

THE EXPRESSIONIST DEBATE
IN THE LIGHT OF THE CONCERNS OF POSTMODERNITY
LUKACS, BRECHT, LYOTARD AND HABERMAS

by
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the debate between Georg Lukács and Bertolt Brecht in the 1930s, known as the Expressionist Debate, and the controversy between Jean-Francois Lyotard and Juergen Habermas, which took place in the 1980s. The two debates, both of which took place among writers of the Left, are juxtaposed in order to shed more light on the issues at stake in the Expressionist Debate when looked at in the light of postmodern concerns. The dissertation is based on selected texts by each of the four writers.

The introduction sets out to place the two debates into their historical context as well as setting out the aims and the methodology of the dissertation. The specific texts by Lukács, Brecht, Lyotard and Habermas are listed.

The first chapter examines the texts by Lukács and Brecht to establish their respective positions. The debate (which is extracted only from the texts in question) is investigated in terms of Marxist aesthetic theory, namely, that of realism. Substantial attention is given to the philosophy of Marx and its relation to that of Hegel. Hegel's background is also briefly set out. The conclusion drawn is that Lukács and Brecht both express opinions in line with Marxist philosophy and its aims. Their controversy lies in a divergence of opinion in terms of the method of the representation of reality as seen through Marxist eyes.

Similarly, the second chapter examines the texts by Lyotard and Habermas. It is found that the controversy here revolves around the disagreement as to whether the Enlightenment project of modernity should be discarded, seen by both writers as not having been successful in its original aim of promoting happiness as a result of an advancement of knowledge, or whether it should rather be seen as a project as yet unfinished. Lyotard's position is emphatically in favour of the former option, while Habermas argues for the latter, advocating a reunification of language games as he puts forward a social theory of what he calls 'communicative reason'. Lyotard is of the opinion that such a move can only lead to political totalitarianism. This chapter pays a great deal of attention to the Enlightenment, especially to the philosophy of Kant.

The conclusion takes some of the findings of the preceding chapters, such as the concern of totality versus fragmentation, and highlights what is seen to be a common but rather understated issue in the two debates, namely, the response of Marxist thinkers and writers to the challenges posed to them in the form of avant-gardism. My opinion is that this can be seen as the subtext of the two debates in question.

I hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own work and that neither the substance nor any part thereof has been presented for any other degree.

Date: 30 - 03 - 1996

Cape Town

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INTRODUCTION

One could ask the question whether the hotly debated aesthetic dispute among the German Left in the 1930's, in which Georg Lukács and Bertolt Brecht were the main contenders, is of any interest in our present time in which the status of Marxism and contemplations about reality have shifted so radically. Known, on the whole, as the Expressionist debate, this was precipitated by Lukács' sharp denunciation of that movement on aesthetic as well as on ideological grounds in response to what appeared to be its persistent influence on a number of the artists of the young German Left. Lukács forced the debate to be one on the issues of realism, a word which he employed in his own specific sense; a sense in line with the official Soviet stipulation in terms of socialist realism. To assign the quality of 'realism' to a work of literature meant that the latter was rated high; it meant that it was perceived to fit into the set of criteria seen to be imperative.

The present day American, Marxist critic, Frederic Jameson, in his essay, "Reflections in Conclusion", an afterword to *Aesthetics and Politics*, a collection of essays constituting much of the Expressionism/Realism debate in the 1930's, puts forward the opinion that the central issue of this debate, that is, the problem inherent in the actual concept of an aesthetic of realism as well the role artistic production should play in socio-political terms, reaches back to pre-Marxist times and still continues to pose unresolved questions in our present period. He suggests that the opinions of both Lukács and Brecht, although dated in some respects as a result of the changes having taken place in capitalism and its culture, do nevertheless have a relevance for us today. They are worth looking at in terms of the problems encountered in what he terms as the postmodern era, a phase which he sees as the logical, cultural result of capitalism in its final global state. He stresses, however, that

concepts of modernism and realism as such have to be renavigated and renegotiated in each different period, and that "a conception of realism must be judged in terms of the historical conjuncture in which it has to function" (Jameson 1977:213).

The "historical conjuncture" at which Lukács and Brecht put forward their convictions about realism was one in which physical survival was at stake, over and above survival as an artist. Both writers were vehemently opposed to fascism, the Nazi government posing a threat to their very lives. Brecht fled from Germany in 1933, first to Denmark, then to Sweden, to Finland, to finally go to America via Russia in 1941. Lukács, who had joined the Communist Party in Hungary after the First World War also fled Germany when the Nazis came into power and went to Moscow to eventually become a highly placed functionary in the Soviet bloc. However, the threat of Nazism was not the only repressive historical factor forming the background to this debate. In terms of the Stalinist regime writers were expected to subscribe to a particular mode of production; that of socialist realism as enforced by Andrei Zhdanov. The policy referred to as Zhdanovism was intent on purging Soviet literature of all Western influence during Stalin's regime. Many writers disappeared as a result of this action. In terms of the dispute concerning realism in this dissertation one would have to take into account that it is possible that, although Lukács and Brecht (both Marxists) were on opposite sides of this debate as well as being differently situated in terms of the Soviet state, neither of them was completely free to express openly what they were possibly thinking. Thus, when studying their texts and assessing them in terms of their interpretation of their time and society, there must remain an awareness that there may be a gap dictated by the repressive political environment in which they found themselves.

Half a century later, in the 1980's, another dispute arose between the theories of two powerful writers of the Left, namely, Jean-Francois Lyotard and Juergen Habermas. Generally known as

the Modernism/Postmodernism controversy, this debate was precipitated by Lyotard's sharp criticism of Habermas' notion of what he called the unfinished project of modernism. The latter directs his efforts to developing a social theory of communicative reason in which a shift from the paradigm of the knowledge of objects to one of "mutual understanding between subjects capable of speech and action" is advocated (Habermas 1987:295). Lyotard, convinced that high political stakes are involved, rejects any notion of totality, fearing a resultant return to political totalitarianism with its accompanying terror (Lyotard 1984: 81). Although the ghost of Nazism and Stalinism certainly hovers in their work, these two writers did not write under the physical constraints placed upon Brecht and Lukács in the Thirties by the actual systems in action. Be that as it may, some of the issues which are contested are shared by the two disputes. Whatever the differences, the question of power, totality, perspectives of reality, and the impact of writing in socio-political terms are high on the agenda in both controversies.

It is my intention in this dissertation to make an investigative study of the two debates. I shall make use of the following selected texts by the four authors in the course of my investigation: "Realism in the Balance" by Lukács; "The Essays of Georg Lukács", "On the Formalistic Character of the Theory of Realism", "Remarks on an Essay", and "Popularity and Realism" by Brecht; "What is Postmodernism" by Lyotard; and "Modernity versus postmodernity" by Habermas. Over and above these I shall refer to Brecht's theatrical work, making use in particular of *Drums in the Night*, *The Messingkauf Dialogues* and *Die Antigone des Sophokles*. As the latter's main cultural contribution was in the domain of the theatre, both on a practical and theoretical level, I feel that to discuss the articles against Lukács on their own would only give a limited picture of his opinion. It must also be remembered that, although Brecht wrote the articles in the context of the debate, and ostensibly planned for their publication in *Das Wort*, they were not actually published at the

time when they were written, but only reached publication in 1967. They could thus not form an active constituent of the debate at the time. *The Messingkauf Dialogues*, also only published as such after Brecht's death, contains most of the latter's theories on theatrical praxis.

I shall not expand in any detail on the actual social conditions surrounding the debates. Rather, I shall look at matters of philosophical genealogy. All the texts in question make reference in one way or another to the German Philosophical tradition, beginning with Kant. I have chosen to see this tradition as the link between the two debates. Another point in common is the issue of Marxism. My aim is to identify particular lines of thought in both debates. In the light of the epochal events that have taken place between the two debates, both on the political and the intellectual planes, it is of interest to see whether some of the lines of thought displayed in the debate of the thirties can be identified in that of the eighties as well. Certainly, many of the concepts appear in both debates. It will be of interest to see what has happened to them with the passing of time.

My methodological approach will be as follows: I shall look specifically at the texts of each of the writers in an attempt to first establish just what they are saying and which issues they are contesting. At the same time account shall be taken of the philosophers which are referred to by actual name by the different writers. When examining a particular opinion, I shall at times interrupt the discussion to refer to the philosophical genealogy in an attempt to identify the possible origin of a line of thought that may have bearing on that particular opinion. The first chapter will focus more on the tradition in terms of Marx and Hegel, as that is the section most relevant to the Expressionist debate. The second Chapter will pay more attention to the work of Kant as that plays the greater part in the issues of postmodernity.

CHAPTER 1

Ambivalence appears to be the dominant feeling in much of the critical attitude towards Lukács. As they embark on a critique of his role in the Expressionist debate, critics, such as Bloch, Jameson, and even Brecht, do not fail to qualify what they are about to say concerning his work. They pay tribute to him as a powerful writer within the Communist movement, whose contribution to the development of a Marxist, socialist, aesthetic theory must not be underestimated. Nevertheless, he has evoked vehement opposition from some of those very writers who, politically speaking, can be seen to be within his own ranks. As time went on, critical opinion has tended to favour the arguments put forward by Brecht and other exponents of Expressionism. Jameson suggests that one reason may have been that Brecht's style with its plebeian touch is more easily accessible than that of Lukács (Jameson 1977: 199). Another reason may lie in a possible fear that Lukács, seen to be of an older generation, may have rejected the new modernist development without having been fully in touch with it. Thirdly, there may have been anxiety on account of Lukács' firm attachment to the Stalinist system; a system which left no space for any valid, alternative development in terms of aesthetic theory. But what seems to be the strongest objection, an objection especially put forward by Brecht, is that writers of the Left in exile, already writing under heavy constraints, found Lukács' stipulations inimical to new art production (Benjamin 1977: 97).

In his "Reflections in Conclusion", Jameson suggests that the underlying reason why any work on realism would be open to attack, including that of Lukács and Brecht, lies in the inherent contradiction in the actual concept of realism itself (Jameson 1977:198). He points out a fundamental difference between this category and the traditional ones, such as comedy, tragedy, lyric, epic and drama. The latter, he says, are purely aesthetic

concepts, the individual works being regarded in terms of beauty and aesthetic play. Realism, however, claims cognitive as well as aesthetic status. In other words, it presupposes a form of aesthetic experience which at the same time claims a binding relationship to the real itself, that is, to realms of knowledge and praxis which had traditionally been differentiated from the aesthetic. The two constituents exist uneasily within one concept. Should there be an over-emphasis on the cognitive aspect then a work denies the necessarily fictive character of artistic discourse, and it could lead to a call for the 'end of art' in the name of political militancy. On the other hand, should there be an over-emphasis on the artistic techniques whereby an *illusion* of reality is produced, then the 'reality' of realism could be transformed into an appearance, undermining the referential value by which it distinguishes itself from the other categories of literature.

Considering the difficulty, Jameson believes that Lukács has been successful in balancing these two aspects. He estimates the latter's development of the theory of mediation to be the decisive contribution to a Marxist, aesthetic theory. Based on an insistence that literature and culture are of crucial significance to revolutionary politics, this theory challenges traditional content analysis. It enables the reader to uncover the political and ideological content of what had up to that time appeared to be purely formal aesthetic phenomena (Jameson 1977: 200). Ronald Taylor, in his "Presentation II", is of the opinion that Lukács was the first writer to have attempted to construct a systematic Marxist account of the historical development of European Literature from the Enlightenment onwards. He judges the latter's analysis of the past in terms of it being a precondition for the present to be of a greater depth than that of Brecht. On the other hand, he finds Lukács' precepts for twentieth century art to be often nostalgic, and even retrograde (Taylor 1977: 64). Be that as it may, Lukács enjoyed considerable power as a writer within the Communist movement, his

theories having been the base on which other Marxist writers developed much of their work.

The first serious attack on Lukács' writing concerning expressionism came from the latter's former friend, Ernst Bloch. Responding to Lukács' essay, "The Greatness and the Decline of Expressionism", and to an article by Alfred Kurella, which he sees as leaning heavily on this essay, he launches a protest against what he sees to be a wholesale disqualification of the products of an entire aesthetic movement; an unfair disqualification, grounded, as he sees it, not upon a close knowledge of the artifacts themselves, the majority of which are paintings, but on articles about them, that is, on secondary literature (Bloch 1938: 18-20). In other words, Bloch feels that Lukács has not engaged with the actual artistic works, but has dismissed them on the grounds of theories which were not necessarily accurate in the representation of the movement itself. Furthermore, Bloch (together with Brecht) rejects what he perceives to be Lukács' way of applying ideological labels to artistic practices, substantiating his aesthetic criticism of the Expressionistic movement with these ideological judgements. Not only does Lukács condemn the works of art as being 'unrealistic', suggesting that they are worthless, but he also associates them with the ideology of the archenemy, namely, Fascism. Here is a partial rendering of the excerpt which Bloch quotes from Lukács' "The Greatness and the Decline of Expressionism":

Der Expressionismus als schriftstellerische Ausdrucksform des entwickelten Imperialismus beruht auf einer irrationalistisch-mythologischen Grundlage; seine schöpferische Methode geht in die Richtung des pathetisch-leeren, deklamatorischen Manifests, der Proklamierung eines Scheinaktivismus. Er hat also eine ganze Reihe von wesentlichen Zuegen, die die faschistische Literaturtheorie, ohne ihnen oder sich einen Zwang anzutun, annehmen konnte.

(Lukács 1969:41)

Expressionism is grounded in an irrationalist mythology. Its creative style tends towards that of an emotive, rhetorical, vacuous manifesto, a declamatory pseudo-activism....[since they [the Expressionists] were unable to free themselves from an imperialist parasitism, and since they colluded in the ideological ~~day~~ of the imperialist bourgeoisie without offering either criticism or resistance, acting indeed on occasion as its vanguard] their creative method could without distortion be pressed into the service of that synthesis of decadence and atavism which is the demagogy of Fascism.

(translated by Rodney Livingstone)

Lukács did not remain on this generalized level of criticism, however. Particularly in his "Realism in the Balance", he personalizes his attack, mentioning individual artists, often fellow Marxists, as for example Hanns Eisler, in a derogatory tone. Not going into a deeper assessment of their work (Eisler's was in the domain of music), he discredits it in a reductive, minimizing manner in order to demonstrate a particular point he is making (Lukács 1977: 54-55). This drew out reaction from writers who rallied round to defend fellow artists.

I would like to take a closer look at the above quotation. The tone being strongly partisan, there is little evidence of any attempt at objectivity. Phrases and words such as 'irrationalist mythology', 'emotive, rhetorical and vacuous manifesto', can in themselves be seen as dismissals of an emotional nature. From the point of view of criticism would this invalidate Lukács' attack? If the critic is supposed to make an adequate assessment of a work by standing at an 'objective' distance from it, then Lukács' clearly partisan involvement would disqualify his judgement. However, looking at it from the point of view of Marxism, partisanship is not in itself a reason for disqualification. Although Marxists speak about a scientific approach and about an objective reality, partisanship in the handling of it is not excluded; in fact it is an integral part

of it. Marx, himself, who insisted that philosophy must not only interpret the world but must also change it, insisted on the interaction between theory and praxis. Praxis involves taking sides. As early as 1843, in his letter to Ruge, he expresses the opinion that the only way of arriving at true consciousness is to look at realities on the ground by getting involved in the struggle, by taking sides (Marx 1992: 210).

We are now faced with two seemingly mutually exclusive elements side by side. We have theory, which must strive towards objectivity. On the other hand the acting person, especially the revolutionary, is only able to work from a position of subjectivity, that is, by taking sides. This includes the theorist who is also a revolutionary, actively involved in the struggle. Marx begins his inaugural address for the first International Workmen's Association with the words, "Fellow Working Men", including himself as one of them, although he was not himself a labourer. Both Lukács and Brecht work from a position of being actively in combat. Lenin, too, supported a conscious partisanship. Marxists justify this paradox with the following argument: As it has been scientifically established that the process of history must inevitably lead to the victory of the proletariat and to the establishment of socialism, objective judgements can only be made from the standpoint of the proletariat. Whoever does not take sides, or takes the side of the bourgeoisie, cannot possibly see social developments in their true light (Stoerig 1950: 405). So if Lukács speaks from a partisan point of view, he could be speaking from a position of political involvement, with the confident presupposition that he is part of the movement which is in possession of true consciousness. As he would be in a position of combat there would be no reason to be 'fair' to the enemy.

What is disturbing about this vision, though, is that it would mean that anyone who looked at the world from that one standpoint (however commendable the final aim), would, of necessity, be seen to have accurate insight, leaving no space for varying ability

between different people. A Marxist writer could thus say many things with impunity. Lukács, in fact, denigrates a whole range of activity in a uniform, ideological manner, completely insensitive to the various aspects of what he is looking at. On the other hand, he does not assign that same right to others who are in the Marxist movement. He attacks the work of people who are committed to the Marxist cause, disqualifying them from the status of true followers of that movement. In other words he assigns himself the right of being the judge of what Marxism is and how it should be conducted, not giving recognition to the capability of others.

I think that it would be a mistake to defend what can only be regarded as a hegemonic attitude on the part of Lukács, as displayed in the above quotation, by linking it to the Marxist cause. At the most one can link it to the Soviet state which officially is based on the Marxist philosophy. From a position of power within this state, Lukács attacks those writers who are not its citizens. By polarising the new modernist art movements into the opposite of Marxism, Lukács equates them with the enemy, expecting 'true' Marxists to refuse to become engaged in a phenomenon which is a substantial part of the modern scene. Whether he is defending his own state, or, simply, his own literary theory to the exclusion of all others, a distinction should be made between this and the Marxist cause in terms Marx, who himself combated the dogmatism of the hegemonic Hegelian system, which was at that time linked to the power of the state. On the other hand, it should be taken into consideration that in the light of the issue of partisanship, as I have just discussed, Marxist theory in itself possibly lends itself to this kind of abuse.

Lukács' response to Bloch's attack is to be found in his essay, "Realism in the Balance", first published in *Das Wort* in Moscow in 1938. In answer to the criticism levelled at him he does address some primary works specifically, as, for example, the interior monologue in James Joyce's *Ulysses* (negatively) and the

handling of the character of Christian in Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* (positively). He repeats his attack on the practices of the movements of Naturalism, Expressionism and Surrealism as he attempts to preserve the superior status of Realism. First and foremost he insists that realism is the only standard by which art must be judged, and assumes that his knowledge of realism - and of reality - is the one and only correct one. Speaking from a position of partisanship as a Marxist, he remarks that anyone who is committed to that movement would know what reality is. The implication is that whoever does not agree with his opinion cannot be a true Marxist. Continuing in this vein he goes beyond the role of a critic who simply assesses works of art. He seems confident that he is in a position to dictate the criteria according to which 'good' works of art should actually be created, notwithstanding the fact that he is not an artist himself.

Lukács does get stiff opposition from another Marxist writer, namely, Brecht. Unfortunately, though, the latter's articles (the ones in question in this dissertation) were not published at the time when they were written. Thus they did not form part of the public debate, and can only be seen in relation to it by later critics. A writer himself, who used a diversity of genres, Brecht finds Lukács' rules based on too narrow a parameter, that is, the model of the nineteenth century novel. The latter, he states, places too much confidence in being able to deduce ideological positions from this one genre. He judges this to be out of touch with the realities of the twentieth century and its scientific developments; developments which have opened up new dimensions in terms of the class struggle, the use of mass media, and thus the domain of actual artistic production. Brecht sees the genres of lyrical poetry and drama as being more conducive to experimentation; an element which he insists is of paramount importance in all artistic creativity. Furthermore, in his "The Essays of Georg Lukács", he points out that the political reality of the twentieth century differs from that of the nineteenth century. The proletariat has replaced the bourgeoisie as the

ascendant class, and as such must be seen as showing the way forward into the future (Brecht 1977 69). New art production must take its lead from there. He cannot agree with Lukács that one can use the old model of the novel and simply substitute the class. According to Brecht, a new reality demands the development of new methods of transmission, including the use of newly acquired scientific skills. He expresses a feeling of constriction in terms of what he sees as Lukács' formalistic hegemony on the creation of art. His view is that the latter is, in fact, not engaged in the real issues of the class struggle. Instead he sees him to be engaged in an utopian idealism, refusing to face the new, current, political challenges.

It must be pointed out at this stage that Brecht and others are not quite accurate in saying that Lukács' theory on realism is solely based on a few selected novels of the nineteenth century and a handful of novels written in the twentieth century along the same lines. In the very essay in question Lukács refers back to whom he perceives as the great realists of past ages, like Cervantes, Shakespeare and Grimmelshausen (Lukács 1977:56). This, together with the fact that he rates twentieth century writers, like Thomas Mann, as a realist implies that he does see realism as a general qualitative term which is not exclusively bound to the model of the nineteenth century novel and its copies. This would support his conviction that realism, according to his criteria, can and must continue as a mode of representation in every age as a crucial part of the class struggle. It should not be relegated to the past. He rejects the notion that just because modernism is the more recent movement, it follows that it is an improvement on realism. What is clear, however, is that he perceives realism as having reached a particularly high standard in terms of an instrument of political change in the nineteenth century movement. Furthermore, it is the terrain on which he has focused his studies for the theory of mediation, and may thus have felt particularly qualified to use it in his arguments.

What then, according to the essay, "Realism in the Balance", is Lukács' conception of reality? What assumptions does he base it on, and how does he perceive the artist and his work? The following quotation will serve to throw light on this.

... Every major realist fashions the material given in his own experience, and in so doing makes use of techniques of abstraction, among others. But his goal is to penetrate the laws governing objective reality and to uncover the deeper, hidden, mediated, not immediately perceptible network of relationships that go to make up society. Since these relationships do not lie on the surface, since the underlying laws only make themselves felt in very complex ways and are realized only unevenly, as trends, the labour of the realist is extraordinarily arduous, since it has both an artistic and an intellectual dimension.

(Lukács 1977:38)

This excerpt could be seen as representative in terms, not only of touching on the issues contained in the essay as a whole, but also on realism in the marxist sense as such. "Major realist" can be taken to mean "artist of true importance", that is, important in terms of reflecting social reality. Earlier, Lukács defines literature as "a particular form by means of which objective reality is reflected" (Lukács 1977:35). He also refers to philosophy as a mental reflection of reality (31). This is indicative of how closely the cognitive and aesthetic faculties are interlinked in his scheme of things. Furthermore, according to this excerpt, it is clear that it is not mere reflection that is demanded of the writer. Before reality, that is, reality according to Lukács, can be reflected, it first has to be grasped in all its depth and implications. In other words, it must be grasped in its totality, and then be reflected as thus by means artistic creativity.

I would like, here, to question the use of the word 'reflection' (*Spiegelung*) in Lukács' article. Is this an accurate term for

the way of mediation that Lukács in effect demands of the artist? 'Spiegel' (mirror), a central image to be found in both modern and postmodern art, implies a reflection of the surface, which is exactly what Lukács is fighting against when he criticises the art of the Naturalist movement. A mirror effectually blocks all exchange between surface and depth. It gives an *illusion* of depth by reflecting only the surface. The above passage talks about the realist 'fashioning' (*bearbeiten*) his experience (*Erlebnisstoff*). This implies that the material (which he takes as a given; i.e. the material of reality) can be made to change its shape and thus its face, its surface. When Lukács talks about reflecting reality he is talking about the rendering of a secondary, deeper image, the primary, surface one having been penetrated to make way for the newly-fashioned 'real' one. In other words, the artist reorganises reality in order to expose its true nature. Lukács appears to have no doubt that the 'great realist' has the ability not only to fully grasp the one, true, hidden, what he calls objective reality, but then also has the creative power to fashion this into what looks like a surface reality, making it accessible in all its ideological, political implication. In other words, according to this text, we are not talking about a reflection, but rather, of a presentation of something which is not evident to the naked eye; something which needs the mediation of the artist to become visible.

Not only does Lukács talk about an objective reality, but he also implies that it is possible to comprehend this. Furthermore, he implies that reality is a whole. In its totality there is nothing outside it. Every fragment is, in fact, not a separate fragment at all, but a part of an organic whole. The work of literature, 'reflecting' this reality truthfully, should thus also be an organic whole. When he criticises the Expressionists, and other movements, Lukács judges them, first and foremost on their perception and understanding of reality. They are taken in, he says, by what shows itself to the naked eye, namely, surface reality. Responding only to the immediacy of the surface experience, they mistake the manifestations of a variety of

fragments of the whole for the whole itself, not realizing that what looks like fragmentation is actually interconnected and interdependent on a deeper level (Lukács 1977: 39). As reality is incorrectly comprehended it is not surprising that the reflection of it must be a false one. Montage, which he sees as an artificial construction opposed to the organic development which is the logical result of an understanding of reality as totality, is unacceptable to him. In Lukács' ideal novel the reader should be able to perceive how a character represents a type in terms of the social forces that have shaped him and the reality in which he has to function while still being an individual. To Lukács the product of montage would be something constructed and thus static, incapable of any growth.

We are now right in the middle of the realm of dialectics. Lukács', as well as Brecht's dialectical vision of reality is in line with the Marxist strand of the German philosophical tradition. I would like to go back at this stage to look at the theories of Marx. However, it would not make sense to look at Marx in isolation, that is, without taking account of his relationship to the system of Hegel, which he opposed, but to which he nevertheless is indebted in terms of the dialectical theory. At the risk of going further back in the tradition than is justified by an assessment of the texts of Lukács and Brecht, I nevertheless feel that it is important in terms of this discussion as a whole, as it will hopefully serve to clarify some of the issues which come up in the works of the later writers as well. At the same time, due to its vastness, I cannot, of course, do justice to the philosophical tradition, but am forced to go into it in a very selective manner.

Consciousness of the subject, and how the latter is linked to material life is one of the key issues in Karl Marx's (1818 - 1883) work. In the letter to his friend, Arnold Ruge, he expresses his intention of showing the world "why it is struggling" and showing it that "the consciousness of this is a thing which it must acquire whether it wishes or not" (Marx 1975:

211). He wrote this at a time when he was disengaging himself from the Young Hegelian movement of which he had been a part. The Young Hegelians were a group of intellectuals who, originally coming from the Hegelian school, opposed that philosophy on the strength of new discoveries in the natural sciences, basing their arguments on the doctrine of positivism and materialism. They challenged Hegel's hierarchy in which philosophy had held the highest position in terms of the Absolute Spirit. The Young Hegelians rejected religious belief, judging the deity to be a creation of man's imagination, a projection of man's desire for happiness. Furthermore, they actively opposed what they saw as a reactionary state in the political sphere. Their movement became that of the political Left in Germany. This was in contrast to the Old Hegelians who also opposed Hegel but for other reasons, who went on to constitute the political Right.

In the letter to Ruge, Marx criticises the Young Hegelians for what he perceives to be an ineffectiveness in the combat against the idealistic system. As he saw it, they were copying the model of the very system which they were criticising, attempting to bring about change by simply supplanting existing ideas with their own new ideas. Marx insisted that engagement with material conditions is a prerequisite for the attainment of true consciousness and consequently for bringing about change. A concept that has not developed out of a knowledge of existing material reality can only lead to a false consciousness. Material reality, rather than God or idealist concepts, is the true source of knowledge. Marx proposes to reform consciousness by "analysing mystical consciousness obscure to itself whether it appears in religious or political forms" (Marx 1975: 211). This is to be done by a critical analysis of the existing material order. To truly know a people, according to Marx, one must not look at the ideas of the intellectuals of that country, but rather at the mode of economic production. As has been mentioned earlier, he insisted on a partisan involvement in the political struggle on the ground.

Although Marx opposed idealism as such, he did not throw out the Hegelian system. Rather, he turned it upside down. This is evident in the epilogue to the second edition of Das Kapital:

Fuer Hegel ist der Denkprozess, den er sogar unter dem Namen Idee in ein selbststaendiges Subjekt verwandelt, der Demiurge (Schoepfer, Erzeuger) des Wirklichen...Bei mir ist umgekehrt das Ideelle nichts anderes als das im Menschenkopf umgesetzte und uebersetzte Materielle.

(Marx 1873:10)

(For Hegel, thought process, which he even transforms into an independent subject in the guise of the name idea, is the demiurge (creator, procreator) of the real...With me it is the opposite: the idea is nothing other than that material which has been processed and translated by man's thought.)

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 - 1831), according to Hans Joachim Stoeig, in his *Kleine Weltgeschichte der Philosophie*, can be seen to be a philosopher in the line of German Idealism. The latter can be distinguished from two other lines of thought which came to the fore in the wake of the powerful impact of the philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804). The other two are Materialism and Positivism, and Romanticism. Kant's system is a dualistic one, that is, there is a distinction between the world of appearances and the world of things as they are in themselves (*Ding an sich*). Furthermore one can see Kant's theory of cognition also to be dualistic. On the one hand there is the given (*Rohmaterial*), and on the other there is the subject, the "I", which is in possession of aprioric concepts and has the ability to categorise. It is only by means of the application of the aprioric capacity on the given raw material that knowledge is attained. (There will be more on Kant in Chapter 2.)

Each of the three strands which can be seen to have developed out of Kant's philosophy, related itself to one specific aspect of his system without necessarily subscribing to others. Positivism

and Materialism based itself on the 'empiricist' component of Kant's system in which he argues that science and knowledge is only possible in the domain of appearances. There the role of philosophy is limited to one of synthesizing knowledge as developed by science. Romanticism protested against the rationalistic spirit in Kant's system, pointing out the existence of the irrational forces in man and the world, claiming the rights and the worth of the individual. German Idealism emphasizes that part of Kant's philosophy which deals with the creative power of the subject through which the concepts of world and nature are brought into being. This leads to a line of thought in which consciousness, that is, the creative "I", is the central issue. According to Kant, this "I" projects itself into the realm of freedom. Freedom comes into its own in the realms of ethics and religion. It materializes itself in history, which Kant sees as a process of development towards the infinite goal of the realization of freedom. German Idealism follows this line of thought, that is, it puts the creative subject first, moving towards freedom, which becomes materialized in history (Stoerig 1950: 305).

Hegel's direct predecessors are Joh. Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling. Apart from these, though, he had a high regard for the teachings of the ancient Greek philosopher, Heraclitus (ca. 500 BC). The latter was of the opinion that strife is the basic condition of the natural world, in which the unity of things does not lie in material substance, but in a delicate balance of tension of opposing forces. Closer to Hegel's own time, Fichte emphasized the creative ability of the will. He differed from Kant on the point of the latter's *Ding an sich*, seeking to deduce the whole phenomenon of life from one paramount dialectical principle: The first step is for the "I" to establish itself (*setzen*). This, on its own, however does not bring about evolvment. What is missing is a moving energising factor. As the "I" cannot evolve without resistance, there must be a "non-I". In other words, the first step would be the establishment of the "I", which he calls the thesis, while the

second step would be the contradiction, that is, the antithesis. The third stage is the synthesis in which both the opposites remain, neither being excluded. They do not remain in full force, however, each one of them having their effect curtailed. According to Fichte, then, the opposition between thesis and antithesis disappears in synthesis by partially limiting the full effect of each (Stoerig 1950:320).

Hegel takes the dialectical principle further at the point of synthesis. Thesis and antithesis are no longer curtailed in synthesis. Instead they have become sublated. In the place of synthesis comes *Aufhebung*. The German word *aufheben* has a three-fold meaning and could itself be seen as an embodiment of Hegel's dialectical principle. One meaning is "to rescind", "to annul", "to render void". The second meaning is almost its opposite: "to keep", "to safeguard", "to reserve". The third meaning is "to lift up", "to raise", "to elevate". Sublation implies that thesis and antithesis are no longer limited as a result of a collision, but are lifted onto a higher level where they no longer manifest themselves as exclusive opposites.

In the domain of logic Hegel does not regard the forms and the content of human thought. Rather, he looks at the spirit, the idea, as in a condition of being itself, outside time and space. Concepts and logical principles are not only precepts of thought but are also essences in themselves. As we move dialectically, developing one concept out of another, we do not develop this out of ourselves but simply act as onlookers observing the self-development of these concepts; rather like the scientist observes the self-development of natural forms, or the historiographer observes the self-evolution of the historical process. In his logic Hegel begins by saying that 'being' is at the same time the most universal and the most empty of concepts. If one were to ask the question what this 'being' is in its most universal form, one realizes that wherever one looks one sees only *particular* 'being'. However, if a being is stripped of all determination it is actually a 'nothing'. It is nothing real but only a

universal thought which is what 'nothing' is as well. In this way one proceeds from 'being' to its apparent contradiction, 'nothing'. Likewise, as each concept is systematically analyzed there follows another concept. Hegel resolves the contradiction between 'being' and 'nothing' in the concept of 'becoming'. From this beginning he moves on to evolve the whole chain of concepts striving towards the supreme concept of the Absolute Spirit (Stoerig 1950:322).

Marx does not take over Hegel's dialectic in its entirety. He makes a distinction between form and content. He makes use of the form of the dialectic movement as the dynamic, revolutionary principle, the foundational thought being that the world does not consist of complexes of finished things, but rather of processes. As far as the content is concerned, however, Marx, as has been mentioned, replaces Hegel's with its opposite, that is, he replaces the idea with material.

Movement belongs to the essence of dialectical materialism. However, it is important to note here that the word 'materialism' underwent a shift of meaning for twentieth century Marxists. Since Marx's time scientific developments have challenged the validity of philosophy as such, and in particular the concept of 'material'. The understanding of material had been something graspable; something that consisted of atoms which were irreducible and unchangeable. It has since been discovered that the atom, in turn, consists of tiny elemental particles, that it can be split, and that there are complicated interrelations between the particles. There is a realization that there is still much, some of which is as yet undiscovered, which cannot simply be fitted into an easily comprehensible order. In short, the concept of material has become multifarious and tenuous. Lenin, who, after Marx and Engels, is responsible for laying the foundation of Marxist philosophy, realized that scientific development would pose a threat to the development of a materialist philosophy. He rejected the older, now too narrow concept of material. For his purposes he reformulated it to mean

"a philosophical category which refers to objective reality" (Stoerig 1950: 406).

The understanding is that there can be no material without movement, and no movement without material. Movement covers every kind of change, that is, not only the movement of bodies in space, but also physical, chemical, physiological and, most important, social and historical processes. This movement goes in an upward direction. Starting at the bottom it moves to phenomena of higher orders to eventually manifest itself in social processes and consciousness. The dialectical development, in line with how Hegel explains it, does not only move quantitatively. It also moves from the quantitative to the qualitative providing a certain limit has been crossed. In contrast to Hegel's view, however, that history is a manifestation of the objective spirit, making use of individuals in its inevitable movement, Marxists see the course of history being actively created and influenced by people.

When Lukács talks about movement he talks about dialectical movement, that is, the inevitable movement that progresses dialectically towards the fulfilment of a complete state of socialism. Brecht, too, believes in the inevitable triumph of the proletariat in the class struggle, confident that he, himself, was living in the age of "the final struggle between the bourgeois and the proletarian class" (Brecht 1977: 77). In line with Marx, both speak from the position of being preoccupied with the aim of changing the world, that is, of combating those phenomena which blockade this inevitable movement towards socialism. On the other hand, capitalism, the enemy of this process, is seen as growing from strength to strength. Fascism, seen as the most extreme manifestation of capitalism is, as it were, taking over Europe. If a false consciousness of objective reality in terms of the nature of capitalism is produced, be it for whatever reason (lack of insight or deliberate, ideological misrepresentation of the truth for political reasons), then this, in turn, hampers socio-political betterment. The existence of

the totality of capitalism, its power structures, and the different ways in which these are camouflaged, constitutes objective reality for both Lukács and Brecht. The aim is to unmask this reality in whatever guise it appears in order to make way for the true, socialist state. Lukács, having actively taken the combat into the sphere of literature, stresses that it is imperative that a work of art has movement, meaning the dialectical movement between surface and depth in the perception of reality. He criticizes what he sees to be the lack of movement both in naturalistic art and expressionistic art, implying that these works constitute a cover up, obstructing access to the real underlying truth.

In the light of this it is ironic that Lukács should be attacked for what could be seen as forcing a stasis in literary development for the writers of the Left. One could ask the question whether his parameters allow for any space for the production of new works of art in terms of variety and innovation. If there is only the one reality which fits into the vision of Socialist Realism, and thus has already been penetrated by the theorists of its proponents, what is there left to be discovered for the individual artist? If on top of this the form has also been laid down by Lukács' criteria, then little space is left for any further innovation. An artist would be forced to move into an oppositional attitude to become creative. This places the writer of the Left, like Brecht, who is on the same side as Lukács on the political level, into a dilemma. As a Marxist artist he cannot dissociate his subject matter from politics, that is, he cannot simply write about other things. He would also want to close ranks with fellow-Marxist in the struggle. But as Lukács' precepts are so constricting, he would be forced to oppose him to be innovatively productive. It is noteworthy that the works brought forward by Lukács as models of the ideal of realistic art are all by authors that are outside the Soviet system. Nobody prescribed to those authors as to how they must write. Balzac, Tolstoy and Thomas Mann were not even Marxists in a broader sense of the term. This may be an

indication that if artists are put into a framework stipulated by a political system, which, amongst other things, would mean that their work has to be supportive of that system, they may have difficulty in producing anything new and significant.

I would like to consider a particular point here; something that comes up frequently, namely, the position of art and that of the artist in society. While the criticism of capitalism and the total rejection of Fascism is clearly stated by both sides of this debate, there is nothing said about the totalitarian nature of the Soviet state. Presumably this is because the latter has the 'right' doctrine of Marxism as its base. In Lukács' terms artists within the Soviet system would presumably not be allowed to be critical of that system. In other words, Lukács combats an enemy that exists outside his own system. Within his own state he does not play an oppositional role, himself being a functionary upholding it. Brecht, on the other hand, because of his particular situation, is truly oppositional in as far as he opposes the ruling system in his own country. The two join hands in attacking that particular system. This raises the question whether a Marxist system, in the eyes of the two writers in question, once established and in power, assigns art a critical role in its society, or whether it is presumed that there will be nothing left to criticise; that the accumulation and abuse of power would stop. Alternatively, would the right to criticise be assigned to a different section of society? This question comes up again later in postmodernist discussions, in which Lyotard, for example, sees the oppositional position of art as essential if totalitarianism is to be avoided, while there is another trend which would release art from this oppositional vocation. A question which would arise then could be whether artistic products will have any significance beyond that of decoration and craft.

Variety and innovation are not the point of Lukács' concern, however. What concerns him is not the work of art for its own sake, but how effective it is in furthering the class struggle.

For example, he did not mind that Balzac's political views were what he called reactionary. What concerned him was the development of an aesthetic theory which would be in line with his own political system, and which could actively be employed in its service. He took what he saw to be useful in the novels of his choice, and made this the cornerstone of his own theory. What is important to him when regarding these novels is that, in spite of being fiction, he could see them as the embodiment of a polemic in terms of a particular class struggle: the struggle being, in their case, that of the bourgeoisie against the aristocracy. They contained the characteristics which he saw as indispensable; socio-political reality portrayed as an organic whole, the novel itself created as an organic whole, and the characters portrayed as types produced by, and representative of their social class. He justified his approval of the works of Thomas Mann on the basis that although the latter portrayed the bourgeoisie (and not the proletariat, which had by then become the ascendant class), he did not idealise the latter, but, rather, pointed out its decadence. My suggestion is that what we see here is an example of the Hegelian way of looking at the historical process. Lukács' assessment of the nineteenth century novel as a model for furthering the class struggle in spite of the fact that the authors were of another political persuasion, implies that the latter's work was made use of by the inevitable historical process without them even being fully aware of it.

We are still left with the problem of the production of art works. It appears that Lukács ignored the realities involved in the making and in the transmitting. Furthermore, one of the problems encountered when art has to serve a particular doctrine, that is, when it has to be in service of a political movement, is that as the artifact is not seen as important in its own right, non-experts who may be in a position of power in the movement as a whole assign themselves the right to determine what artists must do. The artist thus loses his status in terms of creativity, becoming more of a serving craftsman. Lukács, a theorist, chose works which were already completed and presumed

that their framework could simply be copied and filled with the content of his choosing. On the other hand, the reality may be that a writer has the desired political view but may not be able to produce on demand and according to prescribed rules. Furthermore, a work of art or literature has to be accessible to the people on whom it is supposed to make an impact. This attribute is something that has to be tried out in practice to be developed. Brecht criticises Lukács heavily on this particular aspect.

In line with Marxist thought, Brecht appears to be more or less in agreement with Lukács as far as the understanding of reality is concerned, that is, he assumes that there is one objective reality. Like Lukács he sees the function of art as being combative in socio-political terms, unmasking the truth about the pervasive existence of capitalistic power structures, thus bringing about true consciousness which will then bring about socio-political change in real terms. What he disagrees with has to do with the efficacy of the method of transmission. He resents the oppressive imposition of what he sees to be an excessive emphasis on formal theories in the domain of art production. As a theatre practitioner, who always conducted his work in such a way that there was an immediate interaction between theory and praxis, he was critical of the tendency of intellectuals to make ideological analyses by employing methods which needed no external verification.

Brecht, speaking from a position of abundant experience, was convinced that a realistic work of art could not even get off the ground without the elements of pleasure and fun. Pleasure, in terms of discovering reality, in terms of creating the work, and in terms of spectator enjoyment, is a vital agent in the process of transmission. Linked to this is his famous element of ease (*Leichtigkeit*). In his *Messingkauf Dialogues* he states that one can achieve any amount of seriousness within ease, but none without it (Brecht 1965: 94). Ease is brought about by a high degree of proficiency on the part of the artist and the ensemble

in the performance of their work, giving the impression of there being no effort. To practice art at all in the grim political conditions of the day, says Brecht, needed a great deal of courage; the kind of courage needed by someone dancing on a volcano. Brecht compares the combination of courage and ease needed by performers and writers to that needed by circus artists. The theatre was Brecht's central domain. He revolutionized the latter, integrating the literary with staging techniques, even allowing for an interchangeability of form and content. While variety and innovation were not primary concerns for Lukács, Brecht saw them to be indispensable in terms of a work of art reaching the audience. Constantly experimenting with new methods, he documented these experiments and worked out theories. Those theories were in turn applied to praxis, in the process of which they were tested and used for further experimentation. This working method can be seen to be closer to Marx's dialectic thinking in term of a constant interaction between theory and praxis in order to reach true consciousness; closer, that is, than that of Lukács, who tried to solve and control everything by way of his theory. One of Brecht's criticisms of Lukács' method is that the latter takes specific novels as his models, rather than real life situations (Brecht 1977:85).

Brecht's work and theories cannot be divorced from the concerns of Expressionism. Although he committed himself to Marxism as a writer and theatre practitioner, his earlier link with the expressionistic mode of production continued to play a part in his subsequent work. Already at an early age, Brecht had been freely in touch with all the cultural and political currents of his age. The most prominent movement was that of Expressionism. Critics judge his early plays, like *Drums in the Night*, *In the Jungle of the Cities* and *Baal* to have strong expressionistic features. His commitment to the Marxist world view came about in the late Twenties after having studied the works of Marx. By that stage he had quite a substantial body of work behind him; work which had reached performance at major theatres and had

attracted much critical attention.

Expressionism is a term invented by critics to describe an art movement, mainly in painting, which flourished in the early 1900s. The style first began to come to the fore at the end of the nineteenth century with artists from various countries such as Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, James Ensor and Edvard Munch. *Die Bruecke*, represented by Emil Nolde and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner was the first group to promote the expressionist idea. This was followed by the more influential *Der Blaue Reiter* with people like Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee and Franz Marc. These groups, through their painting as well as writing about it, influenced a number of artists, among which are Marc Chagall, George Grosz and Oskar Kokoschka (Wadsworth 1984: 354).

The Expressionistic style of painting was seen to be a reaction to, and a development out of the previous movement of Impressionism, the latter being concerned with the surface appearance of objects, that is, with truth or beauty as it is perceived by the eye. To the Expressionists, however, truth or beauty was in the mind, and not in the eye. They tried to give form to the artist's strong inner feeling, that is, they tried to portray life as modified by their highly personal interpretation of reality. Expressionist paintings often tended to be somber, painful, and even grotesque as they often reflected the unhappiness of the artist (Wadsworth 1984: 354).

Expressionism also influenced literature, particularly in the domain of drama. August Strindberg of Sweden is seen by some as the forerunner in terms of new dramatic forms and stage techniques. Expressionist drama first developed as a movement in Germany, reaching its height in the years following World War I in the plays of Ernst Toller, Frank Wedekind and Georg Kaiser. Characters were often shown in a one sided way, standing for single ideas and attitudes. Usually they are placed into situations in which the objects of the outer world are distorted to reveal the tortured minds of either the characters or the

author. These effects were achieved by symbolic settings, unnatural lighting and non-realistic ways of acting. The influence of psychology is often evident in as far as the inner frustrations of the dramatist is often reflected in characters that are in the grip of intense emotions (Wadsworth 1984: 354). Although Expressionism did not have political involvement as its goal, the movement did display strong anti-war sentiments. Furthermore, the conventional bourgeois way of life was seen in a very negative light.

To this one can add the marked Nietzschean influence in the sense of the latter's positive nihilism, the will to power, the overdimensional person, the notion of beyond good or evil. As this discussion is not about Expressionism itself but rather on how Lukács and Brecht responded to its exponents, I shall not go any deeper into Nietzsche's philosophy. What is interesting here, though, is that in terms of what has just been described, Brecht's early plays certainly show signs of this influence, as for example, the strong anti-militaristic and anti-bourgeois drive, the oversized, amoral, nihilistic character of Baal, and the scene in the bar in *Drums in the Night*, which displays characteristics of a hell-like hereafter with its heat, wind and red moon. Another point of interest is the view on reality. Although there is also the assumption that one objective reality exists, the artist has the freedom to reflect this reality in a highly personal, individualistic way. This implies that what is being reflected is a particular artist's *interpretation* of reality. What is also implied is that the artist is free to select those sections of reality which are of importance to him personally, leading to a subjectively constructed, selective, 'patched-up' expression.

Lukács' criticism in terms of a lack of totality comes in on this point. As has been shown, his ideal art work is the one which takes the whole of reality into account and 'fashions' the experience of it to make it accessible in its totality. I think it must be noted here that, whatever the claims, the resulting

works of both approaches are, as it were, the products of an active intervention with the experience of reality; whether the work is seen as an organic whole or as a result of montage. The difference is that according to Lukács' view the claim is made that true reality is wholly reflected, whereas that is not the case with the Expressionists. The latter never hide the fact that they are projecting an interpretation (which is in effect what Lukács' artist also does), the difference being that Lukács' artist 'fashions' according to a specific model, while the Expressionist makes use of montage amongst other things, freeing himself from all prescribed models. Another difference lies in the final aim. The Expressionists are not primarily working towards a socio-economic revolution. Their main emphasis lies in revolutionizing the accepted forms of representation, rather than finding the means to change society in Marxist terms. Insisting on the sovereignty of the aesthetic realm, they aim to burst out of the constriction imposed on art by previous conventions.

It is this revolutionary and liberating principle in art production which is clearly attractive to Brecht. Having, amongst other things, gone through an 'expressionistic' phase, he does not want to abandon the exciting, progressive elements when developing his own art. To him there seems to be no reason why all of this cannot be exploited to serve the Marxist socio-political mission. Modernist developments had done much to clear the space for new art production. Brecht did not want to see this space clogged up again by rules imposed by people who were theorists rather than artists, even though he was in agreement with their political direction. According to him, the display of surface phenomena and the use of montage is not necessarily in conflict with a belief in an underlying socio-political totality, or with the aim of unmasking capitalistic lies. He was not of the opinion that the modernist mode of production would preclude a work from being realistic.

Besides the Marxist interpretation of realism, there were also

other theories on this subject. It is not possible here to go into all of these, but I will put forward a particular one which I see to be interesting in terms of Brecht. Not only is it an example of another opinion which does not separate realism from modernism, but it is also of interest in terms of Brecht's development and use of the alienation technique; a characteristic which features prominently in all his work. Furthermore, it can be taken as a point of comparison when looking at Lyotard's and Habermas' interpretations of the Avant-garde later in this dissertation.

The Russian formalist theorist, Roman Jakobson, in his article, "On Realism in Art", which appeared in a Czech translation in 1921, primarily puts the term 'realism' under scrutiny as he strives to give various literary terms a more rigorous definition.

What is realism as understood by the theoretician of art? It is an artistic trend which aims at conveying reality as closely as possible and strives for maximum verisimilitude.

(Jakobson 1971: 38)

It is clear from this passage that there is the underlying assumption that reality as such does exist and that the aim of realism is to convey it. Unlike Lukács, Jakobson does not use the word 'reflect'. Furthermore, he differs from the latter's opinion in so far as he allows for a variety of possibilities as to how the term 'realism' can validly be applied to a work of art. The term could simply apply to a work which is representative of the one separate artistic movement, namely, that of the nineteenth century. Looking at the artifact itself the term could refer to the vision and the intent of the author. It could also refer to the perception of the person judging it. Concerning the question of verisimilitude, Jakobson points out that although a term like that could conceivably *almost* make sense in the visual domain (in spite of the fact that what is

presented is still only an illusion of a faithfulness to reality) verisimilitude cannot work in the domain of language (Jakobson 1971: 39). I would like to compare this to the point I made earlier about the problematic use of the word 'reflection' in terms of representation. According to Jakobson, every attempt to render reality faithfully, even a reflection of the surface, can never be anything other than a translation of reality itself. Translation presupposes interpretation. From this one can conclude that not only is there always a subjectivity involved on the part of the artist (the interpreter), but also on the part of the viewer as well. The concepts of 'reflection' and 'verisimilitude' are problematic when they are employed to describe what must always be an interpretation, namely, a work of art.

If, in the light of Jakobson's considerations, one were now to compare Expressionism with Lukács' theory, one could come to the conclusion that the former seems to have accepted this difficulty inherent in representation itself, and has abandoned any claim to convey reality either objectively or totally. Lukács' theory, on the other hand, still clings to the assumption that a uniform perception of reality is possible, and only needs a standard form to transmit it. If one were to view this in the light of Jakobson's implication that reality is experienced subjectively (which could be interpreted as a move in the direction of a later, postmodernist view of there being no, one, objective reality), and can thus only be conveyed and received subjectively, then one could venture to conclude that the perception of reality as well as its transmission in Lukács' theory (which is the one espoused by Socialist Realism) must also be a subjective one. Only in this case it would not be the subjectivity of an individual artist, but rather that of the official party ideology of the Soviet state. The ruling party thus assigns itself the power to interpret and disseminate reality.

Turning to the matter of conveying reality as closely as possible

Jakobson describes what he sees to be the modernist use of the 'estrangement effect'. In an attempt to transmit reality, he says, the artists of the nineteenth century, producing in the mode of realism, attempted to reach a maximum degree of verisimilitude. This conventional, traditional aspect of painting, or writing, conditioned our act of perception. As the tradition accumulated, the painted image became an ideogram, a formula to which the object portrayed is linked by contiguity. Recognition becomes instantaneous, with the result that we no longer 'see' the picture. In order for us to see, the ideogram needs to become deformed, that is, the artist-innovator must impose a new form upon our perception in order to draw our attention to something which has gone unnoticed. This can be done in a number of ways, as for example, by presenting the object from an unusual perspective, or by violating the rules of composition as canonised by the artist's predecessors (Jakobson 1971: 39). With this depiction of the estrangement effect, Jakobson explains the strange, abstract features which characterise the artifacts of the Avant-garde. Instead of excluding Expressionistic works from being realistic, Jakobson seems to be of the opinion that they constitute a more advanced stage of realism than the works produced in the nineteenth century movement.

The estrangement effect is a step towards forcing spectators to participate by thinking in a creative manner. It is this aspect which Brecht exploited for his art. First one has to puzzle out what it is that is represented, and then one has to conjecture why it is presented in this extraordinary manner. Another aspect is the element of shock that goes with it. The estranged form is usually not beautiful in the usual sense. Quite often use is made of an aesthetics of ugliness. But whatever the particular effect is, it causes an interruption in the spectator's expectation, forcing him to pause and reflect; to 'see anew'; to reassess habitual perceptions. This takes us into the realms of association and connotation, something Brecht was to make use of, and what was to become an important issue in the work of the

post-structuralist, Roland Barthes. In expressionist art, colour and its associations play an enormous role. Brecht, in his "On the Formalistic Character of the Theory of Realism" remarks on how what he calls elements of form, like colour, lines, gestures and inflections may already be there before the linear content of what he wants to say has been fully conceived. In other words, there can be a reversal in the sequence of the productive process. The associations attached to certain elements of form, can lead to the discovery of the content. With the notion of this reversal, Brecht (possibly inadvertantly) touches on something which was to play a role in later, post-structuralist thinking. Barthes, in his *S/Z*, uncovers what he sees to be the power which an author assumes over the reader when deciding first on the content and then employing a form to transmit it. The assumption is that he, the author, is in possession of the truth.

In "The Formalistic Character of the Theory of Realism" Brecht points out how stifling this theory is as a whole for the artist who is creating a new work. Focussing on the word 'formalistic', which is the word Lukács makes use of when denigrating expressionist art, Brecht takes the latter to task by suggesting that his use of the word does not make sense (Brecht 1977: 71). First of all he states that as form is an integral part of any work of art, it is particularly important to define what is meant by 'formalistic'. In one sense it can refer to everything that makes a work of art unrealistic. He implies that Lukács uses it in that sense, and presumably alludes to the latter's disapproval of a 'constructed' opposed to an 'organic' work of art. In another sense it refers to a manner of production in which form dominates the content to the detriment of the latter. For example, something untrue or irrelevant is said to fit into a rhyme. He then points out that neither of these uses of the word is satisfactory as there are a number of works which, to his mind, are unrealistic which would not fit into either of these categories. Conversely, a prominent display of form does not necessarily make a work unrealistic. A new criterion must be found. Characteristically, Brecht turns to 'everyday life' to

see how the expression is used there. If someone says "Formally he is right", then he means that that person is not really right, but is right according to a particular form. Similarly, if someone says "Formally the task is solved", he means that the task is not solved. To do something to 'preserve the form' means that what is being done is not important in itself. Brecht sees National Socialism as an example of political formalism; it is a socialism in form only (Brecht 1977: 72).

These examples seem to imply that Brecht would call something formalistic when there is a discrepancy between form and content; form covers up a diverging or missing content. In fact we are talking about a cover-up; a splitting away of the form from reality. In other words, a work could be written to fit into the realistic form as prescribed by Lukács, but could be lacking in realism in its underlying content. On the other hand a work may be truly realistic, according to Brecht, but may have a totally different form to the Lukácsian model. Brecht suggests that if 'formalistic' is used in this sense, then it can be used as a yardstick for assessing phenomena like the avant-garde in terms of realism. Furthermore, it can be used to look critically at a particular style of criticism (meaning that of Lukács), exposing it as being formalistic, because as it is dedicated to a particular form of writing, it attempts to solve matters of literary creation purely in literary terms, that is, without truly engaging in the reality of the current historical process. While Brecht does not subscribe to all aspects of Expressionism he pays tribute to its variety of form and its courage in terms of experimentation (Brecht 1977: 74).

Concerning the mixture of styles within one work, another aspect criticised by Lukács on formalistic grounds, Brecht points out that this method can be particularly effective in politically engaged literature. It is easier to openly separate plot and editorial, giving each their full status, instead of trying to dissolve the editorial into the plot, or vica versa, which usually works out to the detriment of one or the other. The plot

can be interrupted when necessary by the editorial without a deterioration of artistic quality. Brecht points to the example of the chorus in the ancient Greek tragedies (Brecht 1977: 75). With the mixture of styles it is possible to display various perspectives through different voices, thus leaving space for spectator participation. In fact, Brecht's theatre is an embodiment of just that. I will now interrupt the discussion of Brecht's attack on Lukács to expand on how he functions in practice. I have gathered the following material mainly from his plays, his documented production of *Die Antigone des Sophokles*, and from *The Messingkauf Dialogues*. The latter consists of a collection of discussions about the nature of the theatre set out in the form of what can be seen as Socratic dialogues.

Brecht's use of the estrangement effect, which he integrates with his dialectic, is already evident in his early plays. To take an example, *Drums in the Night* contains a number of expressionistic 'estrangement' features. For one thing there is the non-realistic use of colour in the attempt to express the intense emotions of the characters. The dialectic is at play between the overt plot and the covert underlying parable; in this case, an inverted version of *The Prodigal Son*. The inverted version of the parable is furthermore in dialectical tension with the well-known version in the mind of the spectator; the inversion constituting the crucial estrangement effect in the play as a whole. In this play, the young Brecht expresses his outrage at the rotten, bourgeois way of life in Germany, based, as he sees it, on the blood of the young men that are sent to their deaths in the war. However, in spite of this social and moral content, the play does not promote a way out of this state of affairs. It remains an outraged expression.

After he embraced Marxism, however, Brecht could be seen to have regrounded the estrangement effect, developing it into his Alienation Technique, no longer used as a means of mere expression, but rather to be put into the service of actively furthering socio-political change in Marxist terms. First and

foremost he needed to wake up his audience out of habitual lines of thought and perception. In line with the aim underlying Lukács' theory of mediation, Brecht does not want his spectators, after having initially involved them, to lose themselves either in content identification or analysis; especially not in character identification. This would blockade the perception of the underlying power dynamics. To prevent this identification, he contrives various methods of counteracting involvement with the story or with the characters on stage. Constantly he reminds people of the theatricality of what they are seeing; making them aware that they are not looking at 'real' happenings, but at one of many examples of situations which they can relate to their own life. In other words, he breaks down the illusion of reality within the theatre. This is in contrast to what is usually done, namely to use every possible device to create the illusion of reality. Furthermore, Brecht breaks down narrative tension, thus freeing the spectator from the desire of finding out how the story ends. This enables him to look carefully at the dynamic on stage; to look at the 'how' rather than at the 'what'. For instance, the individual scenes are given headings, little abstracts, as it were, of what is going to happen. These headings are often announced either by a narrator or chorus, both of which also comment on the happenings on stage, thus actively interrupting the flow of the action, as well as putting the spectator into the disturbing position of having to assess plot and commentary side by side. The audience is often addressed directly. In this way a conscious spectator position is made possible. The shock effect, often only in terms of presenting something in an unexpected way, is constantly at work, just in case the audience's need to identify themselves with what is presented does take over. Scenery is non-realistic. Often it stands in dialectic contrast to what is happening on stage. The same goes for the music. The actors, extremely versatile, often act in a stylized fashion, even doubling up roles, constantly reminding the spectator that he is looking at an actor who is demonstrating what a character might do; that he is not looking at the character himself. The aim is to prod the spectator into

comparing what he sees with situations in his own life, encouraging him to be creative in devising methods of improving this.

I think that this brief description of Brecht's work in terms of praxis demonstrates what can perhaps be seen as the major difference between his attitude and that of Lukács. Brecht shows optimism in the ability of other people, allowing for creative activity not only on the part of his collaborators, but on that of his spectators as well. In his "Popularity and Realism" he expresses the opinion that the only real ally in the combat against capitalism is that section of the population which is the victim of it, that is, the proletariat (Brecht 1977: 80). In his case this was not a mere theoretical contemplation. He believed in actively engaging the worker in the combat. To begin with this meant that he would have to first reach and address him. Ideally he would have always liked to have performed to an audience consisting of workers. The theatre, however, was a bourgeois consumer institution. Workers did not easily come into the auditorium. Before his exile, in particular when he was performing his didactic plays (*Lehrstuecke*), Brecht did make the effort to move his performances out of the auditorium onto workers' platforms and school stages. He also drew workers into the actual production and sounded them out as to what they found effective.

The article "Popularity and Realism" gives us some idea of Brecht's underlying thought in the effort to reach the workers, from where he felt real change would inevitably come. His aim was to use his art to rouse them into revolutionary action. The above article is a response to Lukács' view of genuine popular culture as "a manifold relationship to every aspect of the life of one's own people as it has developed in its own individual way in the course of history" (Lukács 1977: 57). Against this, Brecht sets his own specific sense of the word 'popular'. He carefully distinguishes what he believes it should mean from the sense in which he perceives it to have been used incorrectly; not

only incorrectly, but in a consciously deceitful manner. The latter rests on a concept of 'the people' which represents them as having unchanging characteristics, hallowed traditions, art forms, hereditary enemies and invincible power. In that sense, there is no question of there being any opposition practised by these people against their oppressors. They are perceived as accepting their lot. Brecht actively opposes this particular meaning of 'the people' as well that of 'popular' based on it, seeing it as carrying the implication of ahistoricity and stasis. He insists that to bring about change, the masses of people who are the producers in society (the proletariat), must "actively usurp the course of history, force its pace and determine its direction" (Brecht 1977: 81). Seen from this perspective 'popular' acquires an aggressive meaning, associated with a fighting people who change the world and themselves.

It is impossible to gauge the impact of Brecht's work outside the domain of the theatre in revolutionary terms. As a result of his prolonged term of exile, he did not have much choice as to where his plays could be performed. According to Martin Esslin in his *Brecht: A Choice of Evils*, his work did not enjoy recognition in the Soviet bloc. Although he worked and lived in East Berlin after he came back from exile, his productions had most of their performances in the West, on the whole played in front of bourgeois audiences. The revolutionary impact of his work can, however, be clearly seen in the domain of the theatre; be it in the writing of plays or in the actual staging.

To sum up this discussion on Lukács and Brecht I would like to highlight those aspects which I perceive the two to have in common, to then also consider those which I perceive to be radically divergent. What unites the two authors is the combat against capitalism, and in particular, against fascism. Furthermore they share the Marxist vision in terms of an understanding of history, of partisanship, of objective reality as social reality from the standpoint of the proletariat, of the dialectic process, of the necessity of the class struggle. They

both believe that culture must be actively employed in the combat to further socio-political change towards a classless society.

Another point of similarity between these two authors, one which I particularly want to stress, is the element of didacticism. Lukács' tone and criticism, as well as the prescriptive nature of his theory, are unmistakable in this regard. In the case of Brecht, however, this allegation may seem paradoxical in view of what has been discussed in terms of the latter's methods which leave so much space for the creative activity of other people. This space must not be mistaken for an openness. Brecht never loses his position of control as far as his final aim is concerned. He decides on the final result. All his plays since his Marxist conversion can be seen as functioning in the parabolic mode; each of them present a lesson which points into the direction of the Marxist, socialistic mission. Not only does his work assist the spectator towards a particular kind of knowledge, but it also provides examples of how conflict situations may be dealt with. Even when Brecht sounds the workers out, he is still the one who is in final control. This quotation from "Popularity and Realism" will demonstrate this point.

Popular means: intelligible to the broad masses, adopting and enriching their forms of expression / assuming their standpoint, confirming and correcting it / representing the most progressive section of the people so that it can assume leadership, and therefore intelligible to other sections of the people as well / relating to traditions and developing them /

(Brecht 1977: 81)

Everyone of these sentences show evidence of the aim to actively intervene by an author who has placed himself into a position of authority above the masses. Benevolently he will teach them to go into the direction which he believes will lead them to a better life. This condescending attitude could be defended with the argument that the masses are as yet underdeveloped as a result of the oppression they have experienced throughout the

ages, and must thus be helped at this stage. Nevertheless, it is an indication that Brecht, himself, whatever he claims, is still speaking in the context of class.

The major point of difference between Lukács and Brecht lies in their opinion as to how the Marxist aim is to be transmitted. Lukács insists on his one closed form which strictly adheres to his theory, dismissing Expressionism and its methods as anti-Marxist. Brecht, on the other hand, separates form from content, making use of every possible innovation, exploiting the methods of every other movement, especially those used by the Expressionists. Feeling in no way threatened as to the identity and wholeness of the reality he transmits, he accepts that this cannot be wholly and accurately presented by a closed work of art which tries to give the picture of reality. Rather, he makes it clear that every work of art is artificial by its very nature; that this artificiality can be employed openly and positively. The work can thus function in a comparative capacity, actively challenging the creative faculty of other people, hopefully steering them into a more accurate perception of the reality of their own conditions. It is on this level that Brecht's democracy comes in. The more he splits up his works into different dimensions and tensions, the more perspectives he creates, the greater the space for multiple contemplations and creations. Here we deal with Brecht the modernist who pushes forward into the direction of poststructuralism and postmodernism.

CHAPTER 2

Whether we talk about Lukács and Brecht, or Habermas and Lyotard, we have to begin with the assumption that all four writers believe that there is something seriously wrong with society. The common enemy is the progressive development of capitalism; the common concern is what this development means in terms of the distribution of power and the ensuing effects of this. In a sense one can say that they are all involved in the struggle to improve society, or, at least, to prevent an even more negative state of affairs. Although marxist thought presumes that the dialectical movement itself moves to an ever-improved state of being, this optimistic attitude is only partially apparent in the two debates in question. To a large extent one gets the impression that the efforts of these writers are directed against the onslaught of an increasingly powerful force. Brecht and Lukács direct their efforts against fascism, which Brecht refers to as the manifestation of capitalism in its most extreme form. In their case the enemy is localised in a particular state and can be directly addressed. In the case of Lyotard and Habermas, however, the enemy is global and pervasive, not confined to any one particular state, but fully integrated into the structures of every day existence. The concern here is the status of knowledge in society and how it is employed to manipulate and legitimate power. Brecht and Lukács focus their attention on the recognition and exposure of the truth underlying power structures in socio-political relations; showing that structures which have been seen to be immutable can, in fact, be changed or done away with altogether; realism, that is, a lack of it, is the accusation that hovers around the discussion. Lyotard and Habermas direct their attention to the matter of language games and how these involve, legitimise (Lyotard) and justify (Habermas) power. Here the point of accusation is the threat of a return of political totalitarianism.

Where the four writers diverge from each other is how the underlying reality of capitalism and all its implications should be counteracted in the most effective way. As each of the writers put forward their convictions, they invoke specific aspects of the philosophical tradition (covertly at times, but at other times specifically by name) to ground and to clarify their line of thought. Lukács' and Brecht's relationship to Marx and Hegel has been discussed in the first chapter. In this chapter I will focus on Lyotard and Habermas and their particular relationship to Kant and Hegel.

Whether a philosopher, sociologist, artist, literary critic, in short, anyone who is involved in the life of present day cultural activity is faced with questions of modernity and postmodernity. Is postmodernism simply a further development of modernism, or is it an anti-modernistic movement, actively negating the validity of the tradition of Enlightenment? Enlightenment and its bearing on present day thinking features in a central position in the discourses at hand. Postmodernism, whatever the opinions are as to its existence, has, as a concept, generated much critical writing in every sphere of our cultural life. It is not possible, within the framework of this discussion, to give a description of this phenomenon in any way that would do justice to it. Nevertheless, I shall give a couple of examples of the wide range of opinions put forward concerning it. Hopefully it will give an idea of the context in which the works of both Lyotard and Habermas are not only written, but of which they are constituents as well.

The term, postmodernism, already poses a problem in its definition, as it is often put forward to challenge the possibility of a stable theory of meaning. The implication of open-endedness, that is, a resistance to any conclusive interpretation, is a constituent component of the concept as such. On the other hand it has variously been used to indicate non-conformative aesthetic attitudes (avant-gardism), a rejection of grand political theories (the critique of totalitarianism).

a critique of rationality and representation (Foucault and Derrida). Furthermore, it has been invoked in a conservative defence of postindustrial societies (Daniel Bell). An assessment of a work of art or literature in terms of whether it can be seen to be postmodernist or not, can neither be based conclusively on criteria in terms of features, nor in terms of the date of its first appearance. Features, conventions, and even the stories, of a variety of other, earlier movements are often made use of in a postmodern work in the form of a pastiche. As far as a historical period is concerned, there is no clear transition from modernism to postmodernism, the two existing simultaneously over the last couple of decades.

Jameson, however, does periodize postmodernism, linking its emergence to what he terms as the 'societe de consommation', also referred to the postindustrial society. In his "Reflections in Conclusions", he discusses what he sees to be the fate which has befallen modernism. Art, which used to be an oppositional anti-social phenomenon, has become a component of commodity production and has thus found a social and economic niche within the system. Jameson judges this change of the position of art in relation to the society in which it exists to be the gap between postmodernism and what he sees as the earlier movement of modernism. Looking at some of the features associated with postmodernist works, he points out that abstraction, that is, the forever repositioning of the estrangement effect, part of the ideology of modernism, has spent itself as a tired convention to be replaced by hyperrealism or photorealism in the visual arts, and by the pastiche of older narratives in literature (Jameson 1977: 209). In his *Postmodernism or, The cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, he puts forward and discusses other features which he identifies with postmodernism: A fascination with surface replaces the former fascination with depth, manifesting itself in the culture of the image and the simulacrum. Furthermore, there is a definite decrease in affect, symptomatic of a new type of emotional groundtone. The self is perceived differently, dominated by a schizophrenic-like fear; a fear of fragmentation.

He opposes this to the modernist fear of alienation which works on the assumption that the subject is intact, attributing the postmodernist fear of fragmentation to a weakening of a sense of historicity (Jameson 1991: 6-15).

On the other hand, Linda Hutcheon, in her preface to *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, identifies postmodernism as a "a problemizing force in our culture today". This force raises questions about the common-sensical and natural, but never offers answers that are anything other than provisional; they can only be contextually determined. Process, rather than conclusion, lies at the heart of postmodernism, indicated by the '-ize' in terms like problematize, totalize, contextualize, and others. She sees postmodernist art as being intensely self-reflexive and parodic while, nevertheless, attempting to root itself in the historical world. The emphasis is on the process as it negotiates these contradictions, rather than on any finished product resulting from a resolution of them. For instance, the concept 'to totalize', would not simply mean 'to unify', but would mean to unify with an eye to power and control, pointing to the hidden power relations behind our humanist and positivist systems of unifying disparate materials (Hutcheon 1988: x-xi).

As the question of language games plays such a crucial part in the work of Lyotard and Habermas, I will now quote Ihab Hassan from his "Postface 1982: Toward a Concept of Postmodernism".

Where the moderns sought purpose, the postmoderns celebrate play; hierachical principles of order yield to non-predictability, as less emphasis is placed upon the finished work than on the process of creation. Instead of totalizing a sense of existence, the postmoderns deconstruct it, revealing how fraudulent any reductive summations must be, based as they are on principles we now recognize as mere assumptions. Metaphor is replaced by metonymy, in which the process of having a part stand for the whole lets each constituent element retain its own identity. An eagerness

for depth is replaced by a fascination with surface: texts are therefore "writerly" rather than "readerly", for there is no compulsion to find meaning beyond the author's performance on the page, which the reader is invited to re-create....

(Hassan 1983: 4)

What these three opinions have in common, amongst other things, is the preoccupation with fragmentation versus totality. Jameson, in line with marxist thinking, does not link this notion to reality as such, working on the assumption that there is the total global reality of capitalism. He ascribes the fragmentation of individual experience to the pervasive power of that reality. Hutcheon appears to presume that a view of a total reality is the result of a totalizing action, inevitably associated with power. Hassan links the totalizing of experience directly to the act of language, language being able to construct and deconstruct a sense of total existence. This is a far cry from Lukács, who assumed the organic whole of reality, believing this had to be reflected in its totality, and even from Brecht, who also assumed the wholeness of reality, even though he was of the opinion that an understanding of it can be projected in an effective way by making use of fragments of experience, allowing for the modernist view that reality can be experienced differently by different people.

In the introduction of his treatise, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (of which the essay under discussion in this dissertation is the appendix), Lyotard defines 'postmodern' as "incredulity towards metanarratives". He uses the word 'modern' to designate any science that legitimates itself "by making an appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth" (Lyotard 1984: xxiii). Possibly alluding to Habermas, he sees the phenomenon of the rule of consensus between the sender and the addressee in which a statement of truth-value is accepted,

provided that it is cast in terms of a possible agreement between rational people, to be what he calls the Enlightenment Narrative. In this narrative the hero of knowledge works towards the good ethical and political end of universal peace. Narratives as such are in a state of crisis in the postmodern condition, as a result of transformations which have altered the game rules for science, literature and art. In Lyotard's view, the "narrative function is losing its functors", that is, the great hero, the great danger, the great voyage, the great goal. Instead, the function is being "dispersed in clouds of narrative language elements - narrative, but also denotative, prescriptive, and so on".

Thus the society of the future falls less within the province of a Newtonian anthropology (such as structuralism or systems theory) than a pragmatics of language particles. There are many different language games - a heterogeneity of elements. They only give rise to institutions in patches - local determinism.

(Lyotard 1984: xxiv)

Concerning the status of knowledge in society, Lyotard argues in his treatise, that the hold of the modernist episteme upon contemporary consciousness channels our cognitive and practical imagination in two directions. In the first place society is conceived as a functional whole, and knowledge is seen in terms of performability. Knowledge is power, but power generates access to knowledge. In other words, power legitimates science and the law on the basis of their efficiency. It then legitimates this efficiency on the basis of science and the law. A circle of self-legitimation of power is set up. High performativity reduces the fragility intrinsic to the legitimation of power by minimizing risk and unpredictability. The other, alternative view of society into which the hold of the modernist episteme channels our consciousness, according to Lyotard, is to see society as divided into two, as an alienated, bifurcated totality, in need for reunification. Knowledge is seen here as 'critical' rather than 'functional'. Critical

knowledge is in the service of the subject. Its goal is not the legitimation of power, but rather empowerment; not the enhancement of the apparatus, but rather, that of the self-formation of humanity. Lyotard sees this as a nineteenth century ideal, which he traces back to the work of Wilhelm von Humboldt. He places Habermas in that line of thought.

In the current context of the experience of postindustrial societies Lyotard puts forward the possibility of alternative cognitive and social options to those which make an appeal to the grand narrative; options which are authentic to the experience at hand, and which had been obscured by the "modernist imperatives". He defines the new cognitive option variously as "paralogy" (Lyotard 1984: 60), "agonistics" (16), and "recognition of the heteromorphous nature of language games" (66). He describes the new social option as a "temporay contract", supplanting permanent institutions in the professional, emotional, sexual, cultural, family and international domains, as well as political affairs(66).

Looking specifically at the appendix of this treatise, namely, the essay, "Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism", the latter could be seen in itself as an embodiment of fragmentation. To begin with we are looking at a work which incorporates the discourse of a writer as he labels it with the title, the metadiscourse of a critic and, thirdly, the 'real' discourse of the writer, in which he puts forward what is really at stake for him. He completes what he overtly sets out to do in the title, that is he answers the question as to what postmodernism is, situating it as a part of modernism (in opposition to, for example, Jameson's view that there is a definite gap between the two) and giving his reasons for doing so. The form of the essay is one of an exegesis, which he divides into the three sections under the headings of "A Demand", "Realism", and "the Postmodern". An exegesis, however, cannot stand as a pure discourse on its own as it invariably makes use of other people's discourses to clarify what it is saying. However, the work of

others is not inserted in a neutral way, always having first been subjected to some kind of critique. Thus we have a discourse which is at the same time a metadiscourse on a number of discourses. Lyotard's exegesis abounds with either allusions or direct references to other people's works and can, in a sense, be seen as a pastiche of discourses. Contrary to what one would expect of an exegesis, this one makes no attempt to hide a strong presence of affect. Nor can one say that the essay as a whole leaves space for open-endedness. Rather, Lyotard puts forward his concerns with a vehemence that can be compared to that of an Old Testament prophet as he predicts terrible consequences should his warnings not be heeded.

The main target of Lyotard's criticism in this essay is the work of Habermas in the context of the latter's efforts towards a communication between the various discourses. Looking closer at the essay, however, it becomes clear that one is looking at a polemic against Habermas rather than at an investigative critique. Lyotard is quite clear on his own position and defends it emphatically, opposing, as it seems, everything that Habermas is propagating. This brings us to what can be seen as Lyotard's real discourse in this essay, that which, given the emphatic tone of his language, is what he really wants to state: the defence of the validity of the view that the unrepresentable exists. This is not only a reinforcement of his opinion regarding the heteromorphous nature of language game. He goes further by not allowing other opinions on this to exist with validity. In fact he strenuously opposes what he calls a 'slackening' in the sense of his perception of there being a general acceptance of an attitude of 'anything goes'. Instead, he insists specifically that the space must be left open for the attempt to present the existence of unrepresentability.

Why would Lyotard be so emphatic about this? After all, why should others not be entitled to their opinion? The reason, according to him, rests on two counts. The first is what he sees as the political stake in all of this, seeing a direct link

between a totalizing way of representation, which claims to contain reality, and a totalitarian political state with its accompanying violence. Secondly, there is a sense of urgency as he perceives an across-the-board desire for the very tendency which, in his eyes, would lead to a disastrous result, that is, an urge to put an end to experimentation in the arts (Lyotard 1984: 71). The emphatic tone, however, must also be seen as part of the rhetorical element in the essay. What emerges is that the element of the exegesis can be seen as secondary to that of exhortation, the former being used to support the latter rather than the other way around. Repeatedly employing terms such as 'terror', 'slackening' and 'mutterings', Lyotard exhorts his readers to engage with him in a war against totality.

Be that as it may, Lyotard stresses his point that the heritage of avant-gardism as found in modernism is the vital instrument in the presenting of the unrepresentable. He thus opposes what he sees to be the move to oust, suppress and liquidate this heritage. In particular he refers to the move in postmodern times which calls itself trans-avant-gardism; a move which pretends to step beyond the fragmentary character of the experimentation of the avant-garde under the cover of eclecticism. Apparently free and liberated in the guise of "anything goes", this eclecticism is in fact controlled by a power; for Lyotard the most overwhelming power of all in present times, namely, that of money. I would like to point out here what I see to be a difference between Lyotard's understanding of the functioning of avant-gardism and that of Jakobson, Brecht and even Jameson. The latter perceive the abstractions and deformations of modernist art works in the light of the estrangement effect, an attempt to enable a viewer to perceive reality in a new way, the artist having to go on inventing ever-new forms in order to direct attention to it. This vision presupposes that there is one reality which is intact, a reality which can be represented, the estrangement effect being a method to achieve it. Lyotard, on the other hand, convinced that a reality can be conceived which cannot be represented, believes

the abstractions in avant-garde works to be a manifestation of the attempt to present the reality of unrepresentability.

Furthermore, Lyotard puts forward a very different view on realism to that of Lukács and Brecht. He sees it as a mode of representation propagated by a system of power which seeks to legitimise its existence. Whether power is in the hands of a particular party or in the hands of capital, the picture presented of reality by those in power is a constructed, easily accessible one which serves to divert the attention of the public from the uncomfortable, anxiety-provoking, depressing feelings of everyday life. What is more is that it is the picture which the public has been conditioned to desire; a picture which serves to reassure. The viewer can recognise it, decipher it, identify himself with its content and be reassured of his own identity. This in turn gives him a feeling of being accepted in society. The reassuring vision of reality would then be seen as evidence of a 'good' system and serve to keep that system in power.

If one is now to go back and look at Lukács' view on realism in this light one could gain new insights concerning the latter's convictions. Lukács did work in the service of a totalitarian state, combating another form of totalitarianism. He did propagate a realism which reflected a whole picture of reality, which he also believed to be one whole. He allowed no alternative view, that is, whatever was produced outside his theory and system was not valid. The irony is that Lukács' intention was surely not to produce a cover-up of what he saw to be true conditions. Rather, he wanted to expose the truth about the reality of capitalistic and fascistic power relations. In doing this he failed to address the truth about the system for which he worked. According to Lyotard's view on realism as a narrative which serves as a reassuring picture to divert the attention from the grim realities of every day existence, Lukács' work may have served the opposite of his intentions, implying that he, himself, was a victim of his own state, inadvertently propagating its power.

The modern artist, says Lyotard, is faced with a choice (Lyotard 1984: 75). The first option would be to produce work which is in service of this cover-up; work which would fulfil certain a priori criteria as stipulated by the powers that be, and thus enjoy popularity and recognition. The second option would be to challenge the rules which were handed down to artists by their predecessors; rules and criteria which have become inadequate in the face of changing realities as a result of capitalism. The resulting work would be experimental and problematic in terms of accessibility. There would be an accompanying lack of popularity. As the rules governing the criteria of a 'good' work of art are made by whoever is in power, be it a political party or capital, the avant-garde work would not only be seen as not 'good', but also as a challenge to the system of power and its claim to being able to encompass all of life. A political state would curb avant-gardism either by simply not recognising the works, or, in the extreme case, by suppressing them with force, whilst, if it is the market that is the power ruling the criteria, then these works would simply never be allowed to feature on the grounds of their not being purchasable commodities.

If one is now to look at Brecht in this light one can say that the latter did take up the challenge to be oppositional, both in terms of challenging constricting conventions and in terms of challenging the existing order and constellation of power. He did have to flee for his life, as well as having to pay the price of being unable to freely perform his works. Where he differs radically in terms of Lyotard's view is on the question of unrepresentability. Instead of making use of the estrangement technique to show the existence of the latter, he regrounded this technique in order to enable the spectator to see what he saw to be the truth about power relations from a different perspective. In contrast to Lyotard, Brecht believed that the very existence of the theatre depended on a vigorous communication between the artist and his audience. In other words, the case of Brecht shows that Lyotard's alternatives are too extreme. There does not have to be an either - or. Brecht can be seen as occupying

the space of a third alternative mediating the two.

Lyotard uses the term modern in connection with art (not to be confused with how he makes use of it to designate a particular science in terms of modernistic aims) to cover both a modernist work of art as well as a postmodernist work (Lyotard 1984: 78). He situates the latter within modern art, which, according to him, is essentially oppositional; essentially tied to a shattering of belief. The modernist work presents the unrepresentable through the content, while still making use of a recognisable form and the solace that goes with this. The postmodernist work, however, attempts to convey unrepresentability via the form, making the form of representation itself unrepresentable. That means that the work is not created in accordance with any established rules, the rules themselves having to be discovered in the process of it becoming a work of art. The solace provided by a recognisable form is denied. He places the work of James Joyce in this category.

What then is the unrepresentable in Lyotard's terms and why does he perceive the recognition of its existence as being of such vital importance? Lyotard invokes Kant's notion of the sublime for his cause. Furthermore, he opposes the latter's system to that of Hegel, which he rejects emphatically. Habermas also refers back to Kant but in another context. As the Enlightenment as such is a major concern in both Lyotard and Habermas' work, as well as in the modernist/postmodernist dispute on the whole, I shall now interrupt my discussion to take a closer look at Kant.

Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804), according to Stoerig, started his philosophical life with the rationalistic system of Gottfried Leibnitz and Christian Wolff, which maintained that it is possible to develop a true image of the world by means of apriori principles of reason, without the necessity of experience. Later he came into contact with the theories of the English

Empiricists, John Locke and David Hume. Locke held that there is nothing in reason that did not first exist in the senses. Cognition is solely based on experience. According to this view metaphysics becomes impossible because experience cannot form the basis for anything supernatural or transcendental. Hume challenged philosophers and scientists to produce evidence that would allow us to make assertions about things we have not actually experienced, and questioned the assumption that we are justified in making generalizations based on a few cases (Stoerig 1950: 265).

Kant's reaction to this challenge was that it is impossible to find the kind of evidence demanded by Hume as long as the mind and its objects are thought of as two separate things. He held that the mind is actively involved in the objects that it experiences. In other words, the mind organizes experience into definite patterns. From that we can be sure that all things capable of being experienced are arranged in these patterns, even if we have not experienced them. In this way we can have knowledge of what we have not yet experienced. This, however, would mean that we must abandon the claim that we can know things as they are in themselves. Paul Guyer, in his "Introduction: The starry heavens and the moral law", emphasises that the certainty of the a priori origins of concepts of understanding and principles of judgement in the structure of human thought, as put forward by Kant, carries with it the cost of recognising that the representation of things, as they are given to us, does not conform to the things as they are in themselves, but rather, that these objects, as appearances, conform to our manner of representation. On the other hand, the very fact that the universal validity of the foundational principles of the scientific world-view can be proved only for the appearances of things, means that we can consider the possibility that things as they are in themselves may not be governed by these laws - but that they may be governed by other laws. This means that we can consider that at the deepest level we, ourselves, are free agents, bound only by the laws of morality, and not by the

deterministic laws of nature (Guyer 1992: 12).

Kant wrote copiously throughout his life, constantly revising his views as he went along. His famous three Critiques were written in his later life. *The Critique of Pure Reason* has been seen by critics as offering a new foundation for human knowledge, virtually demolishing all of the traditional metaphysics. *The Critique of Practical Reason* deals with man's moral existence. Guyer is of the opinion that it inextricably links human freedom to the moral law while attempting to reconstruct the most cherished ideas of traditional metaphysical belief on a practical rather than on a theoretical foundation. In the *The Critique of Judgement* Kant brings the topics of aesthetics and teleological judgement into his system. Critics see it as a completion as well as a revision of the work as put forward in the other two critiques. With these three critiques Kant makes a clear distinction between the faculties of cognition, morality and aesthetics, separating them from each other with no allowance of a possible bridge between them. It is the notion of this distinction which plays such an important role in the Lyotard/Habermas dispute. What was new about Kant's work is that he accommodates the disparate theories from both the Rationalist and the Empiricist systems in his one system. But what separates him from both these systems is the conviction that representation renders appearances of reality rather than reality itself. Things as they are in themselves are outside his system. The Rationalists as well as the Empiricists claim direct access to reality itself. Guyer sees him as the philosopher who transformed the Western conception of the human being from that of a mere spectator in the natural world, and that of a mere subject in the moral world, to that of an active agent in the creation of both (Guyer 1992: 11-12).

The notion of the beautiful and the sublime is discussed in *The Critique of Judgement*. Working along the same lines as he did in the two preceding Critiques, he examines the possibility of a judgement of what happens in nature in terms of purposiveness.

and what role aprioric reason plays in such a judgement. He sees the faculty of judgement in terms of two components, the first one being the capacity to experience sensual feelings of pleasure and pain, which he calls the lower, and the second, the faculty for reflective judgement, which he calls the higher. The aprioric principle of purposiveness is at work in that kind of judgement. It is the faculty of judgement which enables us to orientate ourselves in the world as a whole. Theoretical reason teaches us only strict legality of happening, while practical reason enables us to behave in such a way as though all happening is directed towards a higher moral purpose. Judgement closes the gap between the worlds of nature and freedom, giving us the concept of man as a whole, reasonable being. This, Kant suggests, is an inherent need within us in any case (Stoerig 1950:292).

Turning to the beautiful and the sublime, Kant refers us to the judgement of taste. This is an aesthetical judgement because instead of the representation referring to the object in question, it refers to the subject and its feeling of pleasure and pain. The imagination, as opposed to cognition, is at play. The judgement of taste is aesthetical, not logical. The determining ground is subjective feeling; feeling of pleasure and pain. What is crucial about the satisfaction which determines the judgement of taste is that it is disinterested. It is of no interest to us, when judging something as to its beauty, whether anything depends on the existence of this thing. Rather, we judge it by mere observation, by intuition and reflection. All we want to know is whether the representation of the object is accompanied by a feeling of satisfaction in us, the subjects.

It does not end here, however. Kant identifies the beautiful as "that which apart from concepts is represented as the object of a universal satisfaction" (Kant 1892: 46). He concludes that because it is the object of disinterested satisfaction, there is the implication of there being ground for satisfaction in all men. As the subject feels free in terms of the satisfaction,

unable to find any ground for it in his private conditions, it can be presumed that it must be grounded in something that he can presuppose in every other person as well. Thus he can attribute a similar satisfaction to everyone. This would mean that he would speak of the beautiful *as though beauty is a characteristic of the object* and the judgement is a *logical* one, when in fact it is only *aesthetical*, involving merely a reference of the representation of the object to the subject. The presupposition of it being valid for all men is similar to that of a logical subject. However, this universality cannot arise out of concepts, from which there is no transition to the feeling of pleasure and pain. This means that judgement of taste, combined with the awareness of separation from interest, must claim validity for every man without this universality depending on the object. Kant calls this a 'subjective universality'.

Kant sees the sublime as another variety of aesthetic judgement. The feelings which determine it would also be disinterested. It can also be presumed to be grounded in something that can be presupposed in every other person. It can claim a subjective universality. Over and above this Kant sees the sublime as that which is absolutely great, that is, it is beyond comparison. It is beyond comprehension, and (most important in terms of Lyotard) it is without form. Comparing the sublime with the beautiful, Kant sees the satisfaction experienced in connection with the latter as being one in terms of quality (whether something has a purposiveness in terms of the ultimate perfection found in nature), whereas the experience in the face of the sublime is one in terms of *quantity*. Without form, it arises out of an experience so immense that the imagination cannot provide a representation of it. This causes pain and fear, because of the realization that something that is beyond comprehension is also beyond control. At the same time we are reminded that there is a human faculty, reason, which deals with the super-sensory, which sets the imagination into play. The acknowledgement of this faculty affords pleasure. Although the sublime conflicts with the interests of sensibility, thus giving rise to

unpleasantness, it, nevertheless, at the same time stirs up in man the consciousness that by virtue of his reason he is raised above the finite world of sense.

Lyotard aligns the separate language games to Kant's three faculties (although, in his view, there are an infinite number of language games), the discourses, which according to him, Habermas wants to connect to each other. Another point of interest to him is Kant's notion of the *Ding an sich* which recognises the limit of human representation, allowing for the inaccessibility of a reality about the things depicted; a reality beyond depiction. And then, of course, Lyotard aligns Kant's notion of the sublime to his vision of the existence of the unrepresentable, in so far as the sublime (like the *Ding an sich*) exists outside Kant's system and represents something, the existence of which is conceivable but beyond comprehension, and beyond representation. Thus, whatever his opinion may be about what he calls the Enlightenment narrative as such, Lyotard holds on to the system of Kant in as far as he sees in it an opening which allows for the possibility of the existence of something outside it. He rejects Hegel's system, which he sees as being absolutely closed, referring to it as a transcendental illusion.

Hegel's system does not recognise the possibility of there being anything beyond its comprehension. One can look at the latter's direct predecessor, Fichte, who was of the opinion that human consciousness can cover the whole content of the universe.

The notion of dialectic, which has been described in Chapter 1, contains opposites within it. Although movement and sublation suggests freedom from a potential deadlock, the movement in this system can be seen to move in an ascending spiral pattern, contained within the constraints of opposites as well as by the final goal towards which it moves. Emilia Steurman, in her essay "Habermas vs Lyotard" points out that Hegel was not prepared to accept, uncritically, Kant's synthetic unit of heterogeneous domains of reason. To him, the activity of critique itself must be accounted for; critique must become

self-conscious. Because of modernity's awareness of time, problems of normativity (to create norms which would ground the differentiated domains of rationality) would become an historical endeavour. Hegel's solution to the normative problem is carried out in terms of a philosophy of the subject. Because he believed that the transcendental dimension of reason has got to be itself accounted for in terms of empiricity, of its historicity, he moved on to the idea of a universal subject in history, namely, Absolute Reason. However, this unity, says Steuerman, this Absolute Reason assumed a form which was so overwhelming that in the end it denied the very problem it tried to solve: the subject as universal denied the subject as individual, and thus the problem of critique and normativity disappeared. Should this particular path be followed, Steuerman suggests, then modernity does become a symbol of totalitarianism, with political consequences in which a totalizing absolute reason would be embodied in a universal subject, be it the state or the proletariat (Steuerman 1992: 102).

Although Lyotard does not actually call Habermas a follower of Hegel's system, he does link him to the underlying thought. The drive towards uniting the different discourses by filling up the gap between them would, in his view, be an attempt to subordinate them into one quasi-organic whole; into an all-containing master narrative. Lyotard sees this as a retrogressive step, one which clings to the concepts of a subject and a unitary end of history; concepts which have become increasingly suspect, being the basis of the fantasy which is the task of realistic representation to uphold. Lyotard believes that the project of Enlightenment, with the aim of freeing man from the bondage of unenlightenment, is a nostalgic and dangerous illusion.

Having concentrated on Lyotard's point of view, let me now turn to Habermas. The latter places himself squarely into the Enlightenment tradition of Kant, Hegel and Marx. In his "Modernity versus Postmodernity", which has also been published under the title, "Modernity - an incomplete Project", he sees

postmodernism in the light of anti-modernism and rejects the perception that the goals of Enlightenment necessarily lead to totalitarianism with its accompanying terrorist activity (Habermas 1990: 351). In other words, he does not invalidate the initial Enlightenment goal in terms of the promise of happiness and improvement as a result of greater knowledge, even though he sees this as not having materialized. Like Lyotard, he feels that present day life experience is affected negatively by the forces of the powers that be, contingent on the one-sided emphasis on instrumental knowledge in society. What Lyotard calls the realities of experience in a postindustrial society, Habermas refers to as societal modernizations brought about by the imperatives of the capitalist modernizations of the economy.

What then is the project of Enlightenment? Seyla Benhabib (the translator of Habermas' article), who examines Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition* in terms of whether or not postmodernism and feminism can become allies in terms of epistemic options and normative visions, puts forward a brief introduction concerning Enlightenment thought and the subsequent criticism of it. Before concentrating on the account put forward by Habermas, I shall borrow some of this outline in order to give some general background to what Habermas is saying.

"Modern Philosophy", Benhabib quotes Lyotard, "began with the loss of the world". The autonomous bourgeois subject made the decision to take nothing and no authority for granted of which the content and strictures had not been subjected to thorough examination. This decision began with the withdrawal from the world. The question of classical epistemology from Descartes to Hume, from Locke to Kant was how to make congruous the order of representations in consciousness with the order of representations outside the self. Caught in the prisonhouse of its own consciousness, the modern epistemological subject tried to recover the "world it had well lost" (Benhabib borrows this phrase from R. Rorty's article, "The world well lost"). Two options were available in order to achieve this. The first one

was to reassure oneself that the world would be gained by the direct and immediate evidence of the senses, as in empiricism. The second option, the rationalistic one, was to insist that the rationality of the creator, or the harmony of the mind and nature, would guarantee the correspondence between the two orders of representation. Whether empiricist or rationalist, modern epistemologists agreed that the task of knowledge was to build an adequate representation of things. Modern epistemology operated with a threefold distinction: the order of representation in our consciousness (ideas and sensations); the signs which transmitted this order to other people (the words); and that to which the words referred (the objective world). The meaning of a word was seen to be that which it designates. The primary function of language was denotative, that is, it has to inform us about the state of affairs as it exists objectively. Thus, the classical episteme of representation presupposed a spectator perception of the knowing self, a designative theory of meaning, and a denotative theory of language (Benhabib 1992: 206).

The critique of this classical episteme, leading to its eventual rejection, began in the nineteenth century. Three directions developed, each focusing on a different aspect. The critique of the spectator conception of the subject began with German Idealism. This continued with Marx and Freud, to Horkheimer, and to Habermas in his *Knowledge and Human Interests*. In this critique the spectator model of the self is replaced by an active, producing, fabricating humanity which creates the conditions of objectivity by forming nature through its own historical activity. The second direction of criticism was directed at the modern concept of the object. This tradition is associated with Nietzsche, Heidegger and Adorno, and also Horkheimer. Here, the modern episteme is viewed as an episteme of domination. Adorno, together with Horkheimer, argues that it is 'the concept', the very unit of thought in the western tradition that imposes homogeneity and identity upon the heterogeneity of material. This view sees the drive for identity

of conceptual thought culminating in the technical triumph in the West, which can only know things in that it comes to dominate them. The third tradition of the criticism of the classical episteme, is a critique of the modern concept of the sign. This critique was initiated by Saussure and Peirce, to be taken up by Frege and Wittgenstein. They argue that it is impossible to make sense of meaning, reference and language in general as long as linguistic signs are seen as 'private marks'. The public and shared character of language is an essential prerequisite. There is no natural relation between a sound, the word it represents in a language and the content it refers to. For Peirce, the relation of the sign (of which words are but one species) to the signified is mediated by an interpretant. For Saussure, it is within a system of differential relations that certain sounds get arbitrarily frozen to stand for words. In this analysis of language there is a move from the private to the public, from consciousness to sign, from the individual word to a system of relations among linguistic signs. According to Benhabib, this is the tradition which has triumphed in postmodernity. Whether in analytic philosophy, or in contemporary hermeneutics, or in French poststructuralism, the paradigm of language has replaced the paradigm of consciousness (Benhabib 1992: 208).

Habermas, in putting forward his interpretation of the Project of Enlightenment, stresses that although the emphasis is placed on the aesthetic domain when matters of modernity are discussed, it is a mistake to ignore the other two faculties (in Kantian terms) as being equally important spheres of culture as a whole. He first clears the way by defining the shifting implications of the meaning of the word 'modern' throughout the ages, linking it always to a changed consciousness of time. Up to the Enlightenment period, the term appeared and reappeared in Europe during those periods when the consciousness of a new epoch came into being through a renewed relationship to the ancient classics. Then, the ideals of the French Enlightenment freed themselves from the spell of the ancient classics on the basis of a belief in the infinite progress of knowledge and science;

convinced that this progress would lead towards an ever-advancing social and moral improvement. Referring to Kant's faculties, Habermas borrows Max Weber's characterization of cultural modernity as "the separation of the substantive reason expressed in religion and metaphysics into three autonomous spheres", that is: science, morality and art (Habermas 1990: 348). That would mean that cultural modernity, according to Habermas, came into being with the separation of the faculties. Divided into these three, each domain could become institutionalized. The problems of the old world-view could now be handled separately in each sphere by professional experts. Ideally, greater knowledge could be reached in each field which would, in turn, benefit the larger public in terms of improving everyday praxis. Habermas points to what he sees as the excessive optimism of some Enlightenment thinkers who had the expectation that the arts and sciences would, in fact, not only promote the control of the natural forces, but would also further the understanding of the world, the self, moral progress, the justice of institutions, and even happiness; it would promote a rational organization of everyday social life.

These expectations were not fulfilled, however; breaking down completely in the twentieth century. What happened instead was that the more the experts developed in their autonomous spheres, the greater became the gap between them and the general life-world (*Lebenswelt*). On the whole, the achievements in the domains of knowledge in terms of specialized treatment and reflection did not "become the property of everyday praxis", and certainly not immediately (Habermas 1990: 348). Not only did the life-world not improve, but it was even in a poorer state than before, its traditional substance having been devalued. The autonomy of each segment of culture resulted in a gap between them and the hermeneutics of everyday communication. Thus the notion of the failure of the Enlightenment project as such. Habermas poses the question whether there is something wrong with the ideals in themselves, necessitating a rejection of them, or whether something went wrong in the procedure of realizing them.

He is of the latter opinion and puts forward his particular alternative of communicative reason.

Habermas diagnoses the crises in present day social life which evoke a number of negating responses to be the result of what he calls the disturbed communicative infrastructure of everyday life, brought about by the subordination of the life-worlds to capitalistic imperatives of economics, and to matters of power justification. Like Lyotard, he sees knowledge as the powerful weapon in what must inevitably be a political stake. Unlike Lyotard, however, he believes that the separation between cognitive knowledge (in service of the powers that be for its performability), moral knowledge and aesthetic knowledge, brought about by the ever-increasing autonomy of each sphere, is at the root of this lopsided concentration of power. Furthermore, he is convinced that there is a deep human need to communicate meaningfully and socially. He interprets the call for a negating of modernistic culture as a response to this frustrated need.

Looking at what he judges to be the false programs of the negation of culture, Habermas first sets out to identify which of these efforts mistake the activity of the aesthetic cultural domain as the cause of the problem, using this as a scapegoat rather than analysing the real causes of societal modernization. He places Daniel Bell in this category. The latter sees modernist culture as being incompatible with the moral basis for a purposive, rational way of life, convinced that the principle of self-realization and the call for authentic self-experience encourage a hedonism which is inimical to the discipline of professional life. He calls for a revival of religious faith which is tied to a faith in tradition. As it is impossible to simply call up this faith, says Habermas, this direction of thought has led to an intellectual and political confrontation with the carriers of cultural modernity.

But, says Habermas, there are problems inherent in cultural modernism itself which justifiably evoke a number of responses.

one of which is the call for postmodernism. The crucial problem, in his view, is the increasingly widening gap between the avant-garde and the life-world of the general public. The spirit and the discipline of the avant-garde movement emerged in the nineteenth century with the work of Baudelaire who was influenced by the theories of E.A.Poe. This is the point in history which Habermas associates with a radicalized consciousness of modernity, that is, an understanding of the 'modern' as having freed itself from all historical ties. His view of the spirit of the avant-garde is as follows. (I am giving a very close reading of Habermas' own text here in an attempt to gain absolute clarity on how his view on the avant-garde compares with that of Lyotard, and with that of both Lukács and Brecht on Expressionism.)

The spirit of the avant-garde, says Habermas, is characterized by attitudes that have developed around the focus of a changed consciousness of time. The metaphor which expresses this is that of a vanguard which penetrates into unknown territory on a scouting mission, exposing itself to risks of sudden, shocking encounters. The territory which the avant-garde conquers is the as yet unoccupied future. There is the necessity of orientation on ground which has never been surveyed. However, says Habermas, this orientation into the future, this anticipation of an undetermined, contingent future, this cult of the new, are, in actual fact, the glorification of the present; a present which constantly gives birth to new, subjectively established pasts. This new consciousness of time does not only express the experience of a mobilized society, accelerated history and the fragmentation of everyday life. Underlying the celebration of the transitory, the ephemeral and the dynamic there is a longing for an undefiled, stable present. Habermas quotes Octavio Paz as the latter describes modernism as a self-negating movement, its secret theme being the longing for a true present (Habermas 1990 (2): 35).

With this interpretation Habermas explains what he perceives to

be an abstract opposition to history in the avant-garde: history loses the structure of an organically structured event, handed down by tradition which is committed to continuity. Instead, single epochs lose their face, sacrificed to the affinity of the present to that which is most distant, and that which is close, that is, the decadent recognises itself, unmediated, in the barbaric, the wild and the primitive. The anarchistic intention of exploding the continuity of history explains the subversive power of this aesthetic consciousness which rebels against the normalizing function of tradition. This aesthetic consciousness lives off the experience of the rebellion against all that is normative, neutralizing all that is morally good and practically useful. Habermas does not, however, see this movement as being simply anti-historical. Rather, he sees it as making use of the past as made available by the objectifying scholarship of historicism, while opposing the neutralizing effect on the criteria of history brought about by that historicism (Habermas 1990 (2): 34).

Turning to the art works of the avant-garde, Habermas notes that as these movements unfolded, culminating in surrealism in the twentieth century, matters of form, like colour, lines, sounds and movements no longer served the cause of the 'adequate representation of the objective world'. Rather they became aesthetic objects in themselves. The movement removed itself completely from matters of social concern, to practise 'art for art's sake'. So much did modern art move away from fulfilling its initial promise, in Enlightenment terms, of enhancing the happiness of the 'whole of life', that questions about its very right to exist began to be asked. Art had become a critical, antagonistic mirror showing the irreconcilable nature of the worlds of aesthetic and social concerns.

The surrealist revolt, says Habermas, was a desperate bid to remove the gap between art and everyday life. An attempt was made to "blow up the autarkical sphere of art and to force a reconciliation of art and life" (Habermas 1990 (1): 350).

The reason why this attempt failed to achieve its goal, according to Habermas, was because it only allowed access to one of the three autonomous spheres of culture. In everyday communication, cognitive meanings, moral expectations and subjective expressions must relate to one another. Not only would the opening up of one of these spheres fail to overcome a reified everyday praxis, but it could have more serious consequences as well. If one of the spheres were to become over-extended into other domains, as for example, if there were to be an aestheticizing of politics, or a replacement of politics by moral rigorism, or the submission to the dogmatism of a doctrine, then this could have 'terroristic' (in Lyotard's sense) consequences. On the other hand, Habermas suggests, it would be out of proportion and out of relation to use this as a reason to identify the project of modernity as such with the state of consciousness of an individual terrorist; it would not be a reason to see the intentions of the Enlightenment tradition as leading to totalitarianism with its accompanying terrorist activities.

Habermas notes that the spirit of aesthetic modern culture, as he has described it, has aged in present day times, beginning in the 1960s and 1970s. This should not necessarily be a reason to negate modernity as such, however. The other two autonomous spheres, those of science and morality, he admits, were also subjected to parallel attempts of negation, even though, in contrast to aesthetic modernism, they did maintain the connection to the forms of praxis in their field. But, he argues, that connection was very specialized and is still far removed from the praxis of every day life.

Habermas is of the opinion that, instead of giving up the project of modernity, we should rather learn both from the errors which have accompanied it as well as from the mistakes of the attempts to negate it. He suggests that this can be achieved if approached from the viewpoint of everyday praxis by looking at the reception of art. If, in dealing with problems, this is done from only the one dimension of the aesthetic, separating it from

the aspects of truth and justice, then this clear line of separation would immediately dissolve when the non-expert attempts to draw the aesthetic experience into his everyday life. On the other hand, an aesthetic experience, which is not primarily seen in terms of the expert's critical judgement of taste, could have a changed status. Should it be seen in terms of clarifying a situation in a life history, it becomes a different discourse, a language game which is no longer that of aesthetic criticism. Not only would this experience then shed new light onto our needs, but it would also affect our normative expectations and our cognitive interpretations. In that way, says Habermas, an expert's culture could be reappropriated into the life-world. The other two spheres could be reappropriated in a similar manner. Only if the life-world has become enriched with this reappropriation, can it manage to develop institutions out of itself which are able to effectively oppose the internal dynamics and the imperatives of the almost autonomous economic system (Habermas 1990 (1): 353).

From this description of Habermas' discussion on the project of modernity, which can in itself be interpreted as a critique of cultural modernism, I think it would be wrong to place him at the opposite pole of postmodernism as represented by Lyotard. Rather he should be seen as occupying a third, alternative pole. On the one hand he is critical of modernity as it has manifested itself in real terms. On the other hand he does not want to discard its ideals or the heritage of the philosophical tradition on which it has based itself. I believe that the title of his essay, which puts forward modernity as an incomplete project is partially misleading. It is true that he feels there is as yet much to be done; that with a new approach the project can move forward rather than being discarded and replaced. But that does not do justice to that aspect of the essay which is critical of cultural modernism, especially in terms of the avant-garde. What he is really saying is that the project has not achieved what it set out to do because it has gone wrong. This, however can be remedied. The essay does not suggest that Habermas wants to

discard the *distinction* between the different faculties as instituted by Kant. After all, he does agree with Max Weber's view that cultural modernity *began* with the separation of the faculties. Nor is he against specialized expertise as such, as can be seen from the way he realizes that artistic production would cease if it were not carried out in the form of specialized treatment of autonomous problems (Habermas 1990 (1): 351). What he protests against is the total separation between the faculties, which has led to a subsequent separation between the activities of the experts of culture and the people whose life-world should be benefitting, in Enlightenment terms, from this activity. What is missing, and has been missing all along, is a meaningful communication between the discourses.

The kind of communication Habermas has in mind is based on consensus. He believes that the paradigm of knowledge must be replaced by the paradigm of "mutual understanding between subjects capable of speech and action" (Habermas 1987: 295). In his essay, "An Alternative Way out of the Philosophy of the Subject: Communicative versus Subject-Centered Reason", he suggests that at each stage in the progression of modernity, philosophers were faced with cross-roads, that is, they had to choose one direction at the expense of others. Different directions might have been chosen should the decision have been negotiated by consensual communication. So, for example, he points to Hegel and Marx who "...swallow[ed] the intuition concerning the ethical totality back into the horizon of the self-reference of the knowing and acting subject". Instead they could have explicated that intuition "in accord with the model of unconstrained consensus formation in a communication community standing under cooperative constraints" before choosing which way to go (Habermas 1987: 295). In the same essay Habermas explicates what he means by the paradigm of mutual understanding, in which the performative attitude is crucial. The participants of a discussion enter into an interpersonal relationship as they come to an understanding about something in the world and coordinate their plan of action. He compares this relationship

to the system of personal pronouns in grammar, in which pronouns are transformed from first, second or third persons depending on who speaks. In other words, the relationship is structured by a system of "reciprocally interlocked perspectives among the speakers" (Habermas 1987:297).

Habermas does not stand alone in his desire to bridge cleavages by way of language. Humboldt, to whose line of thought Benhabib aligns Habermas, was a follower of Johann Georg Hamann, a contemporary of Kant's. Known as the spokesman for those who were beginning to oppose the rationalism of Enlightenment, Hamann rejected the division Kant made between sensuousness and understanding. He believed that language, within which understanding is given a sensuous existence, can bridge this gap. He saw language as the key to everything, the link between idealism and realism. He believed that the whole of philosophy consists more of language than of reason, and that the problems posed by history can be solved by it (Stoerig 1950: 307). Much further back one can see evidence of the consternation of people not being able to communicate in terms of language in the Old Testament story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), and its resolution in the New Testament story of Pentecost, in which all people were reunited in the common language of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2).

It is my opinion that the views put forward by Habermas and Lyotard show evidence of a common concern and a common goal, even though there is disagreement on how these should be dealt with. Both authors react to what they see as a reified existence in the society of late capitalism. Both are of the opinion that knowledge is the crucial weapon which ensures the status quo in terms of power relations. In our current society, according to both writers, access to knowledge is held by those in power. There is a privileging of one-sided, instrumental knowledge, which is then, in turn, employed in the service of the self-perpetuating legitimation of power. Thus society moves inevitably into the direction of totalitarianism. This, both

writers suggest, has been made possible by the direction which Enlightenment has taken, either by being a faulty project in the first place, or by taking mistaken directions during the course of time. Lyotard is of the opinion that the experience of fragmentation is an authentic indication of a fragmented society which communicates in an infinite number of discourses. According to him, it was never an organic whole, the project of Enlightenment having forced the illusion of a wholeness artificially onto its essentially heterogenous character in the form of a master narrative. This master narrative is used to mislead society into a comforting but untrue picture of itself. Society is thus prevented from recognising the true state of power relations, disempowering it to defend itself against an increasing state of totalitarianism. Efforts must be made to destroy this illusion. The aesthetic discourse in the form of the heritage of the avant-garde movement has helped to do this, not only by shattering the belief in terms of an organic continuity, but by showing that something can exist outside the knowledge of a system.

Habermas, on the other hand, also does not see society as a whole in the state in which it is, but he presupposes that that is what it is *essentially*, or what it should be, and that an effort must be made to bring this about. According to him, fragmentation is the root of the problem, but something can be done to bridge the cleavages. When society is in a fragmented state, then it is possible for decisions to be made by a power which is concentrated in relatively few hands, the work of the experts being used in service of this. In a unified society, however, there could be a democratic decision making process in which there is clear communication not only between the discourses, but also between people, between experts and non-experts, enabling the participants to contribute equally by consensus. There could be transparency. Knowledge would be gained by way of intersubjectivity.

To Lyotard the idea of a system based on an all-inclusive

consensus is a claustrophobic nightmare. What happens to those who do not fit into it? Will they be marginalized or simply eliminated? Is there a provision for a right of a private existence outside consensus. Discourses that are all interconnected, transparent, and in the service of each other, lay themselves open to becoming inhabited by some power which will then use this whole interconnected system to legitimate itself. As long as the faculties are still separated they can stand in a critical position towards each other, acting as a control to a spiralling ascent to power; a potential contained in every discourse.

I think it is significant that both Lyotard and Habermas in their effort to put forward their views as to what they consider to be acceptable positions in the face of the realities of present day options, no longer talk about the class struggle. Coming from a Marxist background they both seem to have moved away from the doctrine in its narrow sense. Capitalism does remain the force which must be opposed. However, there no longer seems to be the notion that society will inevitably move towards an ideal state of socialism with a resulting happiness. Lyotard does not look positively into the future at all, fighting to stop what he sees to be a deterioration of conditions. Unlike Lukács and Brecht, he not only opposes fascist totalitarianism, but all totalitarianism as such. Habermas, on the other hand, is more optimistic and looks to find a creative alternative option to loosen the stranglehold of the either - or choice, in an attempt to move into the future positively and actively. Although both these writers oppose capitalism, they criticise a mechanism rather than a particular class. All people are the victims of this mechanism in terms of an impoverishment of the fabric of every day life which they see to be dominated by an almost perfect, invincible system of reification.

CONCLUSION

The result of my investigation of the Expressionist debate in the light of the modernist/postmodernist controversy, in which I have covered a vast amount of material, has been that a number of issues have been raised in terms of aesthetic and social theory, each of which could legitimately be highlighted and developed further. What has emerged is that in the case of these two debates, aesthetic theory cannot be divorced from social theory. This can be ascribed to the common Marxist background of these writers, which has determined their common concern in terms of a responsibility towards society; a responsibility which demands active intervention in the socio-political domain. The concern with responsibility in terms of promoting the happiness of mankind has, in these discussions, been traced back to Enlightenment goals. However, the specific link with the Marxist doctrine has narrowed this general aim down to focus directly on political concerns. This is openly displayed in the debate between Lukács and Brecht in which both the tone and the imagery are militant, the enemy, clearly identified in terms of the class struggle, being the oppressing class in capitalist and fascist societies. Lukács and Brecht both show clear commitment to Marx's philosophy with its Hegelian background in terms of dialectics. By the time that the later dispute began to be fought out, the tradition which critiques the Enlightenment concept of the sign (as formulated by Benhabib), initiated by Saussure and Peirce at the beginning of this century, had come fully to the fore (Benhabib 1992: 208); the main focus of concern now being directed at language. The political implications of social and aesthetic theories are still at stake. However, the enemy, here identified as the global development of capitalism, can no longer be seen in the relatively simple, clearly identifiable form of an oppressor section of a particular society. The class struggle as such is not raised by either Lyotard or Habermas. Rather, they react against what they see to be a progressive reification of every day life, resulting in a fragmented, alienated existence which is the result of global

capitalism. No specific concrete enemy against which the attack can be levelled can be identified. As this focal point is missing, the struggle goes beyond actual groups of people to consider the role that knowledge in terms of the Enlightenment tradition has played in lending itself to the unequal power relations which have marked this century. Either the Enlightenment tradition, which includes the philosophy Marx, must be totally discarded, or it must be reconsidered and changed. Language is seen as the crucial medium. As the picture of a unified whole reality, still assumed as such by Lukács and Brecht, has been exploded, the matter of fragmentation versus totality is of crucial concern in the later debate. Interestingly, a similar concern also played a role in the earlier debate. However, when Lukács criticises the Expressionists for their use of montage in their art works, seeing it as a fragmented, faulty representation of reality, neither he nor Brecht doubted that a whole reality as such did exist.

To end this dissertation, I will now highlight what I consider to be perhaps the most important issue to have emerged as a result of the juxtaposition of these two debates; an issue contained in my title. I have looked at the Expressionist Debate in the light of postmodern concerns in order to gain greater insight in terms of what the real stakes, apart from promoting Marxism, are in that debate. The resulting investigation has not only helped towards this but has also served to put the stakes and dynamics of the later debate into a clearer perspective.

Expressionism is the ostensible point of dispute in the Lukács/Brecht debate. However, neither writer actually is particularly interested in the movement itself or its development. It was not so much Lukács' denunciation of it than his denunciation of fellow Marxist writers whom he saw to be influenced by it that set off the controversy. The writers of the Left were predominantly concerned with a Marxist orientated aesthetic. Lukács, primarily interested in his brand of realism,

uses Expressionism to set it off against the explication of his own work. Brecht, angry at Lukács' hegemonic, authoritarian attitude, defends the right of artists to decide for themselves what they consider they should employ in the course of practising their art. He, in turn, sets off Lukács' essay against the explication of his own opinions, defending his methods in the process. He does not so much defend Expressionism as he defends his right to make use of it in spite of being a Marxist writer.

And yet, even though one can see Expressionism in the light of a pretext for this debate, it can nevertheless be seen as the central point of contact between the latter and the later dispute between Lyotard and Habermas. It is the response of Marxist writers to the whole phenomenon of modernism, of which Expressionism is a part, that could be seen as the real stake, the subtext of both these debates. A clarification of the response to modernism must inevitably force a re-assessment of where each writer stands in his relation to the Marxist position in terms of aesthetics. Can one, for instance, truly be a Marxist writer and still embrace modernism?

In terms of the works examined in this dissertation, all of which put forward a particular view on modernism, we are talking about a movement which has run parallel to Marxism, starting from about the middle of the nineteenth century up to present times. Whether referred to as the Avant-garde, Impressionism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Modernism and Postmodernism, it is all part and parcel of the phenomenon of modernism in terms of this discussion. Each of the writers refer to it from an outside position, that is they respond to it from the point of view of how it can positively or negatively have impact on their own persuasion. Lukács rejects it outright, treating it rather like a contaminating disease, fearing that it would have a subversive effect within his own movement. Brecht, having initially been involved in it, does not dissociate himself from it, finding aspects of it indispensable for his own work. Lyotard takes one aspect of it as a safety latch to hold up impending disaster,

whereas Habermas gives serious attention to its concerns and impact on society, but is of the opinion that something has gone wrong with it, which can be remedied by changing it into something else.

It is the position of art and its function in society which is at stake here. In Kantian terms art is part of the faculty of Judgement and stands outside the ethical and the cognitive spheres. In other words it does not interfere in the other domains but it is sovereign in its own right. In terms of Marxism, however, art lost its separate sovereign status. For it to have any recognition, it has to be in the service of furthering the struggle for socio-political change. The merit and the relevance of a work is assessed on that basis. Instead of simply giving pleasure or pain on purely aesthetic grounds, art now has to be combative against the enemy in the class struggle. However, it is not allowed to be critical of Marxism itself, be it in terms of the theories, the practitioners, or a state which has Marxism as its official policy. It would thus not function as a critical control of the system itself. This can be seen to be demonstrated by the Lukács/Brecht debate. Lukács combats everything which he sees to be in any way detrimental to the Marxist doctrine, even to the point of denouncing the work of writers who openly commit themselves to Marxism, but does not criticise the practices of the Soviet state which were both oppressive and totalitarian. Brecht's articles, which were critical of Lukács, were never published, either because they were dismissed or because he feared for his life should they have reached publication in *Das Wort in Moscow*. Nevertheless, Brecht, in line with his Marxist commitment, created his art to combat capitalism. He, too, although he was not even a citizen, did not criticise the practices of the Soviet state.

What is interesting about the Marxist view of art in terms of this debate, is the question of realism. If one is to take it in Lukács' sense, then art has, in fact, crossed over the

divisions of the faculties: it claims cognitive as well as aesthetic status (in Jameson's words) and its prime impact is to be in the ethical sphere in terms of socio-political improvement. Art, here, is in the service of a social theory. This is of interest if one considers that Habermas, and even Lyotard, both, however much they may have moved away from some of the aspects of Marxism, also speak from the perspective of social theory when they talk about the avant-garde. In other words, the cleavages between the faculties are, in fact, closed up in the Marxist theory of realism. It must be realized, however, that the faculties do not stand in equal balance to each other, the aesthetic faculty having been subsumed in the socio-ethical one.

The difference between this position of art in society and that of art in the sense of the Avant-garde, is that the latter stands in a critical position towards the society in which it functions. It must be made clear, though, that it does not do this in the sense of a social function. It acts independently. Criticism of a way of life in a particular society can be deduced rather than that it is spelt out in any specific way. Avant-gardism claims neither cognitive nor ethical status, but demands complete sovereignty in its own sphere. It assigns itself not only the right to function on its own terms but to challenge all preceding conventions, be they social or artistic. It stands outside of and above society. It claims originality, which recognises no higher authority. This is the element that is at once disturbing and challenging to the four writers in question. Art, in this sense, cannot be contained by any official power or philosophical doctrine, and must thus stand in a subversive relationship to any system which claims to contain and control all aspects of life. One can either dismiss it as harmless and ineffectual, or one can actively suppress it. One can also attempt to change its nature and function. On the other hand one can make use of certain aspects of it.

Lukács reacts to avant-gardism by simply dismissing the whole

movement, denigrating the artists without looking closely at what they are doing. As far as he is concerned Marxism and modernism are mutually exclusive. Habermas tries to tame the alienating effects of avant-gardism by recognising its merits but changing its status to fit into his system of communicative reason. Art must come back from its outsider position into the fold of society to serve social needs. In this regard he can be compared to Lukács, although he goes about it in a more subtle manner.

Brecht is the only one of the four writers who speaks from the perspective of the artist. He can be seen to have combined avant-gardism and Marxism in his art. On the one hand his work is in the Marxist cause, clearly seeing its function to be subservient to this. On the other hand, he claims the right of the independence of the artist when creating his works. Within the constraints of his own understanding of Marxism with its dialectic, he does not allow anyone to prescribe to him what he should think and how he should act, especially not someone who is not an artist himself. He insists on self-sufficient expertise in the artistic sphere. However, the combination of these two commitments does carry a cost. The modernist element which was so prominent in his early works, to then almost disappear in his first Marxist-orientated didactic plays, emerges again and can be seen to unfold itself with increasing magnitude in his subsequent plays. He stopped writing new plays once he had moved to East Berlin, spending his last years experimenting with the staging of the plays he had written. The Marxist parameter which contains his work could possibly be seen as the element which prevented him from progressing fully forward into the poststructuralist mode which moved to a deconstruction of all master narratives. In other words, poststructuralism is the point at which there is a conscious dissolution of the master narrative, the narrative of a unified reality, into disparate discourses. The fragmentation of the form, as employed and developed by Brecht, would take the leap over to the content. In his case, it is possible that the master narrative of the realism of Marxism prevented the ultimate fragmentation of the

content. However, if one were to look at Brecht's plays, looking past the Marxist framework, one would see many postmodern features: the pastiche element in the form of the story within a well known story, which also effects the upheaving of time sequence, the different voices and perspectives, the breaking up of the illusion of reality, and the use of surface phenomena. In short, we are talking about a fragmentation in terms of time sequence, story line, the actor as one whole character, the unity of scenery, story and music. We are talking about the spaces left between the many fragments which constitute the play. The main didactic message of the play is time and again subverted and put into question by the disparate elements of the form. If one were now to look back at Lukács' criticism of Ernst Bloch in terms of how the Expressionists, in his eyes, mistook the fragmentary nature of surface reality for a fragmentation of total reality, one could say that his fears were not ungrounded. In terms of his fears of the threat to his concept of totality, in the Marxist sense, future developments, be it in the form of poststructuralism or postmodernism has had the effect of invalidating that concept.

Lyotard, does, in fact, reject this concept completely. The fragmentation we feel in life is due to the fragmentary nature of reality, which can only be seen as a whole if it is artificially constructed as such by language, a language which is refused the separate status of all its language games. It is the separateness of the language game of the avant-garde that he not only recognises but defends so vehemently. Art, in its ability to present the unrepresentable must be the watchdog, as it were, to counteract the danger of totalitarianism. What must be remembered here, though, is that Lyotard, nevertheless, does not see art from the perspective of its own sphere. He, too, also makes it subservient to his social theory, co-opting it into his discourse, determining its function. Ironically it is the very element of being ungraspable in terms of any theory, including his own, that he finds indispensable to his theory. The fact that he does not speak from the perspective of the

avant-garde itself would be clear to any artist who tries to follow his injunction. Brecht could have told him that art cannot be produced in the long run if there is no audience. Also, if there is no audience, how does the artist have an impact on society? Presenting the unrepresentable, not only in content but also in form, would, however much sense it would make in theory, result in only a tiny, exclusive group of spectators.

The question could be asked whether, even if one did have a knowledge of the truth about reality, there would be anything wrong in consciously creating an illusion, a false reality, as it were, to cope with what may be an unpleasant state of affairs. What comes across in both these debates, especially with Habermas, but with the others as well, is that there is a basic longing in human nature for a wholeness in life, be it socially or intellectually. If reality does not correspond with this longing, is it wrong to create the fantasy that will then cope with this truth? We have an example of this in Cervantes.

At one stage Don Quixote asks the canon to tell him what is wrong in living out a fantasy if this helps one to be a better person? Pondering this one could say that that is how we exist all the time. Often it is a hope, an illusion, a fantasy, which are the insubstantial steps towards substantial action. These actions, in turn, create a new substantial reality.

Habermas could be seen to develop his theory of communication in response to the human longing for an experience of wholeness. This could be seen in a positive as well as negative light. He proposes to actively create a united new reality. This is not to be brought about by some authority which forces it on society, as for instance, the church, a doctrine, or a totalitarian state. Rather, the people, themselves, would be the authority by a process of consensus based on a communication which is the result of an interaction of the faculties. Art would be in the position of being a part of this consensus, contributing to the unifying process.

One can now ask why Lyotard should be so adamantly against this. I think one reason is that it looks almost too good to be true. He remembers the two totalitarian states and their vicious methods in this very century. Both these systems had two faces: the initially beautiful one in terms of the ideal, which could be seen as a manifestation of power in its marketing technique, and the face of power without its mask, manifested in terror. One could say that the nostalgia for the whole and one springs from a basic existential fear and must be taken as a given. It can thus easily be exploited by any power. It will gladly lend itself to any story that supports it. In Lyotard's analysis of the role of power and knowledge based on a picture which in turn is based on an illusion, this illusion may be insubstantial, based on worthy ideals, but would, nevertheless, support the substantial reality of keeping power in place. The difference between an individual, like Don Quixote, making use of a fantasy to cope with life, is that in the case of a general consensus a large mass of people are involved. In the individual instance there would probably be an awareness of the fantasy as a fantasy, as is the case of Don Quixote, who exercised his right to choose his particular fantasy. In the case of the masses there is less likelihood of an awareness of the fantasy as a fantasy as one sees it mirrored in everyone around one, an unspoken general consensus having been reached to believe in it. A frightening aspect is that there is no individual choice. Once an illusion, upheld by consensus, has got to the stage of supporting a totalitarian state, the united masses become in themselves an unwieldy force of power. Methods of terror are used to keep them in control, while they, themselves, carry the potential of terror within them.

What can be seen from all this is that every theory and practice as put forward by these four writers can be seen in a positive and in a negative light in terms of power relations. The issue of art is only truly explored by Brecht, who is an artist himself. Lyotard can be seen to be closer to his views in terms of an affirmative attitude towards the element of fragmentation.

Habermas can be seen to be more in line with Lukács in terms of a striving towards unity, even though he dissociates himself from the authority of a doctrine, making the consensus between reasonable people the authority. Where Brecht and Habermas can be seen to be similar, however, is in their optimistic belief in human nature, in the future, and in their own ability to work towards this creatively and courageously. Never losing sight of the realities as encountered in every day praxis, they work from the assumption that theory cannot be effective without a positive interaction with the people on the ground.

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