of action and thought. This means that insofar as protest and revolt arise against the commodity form they must orient themselves to that which is not yet commodified.

Reinicke is not satisfied with merely indicating that each of the writers examined—or that characters in their works—explicitly called for emancipation, and relating that to the general prevailing social 'conditions.' Rather, by means of a critical materialist epistemology, he seeks to uncover the specificity of the *form* of revolt expressed and its connections to the form in which it is conveyed. He discovers that in all three writers, revolt is embedded in sensuality, in the small aspects of everyday life which stand opposed to the abstract universal of the commodity form, rather than in any counter principle of universality. "Use-value surfaces [in their works] as literary micrology: as the phenomenology of the non-identical, the preservation of those small qualities not siezed and levelled by exchange-value. The micrological, the emancipatory compendium of details, becomes the object of reflection for Lichtenberg. For him . . . as for Jean Paul, the humanitarian revolt lies hidden within this form which, with Heine, acquires a new sensual aspect as revolutionary paganism against exploitation and non-freedom" (p. 124).

Reinicke shows how Lichtenberg attempted to indicate protest forms against commodity and merchant capital in the sensual qualities of language, everyday life and the habits of other peoples. In short stories, reflections on everyday life, as well as in the way in which he analyzed literature, Lichtenberg tried to uncover a hidden concrete utopia. At the same time, he had a notion of an emancipatory subjectivity embedded in these details which could be achieved through their reflection. Jean Paul also sought to find the locus of emancipatory radicality in the microcosmic, where moments of hapiness and sensuality were still preserved which had been lost on a more general social elvel. This is, according to Reinicke reflected in his language itself; in its restlessness, richness of display and immanent transmission of the 'small sensual joys' (p. 139). The mode of narration incorporates a process of self-reflection, not only

as related to the world described, as is the case with Lichtenberg, but which includes the writer as subject in the process. It begins to acquire a dialectical character, whereby the 'Self which is in the process of coming to itself' (*zu-sich-selbst-dommende-Ich*) does not attain that goal, but only has a presentiment of it as an anticipated freedom (p. 143).

Heine, the last of the authors considered, continued the tradition of protest against the destruction of sensual qualities by the commodity and made it more explicit. He tried to express a freer sensuality, in lyrical form, as necessary for the emancipatory revolution. Yet, according to Reinicke, it is precisely with Heine that the historical limits of the form of revolt and its medium of transmission — art — become problematic. Heine himself felt that lyrical subjectivity was no longer adequate to the sorts of struggles which were coming into being, but that its decline, the decline of his art, was historically necessary. He was less aware of the historical limits of the revolt form itself which he propagated: "the plebeian critique [which] still has the money fetish as its object and not the reversal of things and of human beings in production itself which is posited by capital relations" (p. 155). On the basis of his investigation and the Marxian categorical distinction between commodity form and capital form Reinicke judges the aesthetic protest of Lichtenberg, Jean Paul, and Heine to be "plebeian anti-capitalism" because it directs itself against the commodity form, not the capital form. Neither the protest nor the historical reality of these writers was adequate to the concept of capital.

In his analysis of Lichtenberg, Jean Paul and Heine, Reinicke indicates that what is essential to all of them is the positive emphasis placed on the subtleties of everyday life. This, as we have seen, characterizes resistance against the abstract universality that informs commodity exchange. Because universality acquired a different, more negative meaning, its unequivocal affirmation as Humanity by Schiller and Goethe became untenable for the writers here examined. For Reinicke, this practical critique of the Weimar classics, as well as its own historical limits, calls art into question as a means of knowledge of the true within the medium of appearance. His point of departure is that art involves the sensualization of truth and that this becomes problematic when reality no longer lends itself to sensualization. With the increasing commodification of nature and people their particular sensuous qualities — what Marx calls the use-value side of commodities — are reduced to exchange values and subordinated to being mere means to capital's utterly abstract goal of the realization of surplus value. At this point, art can at best negatively polemicize against the existing world. It can no longer fully grasp it. Art therefore becomes incapable of positively specifying the sensualization of conditions of knowledge which are becoming increasingly abstract. As Reinicke states, "value and surplus-value . . . cannot be revealed by aesthetic (*kunstschönen*) means. The analysis of this social truth is the task of revolutionary critique" (p. 173).

Reinicke's attempt to analyze the historical determinateness of art as a mode of knowledge should not, however, be taken to mean that he is dismissing it. On the one hand he is trying to indicate the historical limits of art as a means of knowledge of totality. It existed as a separate sphere because, although that totality was graspable, it was not socially realizable. Art begins to lose that function when the determinations of social form become so abstract that they can no longer be grasped aesthetically. On the other hand, the contradictions of capital develop in such a way that a future society, where meaning and form can be identical, becomes a possibility. Art, as a separate sphere, has reached its limits; the aspirations of art, however, begin to be

expressed in those of everyday life. "The forms of art after the end of Art . . . must be presented with reference to the possibilities of a revolutionary practice in everyday life, according to the level of the unfolding of capital, the mode of production and forms of resistance of the proletariat. The emphasis, in any case, would have to be that that appearance (*Schein*) which was once created as the True and the Beautiful, along with its affective exercise, be sedimented in material production and the modes of communication of human beings; that which was the supra-practical moment of free sensuality, becomes the practice of everyday life" (p. 188). Reinicke does not banish art from the future society because it does not represent truth, but rather claims that its truth value, as an independent form, has become historically inadequate. That which art was must become part of everyday life.

This approach still has to be examined with regard to its more immediate political relevance. To do so, a closer examination of 'plebeian anti-capitalism' is in order. During a period when fully developed capital relations and an industrial proletariat were still in the process of coming into being, when the mechanization of industrial production was not yet fully developed, anti-capitalist revolt was most frequently against a *new* form of domination and was strongly informed by a memory of a pre-capitalist past. Not, of course, the past of feudal lords and peasants, guild masters and journeymen, so idyllically recalled by retrograde romantic mythology, but, rather, a past in which each individual could relate to themselves as their own owner. Elements of this past did, in fact, historically exist and it is no coincidence that plebeian anti-capitalism was represented most strongly among artisans. However, with the partial exception of the United States (an exception we return to below), this past, a society composed of independent commodity producers, never existed as an historical totality. If then, it is only *partially* rooted in historical reality, what is the source of this image of this past society as a *totality*?

An anthropological ontology can be avoided only if one argues that the present must be structured in a way conducive to such a nostalgic image. If one examines the course of the unfolding of the categories in Marx's critique of political economy, the movement from commodity to money to capital to the various determinations of capital, does have an historical moment—but only as a moment. As totalities, the categories exist only in capitalist society and do not represent total stages of historical development. On the other hand, each step does not disappear with the emergence of the next, but, rather, all together constitute the totality. That is to say, not only does the sphere of simple commodity circulation only fully exist under capitalism, but it is constantly being reproduced anew. Because, however, it exists as a sphere not *immediately* identical with the sphere of capital-determined production, commodity circulation and the ideas of equality and liberty associated with it, are *thinkable* as a total pre-capitalist social form, one whose appearance is in apparent contradiction with the 'realities' of capitalist society. In other words, the moment of past historical reality appears as a totality because it is mediated as a totality in the present. This brand of anachronism can be found in classical political economy as well as in the early anti-capitalist revolt. Marx, in analyzing Adam Smith, speaks of "the paradise lost of the bourgeoisie, where people did not confront one another as capitalists, wage-labourers, land owners, tenant farmers, users, and so on, but simply as persons who produced commodities and exchanged them" (*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970, p. 59).

In the historical period examined by Reinicke, anti-capitalism could only have

taken on the form of resisting the present by referring to the past. While commodity production was spreading rapidly, the form of production adequate to the concept of capital—real subsumption of labor—began only towards the end of this period. Expressed in terms of the categories of the Marxian critique: on the logical level of commodities, use-value is merely the material carrier of the social relations embodied in exchange-value. It is a non-identical moment, but one which is of little independent significance. The form of thought implied by the categories on this level—the well-known fetish of commodities—is not only static, but one-sided. The categories of the sphere of commodity circulation fail to provide a mode of thought, oppositional to the *value* framework underlying exchange-value. There is an externalization of the *difference* between use-value and exchange-value in the form of the difference between the commodities as the relative forms and money as the universal equivalent form, but this difference is not yet an opposition, much less a contradiction. In other words, within a society which is still in the process of developing a mode of production adequate to the concept of capital, the possibility of revolt and of opposition is in the not-yet-subsumed, the use-value which is not yet a mere carrier of exchange value.

On the logical level of the concept of capital, with the rise of real subsumption, however, use-value has another, more active determination. The use-value dimension is expressed in the labor process, that is, as the non-identical moment of the process of production which incorporates social relations and possesses a dynamic historical moment. The interaction of the process of production of surplus-value with the labor process, as the two moments of the process of capitalist production, not only defines a historical dynamic in terms of the ever accelerating development of the means of production, but also one in which fetishized forms of consciousness as well as oppositional, non-subsumed forms, are constantly coming into being. As opposed to the category of the commodity, that of capital implies the immanent creation of its own opposition (and not merely on the objective level), the possibility of its *Aufhebung*. However, this possibility itself is historical. The dialectic of use-value and exchange-value on the level of capital does not define a given, static, possibility. Rather, that the forms of fetishized thought, as well as those of possible revolutionary subjectivity, historically change qualitatively. The fact that, with real subsumption, the possibility exists that the proletariat can develop anti-capitalist forms out of the immanence of capital itself and does not have to reach back to a pre-capitalist past, does not mean that those immanent anti-capitalist forms can, at any historical point, be capital-transcending. The question of class consciousness is not simply one of the degree of militant anti-capitalism, but one of the content of that anti-capitalism, and that is an historical question.

As an aside, it should be noted that the economy-critical approach here briefly sketched out has important implications for a critique of a major trend in western Marxism stemming from Lukács. In his attempt to theoretically overcome the dichotomy of objectivism and subjectivism, Lukács was the first to analyze the Marxian categories as simultaneous determinations of social form and form of thought. However, he only considered the commodity form and not the capital form in this manner. In terms of what has been argued above, this made it possible for Lukács to derive revolutionary class consciousness immanently out of his categorial analysis. He could only get as far as proletarian self-awareness of its being an object, i.e., the commodity level. On the capital level, however, the immanent analysis breaks off, and instead Lukács has recourse to crisis and the Party. The question as to why

Lukács and those who followed him remained on the logical level of commodities cannot be dealt with here. In any case, this tradition is, in one sense, carried further by the Frankfurt School: they, too, only grasp consciousness which immanently arises under capitalism as one-sided reification. The mechanisms of the reification are described brilliantly, but because only the value dimension is considered, the results are totally pessimistic. Spurning the Party as an emancipatory alternative, but retaining Lukács' equation of commodity-determined thought with capital-determined thought in general, they can only positively view that use-value which is not yet subsumed. But this is, historically, a losing proposition. Habermas tries to revive the notion of emancipation, but his point of departure is, implicitly, also the commodity level as totality rather than as moment. This is indirectly expressed in his equation of the Marxian concept of labor with instrumental activity, i.e., with the value-dimension of labor alone, ignoring its use-value dimension. Emancipation can be 'saved' only by breaking apart the synthetic double-sidedness of the Marxian categories and establishing parallel spheres of labor and interaction, each with its own transhistorical immanent logic. Emancipation sadly, but necessarily, falls back to the level of the Enlightenment — an exhortation in the name of an historically unexamined Reason.

Let us return to the question of plebeian anti-capitalism as considered by Reinicke. As we have seen, during the transitional period leading to the rise of industrial capitalism, that form, a looking to the past, was the only one historically available. In that sense it can be considered historically adequate. With the full development of industrial capitalism, that form did not 'automatically' disappear, to be totally replaced by a now-more-adequate proletarian anti-capitalism. It lived on as an important anti-capitalist strain both within and without the workers' movement. It lived on, not simply because memories die hard, but because, as indicated above, it is a form of thought adequate to the sphere of simple commodity circulation which is continually reproduced as a moment of the capital-determined totality. Because of the changed historical determination of the social formation, however, it acquired a different or, better, a dual significance. As Reinicke argues, the remembrance of pre-capitalist times can become a hindrance for the proletariat when those qualities which have been lost are not transformed in a socialist direction with reference to the prevailing conditions of capitalist labor. If this does not occur, then what is left are various theorists of money or time-chits, proponents of artisanal cooperatives, etc. — in other words, a tendency which in terms of a working class politics adequate to the realities of industrial capitalism is petty bourgeois (p. 52). In spite of the vulgarizing misuse of this latter term within the Marxist tradition, it does have a critical epistemological significance. It, of course, has nothing in common with the usual form of sociological reductionism which relate ideas immediately back to the class origins of their proponents. Nor does it necessarily refer to the thinking of the actual petty-bourgeoisie. Rather, it refers to a form of anti-capitalist thought, adequate to the sphere of simple commodity circulation, with a utopian ideal which is ahistorical and totally inadequate to the concept of capital: a society composed, even if in cooperative form, of free and equal commodity producers and exchangers, i.e., a society in which *all* are petty-bourgeois.

Yet, similarly as was the case with art, Reinicke's intention is not simply to write off the tradition emerging out of early 19th century plebeian anti-capitalism by examining how its historical adequacy dissolves. He notes that a positive moment lies in its insistence upon self-realization, that one relate to oneself as an owner in one's

labor (p. 53). This is the double aspect of the historical non-simultaneity of the form of thought being examined. That it directs itself to a past which never fully was makes its specific goals anachronistic and unrealizable at best. However, the fact that it does "remember" a pre-capitalist past at all means that it maintains the possibility of post-proletarian labor, in however confused a form.

This is of particular contemporary political importance. The ideas of the traditional working class movements, whether Social Democratic or Communist, arose at a time when the non-identical moment emerging out of capitalist society could not, even in its most militantly anti-capitalist form, encompass the idea of the *Aufhebung* of capitalist labor. Questions of ownership of the means of production, of the mode of organization of *existing* labor, and of the distribution of capital and goods, could be placed on the agenda; not however the question of proletarian labor itself. To be sure, these movements turned their backs on a pre-capitalist past, but their vision of a post-capitalist future was still too determined by their capitalist present. Today, when the development of late capitalism is such that questions of self-realization, meaningful labor, and so on are very much on the agenda, the traditional working class movements and ideas have become obsolete. On the other hand, plebeian anti-capitalism in its contemporary variants, whether populist, anarchist, counter-cultural, etc., does grasp this question, but wrapped in a web of pre-capitalist fantasies. The task then is to wed this crucially important "remembrance" of the future with the realities and humane potentialities of the advanced capitalist mode of production.

This is particularly important in America, inasmuch as pre-capitalist anti-capitalism has, as a form of thought, been historically dominant to a degree unknown in other capitalist countries. This is the other side of the coin of the question of the development (or its lack) of working-class consciousness in the United States. Most answers, ignoring the common liberal mystifications, concentrate on ethnicity, relatively high wages, the culture industry, and the availability of land. All of these may be important, but they avoid any type of categorial analysis of the specificity of the American development. American society, outside of the plantations in the South, came closest to a pre-capitalist form which, as a total historical stage, resembled the logical level of simple commodity circulation. Not only was there no feudal past to speak of, but most Americans actually lived as small independent commodity producers—artisans, small merchants and farmers. (The difference between the American farmer and the European peasant is essential here!) Even with the rapid industrialization of the last third of the 19th century, this did not immediately change. On the contrary, the immediate effect was that, for example, the number of farmers tripled. The huge populist waves at the end of the century mark the end of this development. If, as argued above, the nostalgia for a pre-capitalist society of independent commodity producers is present within capitalism as a constant possibility, because the sphere of simple commodity circulation is a continuing moment of capitalist totality, then how much stronger must that form of thought be in a society where it is reinforced by such specific historical circumstances? This form of thought, it could be argued, was practically hegemonic in America and defined what or who the real American was. This, too, was reinforced by a moment of social reality. The American Dream had less to do with the possibility of becoming a capitalist than the possibility of becoming 'independent'—an independence where one could presume a relationship between hard work and material comfort.

On the basis of this thesis, it could be argued that the high degree of awareness indicated by young Americans in the last decade on questions of self-realization and meaningful activity is not only a function of the fact that the U.S. is the most highly developed capitalist country in the world, but also a function of that pre-capitalist anti-capitalism discussed above. This helps explain the double-sidedness of the American movement: the strong, capital-surpassing needs which have been expressed, and the capital-inadequate forms with which they've been expressed. It is no accident that most of those forms—land communes, food coops, community auto-repair garages, etc.—exist in the pores of capitalist society and deal with the simple distribution and production of commodities. They are reflections of an old American tradition, one which, in its concrete specificity, represents a totally historically inadequate form of consciousness as well as organization for the overcoming of capitalism. Yet the general needs standing behind these concrete modes of expression can explode the capital-determined social form. This double-sidedness marks our dilemma and defines our task.

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Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la Prison*. Paris: Gallimard, 1975. 315 pages.

Foucault's aim in *Surveiller et punir* is a correlative history of the modern "soul" and the new *power to punish*: "a genealogy of modern morals. First, he refuses to limit his discussion of punishment to its "repressive," negative effects—excluding, repressing, penalizing. Instead he takes punishment as a complex social function having many *positive* effects—maintaining order, restoring calm, "improving" mankind. Next, he does not view penal methods as answering to legal statutes, but he deals with techniques of power in complicity with other agencies of authority: punishment as a political tactic. Third, he explores whether there is a common matrix for the history of penal law, the development of the human sciences (and humanism), thereby continuing his earlier investigations (especially in *The Order of Things*). In short, the technology of power is seen as the driving element in the "humanization of penalty" and the "sciences of man." Finally, he wishes to see if the entry of the soul, the non-corporal elements, into the penal process represents a transformation in the manner in which the body is affected by power relations. How, for example, does the normal-abnormal prescription come to add to the crime as an object for penal intervention? And what specific mode of subjugation gave birth to man as the object of knowledge for a discourse claiming scientific status?

It becomes ever more clear as we read Foucault's book that for him the body is directly immersed in the political field and traversed by a complex interplay of forces. The body is viewed by society as useful only if it is at the same time labor-power and a subjugated body. A cry for a more comprehensive knowledge of the body's conduct masks perhaps a more political call for mastery over its hidden potentials. The political technology of discipline is ripe.

But what does Foucault mean by power? He takes his distance from the currently brandished notions that power is "held" by those who are "in positions of power." Rather than speak of power and authority as a thing that, like a commodity, can be