

Language in Ernst Bloch's Speculative Materialism

Historical Materialism Book Series

Editorial Board

Loren Balhorn (*Berlin*)
David Broder (*Rome*)
Sebastian Budgen (*Paris*)
Steve Edwards (*London*)
Juan Grigera (*London*)
Marcel van der Linden (*Amsterdam*)
Peter Thomas (*London*)
Gavin Walker (*Montréal*)

VOLUME 299

Bloch Bibliothek

Series Editors

Johan Siebers (*University of London*)
Catherine Moir (*University of Sheffield*)
Peter Thompson (*University of Sheffield*)

VOLUME 2

The titles published in this series are listed at brill.com/blb

Language in Ernst Bloch's Speculative Materialism

By

Nathaniel J.P. Barron



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at <https://catalog.loc.gov>
LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2023034280>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 2352-0752

ISBN 978-90-04-68058-6 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-68059-3 (e-book)

Copyright 2023 by Koninklijke Brill nv, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Koninklijke Brill nv incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Schöningh, Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Brill Wageningen Academic, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau and V&R unipress.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher. Requests for re-use and/or translations must be addressed to Koninklijke Brill nv via brill.com or copyright.com.

This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

*In loving memory of Robina Walker (1932–2012)
& Bridget Coyle (1923–2013)*



Contents

Acknowledgements ix

Introduction 1

- 1 Bloch's Marxism 12
- 2 Philosophy of Language as a Problem 17
- 3 Outline of the Book 22

1 Bloch's Utopian Materialism 24

- 1 Kant 'Burning' through Hegel 26
- 2 Tendency 35
- 3 Possibility 38
- 4 Latency 42

2 Bloch's Anacoluthon 48

- 1 The Anacoluthon 51
- 2 The Anacoluthon as Trace 56
- 3 The Anacoluthon as Linguistic Tendency 67
- 4 The Anacoluthon as Linguistic Latency 80

3 Bloch and Marxist Philosophy of Language 90

- 1 Voloshinov and Relationality 95
- 2 Refraction 100
- 3 Neo-Kantianism 110
- 4 Freudianism 120

4 Bloch and Fascism 136

- 1 Marx's *Incipit* 138
- 2 *The Eighteenth Brumaire* 145
- 3 The Expressionism Debate 168
- 4 Fascism and Language, Then and Now: Postscript 183

References 195

Index 212

Acknowledgements

This book has been a long time in the making. My journey with it certainly has not been straight and narrow. It was produced in stays in London, Glasgow, Bochum, Berlin, Mannheim, Rugeley, Birmingham, and Liège. It has seen me transition into fatherhood and marriage, and the book itself, perhaps like me, has undergone changes which render it almost unrecognisable from its earlier form. Bloch's adage that hope can be disappointed certainly came to define the original PhD thesis from which this book emerged. And, if I were to be honest with myself, the present work, while better approximating the original idea, still carries with it undertones of 'something's missing'.

And yet, the journey I've gone on with this book has been one that has enriched my life. I have met people, all of whose insight, support, and friendship has made the work better than it would have been without them. Although naturally I am solely responsible for its shortcomings, David Bowie's line that 'I never thought I'd need so many people' rings true here too.

For instance, Johan Siebers's generosity of spirit was matched by his deep knowledge of the philosophical tradition; I could not have had a better guide. Volker Schneider first taught me to understand Bloch in the German – I still greatly appreciate his and Gordana's hospitality during my first forays into the Hegel Archive. Ifor Duncan, Jessica Feely, and Daniel Neofetou all acted as excellent partners in discussion. In their own ways, knowingly or not, they helped clarify Bloch for me. And I am indebted to Rainer Zimmermann, who was also very helpful in casting a critical eye on an earlier version of the text.

Thanks should also be given to those involved in this book at Historical Materialism: Cat Moir and Sam Dolbear's respective reviews helped me to rethink my aims, and Danny Hayward and Simon Mussell helped me to get the work over what often appeared to be an ever receding line.

But most of all I would like to thank Justine and Rauree. They have taught me what it truly means to move with an invariant of direction. *Incipit vita nova.*