

The Otherness of the Marxist Philosophy of History: An Attempt at Symbolic Conceptualization

Abstract:

The presented master's thesis makes an attempt to re-contextualize the Marxist philosophy of history in relation to its otherness (*Anderssein*) and thereby to shift the methodologically central accent away from the category of totality (worked out mainly in Lukács' "History and Class Consciousness"). This new perspective is to be centred on the phenomena that cannot be fully covered in a scientific or strictly materialist manner and that nevertheless belong to the conceptual framework of Marxism. For this purpose, the other (*das Andere*) is defined as the symbolic (*das Symbolische*), which is further examined in the first part of the thesis with reference to Kant's "Critique of Judgment" and on the basis of several descriptions – discursive and phenomenological alike. The symbolic is then outlined as a special type of figurative that overcomes the figurative itself and thus constitutes a transcending operation.

In the second part of the paper, this definition is applied to the Marxist philosophy of history with the aim to explicate its symbolic figures and to show their conceptual tensions. In accordance with the established meaning of the term, three symbols are consecutively considered and analysed: The prehistory (*Vorgeschichte*), which sums up the entirety of the actual history as we know it so far (Marx's „A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy”), the art (*Kunst*), which by representing the revolution makes it possible and releases it from the limitations of objectivity (Lenin's „Marxism and Insurrection“), and the ghosts (*Gespenster*), which express different modes of revolutionary transcendence (Benjamin's“ On the Concept of History ”with reference to Derrida's“ Marx's Ghosts ”).

The main result of this research is that with the help of the symbolic the Marxist philosophy of history justifies the possibility of historical transcendence, i.e. the transcendence *in* history and the transcendence *of* history. This is reflected in the logic of the aforementioned symbols: The symbol of prehistory depicts the basic non-identity of history with itself, the symbol of art then indicates the form in which this non- identity can be implemented in practice and lastly the symbol of ghosts gives this implementation a concrete direction and content. In this respect, the presented master's thesis may also serve as a starting point for further studies on the Marxist philosophy of history and its figures of otherness.

Key words: Marxism, Philosophy of History, Otherness, Symbol, Transcendence, Kant, Marx, Lenin, Benjamin, Derrida.