

**George Ciccariello-Maher****“Detached Irony Toward the Rest”: Working-Class One-Sidedness from Sorel to Tronti****“the only way to understand the system is through conceiving of its destruction”<sup>1</sup>**

This paper seeks to situate the thought of Italian Marxist Mario Tronti—however tentatively and imperfectly—within a lineage of anti-synthetic thought, or rather thought which reserves a significant space for the anti-synthetic moment, the moment of subjective dissolution of the enemy totality. What I mean by these somewhat cryptic phrases will become increasingly clear as the argument proceeds. For the moment, and to put it perhaps a bit polemically, I will characterize this tendency—which I also seek to positively valorize—as a fundamentally *separatist* tendency, one which subjectively establishes a division internal to society and which functions toward its dissolution. The “logic of separation” associated with this fundamentally radical and antagonistic tendency, however, can and must be immediately and sharply distinguished from those conservative, essentialist, or reactionary elements that one might associate with the phenomenon of separatism.

While some might choose to begin such an anti-synthetic lineage with Karl Marx himself—after all, it was he who first (arguably preceded only by Saint-Simon<sup>2</sup>) emphasized class struggle as the constitutive element of history—both Marx’s own *oeuvre* and the theoretical legacy of Marxism is far too ambiguous and synthetic for our purposes. We begin, then, with a nominally Marxist thinker—often disavowed, disdained, and discredited—who placed an unprecedented emphasis on this anti-synthetic logic, and from whom we will derive its parameters: Georges Sorel.

**...“to restore the separation of the classes”...**

I don't claim to find in Sorel the *origin* of such thought; indeed, as Foucault's genealogy of “race war” demonstrates, such logics have a long history and can be found in a multiplicity of possible historical moments.<sup>3</sup> But it was Sorel's peculiarity to delineate separation more clearly than most, a peculiarity that derived, no doubt, from the historical conjuncture within which he wrote, book-ended as this was by the Dreyfus Affair and the Revisionist controversy in the mid-1890s and the maturation of Leninism more than two decades later. Sorel would side with the revisionists in theory, but toward an entirely distinct political outcome: unwilling to replace a crumbling determinism with the evolutionary development of Bernstein, Sorel broke more severely with economistic accounts than had any of his contemporaries. Disenchanted with and disgusted by the parliamentary left after Dreyfus, and openly rejecting the determinism of all existing Marxisms, but moreover operating in a context still untouched by what would become a tidal wave of Leninism, Sorel elaborated some of the most radical, innovative, and overlooked revolutionary strategies of the century.

In his seminal *Reflections on Violence* (1908), Sorel establishes the idea of a multifaceted separation—formulated in specifically economic, political, and epistemological terms—as a frontier *internal to* society, which is established through a sort of friend-enemy distinction (but one which, by virtue of precisely this internal character, is necessarily distinct from Schmitt's formulation).<sup>4</sup> This theoretical construct is instantiated in practice through recourse to the idea of a revolutionary myth, an idea which is not—contrary to Antonio Gramsci's reading—a veiled determinism.<sup>5</sup> Rather, the myth serves as a sort of *projection*: it is the projection of the enemy through a firm separation that allows for the consolidation of radical subjectivity. It is the projection of the enemy that allows the consolidation of the self, as—in a gesture toward Tronti—the *class-for-itself* appears as the necessary precursor to the *class-in-itself*.<sup>6</sup>

The radical and innovative character of Sorel's approach is most starkly illustrated through the entry-point of practice, in which Sorel advocates that the working class

repay with *black ingratitude* the *benevolence* of those who would protect the workers, to meet with insults the homilies of the defenders of human fraternity, and to reply by blows to the advances of the propagators of social peace...[this] is a very practical way of indicating to the middle class that they must mind their business and only that.<sup>7</sup>

“For the discussions of law, they [the working class] substitute acts of war,” he adds.<sup>8</sup> Not only is such a response conducive to the crafting of working class identity, but it

also plays a central role in shoring up the class relation itself, and thereby driving history: it is only through such a subjective orientation by the working class that the capitalists might “get back a part of their energy,” since such a violent response “confines employers to their role as producers, and tends to restore the separation of the classes, just when they seemed to be on the point of intermingling in the democratic marsh.”<sup>9</sup> Working-class subjectivity is granted the autonomy to force the consolidation of capitalist subjectivity, thereby restoring objectivity to Marxist science.

“Social peace” and the “democratic marsh”: these are the enemies in Sorel’s account, due to their mediating and moderating function, their effort to formally inscribe the working class into parliamentary socialism. And it is through his opposition to such moderating influences that we derive an understanding of Sorel’s opposition to philosophies and political strategies which rely too heavily on notions of unity and totality, and which are thereby rendered both factually wrong (there’s no such thing as “society”) and politically pernicious (in the co-optation of the working class and the stagnation of capitalist development). The precise character of this concern is formulated in a 1910 appendix to the *Reflections*, entitled “Unity and Multiplicity,” in which Sorel—through an appreciative history of religious separatism—seeks to correct what he sees as a flawed dismissal of class struggle on the basis of common-sense notions of unity.<sup>10</sup> Such claims are most often buttressed by the prevalence of “socio-biological analogies” which presume that the unity of society mirrors that of biological organisms.<sup>11</sup> In place of such approaches, Sorel offers his own “diremptive” method, one which seeks “to examine certain parts without taking into account the ties which connect them to the whole,” and which moreover refuses the imperative to “reconstitute the broken unity.”<sup>12</sup> This method, however, is far from universal or objective, as “according to the points of view one takes, one has the right to consider society as a unity or as a multiplicity of antagonistic forces.”<sup>13</sup>

It is here, however, that Sorel’s argument takes a slightly counterintuitive turn, but one which is consistent with the general contours of his thought. After attacking the idea of the unity of society, he immediately applies the same argument to workers’ organizations, which “ought to vary to infinity as the proletariat feels itself more capable of cutting a figure in the world.”<sup>14</sup> Parliamentary socialists, on the other hand, have taken it upon themselves to group the working class according to a foreign concept—unity—which they borrow from democracy, and which crucially implies a unity *with* the bourgeoisie. “It is necessary to take a point of view diametrically opposed to the one taken by politicians,” but one which doesn’t reject unity *a priori*, but rather cultivates the “ideological unity” of the proletariat as a fighting group, a unity which functions in opposition to a broader social unity.<sup>15</sup> The separation of the working class from capitalists, for Sorel, does not merely imply the

substitution of two unities for one. Rather, to oppose the politicians does not imply a facile rejection of their concepts, but rather a recognition of the autonomous capacity of the working class to turn those concepts to its own ends.

We see, then, that Gramsci's charge of determinism applies even less in the realm of identity and subjectivity, as the identities in question (working class, capitalist, bourgeois) are not rigidly fixed, but rather quite the opposite: Sorel's formulation represents a recognition that such identities *exist only insofar as they are projected*, which translates practically into the idea that "individuals can sensibly adhere to a group only on the assumption that there is one."<sup>16</sup> Struggle, moreover, helps to consolidate these oppositional identities by "weeding out the pacifists who would spoil the elite troops."<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the manner in which such groups are represented and imagined plays a contributing role in their actualization, and this is the performative element of Sorel's thought: "Oppositions, instead of being glozed [*sic.*] over, must be thrown into sharp relief...the groups which are struggling one against the another must be *shown* as separate and compact as possible."<sup>18</sup> To *show* an image of a class and its character is to *create*, contribute to, or encourage that character, and a closer look at the sort of class that Sorel deems necessary—separate and compact—will allow us to glimpse his understanding of class constitution.

What Sorel desires, to put it differently, is a sort of determinism—he wants to restore the objectivity to Marxism—but such objectivity can only be established, paradoxically, through subjectivity:<sup>19</sup>

Proletarian violence not only makes the future revolution certain, but it seems also to be the only means by which the European nations—at present stupefied by humanitarianism—can recover their former energy...A growing and solidly organized working class can *compel the capitalist class to remain firm in the industrial war*, if a united and revolutionary proletariat confronts a rich middle class, eager for conquest, capitalist society will have reached its historical perfection. Thus proletarian violence has become an essential factor of Marxism.<sup>20</sup>

Viewed in this way, we can see that—contrary to most prevalent readings—it is separation and not the myth which constitutes the central category for Sorel.<sup>21</sup> Separation is projected—through "mythical" means—for the sake of cultivating the "ideological unity" necessary for the material instantiation of class separation. Put the other way around, separation simultaneously provides the *raison d'être* and the teleological content of the myth. The myth is a mechanism, albeit a crucial one, whereby the goal of separation and thereby of a paradoxical subjective determinism is established, and recognizing this fact is the key to reorienting and salvaging what is useful in Sorel's thought.

Sorel's logic of separation, moreover, constitutes a *double paradox*. It is paradoxical, firstly, in its antagonism: it is a separation defined not by the establishment of distance between oneself and one's enemy, but rather by the establishment (and projection) of a *frontier of antagonistic separation*. This is a contact zone, not a buffer zone. This paradox is the basis for a crucial distinction between a logic of separation and what I deem a conservative or reactionary separatism, the goal of which is the establishment of distance to allow for isolated, autarkic development. Radical separatism thereby presupposes the maintenance and cultivation of antagonism. The second paradox arises in the temporal aspect of this separation, as it is through a sort of historical disruption that objectivity can be subjectively crafted:

There is no process by which the future can be predicted scientifically...And yet without leaving the present, without reasoning about this future...we should be unable to act at all. Experience shows that the *framing of a future, in some indeterminate time*, may...be very effective.<sup>22</sup>

There exists no zero-sum relation between transcendence and immanence, as the gesture of a "mythical" projection of transcendence is what allows transformation from a position of relative immanence. In what follows, I hope to demonstrate the operation of this paradoxical logic in Tronti.

### **...separation against hegemony...**

The European reception of Sorel is an infinitely complicated one, as his thought would be mobilized by anarcho-syndicalists, communists, and fascists in the later years of his life and following his death in 1922. This reception was equally complicated within the left itself, where the manner in which Sorel was received and his thought utilized can be usefully understood along broadly Gramscian (i.e. "hegemony"-based theories) and anti-Gramscian lines. While Gramsci was inspired by Sorel, he disagreed sharply with the latter on the role of the party, seeing Sorel's theories as having been too critical, too negative, and never sufficiently constructive (a critique which stems, I argue, from Gramsci's misunderstanding of the myth).<sup>23</sup> This critique of Sorel from the perspective of the imperative to construct a hegemonic alternative is continued by what could be broadly deemed the "Gramscian" left, which ironically lays greater claim to Sorel than do many more radical, far-left, or anti-hegemonic elements. This tendency culminates at present in the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, who lay claim to Sorel only after filtering the latter through what they perceive as the radical democratic imperative of Gramsci, and who further add a Derridean twist which results in a further distancing from central elements of Sorel's thought (and indeed from that of Gramsci as well).<sup>24</sup>

Standing in broad opposition to this tendency is what one might loosely term “radical anti-Gramscian” thought. This strand of thought, which appears most clearly in the Italian context (in which Sorel’s direct influence was considerable), constitutes a lineage from Sorel himself to his Italian collaborators, most famously Antonio and later Arturo Labriola and Benedetto Croce. The anti-Gramscian mantle would later be taken up by Galvano Della Volpe, who would then inspire several of the theoretical progenitors of the “Autonomist” school of Italian Marxism, including Mario Tronti. Indeed, Tronti would be more willing than his predecessor to break with the Gramscian legacy, for a number of reasons.<sup>25</sup> Combining the identification of *de facto* working-class antagonism (in the work of Raniero Panzieri and Romano Alquati) with Della Volpe’s “materialist sociology” rooted in a reinterpretation of Marx, Tronti’s break with Gramscianism would be near-inevitable.<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, Tronti and his collaborators would push decisively beyond the “theoreticism” of even Della Volpe himself, forcefully rejecting ideology as a ground for struggle, arguing that “*an ideology is always bourgeois.*”<sup>27</sup> This claim would accompany an attack on the very organic intellectual charged with taking up that ideological struggle, in which the latter would be labeled as a practitioner of “the most diabolical bourgeois science that has ever existed, industrial sociology,” and arguing that thinkers must “refuse to become intellectuals.”<sup>28</sup> That Tronti was severely critical of the Gramscian heritage is clear. Indeed, much of the *Autonomia* movement, which matured in opposition to the stifling presence of an Italian Communist Party (PCI) which openly claimed the Gramscian legacy, would inevitably tend toward a deepening of its hostility toward this monumental figure of early Italian Marxism.<sup>29</sup> However, in what follows I will emphasize another element of Tronti’s anti-Gramscianism, one which resides below the surface of party politics, in the realm of concepts: Tronti’s anti-hegemonic tendency, one which bears striking resemblance to Sorelian separation, and which arises in a context of opposition to the PCI’s assimilation of hegemonic struggle to active participation in capitalist planning. This extension of Sorel’s logic appears most clearly in Tronti’s 1966 *Operai e Capitale (Workers and Capital)*, under the guise of a political, economic, and epistemological affirmation of “one-sidedness.” While the autonomist critique of the logic of hegemonic struggle would appear most unmistakably in Antonio Negri’s work of the late 1970s, this critique is effectively prefigured by Tronti, and an assessment of the Sorelian elements of Negri’s thought thereby requires a close evaluation of his predecessor.<sup>30</sup>

### **...“a rigorously one-sided class logic”...**

In what follows, I set out from Tronti’s understanding of the need for a new working-class science, a science which he formulates as a sort of non-objective objectivity. This seeming paradox becomes clear in Tronti’s practical assertion of the

one-sidedness of the working class, a position which sets out from the imperative of avoiding subsumption to the enemy totality, in this case capitalist society. I then discuss the instantiation of that one-sidedness in reference to the consolidation of working-class identity—which Tronti elaborates through a reversal of the traditional relation between the in-itself and the for-itself—before considering more closely the degree to which this inversion brings Tronti into line with what we have seen above from Sorel.

Much early autonomist thought set out from the initial inversion—delineated most forcefully in Tronti’s 1964 “Lenin in England”—which asserted the fundamental dependence of capital upon labor, and the capacity of the latter to impose upon the former “through the objective violence of their organized strength in the factories.”<sup>31</sup> This “new epoch”—one facilitated by the socialization of capital—gives rise immediately (in the second paragraph of “Lenin in England”) to the need for a new theoretical orientation, a new “science”: “Capitalist society has its laws of development: economists have invented them, governments have imposed them, and workers have suffered them. But who will discover the laws of development of the working class?”<sup>32</sup> This is the project taken up by Tronti’s 1966 *Operai e Capitale* (which included the earlier essay, among others), in which he sets out to make of this initial inversion a working-class science by wading into epistemology, and it is in this effort that Tronti’s proximity to a Sorelian framework comes clearly into view.<sup>33</sup>

The first point to be made regarding this science, however, is its explicit refusal of objectivity. This is already visible in the statement above, in which Tronti argues that economic “laws” are political creatures, to be invented and imposed by one class and suffered by another. As Steve Wright argues, Tronti’s “science” set out from a symptomatic reading of Marx which, unlike Althusser’s seminal study published the same year, explicitly rejected a model of working class epistemology which relied on an internally-coherent and entirely self-referential system.<sup>34</sup> Rather, what Tronti proposes is “a non-objective social science with no pretense to objectivity...a unilateral synthesis,” in which

we must recover a specific type of internal development of the working class, a political growth of its struggles, and on top of this we must build a lever to *leap forwards*—without objectivism, without a return to origins, without beginning from year zero.<sup>35</sup>

Tronti, however, insists on the “objective materiality of the working class,” and this paradoxically non-objective objectivity serves as a useful entry point into Tronti’s understanding of the politics of class constitution, consolidation, and development.<sup>36</sup>

It is here that we get a first glimpse of Tronti's one-sidedness. As a means of opposition to the "objectivity" of bourgeois social science, he offers the point-of-view of the working class, a perspective which has direct relevance to theoretical production:

On the theoretical plane, the workers viewpoint must today be unlimited, it must not erect barriers, it must leap forward by transcending and negating all the factual proofs that the intellectual cowardice of the petty-bourgeois is continually demanding. For working class thought, the moment of discovery has returned. The days of systems building, of repetition, and vulgarity converted into systematic discourse are definitely over: what is needed now is to start again, with rigorously one-sided class logic, engaged courage for ourselves, and detached irony toward the rest.<sup>37</sup>

This is a science of working-class *praxis* as opposed to the bland empiricism of some approaches to *practice*. Instead of thinking *about* the working class—this, after all, is the "diabolical" work of the industrial sociologist—the working class is granted, at least nominally, a theoretical weight of its own.<sup>38</sup> There exist, accordingly, "*history* and *politics*: two legitimate horizons, but each for a different class": the one buried in the collection of banal facts, the other dedicated to the radical unification of those moments.<sup>39</sup> To the assertion that "he who knows truly, hates truly," we could accordingly add the opposite:

The first step continues to be the recuperation of an irreducible working-class partiality against the entire social system of capital. Nothing will be done without *class hatred*: neither the elaboration of theory, nor practical organization. Only from a rigorously working-class viewpoint will the total movement of capitalist production be comprehended and utilized as a *particular* moment of the workers' revolution. Only one-sidedness, in science and in struggle, opens the way simultaneously to the understanding of everything and to its destruction. Any attempt to assume the *general interest*, every temptation to remain at the level of *social science*, will only serve to inscribe the working class—in the most powerful way possible—within the development of capital.<sup>40</sup>

True knowledge—in contradistinction to those inevitably flawed efforts at general knowledge—presupposes class enmity, as embodied in a paradoxically non-objective working-class science.

Like Sorel, this emphasis on "ferocious *unilaterality*" draws its sustenance largely from a critique of totality, and it is no coincidence, then, that the phrase "general interest" appears threateningly prominent in both texts.<sup>41</sup> It is here that anti-synthetic continuity makes itself felt, as Tronti even goes so far as elaborating class relations in terms of the opposition between the working class and capitalist *society*,



arguing that with the historical process of the socialization of capital, it comes to pass that “society’s general representative is now truly social capital.”<sup>42</sup> This is not to say that the two classes have ceased to exist: nothing could be further from the truth. Rather, what has occurred has been that capitalist interest has come to be bound up, firstly, with the need for “real domination over society in general,” and secondly, with the strategic erasure and obfuscation of that very class relation. In such a situation,

workers no longer have to counterpose the ideal of a *true society* to the *false* society of capital, they no longer have to dissolve and dilute themselves within the general social relation. They can now re-discover their own class as an anti-social revolutionary force. At present, the *whole* society of capital stands before the working-class without the possibility of mediation. The relation has finally been reversed: the only thing that the general interest cannot mediate within itself is the irreducible partiality of the workers’ interest.<sup>43</sup>

Tronti’s worry is precisely the emerging talk of the disappearance of class, and he sees the tendency to speak of such a trend as an erroneous and misleading response to the socialization of capital, as “the real generalization of the working-class condition can suggest the appearance of its formal extinction.”<sup>44</sup>

The *specificity* of labor is thereby assimilated to the *genericity* of popular sovereignty, the nation, the people, civil society. This sort of subsumption was, in effect, the unifying thread of PCI strategy: from Togliatti to both Giorgio Amendola’s open support for capitalist planning and even Pietro Ingrao’s nominally left-wing “privileging of civil society as the crucial site of struggle.”<sup>45</sup> Tronti’s rejection of struggles on the level of both ideology and hegemony allowed for the insight that such “political mediation here serves to allow the explosive content of labor’s productive force to function *peacefully* within the beautiful forms of the modern relation of capitalist production.”<sup>46</sup> Diametrically opposed to such a position, and following on from the assertion of working-class partiality, Tronti would conclude that

the working class is not the people...We ourselves, in fact, *come from the people*. And just as the working class is politically emancipated from the people at the moment when it is no longer presented as a subaltern class, so too does working class science break with the heritage of bourgeois culture at the moment in which it no longer assumes the perspective of society as a whole, but rather the perspective of that part which wishes to overthrow it.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, “when the *working class* politically refuses to become *the people*, it does not close, but rather opens the most direct path toward the socialist revolution.”<sup>48</sup> Immediate, uncritical synthesis and the resulting incorporation into the enemy

totality thereby becomes, for Tronti, the mortal enemy of the working class, and he would expend significant energy dispelling those notions which serve as vehicles toward such an end, central among which is culture: “If culture is the reconstruction of the totality of man, the study of his humanity in the world, a vocation to keep united that which is divided, then it is something which is reactionary by nature and should be treated as such.”<sup>49</sup> Moreover, the idea of a specifically working-class culture is, for Tronti, as oxymoronic as the idea of a specifically bourgeois revolution. Rather than cultural synthesis, the task of the working-class perspective is oriented toward “*a dissolution of everything existing*, a refusal to continue to build in the rut of the past. Man, Reason, History, these monstrous divinities should be fought and destroyed as if they were the power of the bosses.”<sup>50</sup> “As if,” because they are central to the maintenance and reproduction of that power.

Dissolution of the social as totality is clearly as central to Tronti as it was to Sorel,<sup>51</sup> but we still have yet to see the precise character, the conditions, the parameters under which this dissolution might occur. That is to say, while we have already mentioned the paradoxical non-objective objectivity of the working-class point-of-view, and while we have glimpsed the social totality within and against which such a perspective operated, we still have yet to probe the precise character and identity of that part which wishes to overthrow society. In order to better grasp these elements of Tronti’s thought, then, we must first analyze a bit more closely the nature of the material vehicle of that dissolution: the autonomous working class.

Central to Tronti’s theoretical apparatus—as was also the case for that of Sorel—is the theme of the compactness of the working class, and it is indeed this specter of compactness which stands in stark contrast to the equation of the working class with “the people,” a derivation which inscribes the former into the expansiveness of society and the general interest. One might argue that this compactness is merely the material result of historical developments, and that it is thereby an objective condition of sorts. This is indeed the impression given by Tronti’s discussion toward the end of “Lenin in England,” when he speaks of “the whole, compact social mass which the working class *has become, in the period of its historical maturity.*”<sup>52</sup> But we can already sense here a tension: certainly, the working class “has become” compact, but it has done so precisely through its *political* development. Hence “the only way to prove this unity [of the working class] is to start organizing it.”<sup>53</sup>

This development toward compactness is situated temporally in Tronti’s discussion of the refusal, his equivalent of Sorel’s practice of working-class separation. From the beginning, Tronti argues, the class struggle has “two faces, that of the working class and that of the capitalists, which are not yet separated by a radical division.”<sup>54</sup> This is indeed a strange statement, but one which becomes clear once we recognize that the “*simplification* of the class struggle” entails a recognition

of “not only the quantitative growth and massification of the antagonism, not only its ever-increasingly homogeneous internal unification,” but *also* and *most crucially* a re-establishment of “its primitive, direct elementary nature,” that is to say, a *cultivation of class partiality*.<sup>55</sup> Hence, the reduction of the class struggle to a pure and one-dimensional antagonism between two compact class identities gains the status not of an objective historical development, but rather a subjective political project in which “struggle...was seen as the greatest educator of the working class, binding the various layers of the workforce together, turning the ensemble of individual labour-powers into a social mass, a mass worker.”<sup>56</sup> Class—specifically in its highest (and thereby most discrete) form—is as much a subjective construction as it is an objective development, and this orientation is central for grasping Tronti’s position in the Sorelian legacy.

The radical character of Tronti’s position on class—and its fundamental proximity to that of Sorel—emerges most clearly in his markedly non-orthodox discussion of the class-in-itself (*Klasse an Sich*) versus the class-for-itself (*Klasse für Sich*). It is perhaps worthwhile to begin by noting that, even for Marx, the so-called “class-in-itself” cannot be reduced to pure objectivity, and we see this even in its alternative formulation as a “class against capital,” a class determined *differentially vis-à-vis* its enemy:

This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. *In the struggle*, of which we have noted only a few phases, this mass becomes united, and *constitutes itself* as a class for itself. The interests it defends becomes class interests. But the struggle of class against class *is a political struggle*.<sup>57</sup>

Here, we see that the organic link between an oppositionally-defined class and its homogenization through struggle is already clearly present in Marx’s formulation. However, in a passage that is so crucial as to be worth quoting at length, Tronti seizes upon this differential character of Marx’s definition to catapult himself beyond it:

Could we then say that we are still in the long historical period in which Marx saw the workers as a “class against capital,” but not yet as a class “for itself”? Or shouldn’t we perhaps say the opposite, even if it means confounding a bit the terms of Hegel’s dialectic? That is, that the workers become, *immediately*, when confronted by the boss, “a class for itself”; and that they are recognized as such by the first capitalists; and it is only afterwards, after a long and difficult historical process, which is perhaps not yet completed, and which involves terrible practical experiences that are still repeated today, that the workers arrive at the point of being actively, subjectively, “a class against capital.” And there exists in this transition the need for political organization ... The working class *does what it is*.<sup>58</sup>

Put another way, “we cannot understand what the working class *is* if we do not see *how it struggles*.”<sup>59</sup> Contrary to many interpretations—which, no doubt, owe much to the misleading phrase “class-in-itself”—Marx’s understanding was not essentialist. A class can be said to *exist* in opposition, but only to *constitute itself* through political struggle. This existence is teleological in that it points toward the struggle, but Marx resists the temptation to define the present in terms of that teleology (by granting the “class-in-itself” political content), and he thereby neglects the strategic utility of that teleological content.

Tronti’s intervention is to tug on the ambiguity of this preliminary existence, one which—as formulated in *The German Ideology*—delineates class as the material effect of a “common battle” that has yet to begin.<sup>60</sup> For Tronti, “from the very beginning the proletariat is nothing more than an immediate *political interest* in the abolition of everything existing,” and it is this political character which, from a Marxist perspective, constitutes the class-for-itself.<sup>61</sup> In accordance with the basic autonomist reversal which grants the working class the offensive, it is then this preliminary struggle against the individual capitalist which “produces capital...it is the organization of industrial workers into a class that provokes the capitalists in general to constitute themselves as a class.”<sup>62</sup>

What does this have to do with Sorel’s formulation of class? The two coincide in Tronti’s recognition of the need to *cultivate* the image of a compact and homogeneous working class (and its equally compact enemy), in the recognition that these characteristics are only partly historical, and thereby partly subjective, existing only insofar as they are projected in struggle and organization. When one focuses correctly on projection, we realize that Tronti’s account of the class-for-itself—like that of Sorel—can be neither empiricist nor Utopian.<sup>63</sup> For both, “homogeneity stood as a goal *for which to fight*,” and this is the key to grasping the continuities of their thought.<sup>64</sup> Nor should we take Tronti’s dismissals of separation too literally: while he rejects the latter in favor of antagonism, the two are essentially equivalent in a Sorelian framework.<sup>65</sup> Better put, Tronti’s wariness toward separation effectively supports Sorel’s recognition of the need to ensure its antagonistic character. Separation is the projection of antagonism, which far more than being a “myth,” is recognized by both Sorel and Tronti as the *precondition for working-class identity*. It is this point that Wright seems to simultaneously recognize and neglect in noting that Tronti—while seeing class homogeneity as a *political objective*—at the same time held a “simplistic and one-dimensional view of proletarian behaviour.”<sup>66</sup> The point here is not to deny that Tronti’s account of such behavior was not occasionally “simplistic,” but rather to situate such observations within his broader system and the projection of separation that it entails.

Such a projection, moreover, concerns more than mere identity: the projection of antagonism in the form of the refusal—the political unification of the

class—is a profoundly *generative* moment, one which can dictate the pace of material homogenization. The working class creates the capitalist class, and Tronti's notion of *simplification* (i.e. the unification of demands in “the refusal to collaborate actively in capitalist development”) forces the capitalist class to behave increasingly “for itself” (this is Tronti's nexus of positive demands and negative blockage).<sup>67</sup> The projection of separation creates antagonism, thereby reinforcing separation as a material effect, and we are reminded once again of Sorel's paradoxical desire to forge objectivity on a subjective foundation by spurning liberal humanitarianism and provoking the capitalists. Hence Tronti's strategy can be seen as a seizure of that workers' autonomy whose positive existence he has already posited: “Our starting point, therefore, lies in the discovery of certain forms of working-class struggles which provoke a certain type of capitalist development that leads toward revolution.”<sup>68</sup> It is only through the subjective assumption of an autonomous perspective that the objective tendencies of the capitalist system can be allowed to run their course.

This Sorelian optic provides us with an entirely different understanding of Tronti's proposed working-class science. He formulates this as a

new concept of the *crisis of capitalism* that must be put into circulation: no longer economic crisis, catastrophic collapse, the Zusammenbruch...rather, a political crisis imposed by the subjective movements of the organized workers, through the provocation of a chain of critical conjunctures, within the sole strategy of the working class refusal to resolve the contradictions of capitalism.<sup>69</sup>

Practically, such a refusal means for Tronti the blocking of any attempts to reinscribe the working class in capitalist development through a broad social democratic party. The lack of such a reinscription was precisely the advantage that Italy had over the rest of Western Europe, but the strategies pursued by the Italian Communist Party threatened to undermine that advantage.<sup>70</sup> While it was precisely this concern that would lead Tronti to favor a defensive entrism into the PCI, an emphasis on the operative theory requires that we—somewhat counterintuitively—emphasize the separateness implied in Tronti's position on social democracy, a separateness which bears a striking resemblance to that formulated by Sorel.<sup>71</sup>

### **...without “reconstituting the broken unity”...**

I would like to briefly draw out some necessarily diremptive conclusions from the above discussion. These will consist, firstly, of outstanding questions, and secondly, of an attempt—which necessarily does violence to Tronti himself—to pry open his “hermetically sealed categories” and make his theory available to a wider range of radical thinking.<sup>72</sup>

Firstly, what are we to make of Tronti's explicit disavowal of Sorel? Beyond noting the fact that disavowal constitutes the red thread that holds together the reception of Sorel's thought—from Negri to Jean-Paul Sartre—we can see that Tronti himself performs the same interpretive errors identified earlier.<sup>73</sup> Tronti criticizes the general strike—in both its Sorelian and Luxemburgist variants—for being “an event for the [labor] movement not directly connected with the class.”<sup>74</sup> By this he means that the general strike tends to be the product of an ideological intellect rather than a product of the struggle of an increasingly massified and compact class. In Sorel's context, such a claim would only apply to those parliamentary socialists whom he opposed so fervently, and whose strikes he dismissed in terms similar to Tronti.

Secondly, therefore, given Tronti's emphasis on the unification of the working-class refusal as explicitly *political*, what are we to make of Sorel's extended critique of “the political general strike”?<sup>75</sup> Tronti argues that

The anarcho-syndicalist “general strike,” which was supposed to provoke the collapse of capitalist society, is without a doubt a romantic naïveté from the beginning. It contains within it and as its basis a demand which only appears to oppose the Lassallian demand for a “fair share of the fruits of labour,” that is, a demand for fair “participation” in capitalist profit.<sup>76</sup>

Hence, the error of such strikes is that they remain on the “economic” level, which in Tronti's vocabulary implies a failure to recognize the “political” implications of such claims. But this is precisely the error of the “political general strike,” in Sorel's formulation, in which “middle-class force” predominates over “proletarian violence,” and functions to further incorporate the working class into the machinery of parliamentary politics: “The political general strike...shows us how the State would lose nothing of its strength, how the transmission of power from one privileged class to another would take place, and how the mass of the producers would merely change masters.”<sup>77</sup> The proletarian strike, on the other hand, operates through the mechanism of the myth to provide precisely the degree of separation and class consolidation that Tronti seeks.

Thirdly, and perhaps most seriously, what are we to make of Sorel's equally extensive celebration of “the ethics of the producers” in the face of Tronti's rejection of the dignity of labor?<sup>78</sup> Sorel is clearly concerned with more than the *pars destruens* of the revolutionary equation, and Tronti might have some reason for concern in hearing the ethic of the producers described in terms of “the betterment of the industry” and “continued progress in methods of production.”<sup>79</sup> However, the revolutionary myth spurs the worker toward “an entirely epic state of mind, and at the same time bends all the energies of the mind to that condition necessary to the realization of a workshop *carried on by free men*.”<sup>80</sup> There is no contradiction

between such an ethic and “Tronti’s advocacy of antagonism between labour and labour-power,” since the proletarian general strike could not conceivably occur without the working class abandoning the “pride of the producer” and “deny[ing] itself as a productive force.”<sup>81</sup>

These potential problems having been clarified, we can assert more forcefully the compatibility of the Sorelian logic of separation and Tronti’s one-sidedness. If all we have done is to provide a new and potentially fruitful optic through which to view early autonomist thought, then we have done enough. This conclusion, however, remains glaringly insufficient. After all, what use is this theoretical continuity to us if its concepts are irretrievably corrupt? Many have noted the central tension running through the *corpus* of Tronti’s theoretical production: namely, the fact that despite his insights into the socialization of capital and the development of the “social factory,” Tronti nevertheless failed to follow through on the radical nature of these insights. He failed to question the privileged *locus* of the factory, and he failed to question the working-class centrality which linked that privileged location to a privileged class formation.

Rather than rehashing such concerns, as valid as they are, I would like to touch briefly on another concern not entirely unrelated to this Gordian Knot of class location, and which opens the logic of separation up more dramatically for radical appropriation. This concern appears in the fact that, while posing significant insights for radical and revolutionary identity *in general*, the account traced thus far is restricted to a strictly working-class identity. This limited purview can be rooted in Tronti’s insistent privileging of the factory, but what is crucial is the fact that this privilege is *doubled* when one considers Tronti’s reflections on so-called “Third-Worldism.” That is to say, much like the tension that arises from the privileging of the factory, we can also locate a tension in the ambiguous privileging of Italy in an otherwise very non-determinist and subjectivist account.<sup>82</sup>

Tronti’s opposition to the “Chinese dances” of Third-Worldism (as well as that of many of his early contemporaries) is well documented.<sup>83</sup> The potential for radical transformation from the periphery is first disposed of through the presumption that the “internal colonization” of socialized capital follows only on the heels of a complete subsumption of the external.<sup>84</sup> However, it is worth noting that Tronti himself would emphasize the incompleteness of this process less than a year after the publication of *Operai e Capitale*.<sup>85</sup> Within that work, however, this very same tension can be felt with equal force. While Tronti would assent to Panzieri’s association of radical possibility with the “developing points” of capital characterized by a high organic composition,<sup>86</sup> he nevertheless concludes that

it would be an error to generalize...a revolutionary rupture of the capitalist system can occur at different levels of capitalist development. We cannot expect

that the history of capitalism be *concluded*, in order to begin to organize the process of its dissolution.<sup>87</sup>

This, of course, makes perfect sense within a theoretical apparatus based—however inconsistently—upon the autonomy of working-class initiative, and we cannot help but wonder what might be the implications of such a statement for Tronti’s broader framework. Something similar might be said about Tronti’s political interpretation of Marx’s labor theory of value.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, what might be the effect of thinking more rigorously about the connection between autonomist manifestations of the “theory of the offensive” and similar notions emerging in the periphery around the idea of guerrilla warfare?<sup>89</sup> What breakthroughs would result from taking seriously the differential character of class that appears in Marx, which is extended and radicalized by Sorel and Tronti and which renders “class” a supremely expansive concept which cannot be limited to economic location? What might be the effect of re-asserting the continuity that exists between this differential notion of class and the idea of the subaltern, which despite being coined by Gramsci and used (dismissively) by Tronti, has come to mean something quite different through the work of postcolonial intellectuals?<sup>90</sup> Can the theoretical linkage of hegemony to subalternity—albeit through a “relation of non-relation”—aid us in recognizing both the danger of the former and the radical potential of the latter?<sup>91</sup> Circling back around, what might be the outcome of stripping the term subaltern of its Eurocentric connotations, by refusing—as does Edward Said—the Marxian argument that those who fail to constitute a class “cannot represent themselves, they must be represented”?<sup>92</sup> In all such gestures, Tronti’s formulations are useful but incomplete.

Such thoughts are necessarily fragmentary, and certainly run the risk of an overly “Alexandrian solution” to the dilemmas posed by Tronti, but my aim here is merely to sketch the parameters of a future research project.<sup>93</sup> The opening to such a project depends first and foremost on recognizing the possibility that Tronti’s hostility to Maoism and radical thought emanating from the periphery was—in accordance with his Dellavolpism—historically determinate and conjunctural. Only then can we free the Sorelian-Trontian logic of separation from its specific context and test its insights for the nexus of separation and identity more generally.

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<sup>1</sup> Alberto Asor Rosa, quoted in Steve Wright, *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 29.

<sup>2</sup> See Saint-Amand Bazard, *et al*, *The Doctrine of Saint Simon: An Exposition; First Year, 1828-1829*, tr. G. Iggers (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958).

<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, “*Society Must be Defended*”: *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*, tr. D. Macey (New York: Picador, 2003 [1997]).



<sup>4</sup> Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, tr. G. Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996 [1932]); *The Theory of the Partisan: A Commentary/Remark on the Concept of the Political*, tr. A.C. Goodson (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2004 [1962]), <http://www.msupress.msu.edu/journals/cr/schmitt.pdf>. While Schmitt comes closest to formulating a division *within* society in *Theory of the Partisan*, it is clear by that point in his career (1962), some thirty years after *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt's strategic priorities had shifted from an affirmation of the friend-enemy distinction to an open hostility toward any form of that distinction in which the decision is not made on the state level. This hostility, moreover, is prefigured in Schmitt's commentary on Sorel in his 1923 *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, tr. E. Kennedy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> "In Sorel's case it is clear that behind the spontaneity there lies a purely mechanistic assumption, behind the liberty (will — life-force) a maximum of determinism, behind the idealism an absolute materialism." Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Q. Hoare and G.N. Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 129.

<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Gramsci's translators note that "'Cleavage', for Sorel, is the equivalent of class consciousness, of the class-for-itself." Gramsci, *Selections*, 126, fn4. Despite the fact that such a statement misses the point a bit—since to equate the two is to render the formulation more bland and banal than it is—it nevertheless serves to illustrate the argument.

<sup>7</sup> George Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, tr. T.E. Hulme (New York: Collier Books, 1961 [1908]), 91.

<sup>8</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 269.

<sup>9</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 91-92.

<sup>10</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 250.

<sup>11</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 251.

<sup>12</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 259.

<sup>13</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 272.

<sup>14</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 272.

<sup>15</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 272-273.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Vernon, *Commitment and Change: Georges Sorel and the Idea of Revolution* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1978), 17.

<sup>17</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 271.

<sup>18</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 122, emphasis added.

<sup>19</sup> Sorel's "ultimate goal" was "the subjection of nature to human control, [which] is—according to Sorel—a universally accepted value," and this represents an attempt "to retain the substantive ambitions of nineteenth-century philosophy of history while skeptically narrowing the scope of reason." Vernon, *Commitment and Change*, 20; Richard Vernon, "Rationalism and Commitment in Sorel," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34, n. 3 (July-September 1973), 420.

<sup>20</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 92, emphasis added.

<sup>21</sup> This error spans the ideological spectrum, and is repeated by both opponents and supporters of Sorel's thought. Even the Wu Ming Foundation (heir to Luther Blissett), which can be credited with engaging in an all-too-rare pragmatic reassessment of Sorel, still makes the error of exaggerating the function of the myth in Sorel's thought. See Wu Ming, "Tute Bianche: The Practical Side of Myth-Making (in Catastrophic Times)," *Giap Digest* 11 (19 October 2001). For a recent example of this mistake by a well-known anarchist intellectual, who goes even further in presenting the Sorelian myth as a sort of hoax perpetrated against the masses, see David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004), 18-19.

<sup>22</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 124-125.

<sup>23</sup> Gramsci, *Selections*, 127; 395.

<sup>24</sup> Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985).

<sup>25</sup> Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 27-28.

<sup>26</sup> Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 26-27.

<sup>27</sup> Tronti's *magnum opus* has yet to be fully translated into English, a situation which will hopefully be remedied in the near future. In what follows, I will cite and translate from the Italian and Spanish editions: Mario Tronti, *Operai e Capitale*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Turin: Einaudi, 1971); Mario Tronti, *Obreros y Capital*, tr. Ó. Chaves Hernández (Madrid: Akal, 2001). Citations will be in this format: Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 33/38.

<sup>28</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 246/256.

<sup>29</sup> Palmiro Togliatti, the post-war leader of the PCI who would inspire the later turn to planning in the 1960s was, unsurprisingly, a close collaborator of Gramsci's. Perhaps more surprising is that Togliatti was also a Sorel devotee earlier in his career. See Jack J. Roth, *The Cult of Violence: Sorel and the Sorelians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 176.

<sup>30</sup> This discussion of Tronti is, obviously, a small part of a wider project already underway, and which will involve a closer analysis of Negri's thought.

<sup>31</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 89/93

<sup>32</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 89/93.

<sup>33</sup> If I start from theory in discussions of Tronti while having started from practice in discussing Sorel, this is no mistake. Sorel was much more consistent in taking working-class practice as the only defensible starting-point, whereas "all of Tronti's discoveries...[were] derived through a process of logical deduction." See also Wright's assertion that Tronti was inconsistent in his deference to practice, and that he remained caught up in the metaphysics of his own apparatus. Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 39; 84.

<sup>34</sup> Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 82.

<sup>35</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 232/242; 244/254

<sup>36</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 310/321.

<sup>37</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 92/96.

<sup>38</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 246/256.

<sup>39</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 268/276.

<sup>40</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 14/19; 84-85/88.

<sup>41</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 53/58.

<sup>42</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 76-78/81-83.

<sup>43</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 82/86.

<sup>44</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 79/83.

<sup>45</sup> Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 74.

<sup>46</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 79/83.

<sup>47</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 245/254.

<sup>48</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 79/83.

<sup>49</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 245/255.

<sup>50</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 245-246/255, emphasis added.

<sup>51</sup> This is a concern that will gain even more clarity in the work of Antonio Negri, especially his *Il Dominio e il Sabotaggio*, available in Antonio Negri, *Books for Burning: Between Civil War and Democracy in 1970s Italy*, ed. T. Murphy (London: Verso, 2005), 231-285.

<sup>52</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 94/98, emphasis added.

<sup>53</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 90/94. We also see this on 93/97 and 247-249/256-258, where the unification and homogenization of the class is again tightly bound to its organization.

<sup>54</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 248/257.

<sup>55</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 248/258.

<sup>56</sup> Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 77.

<sup>57</sup> Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1977), 168, emphasis added. See also Karl Marx, *The 18<sup>th</sup> Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press,

1978), 126: “Insofar as millions of families live under conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests, and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. Insofar as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests forms no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them, they do not constitute a class. They are therefore incapable of asserting their class interest in their own name, whether through a parliament or a convention. They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented.”

<sup>58</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 235/245.

<sup>59</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 200/209.

<sup>60</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Norton, 1978), 179: “The separate individuals form a class only insofar as they have to carry on a common battle against another class.”

<sup>61</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 241/250.

<sup>62</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 236/245-246.

<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, it might be worth comparing the weight that both grant to “anticipation” in more depth. See Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 11-26/16-32; Sorel, *Reflections*, 125.

<sup>64</sup> Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 79. I agree with Wright that Tronti did not recognize the incomplete character of this homogenization as clearly as did someone like Alquati, but this should not undermine the theoretical role it plays in Tronti’s apparatus.

<sup>65</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 246-247/256.

<sup>66</sup> Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 182.

<sup>67</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 247/257.

<sup>68</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 93-94/98.

<sup>69</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 250/259-260.

<sup>70</sup> Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 68.

<sup>71</sup> A focus on a separation which is inherently antagonistic draws us away from facile *a priori* reactions to something like entrism, given the imperative for antagonism that the latter seeks to fulfill.

<sup>72</sup> Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 86.

<sup>73</sup> The only passages in Negri’s *Domination and Sabotage* which directly reference Sorel were left out of the original Red Notes English translation. The translator cited the “incomprehensibility” of the passages, but given that the passages are completely clear, one can only assume that their omission was political (these very passages were used as evidence to imprison Negri later). The recent *Books for Burning* translation includes these passages (258-259), and while the reference to Sorel (and Ernst Bloch) are meant to reject any association with these thinkers, they serve rather as a tacit admission of the profound continuities that exist between the thinkers (though it should be noted that Negri’s description of Sorel’s thought is a caricature at best, which like Gramsci and Laclau and Mouffe, mistake the myth for the central category in Sorel’s work). Jean-Paul Sartre, “Preface,” in Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, tr. C. Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963 [1961]), 14.

<sup>74</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 308/320.

<sup>75</sup> Sorel, *Reflection*, 151-179.

<sup>76</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 237/246-247.

<sup>77</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 177.

<sup>78</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 216-249; Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 261/270.

<sup>79</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 258.

<sup>80</sup> Sorel, *Reflections*, 248.

<sup>81</sup> Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 39; Tronti, 261/270.

<sup>82</sup> This is apart from the prevalence of Eurocentric metaphors—of discovery and conquest, of unknown continents, of a new route to the Indies—that run throughout *Operai e Capitale*, especially the “Introduction.”

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<sup>83</sup> Cited in Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 70.

<sup>84</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 56/60.

<sup>85</sup> Cited in Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 86-87.

<sup>86</sup> Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 40.

<sup>87</sup> Tronti, *Operai/Obreros*, 68/71.

<sup>88</sup> See Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 84.

<sup>89</sup> See Wright, *Storming Heaven*, 144.

<sup>90</sup> See, e.g., Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988). For the differential definition of the subaltern, see Ranajit Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies I: Writing on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: OUP, 1982), 8. Doing so might very well lead us toward a formulation of Marxism on the basis of the category of exteriority rather than totality, of the sort pioneered by Enrique Dussel in *Toward an Unknown Marx: A Commentary on the Manuscripts of 1861-1863*, tr. Y. Angulo (London: Routledge, 2001 [1988]).

<sup>91</sup> Jon Beasley-Murray and Alberto Moreiras, "Editorial Introduction: Subalternity and Affect," *Angelaki* 6, n. 1 (April 2001), 1.

<sup>92</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 293; 335. For an excellent discussion of the link between Marx's differential understanding of class (276), the subaltern as "an identity-in-differential" (284), and its purportedly concomitant need for representation (276-277), see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313.

<sup>93</sup> This project envisions the extension of a Sorelian logic through both Tronti and Negri, before engaging in a "decolonial turn" toward the work of Martinican philosopher-revolutionary Frantz Fanon, whose formulation of identity and radical separation bears a striking similarity to that identified here.