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REALISM AND ANTI-REALISM
IN THE WORK OF GEORG LUKÁCS

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ABSTRACT

This essay sets out to explore Lukács's views on realism and its polar opposite, anti-realism, in nineteenth and twentieth-century literature. As a Marxist, Lukács's views on literature are closely interwoven with his views of society and social development. This necessitates first looking at Lukács's theory of society and history as expressed in the epochal *History and Class Consciousness*. The essay firstly attempts to present and criticize the central Lukácsian concept of concrete totality. Totality, for Lukács, is not a static concept but a dynamically evolving, ever-changing idea. However, he tends to view totality as simply a concept of contemplation. Lukács indicates the proletariat as the subject-object of Western European history. The proletariat is both the object of history, in the sense of being a reified, powerless entity, but must ultimately emerge as the triumphant subject of a historical revolution. The essay then looks at the process of reification to which both the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are subjected. Workers are reduced to things and commodities in capitalist society. Man's labour becomes an object which is estranged from him. Lukács sees the Communist Party as the embodiment of revolutionary class consciousness for the proletariat. The essay then

turns to the various criticisms of *History and Class Consciousness*, both by Lukács himself and by structuralist critics. One main problem is the possibly totalitarian character of the Marxist state envisaged by Lukács.

Lukács's views on realism in literature dovetail with his notion of the concrete totality. The realist writer transcends the fetishized surface of reality to penetrate to the deep, underlying core of social processes and antagonisms. The writer creates a moment of totality in his work, a moment when the full complexity of society emerges clearly into view. There is thus a parallel between the procedure of the Marxist scientist and the realist writer: both try to open up a view of totality in a world resistant to such a perspective. Realism unites social essence and appearance in a new, immediate vision of reality. The essay balances Lukács's traditional concept of realism against Brecht's concern with realism and the alienation effect. Realistic partisanship, for Lukács, means a knowledge of the real driving forces of society. Lukács repeatedly uses the image of a writer who has penetrated the social "essence" and who has depicted the inner motivating forces of society. Lukács's aesthetic demands that negation and critique in great works of art should simultaneously be balanced by an awareness of real positivity and real meaningfulness.

The essay then points out similarities between Lukács's aesthetic and modern idealist literary criticism. Lukács's views on reality and the subject are contrasted with Lacan's view on human ontogenesis.

Lukács's views on anti-realism stand in direct opposition to the function of realism. Anti-realism remains fixated at the level of social appearances, instead of uncovering the essence of the social totality. Lukács refuses to see the ways in which modernism might be seen as a penetrating expression of the modern experience of society and history. Modernism fails to represent movements of resistance immanent in capitalism, and the progressive movement of history itself. As a result of the tendency to systematise in his work, Lukács negates the modern experience of society and of history. His work can be criticized for its inability to give historical weight to the experience of alienation in the twentieth century.

Introduction : Realism and anti-realism

This essay sets out to explore Lukács's views of an immanent truth content in literature. The traditional Marxist approach to literature emphasizes that literature is a form of ideology or false consciousness. However, the initial aim of this essay is to try to pinpoint the value that Lukács finds in literature, its cognitive worth inside a framework of capitalist ideology. Literature works against or transcends ideology to penetrate to the essence hidden by a facade of social appearances. An emphasis on the truth content of literature does not mean that literature is hypostatized as inhabiting a timeless, ahistorical continuum of literary autonomy. The particular worth of each individual work emerges from its specific position in a socio-historical totality. Although literature has potential truth value for Lukács, thus transcending ideology, it cannot transcend its positionality in a particular socio-historical conjuncture of forces and scissions.

For Lukács, truth value also implies its diametrical opposite - the existence of ideological decadence in literature. This aspect of Lukács's work falls in line

with the traditional Marxist view of literature as false consciousness. The second aim of this essay is to explore Lukács's views on "untruth" or "anti-realism" in modernist and naturalistic streams of literature. As a Marxist, Lukács's views on truth and untruth in literature are closely interrelated with his views of society and social development. This necessitates first looking at Lukács's theory of society and history as expressed in the epochal *History and Class Consciousness*.

Concrete totality

Lukács's category of the concrete totality is an essential, intrinsic constituent of orthodox Marxism as a method of dialectics. "*This absolute primacy of the whole, its unity over and above the abstract isolation of its parts - such is the essence of Marx's conception of society and of the dialectical method*" (TE, p.27) A conception of the whole of social interconnections is superior to any factual understanding of its parts, or any bourgeois positivism or empiricism which isolates and atomizes parts of the whole into independent "facts".

"...*der Totalitätsbegriff... wird in den späteren Arbeiten Lukács's - konsequent- verengt auf die Totalität der gesellschaftlichen Lebenszusammenhänge.*" (Ludz, p.53)

Totality can thus be seen as a specific way or method of

looking at society - as a particular epistemological position. Facts are not the final reality, but are artificially isolated aspects or moments of the whole:

"... the only effective superiority of the proletariat, its only decisive weapon is its ability to see the social totality as a concrete historical totality : to see the reified forms as processes between men, to see the immanent meaning of history that only appears negatively in the contradictions of abstract forms, to raise its positive side to consciousness and to put it into practice." (RCP, p.197)

Lukács worked against the fetishistic predominance of isolated, empirically viable facts in favour of a vision of the dynamic, complex social whole: " *Only in this context - which integrates (facts) into a totality, can knowledge of facts become knowledge of reality.*" (HCC, p.8) The totality has a diachronic and synchronic dimension: it is not only the synchronic whole or all the

particulars of reality at a given moment, but also a dynamic progression involving a particular trend, its teleology and its results. Lukács defines totality briefly as *"a total social situation caught up in the process of historical change"*(RCP, p,162). It is past and present history :

"Marx perceived world history as a homogeneous process, as an uninterrupted process of liberation "
(Lukács, in Jay, p.105)

A global view of totality exposes capitalism itself as a historical and transient phenomenon, and is therefore the vehicle of revolutionary consciousness.

"For every genuine Marxist, there is always a reality more real and therefore more important than isolated facts and tendencies - namely, the reality of the total process, the totality of social development."
(Lukács, in Jay, p.122)

A static view of Lukács's totality can be opposed to a concept of totality as a dialectical process of fitting facts into an observed whole, but continually

changing the whole to encompass new aspects of reality as they come into view. The whole is continually altered to fit new observations, so that totality arises from a process - it is not as if totality simply existed as a concept of contemplation, in a Lukácsian view. Lukács tends to hypostatize the totality of history as a given entity in itself, while it is in fact a process which reflexively changes itself.

The subject-object of history

Marxism is not simply a mere description of the world which is extraneous to its object, but is the manifestation and self-knowledge of a social process inherent in history by which the world is revolutionized. Lukács hypostatizes the concept of totality as a historical agent in an essentially Hegelian manoeuvre.

"The totality of history is itself a real historical power - even though one that has not hitherto become conscious and has therefore gone unrecognized ..."

(RCP, p.152)

The social process, the immanent meaning of historical development which realizes itself for Lukács is the class conscious proletariat:

"... the proletariat represents the true reality , namely the tendencies of history awakening into consciousness ..."

(RCP, p. 199)

The structure and process of totality thus has an effect on real historical happenings - it is a directed process. For Lukács, only a class can entirely penetrate social reality and change it in its totality. *"Only the class can relate to the whole of reality in a practical revolutionary way"*(RCP, p.193) And in contemporary society, the proletariat is the only revolutionary class. *"Only the proletariat is capable of historical subjectivity in the positive, constructive sense of overcoming all reified objectivity."*(Arato/Breines,p.44) Social classes, as transindividual subjects, are particularly important to Lukács, since only they can direct consciousness and action towards changing interhuman and man-nature relationships. (Meszaros, p.72) The proletariat is the only class whose interests coincide with the process of becoming conscious. It is in the interests of the proletariat to see the truth of capitalism:

"Only when the consciousness of the proletariat is able to point out the road along which the dialectic of history is objectively impelled, but which it cannot travel unaided,

will the consciousness of the proletariat awaken to a consciousness of the process , and only then will the proletariat become the identical subject-object of history whose praxis will change reality." (RCP, p.197)

The "*objectively propelled dialectic of history*" indicates the initial position of the proletariat as a commodity-object of capitalism and history in the final stage of reification. "*... der Arbeiter als Ware ist der historische Ort radikalster Verdinglichung.*" (Lindner, p. 278) However, for Lukács the proletariat has a role in history : the dialectic of history must be brought to fulfilment in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. When the proletariat becomes conscious of the role which history has imputed for it, and starts to act simultaneously, then it is both the subject and the object of history. The "immanent meaning" of historical contradictions points to this objective possibility for realizing the concrete totality. Lukács assumes that history/totality is an agent which has certain plans.

It is necessary to regard the concrete totality both as object and as subject. "*The all-important thing is to grasp and express the true, not as substance, but equally as subject.*" (Hegel, in Parkinson, p.39) "*The*

truth is the subject ".(Hegel, in Kolakowski, p.269)
Hegel is saying that that what exists is a thinking subject. Hegel identifies the subject as extraneous to history, as Mind successively manifesting itself in historical stages of development, and ultimately becoming absolute Mind-religion, philosophy and art. For Marx and Lukács however, "*Being determines consciousness*"- so Lukács defines the subject inside history as the class-conscious proletariat. Lukács regards the assumption that social existence determines consciousness as the fundamental proposition of the dialectical method. (Parkinson, p. 49) This is not a dialectical view of the relationship between society and consciousness: it can be seen that, in rare instances, consciousness can determine being. Hegel could not have discovered the identity of the object and subject in history itself. Consequently he transferred the identity into the extra-historical sphere of reason and ascribed to Mind the role of a demiurge in historical evolution. For Lukács, the concrete whole thus manifests itself as the intentionality and praxis of a creator-subject, the proletariat, which recognizes and affirms itself in the objective world around it as an expressive totality. This individualistic subject of history is fictional.

The proletariat is capable of seeing society from the centre, as a connected whole. "*The proletariat is privileged from the epistemological point of view: only it can apprehend history as a whole.*"(Kolakowski, p.270)

For the proletariat, the unity of theory and praxis means that practice cannot succeed without theory, and vice versa. It also means that the workers' self-consciousness is practical in that it produces a change both in the subject and in the object of knowledge. In so far as the proletariat knows itself, it changes itself, thus radically transforming society as a whole.

"When the worker knows himself as a commodity, his knowledge is practical. That is to say, this knowledge brings about an objective structural change in the object of knowledge." (RCP, p.169)

Proletarian self-consciousness takes the form of knowledge of the social and historical totality. For Lukacs, proceeding from the Feuerbach theses, knowledge is not a mere contemplation, but a form of praxis : to know is to do, it is not to be a passive reflector of reality. And only the proletariat as a class can start this process of knowledge-as-action: *"When the proletariat proclaims the dissolution of the existing world-order, it only expresses the secret of its own existence, for it is the factual dissolution of the world-order."* (Marx, in Parkinson, p.45) In *Class consciousness* Lukács has a similar insight: *"No doubt the very existence of the proletariat implies criticism and the negation of this*

(capitalist) form of life."(CC, p.76) The dialectic presupposes an awareness of society as a whole, and only the viewpoint of the proletariat can perceive this whole. Marxism is the theoretical consciousness of the working class as it matures towards revolution. The class consciousness of the proletariat is the indispensable driving force of that process.

"To Lukács, the "is" and the "ought", the opposition between ethics and facts would merge once the subject of history, the proletariat, objectified its ethical principles in the concrete mores of Communist society."

(Jay, p. 110) Facts and values converge in the proletariat's objective self-consciousness as the developing subject-object of history - in the proletariat's self-realization in the field of society. The bourgeois antinomies of subject-object, fact-value, and form versus content are resolved in a Marxist monism, which implies that, in the historically developing power of the proletariat, these dualities are transcended. Fact and value coalesce within the historical praxis of the proletariat, in whose actions the ethical imperatives of humanity are simultaneously realized as the proletariat creates a new society.

Reification

Lukács's critique of reification results from a synthesis of his romantic anti-capitalism and Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism. In capitalist society labourers are reduced to things or commodities. The infiltration of the commodity structure on all walks of life affects even the worker's personality: it becomes reified and quantifiable.

"(The commodity structure) stamps its imprint on the whole consciousness of man: his qualities and abilities are no longer an organic part of his personality, they are things which he can 'own' or 'dispose of' like the various objects of the external world."

(RCP, p.100)

A worker is seen as a unit of labour force which is to be integrated with a huge apparatus of social production and exchange. He becomes an article to be bought and sold according to the laws of the market. *"(The worker) is therefore forced into becoming the object of the process*

by which he is turned into a commodity and reduced to a mere quantity." (RCP, p.166) *The worker is defined by his labour-power: his labour-power is the only possession or commodity that he has to sell in the market- place.*" (RCP, p.92) "*The objectification of the individual's labour-power becomes a permanent, ineluctable reality of his daily life.*"(RCP, p.90)

"In capitalist society, man's environment and especially the categories of economics appear to him immediately and necessarily in forms of objectivity, which conceals the fact that they are categories of the relations of men with each other. Instead, they appear as things and the relations of things with each other." (Johnson, p.12) Human activity and interrelationships are turned into frozen objects, economic commodities. Workers live in an isolated, objectified and enslaved life-style, while facing increased mechanization / bureaucratization. In reification, a social relationship between men takes on the phantasmagoric form of a relationship between things. (RCP, pp.100,110)

Man's own labour becomes something that is objectively opposed to him. Lukács argues that labour (labour power and labour product) becomes a system of objective, independent things - commodities. The

estrangement of labour has an objective and a subjective aspect. Objectively, estrangement of labour comprises the coming into being of a second nature of pseudo things and their relations. The laws of this process can be used to the bourgeoisie's advantage, but men cannot control it. From the subjective point of view, man's own activity, his labour becomes an object which is opposed to him. Similarly, this "object" is subject to objective natural laws which govern society, but which are alien to man. (HCC, pp.86-87,93-95).

The object of production is fragmented into mechanical elements, each of which is the predictable result of specialized partial operations. The subject is even more fragmented - one specialized skill is selected and developed at the cost of all the other abilities and potentialities of the labourer (Arato/Breines, pp.115,116) *"This fragmentation of the object of production entails the fragmentation of its subject."*(HCC, p.89) The worker becomes a passive, individualized observer of a process in which his fragmented activity is the object of a process that he can be aware of, but not control or transform. Labour is external to the worker; it is not his own property, but someone else's - the capitalist's. Labour becomes a commodity bought and sold in the marketplace, transforming people into things. The activity of the worker becomes less and less practical and creative: his labour is progressively rationalized and mechanized:

his activity resembles that of a passive, contemplative stance vis à vis the production process. (RCP, p.89) The contemplative, pacified worker faces a closed, self-regulating system over which he has no direct control. Labour is engulfed in this system.

Rationalization is applied to technology and the organization of labour. There is increasing specialization and particularization of productive activity. As a result the individual labourer is increasingly crippled spiritually, and confined to a narrower range of skills. Factory rationalization and specialization increasingly force the worker into a subjective stance of reification:

"If we follow the path taken by labour in its development from the handicrafts via co-operation and manufacture to machine industry, we see a continuous trend towards greater rationalization, the progressive elimination of the qualitative, human and individual attributes of the worker." (RCP, p.88)

Reification is not simply a relationship between the labourer, the capitalist and commodities, but an expanding process in society: "Reification impresses its

structure on the whole consciousness of man during the bourgeoisie period."(HCC, p.100,110) *"The fate of the worker becomes the fate of society as a whole when the internal organization of the factory becomes the microcosm of the whole structure of capitalist society."*(RCP, pp. 101-113,p.106) Lukács emphasizes that the universality of the commodity structure is due to its penetration of all aspects of society. Commodity exchange and production are no longer merely a specific form of the economy, but ineluctably proceed to dominate every aspect of daily life. The labourer is reduced to an object of commodity exchange:

"The fate of the worker becomes the fate of society as a whole: indeed this fate must become universal as otherwise industrialization could not develop in this direction."
(RCP, p.91)

Reification reproduces itself at the level of consciousness.

"Just as the capitalist system continuously produces and reproduces itself economically on higher and higher levels, the structure of reification sinks

*more deeply, more definitively
and more fatefully into the
consciousness of man."*

(RCP, p.93)

Lukács goes so far as to claim that there is only a quantitative distinction between a worker, an entrepreneur and a technologist: in all three modes of being, a contemplative stance towards what is produced reigns supreme. (RCP, p.98)

Bourgeois philosophy remains unable to understand its position within the historical totality of society, since this self-knowledge would entail an awareness of its own transitoriness. It thus oscillates between empiricism and idealism. Empiricism fetishizes what is merely there, thus destroying the historicity of human existence. Idealism ignores the everyday reality in which we live and work. *"The reified world appears quite definitely as the only possible world, the only conceptually accessible world vouchsafed to us humans."*(RCP, p.122) The same is true of bourgeois science: *"Science will then find that its own concrete underlying reality lies methodologically and in principle, beyond its grasp."* (RCP, p.120) The bourgeoisie by virtue of its position in the totality, must have a false consciousness. Understanding the totality and the movement of history is contrary to its

own interests. Bourgeois philosophy laments reification and cannot/will not rise to an understanding of totality. Arbitrary, idealistic utopias or surrender to empirical reality remain the only options open to bourgeois philosophy.

Lukács also traces the expansion of the reified structures of consciousness to the realms of law, economy and bureaucracy. Lukács claims that a 'conscious reification' is at work in jurisprudence.(p.107) He assumes that *"the content of legal institutions is never of a legal character, but always political and economic."* (p.108) The enlightened, pre-revolutionary French bourgeoisie was conscious of this fact, and Voltaire advised them to *"burn the old laws"* and to make new ones based on reason. (p.107) However, this new jurisprudence is soon reified: *"Law is henceforth to be regarded as a formal calculus with the aid of which the legal consequences of particular actions can be determined as exactly as possible."*(p.108)

Reified consciousness is structured by an antinomial subject-object or freedom-necessity relation for both the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Consciousness assumes the character of a free subjectivity which occupies a contemplative position in relation to the

social object.(Johnson, p.12) In the case of the bourgeoisie this consciousness is affirmed by daily experience, but for the proletariat, it is negated: "*In every aspect of daily life in which the individual worker imagines himself to be the subject of his own life, he finds this to be an illusion that is destroyed by the immediacy of his existence.*" (HCC, p.165) This minimal consciousness of negation is the first step towards eventual revolutionary class consciousness for the proletariat. "*Minimal consciousness of alienation is said to be "only the beginning of a complex process of mediation whose goal is the knowledge of society as a historical totality". "That is , in Lukács's terminology, class consciousness is this goal.*" (Arato/Breines, p.137) Only when the proletariat - a mere commodity in bourgeois society - becomes aware of its own situation can it understand, and through understanding change the whole. This may be thought of as the acquisition of self-knowledge by a commodity. When the proletariat becomes aware of itself as a commodity, it will at the same time understand and rebel against the reification of all forms of social life. Self-knowledge is not simply perception or contemplation, but a historical movement of anticipation - there is no question of a mere reflection of reality. Defetishization means not to see the world as a collection of inexplicably existing, second nature-like

Catcher in the rye.

things, but to become aware of things as being constituted by processes of communal social labour, and to see that they can be changed by means of praxis. Lukács describes the moment of minimal access to reification as an act of consciousness, a moment which automatically spells the end of the rule of the bourgeoisie.

"Since consciousness here is not the knowledge of an opposed object, but is the self-consciousness of the object, the act of consciousness overthrows the objective form of its object."
(RCP, p.178)

Access to reification means the auto-reflexive changing of the knowing subject and of the object of knowledge.

"This self-consciousness" brings about an objective structural change in the object of knowledge."
(RCP pp.184-186)
(Arato/Breines, p.134)

Lukács stresses that reification is objectively the same for both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. (RCP, pp.149,150) Bourgeois thought, however remains unable to synthesize the overall viewpoint of totality in

history: its ultimate point of view remains trapped in the empirically verifiable, present categories of immediacy. (p.156) Bourgeois thinkers and historians failed to see contemporary events (the First World War and the Russian Revolution) in a world-historical context. (p.157) However, the process of the proletariat's self-liberation also begins within an awareness of immediacy. *"The historical knowledge of the proletariat begins with the knowledge of the present, with the self-knowledge of its own social situation, and with the elucidation of its necessity."*(p.158) The proletariat struggles inwardly to transcend the barriers of immediacy from the very start because it is confronted with the need to break through those barriers towards its own understanding of history.(p.164) For the proletariat, social reality evinces itself in the form of being an object of the social processes of capitalism. The bourgeoisie exists under the illusion of its own independent, controlling subjectivity directing the course of events.(p.166) The worker, in becoming aware of his own objectivity, penetrates the structure of capitalist dehumanization. This moment of self-revelation is described by Lukács as an act of consciousness and of self-awareness which dispels the fetishistic illusion of bourgeois society:

"(the worker's consciousness) is the self-consciousness of the commodity: or in other words it is the self-knowledge, the self-revelation of the capitalist society, founded on the production and exchange of commodities."

(p.168)

Knowing becomes activity, thought is mediated into action. For the bourgeoisie, the extensive expansion of fetishistic commodity forms to fit the whole of society is the limit of its own awareness. However, for the proletariat the same process means *"its own emergence as a class."*(p.171). This development means the end of the isolated working class individual.(p.171). Ultimately, the proletariat can discover itself as the subject as well as being the object of the reproduction of capital.(p.181) Objective things and reified interrelationships are translated back into social processes of accumulation and distribution of capital by the proletariat's point-of-view.(p.183) When the proletariat becomes aware of its own class standpoint, which tends towards the universal totality of society, theory and practice are united and it becomes possible to change society. (p.189) Only the proletariat as a unified class can thus change society (p.193):

"Reification, then, is the necessary, immediate reality of every person living in capitalist society. It can be overcome only by constant and constantly renewed efforts to disrupt the reified structure of existence by concretely relating to the concretely manifested contradictions of the total development, by being conscious of the immanent meanings of these contradictions for the total development. (p.197)

This must be, as Lukács emphasizes time and again, a fully conscious process for the proletariat. (p.197) Proletarian thought starts out initially as a theory of praxis which gradually transforms itself into a practical theory that attacks reified capitalism. (p.205) Lukács's view of the proletariat's progress is ultimately voluntaristic: *"Any transformation can only come about as the product of the -free- action of the proletariat itself."* (p.209)

There is an unbridged gap between the starting-point and the end goal of class-consciousness in Lukács's account. Lukács never describes the actual process of transformation from initial lack of consciousness to the

final assumption of class consciousness. The actual, practical process of class struggle and organization is missing from his description of the development of class consciousness.

Class consciousness and the party

Class consciousness refers, not to the empirically verifiable, momentary consciousness of the proletariat, but to their "ideal" consciousness:

(By relating consciousness to the whole of society, it becomes possible to infer the thoughts and feelings which men would have in a particular situation if they were able to assess both it and the interests arising from it in their impact on immediate action and on the whole structure of society...)
Now class consciousness consists of the appropriate and rational reactions imputed to a particular position in the process of production."(HCC, p.51)

The determining factor in class consciousness is the totality which empirical class consciousness must be measured against. The proletariat never attains class consciousness by itself: this is the moment when Lukacs calls on the Communist Party to lead the proletariat to

victory in the class struggle. The party embodies or represents true class consciousness, and acts as a mediator between the totality and the spontaneous workers' movement.

There is a continual interaction between the party and the proletariat in the movement of the proletariat to class consciousness. It should thus be, not a one-sided leadership of the party, but a continual dialectical process between party and the proletariat. (RCP, p.157, Arato/Breines, pp.107-108) The Communist Party must therefore constantly interrelate with the growth of the masses. (p.157) Lukács spoke of the necessity of the party's "*constant interchange with the subjective and objective revolutionary development of the class.*" (Arato/Breines, p.108) Lukács explicitly insists that the emergence of class consciousness is not "*an automatic or necessary development but an 'objective possibility'.*" (Arato /Breines, p.87) Lukács defines the Communist Party as the independent '*Gestalt*' of the '*imputed*' or '*ascribed*' class consciousness. (Arato/Breines, p.144) The struggle of the Communist Party is focussed on the class consciousness of the proletariat. Its organizational separation from the class does not mean

that it wishes to do battle for its interests, on its behalf and in its place.(Jay, p.15) The Leninist Party, actively leading the proletariat, becomes the only mode of leadership at an advanced stage of revolutionary development.(Arato/Breines, p.144) The Communist Party has the crucial task of fostering the totalizing interpretation of the significance of immediate struggles into a perspective of the whole of society. The party acts as mediator between empirical false consciousness and an imputed or revolutionary consciousness.(Jay, p.15) It guides workers to self-conscious awareness of historical objectivity, thereby performing a necessary historical activity, since the revolution can only be brought about by an informed, clearly conscious awareness of the historical totality. (Gorman, p.102, HCC, pp.68-81; 295-339) Communist Party members are nonreified historical subjects correctly perceiving the totality and imparting this knowledge to the proletariat.(Gorman, p.101)

The vanguard party's function is that of a catalyst: its task is to reveal the scientific truth about capitalism and to develop methods of organization and political struggle.(Livingstone: Essays,p.6) One of the party's roles is to navigate through the vicissitudes of the unequal development of class consciousness, battling or purging the representatives of false consciousness. By overcoming the ideological crisis, the party enables the proletariat to become a revolutionary

class for itself. Without the party , the proletariat cannot overcome its ideological crisis. In Lukács's view, the party contends against both bureaucracy and the cult of leadership which could possibly emerge from within the party itself.(Arato/Breines,p.158) The Communist Party exists as a separate entity "*so that the proletariat can see immediately its own class consciousness given historical shape.*"(HCC, p.84,p.326) "*The Communist Party is the class consciousness of the proletariat given historical shape.*"(Werke ii,p.536,p.54) The Communist Party therefore provides the relational, momentary truth content of a correct class-consciousness."*It is not an institution. It is instead the organizational expression of the proletariat's revolutionary will.*"(Arato/Breines, p.103)

After the emergence of class consciousness, Lukács states that there is still one more decisive step to be taken: the "*coming to consciousness of the class consciousness of the proletariat.*" This involves knowing "*the world-historical processes and its own world-historic mission of realizing the classless society.*" Marxism itself is the theoretical articulation of this final step.(Arato/Breines, p.80)

"Theory defetishizes reification by totalization, by the synthesis of totality or totalities. The empirical practice of the proletariat defetishizes in terms of the emergence of the minimal consciousness of alienation. To Lukács, only the fusion of these two moments would attain that class self-consciousness that would practically change the structure of its object (the atomized proletariat) by constituting it as a class for itself."

(Arato/Breines, p.139)

The final utopian state would not come into existence automatically, as a result of the ineluctable economic processes of history: it had to be willed freely. (Arato/Breines, p.88) The fate of the revolution (and with it humanity) depends on the ideological maturity of the proletariat, on its class consciousness, since the economic and social conditions for revolution already existed. Any transformation could only come about as the product of the free action of the proletariat itself. (p.228) The party's role after a successful revolution was greater and not less than before, one reason being

that in the post-revolutionary period the class struggle, far from abating, became inevitably more and more acute. (Kolakowski, p.283) Workers' councils or Soviets, useful before the revolution to properly funnel worker energy, must later cede power to the party. (Gorman, p.102) As will be noted later Lukács seems to ignore that the cession of power to the party leads to the danger of a party dictatorship which thwarts the will of the proletariat.

Lukács describes Marxism as a defetishizing force which negates the reification of everyday thinking and re-introduces the category of historical change:

"(Marxism) dissolves the rigid, unhistorical, natural appearance of social institutions: it reveals their historical origins and shows that they are subject to history in every respect including historical decline."(CC, p.47)

Marxism emerges as a critique of reified economics:

"Marx retorted with the demand of a historical critique of economics which resolves the totality of the reified objects of social and economic life into relations between men."(CC, p.49)

Bourgeois thought is forced to stay within an ahistorical level of false consciousness which limits its concepts to the merely immediate, the empirically present. (p.48) History and historical change remain intractable problem areas for bourgeois thought. (p.48) If bourgeois thought escaped from the level of ahistorical immediacy, this would mean a self-awareness of its own ephemerality, and this barrier becomes impossible to cross. (p.54)

"Thus the barrier which converts the class consciousness of the bourgeoisie into "false" consciousness is objective: it is the class situation in itself. It is the objective result of the economic setup." (p.54)

Access to the category of class consciousness is obtained via the category of totality. Once again, Lukács demonstrates that the objective totality is the key to the principle of revolution in science. Bourgeois scientists bypass the totality in their search for empirically viable class consciousness:

"And just when they imagine that they have discovered the most concrete thing of all, society as a concrete totality ... they are in fact at the furthest remove from it. (p.50)

Capitalism is a transient phenomenon which will be taken over by the class conscious proletariat. Lukacs emphasizes that a class, if it is to take over power in society, must above all be conscious of its world-historical mission: "*everything hinges on the extent to which (the proletariat) can become conscious of the actions they need to perform in order to obtain and organize power.*"(p.53) The peasant revolt of 1525 was defeated both by force and by a lack of class consciousness. (p.53)

Lukács describes the totalizing integration of the whole of society into a capitalist class structure, and contrasts this state of affairs with the feudal class structure, in which the separate sub-units existed in a broader, less integrated state of articulation: "*With capitalism, with the abolition of the feudal estates and with the creation of a society with a purely economic articulation, class consciousness arrived at the point where it could become conscious.*"(p.59) "*The hegemony of the bourgeoisie really does attempt to organize the whole of society in its own interests.*" (p.65) Bourgeois hegemony is carried out by a minority and in the interest of that minority.(p.66) This places the bourgeoisie under pressure to construct a deceptive net of ideology which masks this state of affairs.(p.66) This false system of concepts is deflected back into the very theory itself of the bourgeoisie: "*The position*

held by the capitalist class and the interests which determine its actions ensure that it will be unable to control its own system of production even in theory."

(p.62) The ideological history of the bourgeoisie becomes "*a desperate resistance to every insight about the true nature of the society it has created.*"(p.66)

Attempts to create a "planned" economy point to the ideological capitulation of the bourgeoisie before the proletariat.(p.67) The bourgeoisie is on the defensive:

"its power to dominate has vanished beyond recall."

(p.67)

The proletariat has the historical mission of transcending both itself and the bourgeois rule of capitalism. This means that immediate day-to-day struggles of the proletariat must be integrated with, and related to the whole totality of class struggle. This implies that day-to-day activities are subsumed as revolutionary activity.(p.71) The proletarian victory does not simply mean a new form of exploitation: instead, it implies the levelling of all class distinctions, including its own mode of appropriation.(p.72) Lukács criticizes opportunism as a false mode of proletarian struggle, which remains entrapped within the immediacy of daily existence, and which implies a capitulation to the bourgeoisie.(pp.74-75)

Lukács's critique of *History and Class Consciousness*

In the 1967 Preface to *History and Class consciousness*, Lukács subjects his work to a critique which reveals the main weak points of the book. He notes that the work tends to narrow down Marxism to a philosophy of society and man, excluding nature from its observations. (Preface, p.18) However, the materialist conception of nature is itself a really radical point of division between the bourgeois Weltanschauung and socialist theory. (p.19) Lukács also admits that he narrowed down the concept of the economy, so that the fundamental Marxist category of labour as a mediator between nature and society is elided. In the 1967 preface Lukács notes that he failed to recognize the contradictory progressiveness and reaction presented by capitalism, and that this leads to the subjectivising of capitalism and the revolt of the proletariat. (p.20) As a result the concept of praxis is limited and becomes abstract and idealistic: revolutionary praxis is exaggerated in accordance with Lukács's left radicalism. (p.20) In attempting to impart objectivity to the class consciousness of the proletariat, Lukács can only light on the concept of imputed class consciousness. A practical movement in the social totality is reduced to something purely contemplative. (p.21) Lukács admits having emphasized the methodological centrality of the totality, in opposition to the priority of the economy. (p.22) The

question of alienation is addressed in an idealist, Hegelian manner.(p.24) The proletariat, in attaining class consciousness, realizes itself as the identical subject-object of history.(p.25) However, this is a purely metaphysical construction: the subject-object cannot constitute itself on the basis of pure cognition even if that cognition remains alienated.(p.25) Lukács conflates alienation with reification, and tends to describe alienation as a permanent "*condition humaine*". (p.26)

A group of problems in *History and Class Consciousness* centers around Lukács's use of the term totality.(Jay, p.108) The whole expresses the intentionality and praxis of a creator-subject, which recognizes itself in the world around it. (Jay, pp.108-109) It is a genetic/reflexive/self-activating view of totality, because the whole is understood as a reflection of its own genesis. (Jay, p.109) The subject and object of history are ultimately united. The construction of Lukács's concept of totality blocks off empirical or rational criticism in advance by means of a vicious circle of argument. Access to totality is provided only by a correct dialectical method, which in its turn consists in relating all phenomena to the totality. The totality must be known before the search for it starts. (Kolakowski, p.299) For Lukács, totality exists as a real, hitherto unrecognized historical power which must be believed in order for it to become reality. Only a

participant within the Marxist movement can properly understand Marxism, which remains closed off to all outsiders. An initiate must both understand the factual content of Marxism and accept the values implied by the movement: Marxism thus shares the characteristics of a conceptual myth. (Kolakowski, p.298)

Another problem indicates the possibly totalitarian character of the Marxist state envisaged by Lukács in *History and Class Consciousness*. Lukács argues that, in the case of the proletariat, the 'objective' process of revolutionary development coincides with the development of awareness of that process, so that free action and historical inevitability merge. However, there remains an undissolved aporia between freedom and necessity for the proletariat. Revolution can only take place by the 'free action' of the proletariat, yet the role of the proletariat in the class struggle is imputed to it by no less an agent than History itself. The proletariat is both free and not free to act. Lukács also subordinates the proletariat to the communist party. The party is the visible embodiment of class consciousness, the sole guarantor of the correct political orientation of the proletariat and the sole exponent of its real will. This thinking can lead to the dictatorship of the party as the absolute source of truth: all opposition to it must be stifled. Class consciousness can only be instilled in

the proletariat from an extraneous position by the party. Lukács affirms the absolute will of the party at the expense of the proletariat. Lukács equates the dictatorship of the proletariat with the absolute rule of the party.

Finally, structuralist critics aver that *History and Class consciousness* is ahistorical and idealist in some respects: there is very little awareness of the real history of the capitalist mode of production or of working class struggle. (Jones: *The Marxism of the early Lukács*) Instead of being seen as a complex unity of progression and reaction, capitalism is portrayed from the outset of *History and Class Consciousness* as a process of decline and disintegration. Complex historical development is reduced to a single procession of economic and ideological totalities expressing the life-conditions of a succession of class subjects. The historical, self-contradictory complexity of social formations is ignored. The dominance of the process of alienation and reification has no institutional apparatus to support it. "There has never existed the 'pristine' ideological sway which Lukács presupposes: ideologies are not simply the subjective product of the 'will to power' of different classes: they are objective systems determined by the whole field of social struggle between contending classes". (Jones) There is no room for the existence of complex,

contradictory ideologies which are mixtures of the dominant and the dominated class ideologies in Lukács's work: for him ideology is either ascribed or that of the ruling class. On the contrary, one could argue that there is a co-existence of different ideological horizons and traditions within the ranks of the exploited. Lukács also propagates an idealist belief in the power of pure consciousness. For him adequate proletarian consciousness of itself as the revolutionary subject-object is already a practice which alters its object. To become conscious is synonymous with the possibility of taking over the leadership of society.

Realism and totality

Lukács's literary criticism represents a powerful, conservative humanism which abstracts a method for twentieth-century literature from models of nineteenth-century realism. Lukács's humanistic aesthetics is centered on an ideology of the revolutionary human subject realizing his full potential in temporal terms:

*"Der systematische Ort, den
(Lukacs's Ästhetik) der Kunst im
Gefüge menschlichen Verhaltens
zuweist, ist der Erweckung,
Bewahrung und Beförderung
individuell repräsentierter und
geistig-sinnlich vermittelter
Gattungshumanität."
(Kleinschmidt, p.648)*

Lukács juxtaposed an ideal of the harmonious development of human abilities to the distorted humanity of capitalism. His conservatism consists in the propagation of a normative poetics which excludes certain modern varieties of literature as "incorrect" and upholds nineteenth-century examples as models of "real"

literature. Lukács clings to an essentially normative poetics, which is based on a concept of "concrete", "true", "real" works of art and of realism. (Žmegač, p.28)

Lukács saw realism as the continuation of the great progressive movements of the nineteenth century, and the moment of continuity obtained supreme importance in his thought. Instead of the discovery of new artistic methods on the basis of new social processes, he championed the purification of an already established realistic literature from the inroads of modern "decadence". Lukács hypostatizes an absolute, clearly delimited method of realism which differentiates itself absolutely and finally from all other "decadent" creative methods. He also posits a reality which can be known fully by an active subject. He ignores the possibility that there might not be such an absolute, final border-line between realism and anti-realism, and that new forms such as the documentary or montage might represent new developments in the creative method of realism, which arise from new developments in reality itself. Reality might really be opaque in the imperialist period of capitalism, and the disjointedness, complexity and difficulty of modernist forms might be adequate to this new immediate reality. Lukács defends himself from the implication of conservatism as follows:

"Das Festhalten an den grossen Traditionen der Vergangenheit war also hier kein Konservatismus, sondern die Sehnsucht nach einer angemessenen künstlerischen Widerspiegelung der gegenwärtigen Wirklichkeit, die unsere Probleme auf dem geistigen und künstlerischen Niveau der alten Kunst zugleich zeitgemäss und zeitbeständig zu gestalten imstande ist." (Lukács, in Münz-Koenen, p.150)

Nevertheless , his inability to evaluate new artistic forms and a new Western reality confirms the critique of Lukács's approach to the twentieth century. Lukács absolutizes an abstract, derivatory model of nineteenth-century novellistic technique as the final, completed realism which must inform all twentieth-century writing.

In his seminal essay *Es geht um den Realismus*, Lukács states the claim that realist literature can encompass the totality of social interconnections. There is thus a parallel between the practice of the Marxist scientist and the realistic writer: both try to open up a view of totality in a world increasingly resistant to such a perspective:

"Strebt der Schriftsteller nach einer Erfassung und Darstellung der Wirklichkeit, wie sie tatsächlich ist, das heisst, ist er wirklich ein Realist, so spielt das Problem der objektiven Totalität der Wirklichkeit eine entscheidende Rolle ... "(EGR,p.318)

Lukács presupposes that the surface appearance of capitalism does not reveal the actual essence of society, and that a contradiction exists between sensually apprehensible appearance and the social essence. Bloch accuses Lukács of positing a real totality which is completed and closed off in itself.(p.315)"(Lukács) *setze, nach Bloch, überall eine geschlossen zusammenhängende Wirklichkeit voraus...* " Bloch himself states that perhaps reality is discontinuous, a process of "Unterbrechung" instead of a state of wholeness.(ERG,pp.315-316) However, Lukács firmly supports a doctrine of totality as a unified whole: *"Unter Marxisten dürfte darüber kein Streit sein. Marx sagt 'Die Produktionsverhältnisse jeder Gesellschaft bilden ein Ganzes.'"*(p.316) Lukács establishes a dual model of society as consisting of two levels: immediate, open surface reality and deeper, hidden underlying "truth" or social scissions, antagonisms and forms of cohesion. The realist transcends the dichotomy between

the two constituents by penetrating to the underlying reality through a process of abstraction:

"Jeder bedeutende Realist bearbeitet - auch mit den Mitteln der Abstraktion - seinen Erlebnisstoff, um zu den Gesetzmässigkeiten der objektiven Wirklichkeit, um zu den tiefer liegenden, verborgenen, vermittelten, unmittelbar nicht wahrnehmbaren Zusammenhängen der gesellschaftlichen Wirklichkeit zu gelangen."(pp.323-324)

Lukács ignores the possibility that reality is not simply 'present' to be penetrated by the realist writer, but that the author himself constructs reality. Reality is not a given, and its totality is not organic, but constituted by a process of abstraction. Lukács's ideal of the author who has a totalizing overview of society in the twentieth century can only be an illusion because of the tremendous increase in governmental controlling and manipulative forces. Lukács's construct of the writer's spontaneous access to reality by means of pure insight, is problematical.

The second step of realistic creation consists of the sublation of the abstracted social tendencies and interconnections into a new, sensuously present immediacy. This is an idealist illusion on Lukács's part - the presentation of such an illusory unity can be construed as anti-Marxist:

"... zweitens aber, und unzertrennbar davon, das künstlerische Zudecken der abstrahiert erarbeiteten Zusammenhänge - die Aufhebung der Abstraktion. Es entsteht durch diese doppelte Arbeit eine neue, gestaltet vermittelte Unmittelbarkeit, eine gestaltete Oberfläche des Lebens, die, obwohl sie in jedem Moment das Wesen klar durchscheinen lässt ... doch als Unmittelbarkeit, als Oberfläche des Lebens erscheint."(p.324)

The writer moves in a vicious circle - from initial social appearance to a process of abstraction, which is then obliterated precisely to end up with a new, idealist illusory appearance. The immanence of the "essence" in every moment of the work of art is reminiscent of Goethe's description of the literary symbol. Lukács's second step of realistic writing entails the creation of an illusion of artistic unity: "*das Zudecken der erarbeiteten*

Zusammenhänge". The social essence is immanent in this new immediacy, yet it appears solely as unmediated, surface social being. Realism thus synthesizes sensuous immediacy and underlying historical truth. It implies the oft-cited Lukácsian formula of the artistic unity of essence and appearance:

"Es geht also um die Erkenntnis der richtigen dialektischen Einheit von Erscheinung und Wesen, das heisst, um eine künstlerisch gestaltete, nacherlebbare Darstellung der "Oberfläche", die gestaltend, ohne von aussen hinzugetragenen Kommentar, den Zusammenhang von Wesen und Erscheinung in dem dargestellten Lebensausschnitt zeigt." (p. 319)

Lukács's views on the unity of essence and appearance can usefully be contrasted to Brecht's opinions. Both Brecht and Lukács argue for an essential, enhanced realism which penetrates to the essence of reality and reveals it to the reader/audience. However, they follow radically different procedures to reach this goal. For Lukács, the work of art remains a unity of social essence

and appearance. The work of art is a whole in itself. According to Lukács, the goal of all great art is to render an image of reality in which the opposition of appearance and essence, of individual case and law, of immediacy and abstraction is dissolved in such a way that both extremes coalesce to form an indivisible unity for the receptor of the work of art. (KOW) Every true work of art is a complex, independent unity which builds an "own world" in which the reader is immersed. The reader surrenders himself to the work of art, accepting and 'digesting' it as reality. (KOW)

Brecht shatters the unity of essence and appearance by means of *Verfremdung*: he makes the work of art appear strange, so as to lead the reader to question reality and the relationship of the work of art to reality. Lukács argues for an artistically completed, represented vision of reality: he does not place the unity of this vision into question. For Lukács, ironically, realism consists in maintaining an artistic illusion: that of a continuous, completed narrative. Brecht's aim was the cancellation of the reality of the stage, as a static, unchangeable "world-in-itself". Lukács argues for a completed "world" which the artist offers. By means of *Verfremdung*, Brecht wants to show that reality is not the ineluctable, unchangeable outcome of history. The audience should be led to question reality itself as a result of the

socio-political framework within which the play is presented. The liberal ideology of the "universally human truth" is broken down . We see specific class-linked actions in capitalist society.

Totalizing realism is Lukács's answer to reification of consciousness: only by means of consciousness of the totality can reification be overcome. Lukács's aesthetics is based on the opposition of an alienated, reified world and art which produces a conception of totality. Literature defetishizes the world purely by means of narration. Ultimately, the defetishizing function of literature causes the establishment of an ahistorical concept of reification.(Kliche,p.226) *"Eine solche defetischierende Rolle, wie sie Marx's Erkenntnis des Warenfetischismus zukommt, hat Kunst sui generis"* (Kliche,p.226) Lukács bases the power of the de-reifying effect of art on an unjustifiable blind faith in the power of artistic creation. The permanent fetishizing effect in consciousness leads to a permanent defetishizing function of art and the permanent affirmation of realistic mimesis (p.227) A supra-historical concept of art arises from the supra-historical process of reification.(p.227) For Lukács the work of art is a concentrating mirror which reveals the essence of the historical process. Because the totality includes the defetishizing point-of-view of

the proletariat, art should negate capitalism by including this aspect of reality in its presentation.

Realism is concerned with the artistic depiction of the coherence of essence and appearance without extraneous authorial commentary. The realist method of representation transcends the immediate, contingent and fluctuating surface appearances of reality by exposing its coherent links with the objective reality of society, consequently showing immediacy to be the concretization of distinct specific social laws and hidden social causes. Creating realists know that thought and experience grow organically from social being, and that experience and perceptions form part of a larger social whole. (EGR, p.321) The realist's grasp of reality is so penetrating that his narrative can be shown to anticipate subsequent social developments and types which were only incipient in contemporary life:

"Solche Schriftsteller bilden eine wirkliche ideologische Avantgarde, denn sie gestalten die lebendigen, aber unmittelbar noch verborgenen Tendenzen der objektiven Wirklichkeit so tief und so wahr, dass ihre Gestaltung von den späteren Wirklichkeitsentwicklung bestätigt wird ..."(EGR,p.332)

While Lukács turned to the works of nineteenth-century realists to deduce his conception of realistic method, Brecht developed a conception of realism which was broad and flexible. Brecht did not deduce realistic method from nineteenth-century "patterns", but enquired about the social ends which the artistic methods could support. He protested against Lukács's derivatory procedure:

"Realismus ist keine Formsache. Man kann nicht die Form von einem einzigen Realisten (oder eine begrenzten Anzahl von Realisten) nehmen und sie die realistische Form nennen. Das ist unrealistisch ..."(Brecht, in Mittenzwei, p.181)

Furthermore Brecht maintains that,

"Wir dürfen nicht bestimmten vorhandenen Werken den Realismus abziehen, sondern wir werden alle Mittel verwenden, alte und neuen, erprobte und unerprobte, aus der Kunst stammende und anderswoherstammende, um die Realität den Menschen meisterbar in die Hand zu geben."(Brecht, in Kohl, p.161)

Brecht has a more pragmatic and flexible definition of realism, which concentrates on the function that realism has within a particular society: he is thus able to include various methods and forms of literature. Brecht is able to adopt and use literary forms for his own purposes, while for Lukács, these techniques remain condemned by virtue of their origin in so-called "decadence":

" 'Realistisch' heisst: den gesellschaftlichen Kausalkomplex aufdeckend / die herrschenden Gesichtspunkte als die Gesichtspunkte der Herrschenden entlarvend / vom Standpunkt der Klasse aus schreibend, welche für die dringendsten Schwierigkeiten, in denen die menschliche Gesellschaft steckt, die breitesten Lösungen bereithält / das Moment der Entwicklung betonend / Konkret und das Abstrahieren ermöglichend."
(Brecht, in Kohl, p.161)

Brecht's pragmatic approach can be seen in the series of imperatives which constitutes his definition of realism: he derives his realistic method primarily from

the function a specific piece has in a specific socio-historical conjuncture. Realism cannot finally be defined on a formal basis, but must be seen as a continuous task of finding and representing the truth under changing socio-historical conditions.

In *Tendenz oder Parteilichkeit* Lukács defines the extent to which realistic literature acts as a negation of capitalism. He distinguishes two modes of negation: tendency or partisanship. "Tendentiousness" is taken to mean agitatory, politically orientated literature. In tendentious literature, there is a dichotomy between the author's political, subjective tendency and his artistic representation. Tendency is not integrated into representation - it remains a subjective political demand co-existing with the "pure", "aesthetic" component of the work of art. This means that on the one hand, aesthetic immanence, the pure artistic completion of the work is covertly acknowledged, that is to say, the primacy of form over content. On the other hand it is demanded that a non-artistic content, the tendency, should be asserted in the work of art. In this way, an eclectic idealism comes into being. (TP, p.26) The defence of tendentious literature banishes the question of form from art: art is reduced to its direct agitatory content and effect in the class struggle. The subjective

idealistic character of tendency emerges clearly:

"tendency" is a demand, an ideal which the writer juxtaposes to reality itself. It is not a tendency of social development made conscious by the author, but rather a subjective demand, whose fulfillment is required by reality.(p.27)

For Lukács, the task of the artist is to be conscious of new elements of society, and to bring them to the surface by the power of his representation alone. Partisanship means a knowledge of the real driving forces of society. Since reality itself is in the process of negating capitalism, a consciousness of reality will automatically include a critique of capitalism. Tendency becomes superfluous in the face of the totalizing vision of the realist. In his representation of objective reality with its real driving forces, there is no room for an ideal, neither a moral imperative, nor an aesthetic one.(pp.31-32) The realist makes no extraneous demands on his representation of reality, because his depiction must itself contain the fate of those demands which grow concretely from the class struggle, as moments of objective reality.(p.32) Partisanship means:

*"die Erkenntnis und die Gestaltung
des Gesamtprozesses als
zusammengefasste Totalität seiner
wahren treibenden Kräfte, als
ständige, erhöhte Reproduktion
der ihm zugrunde liegenden
dialektischen Widersprüche."
(Gallas)*

Gallas claims that Lukács's concept of partisanship is identical with his concept of realism .(Gallas,p.50)

The correct, dialectical representation of reality presupposes the partisanship of the author.(p.32) This means partisanship for the class which is the carrier of historical progressiveness in our time - the proletariat. (p.32) Partisanship, unlike tendency, does not stand in contradiction to objectivity in the representation of reality. On the contrary, it is the presupposition of real - dialectical - objectivity.(p.32) Partisanship represents a fusion of ethical and aesthetic standards for literature - there is no longer a clear-cut distinction between the two, as is the case with tendency literature. Partisanship is not introduced arbitrarily into the outer world by a subject: it is a driving force immanent in history itself, which is made conscious and

transformed into praxis by the correct, dialectical representation of reality.(KOW,p.621)

Realism means the Marxist identity of autonomous and partisan art. Marxism does not propagate subjective ideals or abstract moral norms, but articulates an insight into the laws of the socio-historical total process. The proletariat represents the epistemological position with the widest, deepest possible insight into the social totality as a process. This objective, historical truth is the object of the progressive artist. The revolutionary artist does not have to articulate his political demands as a subjective tendency. "*Die Darstellung der objektiven Wirklichkeit mit ihren wirklichen treibenden Kräften, mit ihrer wirklichen Entwicklungstendenzen, also die Selbstbewegung der Wirklichkeit selbst ist nicht tendenziös gefärbt, sondern wahr, wirklich und parteilich zugleich: parteilich für jene Klasse die Trägerin des geschichtlichen Fortschritts unserer Periode ist: das Proletariat.*"(Lukács, in Lindner, p.265) Because the object of art is the general, objective tendencies of the historical process, it does not have to tendentially distort reality, but it has to realistically represent its essence. Lukács's struggle for the maintenance of the principles of realistic representation is a struggle for the unity of the humanistic legacy (Erbe) and authentic Marxism.

Objective partisanship must be reproduced at a higher level in the work of art. The intensification works in terms of clarity and distinctiveness - the material for the work of art is structured consciously by the artist to cohere with objective partisanship.(KOW, p.621) The intensification also works in terms of objectivity, because the structuring of a genuine work of art should intend to depict partisanship as part of the represented matter, as a driving force immanent in reality and developing from reality. Engels strongly rejects subjectively introduced tendentiousness: "*Aber ich meine, die Tendenz muss aus der Situation und Handlung selbst hervorspringen, ohne dass ausdrücklich darauf hingewiesen wird.*"(KOW, p.622)

Lukács's definition of partisanship had a political function: to negate the thesis of the "Klassenkampf" character of art and to criticize the inadequate modes of representation of left-radical writers.(Gallas ,p.68) Several points of critique can be made about partisanship. The emphasis on the objectivity of artistic partisanship narrows down the subjective factor, namely the creative, aesthetic function of the Marxist writer.(Nössig,p.46) Lukács's conception of partisanship ignores the existent artistic praxes which function as a method of making Marxist social analysis and revolutionary strategy recognizable and open to experience.(Nössig, p.46)

The terminological abstractness and absoluteness of this formulation reduces the demand for works of art to something purely contemplative. (p.47) Lukács's concept of partisanship is closely related to the idea that literature is finally simply a concrete, artistic version of Marxist social analysis.

Lukács's construction of the principle of objective partisanship limits socialistic literature to a purely cognitive function, excluding it from an active, propagandistic, agitatory role in the class struggle. Literature is reduced to "*Erkenntnis und Gestaltung des Gesamtprozesses als zusammengefasste Totalität seiner wahren treibenden Kräfte.*" (Lukács, in Klatt, p.324) By this means Lukács actively and concretely refuses the role of literature as an organon of immediate, day-to-day agitation for the socialistic party or organizations: "*Im Werk von Georg Lukács ist die Ablehnung der subjektiven und politischen Parteinahme des Künstlers eine der stabilsten gedanklichen Motive.*" (Kliche, p.249) The consequence of this stance is that any attempt by writers to intervene concretely in the class struggle is seen automatically as a violation of the role of art as an unbiased observer of reality. Literature means pure, passive insight into the historical currents, scissions and antagonisms of a particular socio-historical conjuncture:

*"Der Künstler braucht die
Wirklichkeit nicht zu entstellen,
nicht zurechtzurücken, nicht
tendenziös umzufarben, denn seine
Darstellung ... ist gerade auf die
Erkenntnis jener Tendenzen
aufgebaut, die sich in der
objektiven Entwicklung durchsetzen."(TP)*

This passive role of literature as an intensifying, heightening mirror of daily life stands in clear contradiction to Lukács's view of the content of literature as an active, denunciatory realism which portrays processes of struggle and resistance within capitalistic society. Realist literature portrays oppression and resistance to oppression, in such a way as to create an illusion of reality, of a total world, but simultaneously acts as a passive receptor and observer of a particular kind of reality. Lukács's notions of totality and the type imply that the author can stand above the class struggle and perceive the whole from a neutral position.

Lukács's partisanship is objectivistic. The essence of this objectivistic partisanship is that only "Parteinahme" which is inherent in the classical form-content identity is relevant and worthy to be

considered as art. Non-inherent partisanship which attempts to consciously and openly persuade the reader to the writer's point of view is rejected as being subjectivistic. Lukács's method enables only a passive reflection of certain social interconnections. Partisanship exists in the clarity and distinctiveness with which the writer organizes his material so as to enable an insight into the nature of reality. For Brecht simple insight is not sufficient: the audience of a Brechtian play should be encouraged to act and to change social reality by means of praxis.

For Lukács, realism presupposes the representation of a complex, vital, developing subject in active interaction with his society. The subject himself is above all, an active, struggling participant in the main historical currents of his time. One might point to the "fighting categorical" in Lukács - it is imperative for realism that the subject should actively struggle with or against social forces in order to bring about change by human praxis. The subject is changed by means of concrete action: it is not a lifeless figure, but an actively developing, complex, "alive" human being that stands before us. Capitalist society itself, although it is to be regarded as a constricting, dehumanizing force, should be depicted in such a way as to allow meaningful change to take place by means of the character's struggle.

Victory is not imperative, but what is necessary is that society is not portrayed as a monolith which crushes all resistance in advance. Realist works represent the concreteness and directness of human praxis. This is the de-reifying impact of Lukács's realism: instead of being presented with powerless subjects at the mercy of reifying forces of capitalist society, we observe the concrete struggle between two mutually opposed forces. Realism is able to grasp totality in the first instance, but it must be an activated, living, coruscating totality. Realist works represent the richness and multiplicity of human praxis: "*Nur die menschliche Praxis kann das Wesen der Menschen konkret zeigen.*" (ND, p.210) They incorporate the richness and complexity of reality itself: the characters take active part in the social life of the people. (ND, p.211)

Lukács's active hero is based on the bourgeoisie preconception of the free individual who is able to act meaningfully in society. However, the passive modernist hero is a much more accurate pointer to reification than the active hero propagated by Lukács. The modern, passive hero expresses the experience of the subject in a situation where repression, alienation and control by political, economic and social forces have reached such intensity that it cannot be balanced or overcome by the class consciousness of the proletariat. Lukács

paradoxically demands that the bourgeoisie writer proceeds as if he can participate in a class consciousness which is only nascent and developing amongst the proletariat . From time to time, an assertive consciousness may be possible, but the dominant experience in society is one of repression.

For Lukács, the representation of subjectivity is essential to realism. "*Menschengestaltung ist keine 'technische Frage' sondern vor allem die 'Handhabung der Dialektik' auf dem Gebiet der Literatur.*" (Lukács, in Münz-Koenen, p.125) Lukács consistently ignores the importance of the writer's consciously held Weltanschauung in favour of his creative, formal method. Balzac is a good example: Lukács ignores the reactionary monarchism displayed in his works in order to point to the truth of his representation of the total conflicts and developments in nineteenth-century France:

"Die fehlende weltanschauliche Bewusstheit wird dadurch kompensiert, dass der Verfasser... in seiner Gestaltung doch die treibenden Kräfte in ihren Zusammenhang erkennt."

(Lukács, in Münz-Koenen, p.137)

Tolstoy's works contain an element of peasant conservatism and piety, yet in spite of this reactionary class content, he is able to represent the totality of prerevolutionary Russia. The mode of representation is thus the precondition for cognition. Brecht is, ideologically speaking, a socialist writer: yet Lukács criticizes the lack of dialectical thinking in his portrayal of people and events, ignoring the progressive class content of his novels.

Lukács's views on negation in realist writing can usefully be contrasted with those of Adorno. For Adorno, art cannot isolate itself from the process of universal reification, but must respond to this process by developing new forms and artistic procedures. That which Lukács denounces as abstract, anti-humanistic subjectivity must rather be seen as an adequate artistic response to a reality in the process of change:

*"Die Verdinglichung aller
Beziehungen zwischen den
Individuen, die ihre menschlichen
Eigenschaften in Schmieröl für
den glatten Ablauf der
Maschinerie verwandelt, die
universale Entfremdung und
Selbstentfremdung, fordert beim
Wort gerufen zu werden.."(Adorno,
in Lindner, p.270)*

Lukács's negation implies a limitation of critique to positive realism. This is based on the existence of positive, anti-capitalist processes of life, of active resistance to capitalism. However, Adorno emphasizes the possibility of negative critique: critique which incorporates and exposes reification and capitalism in its form, without depicting any counter-tendencies. Perhaps this, in view of the changed reality, is the only possible form of critique in the twentieth century: a form of passive, negative resistance. For Adorno, art acts as a positive "mirror" of reality. It heightens the processes of alienation and reification - it becomes a "Verzerrung der Verzerrung". For Lukács, similarly, art heightens and makes more concrete social processes in society - it is also an intensifying mirror. However, Lukács's and Adorno's views on reality differ radically. Where Adorno sees rampant reification and alienation, Lukács sees powerful counter-forces at work in society - forces which should be included in a realistic representation. Adorno makes possible a powerful, passive critique *ex negativo*, by revealing the full extent of reification: Lukács, on the contrary, depends on a positive critique which shows up resistance to capitalistic reification.

"(Lukács fordert) mit unerschütterlicher Beharrlichkeit, dass der Standpunkt reiner Negation und Kritik künstlerisch nicht ausreicht, sondern (dass)... positive wahrnehmbare Humanität im Kunstwerk ästhetisch wirksam werden müsse. (Kleinschmidt, p.650)

Lukács's concern was the maintenance of the human core of the individual and the need for harmonious integrity amidst paramount modern fragmentation and alienation. The struggle against tendencies of alienation in society could be co-ordinated and directed from this core of artistic humanity. Lukács's aesthetic demands that negation and critique in great works of art should simultaneously be balanced by an awareness of real positivity and real meaningfulness. Art should activate powers of resistance against capitalism - and as a simple exposure of capitalist absurdity is not enough to indicate these real reserves of human power and greatness.

Lukács saw realist literature as a weapon on the side of the popular front against the rising tide of fascism:

"Son intention est d'associer à la lutte anti-fasciste les grands romanciers bourgeois en les arrachant aux interprétations réactionnaires dont ils ont été victimes jusqu'alors, et en découvrant chez eux ce réalisme critique, c'est-à-dire cette vue pénétrante de la société bourgeoise qui leur est propre et qui mène tout droit vers la conception d'une autre société délivrée des vices qu'ils dénoncent avec tant de vigueur, c'est-à-dire vers la société sans classe."(Arvon, p.16)

According to Lukács, the activating mode of creation of realistic literature is spontaneously, by its own logic, a form of critique against the dehumanization of capitalism.(MPID,p.280) The critique becomes sharper the more the dehumanization inherent in capitalism spreads and becomes generalized in the general crisis of the system. (MPID,p.280) The representation of historically concrete, real people in specific socio-historical conflicts already implies the beginnings of a rebellion against the ruling system.(p.280) According to Lukács, the writer who represents real people in real collisions,"spontaneously"

sets himself up in contradiction to capitalist society and exposes, from a distinct point-of-view, the inhumanity of this system. In representing the real dialectic of appearance and being in human existence, realism "spontaneously" comes into opposition to the capitalist world and its ideology of decline. The literary presentation of the dialectic between the individual's subjective and objective reality implies a description of actual persons living in a palpable, identifiable world.(IM,p.24)

Realism, for Lukács, is based on an ideology of the active revolutionary subject. He does not see the possibility of subjectivity itself being fragmented in the twentieth century. As a result of this ideology, Lukács ends up by prescribing a "correct" content for literature- he posits works in which the active subject is placed in interaction with his environment. Divergent portrayals of subjectivity as powerless or limited are denounced as "decadent" or as a "partial truth".

Lukács posits the existence of an international body of realistic literature which is also absolutely and definitely delimited from all literature which is "anti-realist". He similarly lumps various literary movements together as "decadence", which is the polar opposite of realistic literature. Lukács fails to

differentiate between the various currents of modernism. Lukács's ideal of realism is ahistorical, and does not change with the passage of time and with new realities which surface. Realism is immutable, and is always announced with the same characteristic of having penetrated to the "core" of society, and with embodying the totality of a society. There is no continuum of developing literature, but a series of nodal points of achieved realism which radically distinguishes itself from non-realism. Lukács ignores the development from early capitalism to the monopoly capitalism of imperialistic Europe, and negates the necessity that literature should develop new techniques to account for new realities. Realism remains a frozen, atemporal absolute, a kind of literature that is the same for all periods of capitalism:

*"Die von (Lukács) aus den
Gipfelleistungen der Weltliteratur
abgezogenen und höchst eindringlich
beschriebenen Formen und
Formungsprinzipien waren für ihn
ästhetische Grundkategorien. In
ihnen manifestierten sich, wie er in
Der historische Roman dartat,
andauernde, man könnte sagen,
ontologische "Lebenstatsachen"
(Batt, p.220)*

Lukács's debate with Anna Seghers is relevant here, because she allows for the possibility of historical development and times of renewal and crisis in literature. She describes the occurrence of radically new forms of development in literature as necessary moments in the history of art; as a kind of transitional phase which corresponds to a transitional phase in history itself. Instead of automatically condemning all innovations as decadent, Seghers acknowledges the various forms of development that a new attempt to capture a new reality must take in specific historical moments:

"Als die Antike zusammenbrach, in den Jahrhunderten, in denen sich die Christliche Kultur des Abendlandes eben erst entwickelte, gab es unsagbar viele Versuche, der Realität habhaft zu werden... Schliesslich gab es die ersten einzelnen abgeschlossenen Porträts, recht fragwürdige Versuche und doch Rembrandts Vorläufer. Vom Standpunkt der antiken Kunst aus war das, was nachkam, der reinste Zerfall. Im besten Fall absurd, experimentell. Es war doch der Anfang zu etwas Neuem. (Seghers: Briefwechsel)

Seghers's flexibility allows for a realism which is not absolutely and finally defined, but which is relative to historical stages of development. Lukács's ideal of positive, active realism enables him to conserve much of nineteenth-century realism as part of the heritage of socialism. However, his refusal to acknowledge modernist passive critique *ex negativo* cuts him off from twentieth-century avant-garde literature. Critique *per se* is not the sole criterion for excellence. Lukács notes that naturalist and modernist works are written in a spirit of resistance to capitalism. *Narrative, combative* critique is his prime category: the view of interaction between an active, heroic subject and his environment.

The goal of all great art is to render an image of reality in which the opposition of appearance and essence, of individual case and law, of immediacy and abstraction is dissolved in such a way that both coalesce to a spontaneous unity, which builds an indivisible unity for the receptor of the work of art. (KOW, p.616) In realist literature, there should be a narrative synthesis between individual events / detail and larger dramatic conflicts. For example in the race scene in Anna Karenina. Tolstoy does not simply describe objects, but constructs a synthesis between the detailed events of the race and the dramatic conflicts of Anna and Vronsky's lives:

*"In Anna Karenina ist das
Wettrennen der Knotenpunkt eines
grossen Dramas...Das Rennen selbst
wird jetzt zu einem seelischen
Drama... Tolstoy hat die
Verknüpfung dieser Episode mit dem
wichtigen Lebensdrama so eng
gestaltet, wie nur irgend
möglich."(ND, pp.198-199)*

Balzac's description of a theatre in Lost Illusions reveals something more of the social structures behind the immediate detail of the theatre: conflicts and struggles of the theatre in the capitalist world are illustrated.(ND, p.200) The immediate detail of a tournament scene in Scott's novel Old Mortality is simultaneously an exposition of all the main figures and currents of a great historical drama. Described objects derive their quality from the fact they they coalesce with human interactions: "*Die Dinge leben dichterisch nur durch ihre Beziehungen zum Menschenschicksal*"(ND, p.223)

Socialist realism is able to produce the profound organic unity of individuality and typicality.(CRSR,p.123) Every aspect of a realist writer's characters, every individual experience, thought and emotion, however

subjective, partakes of a social character. (KM, p.54)
Realism demands a deep, living conception of the
interconnections between the individual and society, as
well as those between persons. (IPAC, p.194) Artistic
creation can be significant and typical only when the
artist can uncover the multiple connections between
individual traits of his hero and the objective general
problems of the epoch. (IPAC, p.156) The organic unity
between individuality and typicality is present in the
criterion of the realistic type. For Lukács the individual
should always be the representative of larger, collective,
socio-historical forces. In brief, the individual is a
type:

*"The central category and criterion
of realist literature is the type,
a peculiar synthesis which
organically binds together the
general and the particular both in
characters and situations. What
makes a type a type is not its
average quality, not its mere
individual being, however
profoundly conceived: what makes
it a type is that in it all the
humanly and socially essential
determinants are present in their*

*highest level of development, in
the ultimate unfolding of the
possibilities latent in them, in
extreme presentation of their
extremes, rendering concrete the
peaks and limits of men and epochs."*

(Introduction SER, p.6)

Lukács always insisted on an integration between the individualized literary character and the fate of his class as a whole: there is an organic unity between individual action and the larger historical currents. *"Auf diesen 'lebendigen Menschen' bezog (Lukács) sich hier umschreibend als die Konkrete, erlebbare und gestaltete Einheit von Individuum und Klasse."* (Lukács, in Pike, p.38)

It is the task of every literary work to depict the immediate, apparent, surface circumstances of man in interaction with the social essence, with the real driving forces of society and history. (QS, p.89)

"Geschichtliche Situation, Klassenlage, Weltanschauungshöhe, Gestaltungskraft des Schriftstellers werden bestimmen, wieweit er imstande ist, bis zu den wirklichen treibenden Kräften der von ihm geschilderten Wirklichkeit vorzudrängen und das erfasste Wesen schriftstellerisch zu gestalten." (QS, p.89) The realistic sequence and

organization of creation makes for an adequate image of objective reality, which depends on the writer's attitude to reality as a whole .(KM, p.51) The realist writer does not only transcend surface phenomena for the "inner essence" of society, but explores the connection and interrelationship between the two levels.

Literature can portray the contradictions, struggles and conflicts of social life as they manifest themselves in the life of real man, as well as the inner connections of these collisions as they are concentrated in real people.(MPID, p.274) Realistic writers discover the great inner contradictions of social development, and create an organic unity between great social conflicts and the fate of a single human being.(MPID, p.297) They distill a typical destiny of a whole class from a single individual's fate.

Realist writing is based on a real understanding and depiction of the conflicts and crises of social development. A thorough knowledge of life never limits itself to the observation of everyday events. It consists of inventing characters and situations which are impossible to find in daily life, yet which expose clearly the highest and purest reciprocal action of contradictions, which emerge only confusedly in real life.(IPAC, p.160) The representation of extreme

situations and characters only becomes typical when it is shown how in the overall context, an extreme action of a character in an extreme situation allows the deepest contradictions of a distinct social complex of problems to emerge.(IPAC, p.161)

Lukács demands a particular narrative technique from realist writers. They should adhere to the omniscient point of view, so as to retain control of their subject matter.(ND, p.219) Modernist writing finds it impossible to sustain this omniscient, disinterested view of society. If such omniscience is assumed, the result is writing which, in an age of total domination, is not credible. Realism bears down to an ultimate clarification of the initiatory moments.(IPAC, p.179) Realist writers also use critical conjunctions or turning-points in their writing. (p.179) The creation of a fable and of real action leads ineluctably to the testing of feelings and occurrences against the objective world.(MPID) The realist writers retain control of their own feelings and experience by means of their confrontation with the objective reality of social life. The realistic theme originates in socio-historical development.(MPID, p.227)

Lukács's criterion of a fable and action presupposes a fully constituted, acting subject. However, in capitalism the worker is constituted only as a unit

of labour power, and subjectivity stops existing. The destruction of subjectivity expands and envelops all classes. Subjectivity only comes into play when the worker forms a union or a collectivity and starts the struggle for emancipation. The fragmented subjectivity depicted by modernist texts is a correct Marxist perspective, because the overwhelming impression of the worker's point-of-view is one of de-individualization. Alienation is the first aspect of society that has to be described, and an alienated subject cannot be an active subject which generates action and a fable. Lukács's terms are useful only in terms of a privileged, bourgeois society. It is difficult or impossible to write a novel of the workplace itself - a novel which captures the steady, inexorable process of daily alienation to which the worker is subjected.

For Lukács, there is a dichotomy between the underlying positions of realist and naturalist writers. Lukács claims that the realists were active participants in the great historical movements of their times.(ND, p.205) In contrast, the naturalist attitude derives from a rejection and withdrawal from bourgeois life after the failure of the 1848 revolutions.(p.205) The naturalists hated the political and social regimes of their time: however, they remained mere critical observers:

*"Mitleben oder Beobachten sind also
gesellschaftlich notwendige
Verhaltensweisen der Schriftsteller
zweier Perioden des Kapitalismus,
Erzählen oder Beschreiben die beiden
grundlegenden Darstellungsmethoden
dieser Perioden."*(ND, p.206)

Lukács is also concerned with the ability of realist writers to let their characters express themselves consciously and intellectually about their inner feelings. In realistic works, characters are individualized through their living, personal attitude towards abstract problems. The intellectual physiognomy is the main method of creating the living personality.(IPAC, p.152) The intellectual physiognomy of characters is always carefully drawn in the great works of world literature. The ability of characters to express their world view is a necessary and important component of the artistic representation of reality. A world view is a deeply personal experience of the individual person, a highly characteristic expression of his inner being, and it simultaneously mirrors the great problems of his epoch. Realist writers create a hierarchy of characters in their work.(p.157) The rank of the human figure originates by means of the degree of

consciousness of his fate, through the ability to sublimate the personal and contingent aspects of his fate to a definite concrete height of generality.(p.157) When social conflict is grasped deeply and correctly, the poet has to create main characters in whose personal qualities, culminating in their intellectual physiognomy, the conflict emerges most concretely .(IPAC, p.158)

For Lukács the immense social power of realism lies in the fact that it focusses on man immediately and concretely, in the full richness of his inner and outer life. This intensified image of man is equalled in no other mirroring of objective reality.(MPID, pp.273-274) The centrality of real man in literature, its "*microcosmic, anthropological*" character, results in the possibility of a genuine and important realism amidst the general decline of twentieth-century literature.(p.275) This is the continued existence of the "*triumph of realism*" amidst the decadence of much of twentieth-century literature.(p.275) A realistic victory over the surface appearance of capitalism is made possible by knowledge and experience of the deeper interconnections of life.

In a capitalistic context, realism depends on whether the writer's interaction with reality allows him a free observation of reality or whether it hampers his full surrender to the complexity of social life.(MPD, p.269)
The writer should open up before reality and trust observed reality, so as to establish a realistic fearlessness in his representation of the world.(p.270)

"Der ästhetische Produktionsvorgang ist in (Lukács's) Auffassung davon erfüllt, dass das Subjekt des Schaffens sich der Wirklichkeit bedingungslos hingibt, und sie zugleich zu übertreffen versucht..."
(Batt,p.237)

Lukács always presupposes a reality external to the subject which needs to be "grasped".However, one can argue that subjectivity and language construct reality as we know it: reality is not a given which is accessible to realistic penetration, as Lukács supposes. It may be a more adequate, realistic description of reality to portray it as difficult of access. Lukács is wrong when he attacks the differently constituted "reality" of writers like Kafka, Proust and Joyce. The underlying structures of capitalist reality are not directly accessible to the writer.

Lukács differentiates between critical realism and socialist realism. Critical realism depicts developments in socialist society from an extraneous perspective. (CRSR, p.93) In contrast, socialist realism has a concrete socialist perspective, which is used to describe the transitional society of Russia from an internal position. (CRSR, p.93) The critical realist starts from a position based on the individual and his personal conflicts, and attempts to attain wider social significance from his position. (p.94) Socialist realism is able to describe from the inside persons whose energies are spent in the creation of a socialist future. (p.96) The concrete perspective of socialist realism enables the writer to see the true nature of society and history. (p.97)

Although Lukács claims to lay the foundations of a purely Marxist aesthetic, an integral part of his criteria is closely analogous to important tenets of mainstream idealist literary criticism. The Lukácsian doctrine of the work of art as an independent, closed-off entity which manifests an inner organic unity is similar to the bourgeois positing of the literary work as an intricately structured, complete creation imbued with autonomous life. Lukács demands that the authorial ideology be intrinsic to the inner structure and form of the work itself, and negates any conscious, open

authorial intervention in the narrative. This is similar to the Flaubertian authorial *impassibilité* and to the modern contrast between "telling" and "showing". In telling, the author states his beliefs openly, while the narrative which "shows" reveals the characters by indirect narrative methods of implication. In modern Anglo-American criticism a strong primacy is placed on the "artistically superior" method of showing - and Lukács, with his emphasis on authorial invisibility, does the same.

Lukács requires the presence of complex, developing "living" characters in interaction with their environment, just as idealist critiques recommend the "round", three-dimensional character which is created with subtle particularity. The realist novel should have a plot, which reveals inner unity of action, and which moves to a final climax of revealed truth. Similarly, idealist approaches chart the "rising action" and the climax of the plot, in which all parts are organically necessary to the whole. In this narrative scheme, everything pivots on the struggle of protagonist and antagonist - which again dovetails with Lukács's theory of dramatic conflict as a base of action in realistic works.

Both Lukács and idealist critiques celebrate the author as the creator of artistically valuable literature.

For Lukács, the powerful insight of the artist-creator leads to the central, timeless moment of truth of realism, when the social essence of the totality stands revealed. Lukács attempts to bypass the moment of ideology in granting the text direct access to historical truth. The emphasis on the truth of the "great" author can be contrasted to a Marxist analysis of the text as a production of ideology which reveals the inner contradictions of that ideology, by an author who is himself a producer limited by the ideological barriers of his specific socio-historical conjunction.

Lukács's ideal of the active realistic hero is based on certain presuppositions about the individual and society which are integral to both Marxist and idealist humanism. His ideal can be seen as ideological, if ideology is taken to indicate unquestioned, "natural" assumptions underlying our interaction with reality itself. The active hero interacting with social forces proposes a humanism based on an empiricist-idealist interpretation of the world. It proposes "man" as an origin and source of meaning, of action and of history. Human experience in the world is seen as part of a transcendent human nature whose essence is the attribute of each individual. The essentially "human" which is constituted prior to any interaction with society is a fundamental presupposition of bourgeois ideology.

Idealism is based on the idea of a human "essence" which controls and transcends the social system, and is not constructed in this system. "Mankind" and the "human" are the entities whereby realist literature exposes the deformation of humanity in capitalist Europe. The idealist idea of identity points to society as a collection of "free" individuals whose social determination results from their "pre-given" essences. Language is conceived of as a transparent, neutral mode of communication.

A materialist analysis of the interrelationship of the individual and society must therefore move to decentre the notion of the individual in control of the process of history. This process of decentering the individual works in terms of seeing the individual as a historically limited, specific construct and by emphasizing the active role of language in the construction of the individual as an integral part of society. Language must be seen to construct the categories and system of differences which are apprehended as "natural" reality. The sovereign, individual self can be seen as a relatively recent cultural construct, which was added on to human reality by the seventeenth-century rise of the bourgeois ethic of individualism. Althusser claims that *"this humanist ideology... is inseparably linked to the rising bourgeoisie, whose aspirations it expressed."* (Althusser, in Harland, p.47) Bourgeois ideology is always directed

towards the affirmation of independent, "natural" subjectivity. It is the primary role of ideology to construct people as autonomous individuals, possessed of subjectivity or consciousness which is the source of their beliefs and actions. They appear as unique, distinguishable and irreplaceable entities:

*"I say the category of the subject
is constituted of all ideology,
but at the same time and
immediately I add that the category
of the subject is only constitutive
of all ideology in so far as all
ideology has the function which
defines it of 'constituting'
concrete individuals as subjects"
(Althusser: Ideology and
ideological State Apparatuses.
1971, p.160)*

The individual self is socially created: it is never truly primary, self-sufficient, or independent of society. The notion of a unified subject of self-consciousness becomes untenable in Marxist approaches to the subject. The subject is not to be understood in any ontological sense as having any pre-existent essence which language somehow conditions, but as an "absent"

subject: able to signify because of his production, positioned in relation to the signifier. The primacy of language decentres the ideology of the independent subject as a source of meaning and significant action: "*l'homme parle, mais parce que le symbole l'a fait homme.*" (Mooij, p.99) Freud notes "*dass das Ich kein Herr sei in seinem eigenen Hause*" (Freud, in Mooij, p.107)

The work of Jacques Lacan on human ontogenesis acts against idealist presuppositions of a primordial, essential "oneness" or "unity" of the naturally constituted human subject. There is nothing, not even the unconscious, that has a pre-existent form as a germ of self or "ego" for Lacan. Lacan disagrees completely with any notion of a conflict-free origin of the ego or of the subject. The human starts life as an "hommellette", with undirected, diffuse desires, and with no sense of an ego or self as a central point of existence. She/he is not a human subject at this point. The conversion of the primordial partial subject into the human subject proceeds on the basis of two major splits: the first is the mirror-phase, and the second is the entry of the child into a social order which predates and extends beyond its limits. (Frosch, pp.132;134) The mirror-phase means the joyous, premature identification of a self-projection of a unified, controlling self. It involves the joyful, mistaken perception of bodily unity and control as the

site of the unified self, when the child sees an essence of itself in its multiple self-projections. This moment of mistaken self-identification is the inception of a life-long process where the subject searches for imaginary wholeness, uniqueness and essentiality to disguise its fundamental conflict, lack and absence. The child identifies itself with a vision that comes from elsewhere.

The developmental split that ruptures the imaginary unity and self-sufficiency of the mirror stage is the entry of the child into the realm of language and culture. The Oedipus complex effects the transition from a dual, immediate mother-child relationship to the mediated, indirect relationship proper to the symbolic mode. (Lemaire, p.78) The Oedipus is the moment when the child humanizes itself by becoming aware of the self, the world and the others.(p.90) The pre-Oedipal sensory continuity between the self and materiality is ruptured. The Oedipus complex is the "spirit of humanization".The child, in its first function as a subject, speaks from the position of the Other. Language reproduces reality, and mediates between the self and reality. *"Language is the vehicle of the social prohibition of a culture, prescriptions and laws. The child who enters into this symbolic order with its multiple dimensions will be fashioned by this order and will be indelibly marked by it without being aware of it."*(Lemaire, p.54) The

inner structure of language consists of social imperatives - the father's rules, laws and definitions - among which are those of "child" and "mother" The child's desire is constructed according to the rules and inner necessities of language: it must express itself according to what language allows to be said.

Language is not a function of the self: language speaks the human subject. "*Le sujet est parlé plutôt qu'il ne parle.*" (Mooij, p.97) Subjectivity is constructed in and through pre-existent language itself. The accession to language also affords the subject with a point of reference for his/her subjectivity - it enables the subject to articulate him/herself as subject. Language is the precondition for being aware of oneself as a distinct entity. "*Le langage avec sa structure préexiste à l'entrée qu'y fait chaque sujet à un moment de son développement mental.*" (Lacan, in Mooij, p.95) The subject is forced to realize him/herself in the symbolic mode or to become ill. Language belongs to the symbolic order, and it is through language that the subject is forced to represent desires and feelings. The subject is represented or instituted in the symbolic order.

Mediated by language, the subject is irremediably split, because he is at once excluded from the signifying

chain, and represented in it. Being produced in the place of the Other (the symbolic) the signifier causes the subject to arise there, but at the cost of being fixed and of defining him/herself in the terms provided by language. "What was ready to speak there disappears, being no longer anything more than a signifier." (Lemaire, p.71) The subject becomes set in his utterances and social roles, and their totality is gradually constricted into an 'ego' which is an 'objectification' of the subject.

"The only homogeneous function of consciousness is the imaginary capture of the Ego by its mirror reflection and the function of misrecognition attached to it."

Primary repression is simultaneous with access to language: the subject *"withdraws from the immediacy of a lived experience by giving it a substitute (language) which it is not..."* (Lemaire, p.85) Speech is simultaneously self-exposure and the closure of the self. Accession to the symbolic must be balanced against the *'division of the subject'* with the loss of an essential constituent of the self, since the symbolic can only *'represent' or 'translate'* the subject. *"The signifier is that which represents the subject to another signifier."*

Lacan thus radically subverts the image of the heroic, self-sufficient subject propagated by Lukács. The subject, instead of commanding historical forces and struggling actively for a social cause, is subservient to the primary social forces of language and culture. Lukács puts the subject on a pedestal of self-sufficiency and power, while Lacan submits the subject to the forces of language and culture. Lukács ignores the role of language/culture in the constitution of the speaking, active self. This constitution by language itself, is the precondition for Lukács's heroic, independent subject. For Lukács, language is a transparent, passive communicative medium utilized by subjects in their daily interaction and class struggle. For Lacan, the very possibility of struggle itself is subordinated to the commanding role of language/culture in the constitution of the speaking subject.

Anti-realism or "decadence"

The historical point of transition between realism and anti-realism for Lukács is the failure of the proletarian revolutions in 1848 .(Eagleton ,p.30) Before that watershed, the bourgeoisie could still be regarded as a progressive class with its own ideals to realize, while after 1848, the main task before the bourgeoisie was to consolidate their rule at the expense of proletarian emancipation. The bourgeoisie consequently denies historical development and class struggle, and fixates the contemporary state as an eternal, "natural" situation. The bourgeoisie, trapped by their own myths, are forced to mask the true nature of class society. The emergence of ideological counter-realism is a part of this historical development.

Lukács initially used the term "naturalism" as a blanket category subsuming all avant-garde literature. He writes of twentieth-century naturalism:

*"We encounter it in symbolism's
impressionist methods and its
cultivation of the exotic, in the
fragmentation of objective reality,
in Futurism and Constructivism and
the German Neue Sachlichkeit or*

again in Surrealism's streams-of-consciousness."

(Lukács, in Orr, p.119)

After publishing The Meaning of Contemporary Realism, (1956) Lukács uses "modernism" to refer to decadent literature, indicating mainly the novel of the nineteen-twenties and the post-war novel.

Lukács juxtaposes expressionism, naturalism and surrealism to realism by maintaining that these movements remain fixated at the level of social appearances, instead of uncovering the social essence. Fragmentation instead of totality is offered to the reader:

*"Die undurchsichtige, zerissen
gespiegelte, chaotisch erscheinende,
unverstandene, nur unmittelbar
erlebte Oberfläche wird... ohne
gedankliche Erhebung über dieses
Niveau als solche fixiert."*

(EGR, p.324)

*"Aber diese ganze Arbeit erhebt sich,
wenn man ihre Beziehung zur
gesellschaftlichen Wirklichkeit ins
Auge fasst, weder weltanschaulich
noch künstlerisch über das Niveau
der Unmittelbarkeit."*

(EGR, p.322)

There is no escape from the apparently chaotic contingency of immediate reality for the writers of modernism. The tendencies are the result of reified consciousness: a fragmented view of reality is offered in the place of the realist totality of events and characters. Lukács describes naturalism as dehumanizing and abstract:

*"Der einen abstrakten
Unmittelbarkeit wurde immer wieder
eine andersgeartete, scheinbar
entgegengesetzte, aber ebenso
abstrakte Unmittelbarkeit
gegenübergestellt."(EGR, p.325)*

All techniques of modernism , which intend to unlock new art and new reality, fetishize the reified social surface, and are subservient to social appearances, which are constituted by commodity fetishism. Art which understands itself as radically avant-garde, as revealing radically new forms and contents, merely represent ideological disorientation and artistic weakness. However, Brecht maintains that techniques such as montage, stream of consciousness and inner monologue can be used for various purposes: they have no identities or qualities which automatically preclude their use by realistic writers. Montage, inner monologue and other techniques

can be used to demonstrate the senselessness of life: but they can also be used to show that this life is changeable by means of praxis. Modernist techniques are not bound to a world-view by Brecht, as they are for Lukács, but can be used for several purposes.

For Lukács, naturalism is the exponent of a purely subjective essence.(EGR, p.325) Lukács identifies the main characteristic of all modernist literature as an elimination or a movement away from realism .(p.314) The surface appearance of capitalism is one of disorganization, discontinuity and chaos, and this appearance is adhered to in modernist writing.(p.317) The photographically and phonographically precise surface of life of naturalism remains dead, in a state of being without inner movement.(p.325) Paradoxically, naturalism itself, with its purely descriptive essence, initiated a movement away from realism.(p.324) Pure expressionism denies all relationship to reality, and attacks all content which displays a grasp of totality. (p.326) Expressionism brings an artistic refinement to naturalism, but this refinement purifies art from the complex mediations and the intricate objective dialectic of being and consciousness.(p.328) Montage is the artistic climax of this development.(p.3)

Lukács consigns expressionism as a whole to modernism, subjecting it to overall condemnation as a specific manifestation of anti-realism. This condemnation is inevitable, given the conservative impetus of Lukács's criticism as a whole. He refuses to see the ways in which expressionism can act as a genuine, penetrating expression of the modern experience of society and history.

Lukács's objection to "anti-realism" centers on the issue of artistic subjectivity which is paramount in modern literature. The modernist writer identifies what is necessarily a subjective experience with reality as such. This coalescence of subjectivity and reality leads to a distorted picture of reality as a whole. (KM, p.51) Objective reality is deprived of its historicity and subjectivized. (KM, p.69) Modernism absolutizes subjectivity, and reduces society to an ahistorical nonentity. (IM, p.18) The exaltation of human subjectivity at the expense of the objective reality of his environment means that man's subjectivity itself is impoverished. Modernism splits subjective and objective time, rendering subjective time an absolute experience. (KM, p.36) Ideological decadence appears with the shifting of knowledge of real interconnections and coherences into the subjective. (MPID, p.287) Another sign of decadence is

when the progressive tendencies of life are more or less consciously ignored, and subjective wishes are introjected in their place as moving forces of reality.(p.287) The dissolution of character in modern literature is caused by the extreme subjectivism of the modern Weltanschauung, the increasing refinement in the literary depiction of the individual, and the increasing exclusivity in the emphasis on the psychological moment.(IPAC, p.175)

The psychological introspection of the modernists affords the inner life a scope which is unlimited. False subjectivism and the uninhibited self-expression of the writer's inner life results in being confronted by a world of free experimentation, in which the writer can interfere entirely at his own will.(MPID, p.276) Expressionism sees reality as chaos instead of a complex, law-governed totality.(GDE, p.137) Instead of attempting to uncover the determinants of this totality, they employ a method of grasping the so-called "essence" of reality. This essence is based on the opposition of subjectivity to society, and has nothing to do with the socio-historical truth underlying history.

By means of the theme of false subjectivism, Lukács demands the objective representation of reality. However, art, in contrast to science, entails the representation of reality via the medium of the subject. Lukács implies

that subjectivism necessarily introduces ideological distortions in the work of art. But the subject is needed to mediate between art and reality. Subjectivity in art is necessary because it starts off from what most people experience. Art does not find an objective, impersonal "essence" of history, but relates the subjective experience of people to objective reality. For Lukács "false subjectivism" means superficial inner life. His accusation is acceptable only if he means art which achieves an aesthetic effect in a facile way without addressing the underlying structure of reality. Art tries to reach the totality and the inherent structure of reality while holding on to subjectivity.

The naturalist view of life manifests itself as an uninterrupted, even depiction of everyday reality, with no significant organization evident in the presentation of this reality. We see "normal" life as an uninterrupted flow of average, everyday occurrences, a mass of superficial detail. Lukács claims that this seamless portrayal of life represents a distortion of the complex laws of everyday reality.(ND, p.211) Description is an authorial replacement for the absent praxis and epic significance of realism.(p.213) It necessarily arises from the increasing dehumanization of life entailed by capitalism.(p.213) "*Das Erzählen gliedert, die Beschreibung nivelliert.*"(ND, p.214) The narrator

makes clear his choice of significant moments in the narration, while the observer loses himself in the confusion of equalized details.(p.215)

In modernist literature, montage and other techniques are incorporated into works of art. In this way, the whole of literature is expanded, new material is collected and the mode of operation of literature is changed. Lukács, however, instead of expanding the instrumentarium of his aesthetics to include new forms such as the reportage novel, rejects them as "pseudo-art" and excludes them from the sphere of aesthetics. The inclusion of "facts" just as they are means the reproduction of the mechanism of reification for Lukács. However, there may be artistically valid reasons for the inclusion of facts in literature. The modernist method includes facts precisely because they are opaque and because people have to deal with appearances and facts in everyday life. In the novel of reportage, facts are absorbed and combined in such a way as to leave the contradictions of surface life undisturbed. The reader must become aware that these scissions and contradictions continue to exist in everyday life. He must be challenged to change the face of reality, instead of being confronted with the full-blown illusion of a "representational" work of art as a world in itself. Commentary and montage allow the author to appear in his

works. Montage juxtaposes seemingly disconnected segments of reality precisely in order to let them form a new statement. The reader himself must synthesize the montage of material into a new whole. The principle of construction is not hidden, so that the illusion that the work of art represents reality can be avoided. The novel of reportage indicates that the dissolution of contradictions takes place not in art, but in praxis.

Lukács occupies an ambivalent, shifting position on the justification for calling most of modern literature "decadent". On the one hand, he seems to exonerate the modernists from blame, arguing that experiments in form and new techniques are the inevitable result of the increasing reification of society and the undermining of individual subjectivity in capitalist society:

"Die Herrschaft des kapitalistischen Prosa über die innere Poesie der menschlichen Praxis, das immer Unmenschlicherwerden des gesellschaftlichen Lebens, das Sinken des Niveaus der Menschlichkeit - all dies sind objektive Tatsachen der Entwicklung des Kapitalismus. Aus ihnen entsteht notwendig die Methode des Beschreibens..." (Lukács, in Lindner, p.270)

Montage is a necessary result of these factors:

*"(Lukács konzediert) dass die Montage
notwendige künstlerische
Ausdrucksform einer bestimmten
Entwicklungsstufe sei..."*

(Mayer/Knepler, p.382)

*"(Lukács schienen) Experimente,
Ansätze, Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten...
zeitbedingte Notwendigkeiten"*

(Mayer/Knepler, p.388)

On the other hand, Lukács argues that progressive movements of resistance are always-ready immanent in the period of capitalist decline. The modernist author simply has to become aware of these currents to escape from "decadence". Modernist depictions of passive subjectivity can thus be accused of only seeing a part of the totality, and of eliding the socio-historical struggle versus capitalism which is, as it were, taking place right before them. Lukács maintains that:

*"Die Arbeiterklasse hat keine Ideale zu
verwirklichen; sie hat immer nur die
Elemente der neuen Gesellschaft in
Freiheit zu setzen, die sich bereits im
Schoss der zusammenbrechenden
Bourgeois-Gesellschaft entwickelt haben."*

(Lukács, in Kliche, p.233 -234)

Lukács thus shifts his viewpoint on the extent of reification and alienation in modern Europe: he seems to see it as both all-powerful and as a declining force which cannot suppress the forces of revolutionary consciousness.

Lukács accuses the writers of modernism of not representing the whole of totality. Realism never simply depicts external appearances as naked, finished-off, ready-made facts of a homogenous society, but is concerned with representing the human world as a complex structure of interrelationships between men. The portrayal of ready-made results of the capitalist deformation of man as well as the addition of an elegiac or revolutionary mood means simply the authorial fixation of the social surface plus a commentary which is unable to touch on the essence of the subject matter. The result instead of the whole process is described. What is missing most often in modernist writing is the struggle and the resistance of the proletariat against the inroads of dehumanizing capitalism. *"By attributing distortion to reality itself, modernism dismisses the counterforces at work as ontologically irrelevant."* (Lukács, in Orr, p.122) Modernist writers represent the ready-made results of capitalist development, without concentrating on the processes and struggles which give rise to those results.

Modernist heroes do not act, but are passive victims of circumstances which are beyond their control. This passivity distorts the reality of the total capitalist situation. Modernists see a new reality, and change their methods and art to portray this new reality. Lukács, however, will accuse them of leaving out powerful counter-capitalist trends and the progressive movement of history:

"Wie widersprüchlich, tragisch und kunstfeindlich die objektive historische Konstellation auch immer beschaffen sein mag, Kunst kann und muss das deutlichere gesteigerte Spiegelbild des Sinnverlangens gesellschaftlicher Praxis aufbieten und in Einzelschicksalen die vorwärtstreibenden Kräfte der gesellschaftlich-geschichtlichen Entwicklung gestalten"

(Lukács, in Lindner, p.272)

The realistic novel actively operates with the reader's tension: the reader wants to see what happens to active, real characters in the realist novel. His concern is with their victory or defeat. (ND, p.216)

The naturalist novel, however, has no tension:

"Die Beschreibung macht alles gegenwärtig. Man erzählt Vergangenes. Man beschreibt das, was man vor sich sieht, und die räumliche Gegenwart verwandelt Menschen und Dinge auch in eine zeitliche Gegenwärtigkeit... Es werden Zustände beschrieben, Statisches, Stillstehendes, Seelenzustände von Menschen oder das zúständliche Sein von Dingen, états d'âme oder Stilleben.

(p.216-217)

Another danger that threatens with the descriptive method is the independence of particular, fine detail. There is no composition, as with realistic novels: the false presence of description expresses itself in the atomization of narrative into independent moments.(p.218) Things are described independently of the fate of human beings: there is no essential nexus between characterization and description of states of being. In naturalist novels, there is no single omniscient point of view, as is the case with realistic novels: the author's perspective is always shifting, and so epic control of the subject matter is lost.(p.211) There is no longer

a unified, overall perspective uniting the separate narrative moments. Description reduces people to frozen, dead objects.(p.220) We only see sequences of subjective moods as well as sequences of independent objects. Without interaction of the main characters and tests of strength in real situations, the epic composition declines into arbitrary, purely coincidental structures of action. The universal levelling process makes action into episodic sequences.(p.230)

For the naturalist, the fictional character appears as a ready-made "product" of social and natural components.(p.225) Naturalism dehumanizes: the emphasis on the animal qualities of characters in Zola's work was a protest against the bestiality of capitalism, but this protest is converted into a fixation of dehumanization and of animal qualities. A writer must have a clear world view if he is to complete meaningful works of art. There is no "neutrality" in true creation:

*"Aber der Dichter muss eine feste
und lebendige Weltanschauung haben,
er muss die Welt in ihrer bewegten
Widersprüchlichkeit sehen, um
überhaupt in der Lage zu sein,
einen Menschen zum Helden zu
wählen." (p.228)*

In the absence of a world-vision, we see a sequence of static descriptions, with a very tenuous line of plot to unite them.(p.230) This is the false objectivism of the modern writers: and on the other side of the spectrum, the false subjectivism of the modernists leads to the novel of defeat, the novel of disillusionment.(p.230)

Lukács posits the question whether the naturalistic novel is not an adequate, correct reflection of the dehumanizing, completed quality of capitalism. In his answer, he points to the defetishizing qualities of the point-of-view of the proletariat inside modern capitalism. (ND, p.231) Proletarian novels transcend the passivity of the descriptive novel: "*Die Notwendigkeit der Fabel, der erzählenden Methode entsteht von selbst*".(p.231) Protest against capitalism is also found in the bourgeoisie, but it is superficially conceived and without real power. They merely reproduce the capitalist system in its entirety, and capitulate without a struggle against completed, dominant capitalism. Lukács claims that the real reduction of human beings is closely interconnected with struggle, and it is this struggle which is passively eliminated in naturalism. The naturalist subject appears as a ready-made product of capitalism: the dimension of struggle disappears.(p.232) Lukács admits that at times, the methods of decadence are suited to reflect the helplessness and powerlessness of

the subject in the face of capitalist exploitation. (PTB, p.451) However, any claim this gives them to an objective reflection of the social world must be denied.

While using his idea of the "triumph of realism", Lukács is able to redeem bourgeois writers to the cause of socialism in spite of reactionary or idealistic ideologies which are manifested in their work:

"Die Gestaltung des Gesamtzusammenhang ist die Voraussetzung für eine richtige Komposition des Romans. Das mag mit 'falschem Bewusstsein' geschehen, d.h., so, dass der Verfasser die Gegenwart, in der er lebt, und die er schildert, verurteilt, bewusst eine vergangene, vergehende Gesellschaft oder eine nur in seiner Vorstellung vorhandene Utopie bejaht, aber in seiner Gestaltung doch die treibenden Kräfte in ihrem Zusammenhang erkennt, aufzeigt und gestaltet,..." (Lukács, in Pike, p.69)

However, in looking at socialist writers in Russia or in Western Europe, he diametrically reverses this procedure: socialist writers are condemned as artists despite the progressive class content of their work. For writers like Bredel or Ottwalt, there can be no

intuitive, spontaneous triumph of realism. The factor which excludes socialist writers from acceptance is the avant-garde form which they use in their work. Lukács argued that form is not merely a subjective choice, but is historically objective, and bound to certain socio-historical preconditions.(KOW) This allows him to define experimental, innovative forms as products of Western "decadence", and to banish its practitioners from the realms of socialist literature. This divergent treatment of Soviet and socialist writers is a result of Lukács's appraisal of Soviet reality in the twentieth century: the dictatorship of the proletariat had already been realized in Russia, therefore socialist realism should be seen as the norm for fiction in Russia. While in Europe writers who stood outside Russia could still be rehabilitated to the Soviet cause, in Russia Soviet writers could be expected to write from within a socialist realist perspective. There remains a possibility for rehabilitating progressive bourgeois writers on the ground of their representational realism: but this possibility does not exist for Soviet or Socialist writers.

In modern bourgeois naturalism, an isolated individual (man as an enclosed "psychic system") is opposed to an apparently objective, fetishized, fatalized world.(IPAC, p.170) The dissolution of character in modern literature is caused by the extreme

subjectivism of the modern Weltanschauung, the increasing refinement in the literary depiction of the individual and the increasing exclusivity in the emphasis on the psychological moment.(p.173) The living unity of character dissolves into a disordered confusion of complex momentariness, and to an abstract unity without inner movement.(p.175) Naturalist writers still retain a highly developed literary technique in spite of their dissolution of character.(p.175) Modernism's refined technical methods only serve to depict the surface details of capitalist society.(p.177)The principal equalization of the immediately experienceable surface of life with reality itself divorces literature from the conditions of real experience.(p.178)

In the reportage novels of Ottwalt, the rule of the bourgeoisie appears as all-powerful and finished, complete. The proletariat is depicted as the passive, powerless object of "justice": the struggle and resistance of the proletariat is missing.(RP, p.46) The system of justice which Ottwalt depicts is merely a moment in the class struggle. Seen apart from the class struggle, it becomes a fetishized, rigid object.(p.46)

*"Das vom ganzen losgelöste, starr
auf sich gestellte Teilwahrheit,
die Teilwahrheit, die sich als
ganze Wahrheit gibt, schlägt
notwendig in eine Entstellung der
Wahrheit um."(p.46)*

Another aspect of modernism is its radical, almost total elimination of social significance.(KM, p.74)
An artistic method which diminishes the social and individual dialectical totality of human existence relapses into naturalistic arbitrariness of construction and detail. Modernism leads to the elision of perspective and historicity. The negation of the historicity of human being has two results: the hero is confined within the limits of his own experience and is unchangeable, without a personal history.(p.21) Modernism denies historicity, development, historical movement and this denial is said to represent a true insight into the nature of reality. (IM, p.34) A view of the world based on chaos and Angst presupposes the elimination of all social categories. (KM, p.66)

Realist literature portrays man as a zoon politikon, a social animal.(p.19) "*(the) ontological being (of realist characters)... cannot be distinguished from their social and historical environment*".(IM, p.19)
Modernist literature portrays man as a solitary, isolated being, unable to enter into relations with other men. (p.20) Isolation per se is not a point of critique, but ontological isolation which elides capitalism as a causative factor is Lukács's target. In modernism, characters are static and immobile, or reduced to a shadowy blur.(KM, p.58) The illustrations and examples

used by reportage remain schematic and abstract: they fail to become properly realized characters with individual traits.(RP, p.40-41)

*"Die konkrete Gesamtheit der
dichterischen Gestaltung verträgt
nur Individuen und individuelle
Schicksale, die in ihrer
lebendigen Wechselwirkung einander
beleuchten, ergänzen,
vervollständigen, verständlich
machen, deren individuelle
Verknüpftheit miteinander das Lage
typisch macht."*

(RP ,p.41)

Ottwalt's characters are all contingent, exchangeable schematic examples of certain types. Realist characters and their fate are indivisibly connected to the central action of the novel - there is an organic unity between character and action. In Ottwalt the mechanical sequence of development is independent of the action and composition. It follows the abstract juridico-political intention of the author, which is not grounded in the action of the novel.(p.52):

*"Die Hauptgestalt - und noch mehr
die Nebengestalten - ist nichts mehr
als ein Demonstrationsobjekt für
die Vorführung sachlicher Inhalte."*

(RP, p.53)

Characterization remains on an abstract level.

*"Die Menschen bilden zumeist nur
'Zubehör, Illustrationsmaterial
für die sachlichen Zusammenhänge."*

(ND, p.235)

Lukács's critique of characterization is also directed against socialist writers in Russia. Lesser socialist writers reveal an almost total inability to express the inner thoughts or the development of their characters in discussions or monologues. (IPAC, p.192) The nexus between the personal, private and public life is often merely coincidental, or schematically abstract. (IPAC, p.193)

According to Lukács, the ideology underlying modernism is characterized by a distortion of the relationship between subjectivity and objective reality in the literary work. Either the 'finished, dead' reality of the external world was described exclusively, or the

inner life of the individual subject was presented without interaction with social or historical reality. Man's subjective world becomes static and reified, while the external world loses the dimension of sociality and historicity. The disintegration of personality is accompanied by the disintegration of the external world. (IM, p.25)

"Attenuation of reality and dissolution of personality are thus interdependent: the stronger the one, the stronger the other."

(IM, p.26)

The separation of time from the outer world of objective reality transforms the subject's inner world into an inexplicable flux which acquires a static character. (IM, p.39) The false objectivity of naturalism means a clear, open weakening of the conflict-filled character of human life, and a nearly undisguised capitulation before the inhumanity of capitalism. (MPID, p.282) Abstract objectivity is replaced by an equally abstract subjectivity: the result is the same. Once again a distorted, superficial reflection of human conflicts arises, because real struggle of the people with and in society and the objective determination of human life are missing (p. 283) In both extremes of abstract subjectivism or abstract objectivism, the same underlying impoverishment is dominant. (p.297)

Lukács dwells on the failure of modernism as a critique of modern society. Modernism protests against social reality by a flight into psychopathology.(IM, p.29) However, this flight is based on a wholesale, indiscriminate rejection of society per se. Earlier bourgeois or proletarian protests incorporated the conditions they fought against - modernism merely denies reality altogether.(p.29) An impulse of humanist protest remains in modernism. Life under capitalism manifests itself as a distortion of the human essence.(p.33) However, psychopathology has no corrective for this, being itself a distortion of normality.(p.33) In modernist writing there is a failure of an essentially creative critique of capitalism : the adherence to surface detail leads to the renunciation of real, penetrating distance from capitalist inhumanity.(MPID, p.282) Many modern writers see themselves as honest, embittered opponents of capitalism.(p.285) But this oppositional socio-political intention exhausts itself only on the surface, in an abstract political and social tendency which is not embodied in the concrete construction of the work itself. In these cases, an abstract, revolutionary utilitarianism comes into being: the representation of people, the exposure of their individual natures is reduced to their abstract function in the class struggle. (p.285) The general decline of all literary forms in the modernist period is the socially necessary, objective

and ineluctable result of the lack of criticism in the modernist writers vis à vis the surface appearance of capitalism, their open capitulation before this surface, their open identification of distorted appearance and being.(p.296) A long sequence of movements came into being alongside openly apologetic anti-realism and pseudo-realism, which understood themselves to be in radical avant-garde opposition to the bourgeoisie. In reality, they objectively helped the bourgeoisie in its struggle against genuine realism.

Conclusion: systematic criticism

Lukács's philosophy is an extensive, systematic whole of politico-social postulates with claims to objective truth content, of ethical norms and a historical perspective with universal truth claims. Lukács demands close attention to precisely the philosophical and ethical positions of works of art in relation to reality, and also consistently confronts these positions with the results of his own philosophy. As a result of the tendency to systematize in his own work, Lukács creates an approach to art which systematically negates sensuous, modern, concrete, historical experience. It is an inevitable result of his entire work that he negates the artistic content which is innate to modernist works of art. In this respect, his work can be criticized for its

narrowness and inability to give historical weight to the experience of alienation in the twentieth century.

However, as a systematic attempt to understand nineteenth and early twentieth-century works of art, and for a courageous drawing of the border between acceptable and unacceptable art necessarily instituted by a Marxist-historicist approach, Lukács has few peers in this century.

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