

### **It's Dialectical!**

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*Valences of the Dialectic*, by Fredric Jameson. London: Verso, 2009, 625 pp., US\$49.95, ISBN 9781859848777

Fredric Jameson's *Valences of the Dialectic* is in essence three books: an exhilarating new book on the dialectic, destined to be counted among the central works in Jameson's corpus (Parts I, II, and VI); a virtual third volume of the essay collection *Ideologies of Theory* (Parts III and V); and a peculiar middle section (Part IV), which I will characterize more fully below.

The bracing early chapters of *Valences of the Dialectic* return to us the useful Hegel, not the thinker of the One (of teleology, of identity, of the ultimate return of every difference into the monotony of the same), but rather the unrelenting and almost impossibly rigorous thinker of the Two, of the fundamental unrest and instability (neither the yin and yang of complementarity, nor the static field of binary opposition, nor yet the aporetic abyss of the antinomy, each one of these being rather a disguise for the thought of the One) that dissolves every certainty in contradiction and propels it forward into something else which is not, from its own perspective, conceivable. Of course, these two Hegels, the thinker of the One and of the Two, are the same Hegel, viewed under different and contradictory aspects. Even if we read, as we should, the final chapter of the *Phenomenology* ("On Absolute Knowing") as utterly in contradiction with the only ontological (in fact anti-ontological) claim in the *Phenomenology* (the derivation of dialectical movement in the Introduction) and as a last-ditch attempt to rescue the *Phenomenology* from its most profound implications (from which perspective it can be made to look like a Brechtian happy end, but it is really more like a Hollywood ending: for Lukács, Hegel's teleology was "scarcely

comprehensible in view of his method”) everything still depends on how we read “the identity of identity and difference” (which appears in its explicit and abstract form only later, in the *Logic*).<sup>1</sup>

The formula looks like our everyday stereotype of the Hegelian procedure: the submission of Difference to the rule of Identity. But we must also read Hegel’s formulation in the other direction: Every identity contains difference within it; everything that appears self-contained and solid hides a secret self-contradiction. The question is not so much which is the “real” Hegel (both procedures are necessary) but which is the tonic chord of the Hegelian dialectic — or, better, to extend the metaphor, whether the dialectic is, in fact, constructed around a tonic chord, every dissonance and unresolved tension in exile from resolution even when resolution is treated as anathema; or whether, on the contrary, it is constructed around an unresolved dominant, seething with tension and potential movement even when seemingly at rest. Once the question assumes this enlarged dimension, however, it becomes correspondingly more difficult to decide, and Jameson’s answer, bypassing a great deal that might be said in the way of “theological niceties,” is that only the second Hegel is interesting.

The first chapter, “The Three Names of the Dialectic” (a version of which was presented at the Marxist Literary Group’s Summer Institute on Culture and Society in Chicago in 2007), raises three possibilities: “the dialectic” as a system or method, “many dialectics” as a set of operations which can be found across disciplines and discourses, and “it’s dialectical!” as a name for the effect of the dialectic, for the sudden widening of the conceptual field that accompanies the transformation of an apparently discrete phenomenon into a moment within a larger force field. The first of these will be the most obviously problematic — even as the title of the book insists, despite a more ambiguous discussion of the matter in this chapter (11–12), that a sense of “the” dialectic is nonetheless necessary — while the second will demonstrate its own unsatisfactory nature by way of a catalog of “dialectical moments in the work of non- or anti-dialectical thinkers” (15). The key moment here is that of structuralism and the discovery of binary opposition as a generative principle of meaning and, in a negative corollary, as the very form of ideology and error. This then permits a new staging of the emergence of the dialectic. In Hegel, opposition was to be derived from something else, namely *Verstand* or the law of noncontradiction. After the brief reign of the binary opposition and the longer reign of its deconstruction, the dialectic can be revealed to be the truth of that relationship, such that “any opposition can be the starting point for a dialectic in its own right” (19); or, more strongly put, “it is the unmasking of [static] antinomy as [dynamic] contradiction which constitutes truly dialectical thinking as such” (43). Now

a dialectic can be identified in Coleridge, in Mondrian, in the *Aeneid*, in the thought of a Foucault or a Deleuze, and of course the examples of those who are “dialectical without knowing it” (67) can be multiplied almost infinitely; in the hands of a Žižek (on Deleuze, for example) this game becomes almost a sport, though here it is played in earnest. Particularly productive in this section is a kind of typology that emerges, such that several distinct procedures, both within and outside of the explicitly dialectical tradition, can all be shown to be “dialectical” in some substantial sense.

However, what we have arrived at by way of this second moment is nothing less than the singular “method” which was to be avoided in the first, and indeed this immanent method delivers us at the feet of a set of discursive regularities, of laws to be discovered — “laws” being, however, the target of the dialectic from the beginning (in those interminable passages on the physical sciences in the *Phenomenology*) and which only reinstate themselves within it by way of what now seem deplorable — but at the same time almost charming — Engelsisms. In a first approach, the problem can be avoided by returning to a conception of the dialectic as purely reactive, as a practice of disruptive guerrilla raids on *Verstand*, reified thinking, common sense. (And indeed, as with the two Hegels above, the thought of the Two cannot function without the thought of the One; the dialectic presumes common sense; if the latter were really defeated, the former would have nothing on which to operate. The complication is, to get ahead of ourselves, that *Verstand* is not stable but is rather itself implicated in the movement of the dialectic). But this guerrilla dialectic begins to look both familiar and harmless; it has become a matter of rediscovering some old tools, providing a new genealogy and perhaps a gratifyingly militant tone for the deconstructive attitude. The difference between the dialectic and this attitude — a difference which becomes obvious in Marx — is, however, already fully present in Hegel, in his insistence that the dialectic was already an operation in the object itself, leaving noumenal squeamishness to the Kantians. This is, then, the explosive force of the central Hegelian claim for the “reality of the appearance,” or that “the essence must appear”: the insight that *Verstand* is not just “in here” in consciousness, but “out there” in the world itself: in more modern terms, reality is itself ideological. The wage relation, for example, disguises the essence of labor-power, but the wage relation is not only an ideological construct but also something objectively “out there” in society. The dialectic does not attack appearances in the name of an essence that lies outside them; nor does it attack them in the hopes of merely loosening their hold on thought; rather, it takes hold of them from the inside in the name of another appearance that is already immanent in them. The

dialectic, the dereification of thought, is also the dereification of the world, the edifice of facts turned into a tissue of potentialities.

“The Three Names of the Dialectic,” however, includes four names, the supplementary possibility being the “spatial dialectic.” The term has caused some confusion and even suspicion; matters can be clarified by understanding first that the spatial dialectic is still historical. We are really talking here more about making space dialectical than about making the dialectic spatial; the point is to outfit the dialectic for a moment when space is a conceptual dominant, for reasons that are entirely historical in the strong sense. When the dialectic stalls in the *Aesthetics*, Hegel often gets things moving by means of a leap from one “civilization” to another — but this leap is often immediate, which is to say, precisely undialectical, so these leaps would be the task of a spatial dialectic to explain, rather than its source. Still, one has only to remember that *Phenomenology of Spirit* itself is far from straightforwardly chronological to realize that the dialectic is there already spatial. Indeed, many of the relationships in the *Phenomenology* are explicitly spatial ones: the recurrent problem of the “beyond,” which it is the particular task of the dialectic to hunt down and destroy wherever it appears; the realms of the netherworld and the city that organize the oppositions in the *Antigone* section (and many of the other dialectical pairings can now be seen to be spatial as well: lord and bondsman, virtue and the way of the world, inner and outer in the observation of nature, and so on); or finally the “typological” reading which the *Phenomenology* permits (the beautiful soul, the unhappy consciousness, the law of the heart, and so on), from which perspective the types can be thought of as locations — or at least temptations native to locations — in social space. And, of course, once we move beyond Hegel (Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Cardoso, Amin...), a spatial dialectic, not named as such but already specifically global, begins to emerge as a mode of thinking in its own right. It has yet to be isolated and theorized under its own name, and Jameson does the former but not yet the latter here. However, the theoretical aim of the diverse projects of the São Paulo “school” — *Valences* is dedicated to Grécia de la Sobera and Roberto Schwarz — in the various disciplines (sociology, history, literary studies, economics, history) is precisely to produce a spatial dialectic, and if one wants to get a sense of what a spatial dialectic would look like in practice, one could do a lot worse than look at the *Dossier: Brazil* issue of this journal ([www.mediationsjournal.org/toc/23\\_1](http://www.mediationsjournal.org/toc/23_1)).

The second chapter is equally stimulating but more difficult to summarize. Essentially, it is a guided tour of the *Encyclopedia Logic*, organized through the itinerary of vulgar understanding or *Verstand*, which itself is no stable term but rather assumes various forms as the *Logic* unfolds. Here,

some theological niceties can really not be avoided, particularly with regard to the problem of the “where” or the space in which the *Logic* unfolds: any such homogeneous space will immediately, no matter how interesting the local content, force us back into the bad Hegel of “Absolute Spirit” as omniscient narrator. Jameson’s solution here is, if I am not mistaken, very much in line with his earlier reading of the *Phenomenology*: the space of the *Logic* is heterogeneous from one moment to the next. That is, the movement from one contradiction to another in the text is not so much to be thought of as a movement higher in some absolute space (though Jameson cannot expunge the vertical metaphor altogether), but rather wider with reference to the moment that preceded it. The real innovation here, however, and the meat of the chapter, is to identify *Verstand* with reification, and so to turn the venerable (that is, tedious) question of “Marx’s Hegelianism” on its head: the *Logic*, even more than the Master-Slave dialectic, turns out to give us a clue to “Hegel’s Marxism” (100).

This brings us to “Hegel’s Contemporary Critics,” and the first thing to be said about those critics of Hegel that are worth talking about here — Derrida, Deleuze, Blanchot, and (barely) Foucault — is that they are all dead (though some of them continue to publish), making one wonder whether we are talking about contemporary anti-Hegelians or rather an anti-Hegelian moment whose time has come and gone. To be sure, North American doxa still clings to the insights and arguments of this largely French moment (but the former has for Jameson always been a doxa of “camp-followers,” the worst insult in a deceptively mild lexicon where even “extraordinary” can be intended merely literally), and (this) dialectic will always have its enemies on the Right; just as surely there is and always will be plenty of simply undialectical thinking going on at various levels of real and imagined sophistication (though one of Jameson’s more arresting theses is that the dialectic is a mode of thinking native to Utopia itself, and that the historical moments of its elaboration have been windows onto it). But I have the sense that “our” wholesale critiques of Hegel (critiques directed from a perceptive and intelligent Left) have had their day. The post-Deleuzian neo-Spinozists are perhaps an exception (even if the best of them are “dialectical without knowing it”), but we won’t see an engagement with them until much later in the book. This chapter, then, is as much a settling of accounts — a *What Is Living and What Is Dead in the Critique of Hegel* — as it is a set of arguments. One is treated in this staging to a series of defenses of the dialectic against some of its most worthy opponents, while later engagements with some of the same thinkers will assume a more dialectical form.

It is hard to imagine a mode of summary that would do here: suffice it to say that in these brief encounters (with *Glas*, *Différence et répétition*, and,

less obviously, Foucault's 1966 essay "La Pensée du dehors"), Hegel will generally turn out to have been either summarized where we thought he was being critiqued, foundational to the critique itself, or waiting patiently where we thought something new was being said. But while these engagements take the form of a series of arguments, sometimes clearly exasperated ones, a later chapter on Derrida, which responds to *Specters of Marx*, is both more generous and less direct; indeed much of it is given over to explication and to chasing down the resonances that situate spectrality as central to the Derridean corpus. The strategy there will be twofold: on one hand not to fall into the trap Derrida has laid by attempting to disperse too soon the ghosts of arguments that flit through the text (though brushing away a few misapprehensions cannot be resisted); and on the other to include Derrida's critique within Marxism: spectrality and its cognates are what Utopia looks like when the attempt is made to think it in an historical moment when Utopia itself is unthinkable. (On this account, Derrida becomes a symptom of a situation that affects all Left thinking today in one way or another, non-Marxist and Marxist alike). The full Deleuze chapter, meanwhile, hews more closely to the case made here: that there is an irresolvable tension or antinomy between the monism of desire, avowed as fundamental in Deleuze, and the various dualisms that proliferate in Deleuze's work — but which are also essential, though in a more subterranean way, to the functioning of the Deleuzian machine. Once such an antinomy has been produced, it becomes, as we have seen, ripe for the dialectical picking.

We turn, then, to Part III (the long initial chapter having received a Part of its own), and to familiar material. Chapters 4 and 5 (the commentaries on Derrida and Deleuze mentioned above) appeared in *New Left Review* and *South Atlantic Quarterly*. Chapters 7 and 8 reprint introductions to Volumes 1 and 2 of Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, and are not, to me at least, as interesting as the rest of this section. Chapter 6, which appeared in the first issue of *Rethinking Marxism*, is Jameson's striking solution to the "intersectionality" problem — a problem which is still with us despite having a name that declares itself solved in advance. This chapter is other things as well — a defense of Totality (the concept, not the thing) as well as a reappraisal of Lukács's legacy for aesthetic thought — but, most importantly, it issues a challenge to complete Lukács rather than to repudiate him: that is, not to assail the (narrow-minded, old-fashioned, "workerist") privileging of class standpoint as epistemological fulcrum, but rather to repeat it with race, gender, sexuality, subalternity, or indeed anything else: in other words, to produce the insights to which this or that standpoint provides privileged access. Jameson singles out feminist science studies as the principal example, and Fanon stands in, one presumes, for a whole range of insights which

continue up to the present day (one thinks, for example, of the very different projects of Roberto Schwarz and Paulin Hountondji); the challenge has also been explicitly taken up for queer theory by, among others, Kevin Floyd in a book reviewed in this issue. One might open up possibilities beyond the usual "intersectional" suspects by considering that Pierre Bourdieu's defense of the specificity of intellectual production — established as it was via the particular location of intellectuals in social space ("the dominated fraction of the dominant class") as well as the specific conditions of production that distinguish academic from journalistic investigation (the centrality of a more or less self-regulated "restricted field") — might be recast as an answer to such a call. What distinguishes Jameson's enlarged Lukácsian imperative from the complacent injunction to believe what you believe because it's your belief is precisely the "aspiration to Totality" (Lukács, of course): that is, the posited identity of the ultimate object of all these different analyses or, in an older parlance, a commitment to truth. It is worth noting that at the time of this essay (1988), Jameson was willing to concede that "one does not argue with the *Zeitgeist*" (210), by which he meant that one might make an argument against this or that position against Totality, but that the aversion to Totality itself can only be considered historically, approached as a symptom. My sense is that, more than two decades later, something has changed in that one *can* argue with that *Zeitgeist*, which is to say that it is no longer quite our *Zeitgeist*, that the aversion to Totality is no longer as hegemonic for the intellectual Left as it once was. This reversal would, in turn, have to be approached as a symptom, a project which Jameson does not undertake here — though it would be entirely plausible to relate it to the closure of the world market, which has entered the *Zeitgeist* in the allegorical figure of the globe as an ecological or economic totality.

The next section, "Entries" from some possible dictionary of dialectical thinking, is problematic, though it, too, contains some essential reading. Jameson is not a pedagogue in quite this way, and there is something jarring about seeing dialectical ideas laid out in nondialectical form. (What would Hegel's *Logic* have to say if it really looked like a conventional encyclopedia?) The notes are all there, but the breathing is wrong. Plenty has been said about Jameson's "style," and someone has no doubt noted that his arguments tend to proceed through a series of temporal adverbs: "now," "then," "meanwhile," "suddenly," "immediately," "slowly," "at this point," "initially," "for the moment," "finally." The indispensability of these adverbs is part of the rhetoric of the dialectic, and part also of what makes Jameson so difficult to understand for those who have no sympathy for it: the sentence under consideration is true from the perspective, as it were, of the sentence itself; its content is liable to be overturned in the next one. All this temporal

architecture tends to disappear in this middle section, the major exceptions being the two “entries” on Lenin and Rousseau. The argument about Rousseau is going to show a surprising family resemblance to the one about Deleuze (“dialectical without knowing it”), and the one about Lenin is indispensable reading, both for its clarification of what “the economic” means within Marxism and for the counterintuitive conclusion about what a Left politics concretely entails today. I quote the latter, a truly dialectical proposition, out of context here in the hopes that readers will be provoked to read the essay in its entirety: “We must support social democracy because its inevitable failure constitutes the basic lesson, the fundamental pedagogy, of a genuine Left” (299).

This brings us squarely into the matter of Part V, “Politics.” Here, also, much of the material has been published before. Two of these essays will be familiar: “Globalization as a Philosophical Issue,” which is already a standard reference point, and “Globalization as Political Strategy.”<sup>2</sup> A relatively unfamiliar essay will probably be the first one in this section, on “Actually Existing Marxism,” an updated version of an article first published in 1993, at the height of American triumphalism over the “death of Communism.” The thesis is one I believe we have seen elsewhere, but fully elaborated here, namely that since “Marxism is the science of capitalism,” Marxism can scarcely be expected to disappear until capitalism does; or, if it did, that it would have to be reinvented. Jameson divides the question into several parts, essentially: What is Marxism today, and what is it not? What is socialism today, and what is it not? What is revolution today, and what is it not? What was communism, and what was it not? And, what is capitalism today, and what does Marxism present as a response? To followers of Jameson’s work there will not be many surprises, though there are enough new epicycles to contemplate with interest; but rarely is Jameson, clear-eyed as always, so forthright and, though the language is dispassionate, so stirring in his conviction about the positions his work both presumes and entails.

The remaining chapter in this section is new: “Utopia as Replication.” It is a brief essay but one with deep roots, revisiting Jameson’s contribution to the concept of Utopia. Jameson illustrates his “method” — “strategy” or even “technique” is closer to the right word — via the two utopias of Wal-Mart and, more scandalous yet, the multitude. The idea is to find a perspective, or produce one, from which an object can be narrativized into an allegory of a transformed world. There are cases when this perspective is given to us with the object itself (a painting by Van Gogh); we have only to look over the shoulder of the allegorizer. With other cases this perspective is only arrived through our own allegorical effort. In the case of Wal-Mart, it is largely a matter of highlighting its unique place in the economy: to simplify

drastically, the fact that its enormous size and power in relationship to its industrial suppliers can condense complex and, in the long view, untenable relationships between sectors into a single figure. With the multitude, it is (on this account) Paolo Virno who is doing the allegorizing; we are looking on as he changes the valences of the traditional conservative critiques of modernity and turns them into harbingers of the future.

One remembers that Utopianism used to be an insult on the Left, referring to radical postures with no practical political program (essentially, no Party in the abstract sense of a mediatory collective) behind them. Jameson’s good Utopianism perfectly “replicates” the old, bad Utopianism; what is different is a political situation that now no longer seems to offer a practical political program of any kind, such that, on the Left, Utopianism has no other. Its only other is on the Right, in the insistence that any radical alternative is either impossible on its face or destined for totalitarianism. In this situation, the preservation of a Utopian vision is, however minimal, the precondition for any future politics: “Such a revival of futurity and of the positing of alternate futures is not itself a political program nor even a political practice: but it is hard to see how any durable or effective political action could come into being without it” (434). The minimal precondition laid out in this form may be misleading, however. What Jameson does not say here, but which is implicit everywhere else, is that Marxism is not Utopian in only this sense, but in another one which already goes beyond it to find a mediating link (Party being only one possible mediation) between the Utopian and the actual. *Hic rhodus, hic salta*: Aesop’s punch line meant different things to Hegel and Marx, but they both understood it to embody something fundamental. We might translate it into our own historical moment as: no matter how long the march, it must start here. The insistence on the national situation that permeates all of Jameson’s work derives from this imperative, because the nation is, for better and for worse, the only form of political collectivity that is actual today; similarly with the injunction to “support social democracy because it will fail,” a Left politics which is far from ideal but which offers, for precisely that reason, the benefit of intervening in the actual. Jameson’s are not the only possible ways to answer this imperative, and not all of them will be compatible (while, on the contrary and much to the point, all Utopian allegories will be: Jameson will endorse the multitude precisely as far as it is an allegorical “reading” of contemporary society, in other words science fiction; beyond that, he falls silent [see 433]). But any framework that leaves out this mediation or, aware of the difficulty, reserves a place for Elijah, is, to revive a cliché, insufficiently dialectical.

There’s a certain logic in the placement of the final chapter, but I don’t see any good reason to postpone the reading of it until after the 350 pages of

the three middle sections, which have a unity that is no more than thematic and can be read in any order; it would be best not to arrive exhausted at this demanding Part VI. I will not be able to do justice to it here, but it seems to me that this chapter (really a short book in itself) strikes out for radically new territory. The first chapters of *Valences* are dedicated in the main to a certain explication of the dialectic and a demonstration of its persistence; this requires taking account of all kinds of new phenomena and situations, but does not itself reach beyond the dialectic as Jameson finds it. The mode in this final chapter is still commentary (the first part is given over largely to a meditation on Paul Ricoeur's *Temps et récit*), but the point is now not to wear down the points of friction between Ricoeur's account of time and a dialectical one, but rather to produce something new from the encounter: a nonvulgar account of time. Opening this chapter with Derrida's "it is always too late to talk about time," Jameson knows that any classical approach to this project will be doomed at the outset: a satisfactory concept of time is not going to emerge. On the other hand, time itself will be made to emerge as an effect of something else. (Though it is not invoked here, something similar happens in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where time does not arise as a problem precisely because it emerges as the solution to another problem.)

What this "something else" might be is prefigured in Jameson's retranslation of Aristotle's definition of time in the *Physics*. Heidegger had, in a typical move, translated it in such a way as to prioritize a phenomenal horizon. In Jameson's translation, Aristotle's definition is flattened into a mere juxtaposition of temporalities: "time is the number of motion in respect of 'before' and 'after.'" This is, obviously, no definition at all, but a list of things required to make time appear: movement (in what we are to understand is a particularly Greek sense), number, and before and after. The discussion here of Aristotle's *Physics* is no more than a prolegomenon, and yet it gives a sense of what is to come, for the project here will be to speak through (and to some extent against) Ricoeur in order to suggest that time is what emerges in the gaps and frictions between different processes, sequences, or temporalities. (These latter terms already presuppose a concept of time: is always too late to talk about time). Such temporal incommensurability can be as familiar as the everyday disjunction between "subjective" and "objective" time, or as elaborate as Heidegger's temporal categories (Jameson counts nine), and several other sets of juxtapositions are mentioned in passing. A privileged example, which foreshadows the concerns of the second part of this chapter, will be the three temporalities that govern Braudelian historiography.

This only gets Jameson half as far as he wants to go: history does not automatically appear alongside time. What is history, and how does one

make it appear? As with the question of time, the question is one of totalization: the assembly of multiple and in themselves disparate temporalities — in Braudel's version, that of the earth, of institutions, of individual actions — into a followable narrative. The processes themselves are of course multiple and shifting, as it is still a critical commonplace to insist. But to do justice to these processes in their radical particularity is not enough to make history appear; rather, the conflict between temporalities has to be narrativized, and this requires a process of totalization to put them into determinate relations with each other. But now this narrative totalization takes place at a scale where the very idea of narrative would seem to be illegitimate — that is, at a scale where to apply the anthropomorphic categories that seem to emerge spontaneously in the discussion of fictional narrative would be "humanist" in the worst sense. This is, indeed, where Jameson parts company most decisively with Ricoeur. The latter collapses history into narrative by privileging the scale of human action. Jameson, however, is concerned to deanthropomorphize the narrative categories themselves (here, Ricoeur's Aristotelian ones: reversal, recognition, pathos), which must now be interrogated and expanded to the point that their fictional application becomes merely a special case.

The illustrations that accompany these conceptual enlargements are fascinating in themselves, but I will pass them over to emphasize the key category of pathos, which is an even more complex matter than the discussions of peripeteia and anagnorisis that precede it. Essentially, here, pathos is coming-to-appearance of plot itself, the "tableau" in which a tragic plot culminates; in an historical register, it is, for example, the Event (but this is only one of several modes) in which history is made to appear. (This may be stretch, but Aristotle is no longer at stake here.) It is, then, a kind of reification of history, a way in which multiple trajectories intersect to produce something that can be assembled into a single narrative. Simplifying a great deal and leaving out at least one fundamental complication, it appears that two modes of such totalization are essential here: history as system and history as event. The first of these is the unification of diverse actors and motives, some of them deeply antagonistic and contradictory, into a massive homeostasis that results at most in a creeping expansion or hardening. The second is also a unification of diverse series, contingencies, and accidents, but here in the mode of will and action; at the limit, of revolution. (In fact, both are separations as well as unifications: the homeostatic system is an array of forces in tension, and the revolutionary event is their precipitation into antagonism. Thus, System assembles separation under unification, and Event precipitates unification under separation.) But it is not enough to produce either one of these totalizations alone. Both procedures are neces-

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sary: “The experience of History is impossible without this dual perspective of system and event. Each without the other falls short of History and into another category altogether: the isolated sense of unity becoming philosophy and metaphysics, the experience of merely empirical events becoming at best existential narrative and at worst a kind of inert or positivistic knowledge” (603).

The grounding of historical thought undertaken in this final section is not just a defense, an explication, a deployment, or an elaboration of the dialectic; it is a profound contribution to dialectical thought. It is curious that neither Hegel nor Marx questions the being of History in this way. But then Hegel and Marx lived in historical times and did not face the task the Jameson has set himself: to make history appear.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (Cambridge: MIT P, 1971) 147.

<sup>2</sup> The acknowledgments page gets the title and publication information wrong for this essay, which appeared in *New Left Review* 4 (2000): 49-68. As is hardly uncommon, the index and copyediting could have been a lot better.