

Hungarian Studies on György Lukács

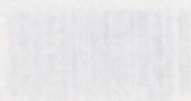
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Hungarian Studies on György Lukács

Volume I



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Volume I



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Editorial Note

Works by György Lukács are mentioned in English (if available), or in German (if not available in English and were written originally in German), or in Hungarian (if written originally in Hungarian; in this case translations of the titles are given in brackets after the first occurrence within a study) throughout the present book, except where direct reference is made to a specific publication, regardless of its language. Quotations taken from works by Lukács are given either in English or in German.

Although Lukács is widely known all over the world, the international scholarly public knows little about the advanced and many-colored literature dealing with Lukács in the native country of this great Hungarian thinker. There are various reasons for this state of affairs. Although there is no denying the fact that the study of Lukács's oeuvre started relatively late—only in the first half of the seventies—in Hungary, it is also true that this research has recently gained momentum since then. The other reason is the well-known isolation of the Hungarian language, which in this case represents a significant impediment because only a few writings of Hungarian Lukács scholars are available in translation.

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This research, however—although understandable—can rely on sources which are available only in Hungary and in the Hungarian language, and it can interpret Lukács's activities in the intellectual atmosphere and social environment in which Lukács himself—except his years of emigration—lived and worked. We think it is not an empty hope that, by virtue of these advantages, the writings of Hungarian authors can provide a more reliable image of Lukács than that curiously reflected in the international scholarly literature. And they can accomplish this precisely by exhibiting new facts and essential interrelations; in given instances, they can even contribute to clearing up the legends that surround his figure.

We wish to call the attention of our readers to the fact that Lukács's oeuvre is subject both in Hungary and abroad, to analyses that approach this oeuvre from different points of view, while some aspects of his works stimulate heated debates. The editors of the

Preface

The editors of the present collection of essays do not wish to introduce the life and works of György Lukács to the English reading public, for Lukács needs no such introduction. His works are available in various English-language editions—just as in every great language of the world from German to Spanish—his thoughts are analyzed in thousands of essays and in dozens of monograph studies all over the world and in an ever-increasing number. On the centenary of his birth, scholarly conferences were held to commemorate his life work in every part of the world, from Moscow to Berlin, from Hamburg to Paris, and from Madrid to Mexico City. And in the English-speaking countries, in particular, it is striking to learn that Lukács's influence extends even to the United States: the scholarly conferences held in Princeton, in Bloomington, at Rutgers University, and in New York, mark new spots in the world map of the radiation of his ideas.

Although Lukács is widely known all over the world, the international scholarly public knows little about the advanced and many-colored literature dealing with Lukács in the native country of this great Hungarian thinker. There are various reasons for this state of affairs. Although there is no denying the fact that the study of Lukács's oeuvre started relatively late—only in the first half of the seventies—in Hungary, it is also true that this research has steadily gained momentum since then. The other reason is the well-known isolation of the Hungarian language, which in this case represents a significant impediment because only a few writings of Hungarian Lukács scholars are available in translation.

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present collection of essays do not wish to present a unified picture of Lukács studies in Hungary by offering a tendentious selection of essays. On the contrary, they wish to offer as rich and true a picture of Hungarian studies on Lukács as possible, giving room to every author who explains his/her views with appropriate erudition. These volumes do not propagate an 'official Hungarian picture of Lukács', the less so, since such a picture has not existed in Hungarian intellectual life for some time past. Rather, their goal is to call attention to the colorful, many-sided, and pluralistic efforts devoted to studying Lukács in various intellectual workshops of this country.

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György Lukács: A Biography

by

László Sziklai

György—later to become known as Georg—Lukács was born on April 13, 1885 to an upper-middle-class Jewish family. His father, József Lukács, to whom he was very close, was a director of the Hungarian General Credit Bank; his mother, who came from Vienna, was Adele Wertheimer. He made his literary debut—in the form of subjectively written drama reviews—while he was a secondary-school student in a Budapest gymnasium, from which he graduated in 1902. He attended university in Budapest and Berlin, reading first law, government, and economics, later literature and art history, and finally philosophy. In 1906, he obtained his first doctorate in law and government in Kolozsvár (today: Cluj, Romania) and his second, in philosophy, in Budapest.

In 1904, along with Sándor Hevesi, Marcell Benedek, and László Bánóczy, he founded the Thália Society. As a 'liberal theater', the Thália immediately found itself in opposition to academic theatrical life in Hungary and attached itself, by virtue of its choice of plays (by Ibsen, Chekhov, Hauptmann, Hebbel, Gorky, and Strindberg), its style of direction and acting, as well as its practice of addressing some of its performances specifically to workers, to the modern European theater movement (Freie Bühne, Théâtre Libre, and Hudozhestvennyy Teatr).

To be sure, Lukács made his presence felt in the Hungarian intellectual, literary, and cultural life not only through his work in directing, dramaturgy, and translations at the Thália. He had articles and essays published in *Nyugat* and in *Huszadik Század*, and he was in close touch with the Society for the Social Sciences, the Galilei Circle, and The Eight. It was, however, the poetry of Endre Ady—that 'poet of Hungarian revolutionists who lacked a revolution', as he referred to him—that struck chords of kinship with Lukács's own longing for a redeeming revolution and his rejection of gentry Hungary. Ady's poetry expressed for him the true meaning of being Hungarian.

In 1906—7, Lukács completed his monograph, *A modern dráma fejlődésének története* [The history of the development of modern drama], which won a prize offered by the Hungarian Kisfaludy Society. (The original version was rewritten in 1909, published, in Hungarian, in 1911.) This work tried to find an answer to the question of whether there was such a thing as bourgeois drama, how it had come into existence, and what its stylistic attributes were. His method of analysis is sociological, although, in his view, it is not the study of the interrelation between content and economic conditions that constitutes a sociological approach to literature, but the examination of form—and the effect—as determined by world view. The sociology in his book on drama is basically

conceived in the spirit of Georg Simmel (whose pupil Lukács became in 1906) and Max Weber. It was in this spirit that he thought over his readings of Marx, too (he read *Capital* around 1908), at the same time seeking starting points for his history of drama in the 'sociologist' Marx.

The *Soul and Form*, which was to produce a considerable impact in world literature, came out in 1910 in Hungarian, and in 1911 in German. As against the sociological approach evident in his book on drama, these philosophically inspired essays dealing with Novalis, Theodor Storm, and Stefan George show the dominance of the neo-Kantian, mystical, and irrational aspects of Lukács's ideology at the time (the influence of Windelband, Rickert, and Dilthey) and how they provided the philosophical basis for depicting an era in which the soul was unable to find reliable points of reference and had to mould everything to its own image.

Between 1909 and 1918 Lukács was living largely abroad, in Berlin and Florence, and from 1912 on in Heidelberg. In the German university town, he attempted to work out a philosophy of art based on the Kantian way of posing questions ('Works of art exist—how are they possible?'), and wrote the *Heidelberger Philosophie der Kunst* and *Heidelberger Ästhetik* (the part on philosophy of art: 1912—14; the part on aesthetics: 1916—18). The treatise focuses on the 'work' as an immanent whole in itself, and examines the aesthetic relationship between subject and object, between the work and the reality of everyday experience. This study remained, however, in manuscript form, and only in 1975 was it translated into Hungarian.

The wish to plow deeper than leftist bourgeois views, growing sympathy for the labor movement and socialism, and the impact of Sorelian syndicalism and of Rosa Luxemburg's writings were the main features of Lukács's contradictory political and philosophical development during the Heidelberg period and the years of World War I. His social and political views were becoming increasingly radical, and his energetic pacifist rejection of war and pessimistic criticism of capitalist culture were replaced, at the time of the victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia, by determined political opposition to the bourgeois system that he had always hated. Lukács's philosophical orientation was also changing: from Kant he was turning toward Hegel, with Kirkegaard strongly influencing him in his interpretation of Hegel's philosophy. This was the period when Lukács embarked again on an intensive study of Marx—chiefly Marx's early writings. He wanted, however, to integrate the Marxian dialectic with Hegel in a philosophy of history, and approached it ethically on the basis of the Hungarian syndicalist Ervin Szabó's Marx interpretation.

In 1914, Lukács was planning to write a book about Dostoevsky, but completed only the first part, *The Theory of the Novel*. The work, dedicated to E. A. Grabenko, his first wife, was published in 1916 (in Hungarian: 1975). In this 'aesthetic of the novel', the aforementioned philosophical tendencies were already in evidence. Lukács himself described *The Theory of the Novel* as a typical work of the 'intellectual sciences' approach, which uses Hegel's dialectical philosophy of history to analyze such literary forms as the epic, the novel, and the drama. The message is that, in the age of 'absolute sinfulness' (Fichte), existence loses its fullness, and the novel is the artistic form best suited to represent the dissolution of a closed and complete culture.

Between 1912 and 1918, Lukács also spent some time in Budapest. During these intermittent periods, two collections of his works appeared in Hungarian: *Eszttetikai kultúra* [Aesthetic culture] (1913), and *Balázs Béla és akiknek nem kell* [Béla Balázs and those who want none of him] (1918). He was active in various progressive groups,

intellectual movements, and anti-militarist drives, such as the Sunday Circle, the Free School of Intellectual Sciences, and the Society for the Social Sciences.

In December, 1918, Lukács joined the Hungarian Party of Communists. There were a number of reasons behind this decision. The bloodless victory of the Revolution of the Asters and the rapid collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy gave rise in his mind to the utopian illusion that gradual democratization might lead to communism even without force and terror. The moral dilemma of choosing between the dictatorship of the proletariat and 'true democracy' was actually decided for Lukács by the circumstances. Bourgeois democracy revealed itself to be utterly impotent in the face of the plottings of reaction, and only the communist party and the dictatorship of the proletariat provided any realistic hope of a political way out of the impasse. Lukács's messianism, his faith that dictatorship was a necessary though short transition to world revolution, and that violence committed for the sake of communism—though it may be sinful—was of a higher order than whatever was committed for the survival of capitalism and for a new imperialist war, also motivated this decision. Lukács's commitment to a by no means Marxist solution of the 'moral problem of bolshevism' was promoted, apart from his leftist ethical position, by his first serious encounter with Leninism through his study of *State and Revolution*.

Lukács's views at this point are best reflected in the writings included in the volume entitled *Tactics and Ethics* (1919). He took part in party propaganda work, was active in editing in *Internationale* and *Vörös Újság*, and in February, 1919, became a member of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Party of Communists (HPC).

Under the Hungarian Republic of Councils Lukács was people's commissar for education, and later, the political representative of the Fifth Division of the Hungarian Red Army. His work as a cultural politician was marked by a peculiar ambivalence: his practical measures were based on the firm desire to rely on the 'policy of alliance', while his theoretical approach reflected an extraordinary abstract examination of the relationship between the old bourgeois culture and the new communist one, without supposing any transition between the two. Seeking a deeper theoretical justification for the union of the social democratic and communist parties, Lukács distinguished between 'party form' and 'pure proletarian action'.

After the defeat of the Republic of Councils, Lukács went underground in Budapest with Ottó Korvin, and after Korvin's arrest emigrated to Vienna. Between 1919 and 1930 Lukács worked as a leader of the HPC, serving as a member of the central committee between 1919 and 1921, and of the party's secretariat between 1928 and 1930. In 1929 he returned illegally to Budapest to give direct guidance and assistance to the party organizations at home. He headed a party school, worked on the editorial board of *Új Március*, was the Vienna editor of *100%*, and edited *Kommunismus*, which was also published in Vienna. Both *Proletár*, an illegal paper appearing in Budapest, and *Die Rote Fahne*, issued in Vienna, carried articles by Lukács. In 1921 he attended the third Comintern congress, in Moscow.

In the factional struggle that was taking place at the time within the HPC, Lukács stood on the side of Jenő Landler, who represented the correct position in regard to the questions of party organization in Hungary, but, at the same time, he rejected parliamentarism from an ultra-left platform—an action that was criticized by Lenin. Later Lukács himself described his earlier policy as having been strained by the ambivalence of a messianic sectarianism (with regard to the international issues of the movement,

his anticipation of an imminent world revolution) and anti-bureaucratism, that is, the criticism of sectarian practice (with regard to Hungarian party affairs).

During the years of the Vienna emigration, Lukács took a significant step toward Marx and Lenin. *History and Class Consciousness*, a collection of Lukács's writings between 1919 and 1922, was published in 1923 in Berlin, dedicated to his second wife, Gertrúd Bortstieber, which contained, among others, the article entitled "What is Orthodox Marxism?". His work, which, for all its shortcomings, was an important contribution to the ideological maturation of a generation of antifascists and communists, of the leftist intelligentsia of the West, focuses on Marx's alienation theory and his philosophical analysis of the pattern of capitalist commodity production.

Lukács was trying to link the revolutionary content of Hegelian dialectic with Marxian economics, and to contrast it with the vulgar materialistic and mechanical-evolutionalist interpretations of social reality. Lukács ascribed a practical function to the class consciousness of the proletariat, namely, the ability to shape history and reality. The proletariat was the only subject capable of making people aware of the objective dialectical processes of capitalist production, for its class consciousness developing into revolutionary praxis broke through the reifications of the capitalist world. *History and Class Consciousness* ignores the fact that, on the one hand, it is the alienated 'obtuse bourgeois form' itself that creates the possibility for universal domination over natural and human resources (Marx), and, on the other hand, that the overthrow of capitalism cannot wipe out commodity structure overnight. When it first came out, this work was sharply criticized—by, among others, László Rudas and A. M. Deborin—above all on account of its Hegelianism, its rejection of the dialectic of nature, and its criticism of Engels.

In later years, Lukács himself had second thoughts about the book (1926—27, 1930, 1933, 1934, and 1967).

When Lenin died, Lukács wrote a study on 'the Marx of the imperialist period' (Lenin: The Unity of His Thoughts, 1924). Despite the fact that there are some sectarian declarations in the essay, Lukács undeniably presents Lenin as a theoretician and revolutionary wrapped into one, and shows that his political and philosophical contribution marked a new phase in the history of Marxism.

In April, 1928, Lukács was arrested together with Béla Kun, and then, almost a month later, released. In September, 1928, he was given the assignment of working out theses for the second congress of the HPC on the position and prospects of the party. His "Draft Theses on the Hungarian Political and Economic Situation and the Tasks of the HPC" (commonly referred to as the "Blum Theses") were completed and discussed in January, 1929. Relying on Lenin's views, Lukács presented here a correct analysis of the relationship between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants, considering the latter as the strategy to be followed by the party. Nonetheless, the "Blum Theses" is not free of the erroneous sectarian views then generally held by Lukács, the Hungarian party, and the international workers' movement as a whole. Both the HPC and the Comintern rejected the theses, and the criticism prompted Lukács to withdraw them. At the second congress of the HPC, Lukács was not elected to the central committee.

Soon afterward, Lukács was expelled from Austria because of his political activities. In 1930, he went to Moscow, where he joined the staff of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute. Before the end of the year, he was accepted into the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (bolsheviks).

The end of the twenties and the beginning of the thirties marked a change in Lukács's career and philosophical development as well. In 1930 and 1931, he continued his intensive study of the works of Marx and Lenin, turning chiefly toward the philosophical and aesthetic aspects of these classics. At about this time he met M.A. Lifschitz, who was trying to reconstruct Marxian aesthetic, and the two men became friends for life. Lukács himself was working on a complete edition of Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, and Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks*. He made his opinions heard in the Soviet discussions concerning the epochal significance of Lenin's philosophical heritage, and he published a series of articles on recent Soviet belletristic works.

In 1931, already a member of the German Communist Party, Lukács moved to Berlin with the assignment to help repudiate the ultra-left trend that was becoming dominant in the Association of Proletarian Revolutionary Writers, and—as head of the communist faction of the German Writers' Association and vice-president of the Defence Alliance of German Writers—to create a united front of leftist bourgeois and communist writers. Lukács published his articles critical of the methods of documentary literature and of *proletkult* tendencies first in the periodical *Linkskurve*, and then also in other journals. He was an active propagandist, holding lectures and giving courses on the Marxist theory of literature, and teaching at the Marxist Workers' School. In Cologne, Düsseldorf, and Frankfurt, he presented a critical series on the literature of fascism.

After the seizure of power by the fascists, Lukács emigrated to the Soviet Union, arriving in Moscow in March, 1933. He found employment there first at the Institute of Linguistics and Literature of the Communist Academy, and later at the Institute of Philosophy of the Soviet Academy of Sciences (up to 1938, and then again from 1942 to 1945). He became a member of the Soviet Association of Writers at the time of its foundation, in 1934.

The twelve years that he spent in Moscow—interrupted only by evacuation to Tashkent between October, 1941 and June, 1942—marked a most fruitful period of scholarship in Lukács's oeuvre. He published one small and two large collections of essays in book form in Russian: *Literaturnie teorii XIX. veka i marksizm* (1937); *K istorii realizma* (1939); and *Borba gumanizma i varvarstva* (1943). His *Irástudók felelőssége* [The responsibility of intellectuals] came out in Hungarian in 1944 in the Soviet Union. By the end of the thirties Lukács had completed *The Historical Novel* (1936—37; in Hungarian: 1947) and *Goethe and His Age* (1940; in Hungarian: 1946), and started publishing individual chapters of the two big monographs—largely in *Literaturny Kritik* and *Internationale Literatur*. In 1938 he completed his manuscript on "The Young Hegel and the Problems of Capitalist Society" (dedicated to Lifschitz), which he defended as his Ph.D. thesis in December, 1942 (it was published in Hungarian in 1976 as *A fiatal Hegel* [The Young Hegel]). Two book manuscripts, *Wie ist die faschistische Philosophie in Deutschland entstanden?* (1933) and *Wie ist Deutschland zum Zentrum der reaktionären Ideologie geworden?* (1941—42) were published in 1982. These works (as well as a good many of the papers and articles published in Russian-, German-, French-, English-, Czech-, and Hungarian-language journals and periodicals) document the fact that, in these years, Lukács did research on a wide variety of themes, including the decline of classical German philosophy, particularly the Hegelian school; the post-1848 development of bourgeois philosophy and the development of fascist ideology; the history of aesthetics and the theory of literature—classical and nineteenth-century German, English, French, and Russian; the aesthetic views of Marx, Engels, and Lenin; a critique of fascist aesthetic and cultural policy; the art of the great figures of nineteenth- and

twentieth-century German, French, and Russian literature; and the general methodological and theoretical problems of aesthetics and the various kinds and genres of literature.

In the thirties, Lukács's theoretical work, both in philosophy and aesthetics, was rooted in the premise that, in the period of capitalist decay, the bourgeoisie is no longer able to preserve and further develop its own earlier great intellectual and artistic values; it experiences various stages of decline, ultimately leading to irrationalism and the ideological preparation for fascism in the field of philosophy, and to decadence combined with the abandonment of the portrayal of reality in art and literature.

Lukács held that Marxism, which preserved the heritage of classical German philosophy and went beyond it, had to contend not only with the reactionary trends of the imperialist period and with the fascist falsifiers of the great intellectual traditions, but also with the vulgar views of the theoreticians of the Second International and their successors. (After 1935 as a popular-front policy was evolving, this Lukácsian approach became much less rigid.) Socialist realism carried on with the realist traditions of modern bourgeois art, and Lukács was just as averse to bourgeois naturalism as to schematically tendentious didactic work—mere illustrations of party slogans—whether they sprang from leftist avant-garde revolt, or simply from the kind of resignation that lacked the courage to look reality in the face. These views determined his position with regard to the Expressionism debate (1938). Lenin's reflection theory constitutes the basis for Lukács's concepts on realism. In taking a stand against formalism and naturalism (1936), Lukács built his premise on the aesthetic consequences of this Leninist theory, on the concepts of artistic truth, intensive totality, the specific, and typization.

As against the vulgar-sociological interpretation of art put forward in the debates on the novel in 1934—35, Lukács posited an imbalance in the relations of economic and artistic development (Marx). In 1939, after the publication of his volume *K istorii realizma*, Lukács found his work as well as that of the theoreticians and critics on the editorial staff of *Literaturny Kritik* in the cross-fire of arguments, especially in regard to their views on the triumph of realism. The accusation against them was that they denied the role of ideology in the process of artistic creation. This politically colored attack was in essence a reply to Lukács's article concerning the bureaucratic features often evident in the Soviet literature of the period.

Lukács fought for a popular front not only in his own writings, but also in his capacity as one of the members of the editorial board of the German-language *Internationale Literatur* and the Hungarian *Új Hang*. From April, 1941 on, he was again accepted into the Hungarian party. On June 29, 1941 he was taken into custody, for reasons that have remained unknown to this day, only to be released on August 26.

Lukács returned to Hungary in August, 1945. *Irodalom és demokrácia* [Literature and democracy] (1947), and *Új magyar kultúráért* [For a new Hungarian culture] (1948), the volumes that bring together his articles from this period, suggest that, at that time, his oeuvre was oriented mainly toward literary policy and criticism. It is through his publicistic writings that he struggled for the transformation of Hungarian society, for the democratization of culture, and for winning over the intelligentsia (especially in the debate on the crisis of Hungarian democracy and in the discussion in *Új Hold*) and took part directly in political and literary life (the articles appearing in *Szabad Nép*, *Új Szó*, *Valóság*, *Forum*, *Társadalmi Szemle*, *Csillag*, and *Fiatal Magyarország*). The appearance of some of the works that he had written in the Soviet Union in Hungarian edition (*Balzac, Stendhal, Zola*, 1945; *Nagy orosz realisták* [Great Russian realists], 1946; *Goethe and his Age*, 1946; *The Historical Novel*, 1947; and *Essays über Rea-*

lismus, 1948) played an important role in bringing home Marxist philosophy, aesthetic, and literary theory to Hungarian readers. Lukács's scholarly activity in this period was a direct continuation of the work that he had started in the thirties. He wrote the history of German literature from the Enlightenment until World War II (*Skizze einer Geschichte der neueren deutschen Literatur*, 1946), made a significant contribution to the assessment of Thomas Mann (*Essays on Thomas Mann*, 1948) and added his polemic against Existentialism to his critique of the bourgeois philosophy of the age of imperialism (*A polgári filozófia válsága* [The crisis of bourgeois philosophy], 1947).

In November, 1945, Lukács was appointed university professor at the Department of Aesthetics and Cultural Philosophy of the University of Budapest, and in 1950, he was given a department of his own to head. His lectures and seminars presented classical German philosophy and aesthetic (Kant and Hegel) and the history of irrationalism from Nietzsche through national socialism, and analyzed the distinctive features of the historical novel and drama. From 1954 on, he lectured on the specific as an aesthetic category.

Lukács filled important state and social functions in post-liberation Hungary. In April, 1945 he was a member of the National Assembly, and from 1949 to 1956 a member of Parliament. In 1948 he became a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and between 1949 and 1958, he was a member of the Presidium of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He was also active in the World Peace Council (1949–57). Lukács was awarded Hungary's prestigious Kossuth Prize twice—in 1948 and 1955.

Irodalom és demokrácia came out in its second—unaltered—edition in 1948, and this collection of articles, summarizing Lukács's theory on realism, socialist realism, and partisanship, soon became the object of dogmatic attacks. His opponents (László Rudas, József Révai, and Márton Horváth) not only argued against his statement that 'the poet of the party is never a commander or an enlisted man, but always a partisan' (1945), but also objected to his entire concept, which they considered the expression of a 'rightist trend' and, therefore, politically wrong, even extending their criticism to Lukács's views of the twenties and thirties.

Lukács exercised self-criticism, chiefly for his failure to have noted that, after the social change that occurred in 1948, his views—which may have been correct at the time of the liberation—caused confusion, and for his error in thinking that the class struggle for socialism would develop more slowly than it did. The first congress of the Hungarian writers in 1951 reiterated the criticism that Lukács did not devote sufficient attention to Soviet literature. As a matter of fact, several of his studies between 1949 and 1951 analyzed the works of Makarenko, Sholokhov, Fadeev, Bek, Kazakevich, and Virta. He included these writings in the third edition (1952) of *Nagy orosz realisták: szocialista realizmus* [Great Russian realists: socialist realism].

The Destruction of Reason was completed at the end of 1951 and published in 1954. The central statement of the work was the same as that of the book written in 1941–42, that is: "The road covered by Germany in the field of philosophy. In other words, we intend to show how this realistic path is represented in philosophy and how philosophical formulations have helped [...] to speed up the advance along this road." Here, however, Lukács extended the straight line traveled by irrationalism from Schelling, Schopenhauer, and Kierkegaard through Nietzsche to nazi racism, so as to include the various trends of post-war American, British, and German philosophy that he regarded as continuations of fascist ideology. *The Destruction of Reason* is not only the philosophical summary of Lukács's antifascist battles—a summary, some of whose theses have but a

single cutting edge always pointed in one direction—but is, at the same time, an ideological account of the period already defined by the cold war and the partition of Germany.

From October 27 to November 3, 1956, Lukács was Minister of Culture in the Imre Nagy Government. He did not agree, however, with the decision of that government to withdraw Hungary from the Warsaw Treaty Organization. At the meeting of the Provisional Executive Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP), he and Zoltán Szántó voted against the withdrawal. Nonetheless, his registration for the newly formed Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party was not accepted, and the restoration of his party membership took place only in 1967.

Already in the first half of the fifties, Lukács entertained the plan of writing a monograph on the problems with the aesthetic reflection of reality. As the first step in the realization of his plan, he published *Über die Besonderheit als Kategorie der Ästhetik* (1957), in which he probed into the distinctions between scientific and artistic representation. Both ways of 'reflection' mirror the same reality, according to Lukács, and the fact that these two different categories exist can best be explained through the concept of specificity. *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* (in Hungarian: 1965), the first part of his aesthetic, in which he puts forward a dialectical materialist analysis and systematization of the disanthropomorphizing and anthropocentric forms of reflection—in fact, the relationship between everyday reality and art—was completed in 1962, in a form significantly different from and larger than the version that he had originally had in mind. It turned into a powerful and highly effective experiment in the application of Marxist-Leninist philosophy to the field of aesthetics, and was at the same time Lukács's first summary of his own Marxist development, written with the claim for completeness ('I started to write my real life work at the age of 70', he has often been quoted as saying).

In 1962, he started to work on a new synthesis, and although he at first intended to lay the foundations of a Marxist ethic, he soon expanded it into a work on social being in *The Ontology of Social Being* (published posthumously in 1976). The historical chapters treat neo-Positivism, Existentialism, and the ontological theories of Nicolai Hartmann, Hegel, and Marx, whereas those parts of the work that put forward the ontology itself in a systematic manner (for instance the summarizing 'prolegomena') deal with the characteristics of work, artistic reproduction, ideology, and of alienation. This pioneering contribution to the reconstruction of the principles of Marxist ontology is new in terms of form and content. Still, the intentions are the same as in *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, as he himself said, 'the aim is to re-establish the links with the great traditions of Marxism'.

Lukács did not live to see his *Ontology* in print. He died on June 4, 1971.

(Translated by Iván Sella)

On the Ideological History of the Hungarian Fin-de-Siècle: Ady and Lukács¹

by

Kristóf Nyíri

The year 1906 and those following it constitute a period of outstanding importance for the history of Hungarian philosophy, for this is the period of György Lukács's appearance. Lukács started writing his art-sociological and historico-philosophical work on the modern drama—*A modern dráma fejlődésének története* [The history of the development of modern drama]—in the autumn of 1906, and finished it in 1910. The chapters of his famous volume of essays, *Soul and Form* (1910), were written between 1907 and 1909. The close temporal subsequence of Endre Ady's rising poetic career—his *New Verses* was published in 1906—and of Lukács's philosophical debut is obviously striking and by no means accidental. For, on the one hand, the poetry of Ady and the philosophy of Lukács expressed, albeit in different ways, the same political contradictions and historical dilemmas lurking behind the former, namely: the paradoxes of belated bourgeois development in a state lacking national independence, on whose territory significant national minorities lived; the long-lasting political crisis that broke out in 1905; and, connected to all these problems, a kind of disintegration of the Hungarian national consciousness. On the other hand, however, it was only by the aid of Ady that the young Lukács became sensitive to the problems of the specifically Hungarian destiny. As he said in an interview, published in 1967:

Ady's *New Verses* really changed me. Roughly speaking, that was the first Hungarian literary work that allowed me to find my way home, the first that I could identify with [...] At that time, I must admit, I felt no inner relationship with classical Hungarian literature, having been influenced only by world literature, primarily by German, Scandinavian, and Russian literature, and also by German philosophy. German philosophy influenced me throughout my life, and the moving experience that Ady afforded me did not essentially change this, did not put an end to it, did not take me back to Hungary. One could say that, at that time, Ady's poems meant Hungary to me.²

Certainly, *New Verses* had its effect on many contemporaries, including Lukács, thanks to its image of the 'Hungarian Fallow', to the poetic description of the sum of experiences united in this picture.³ But it is no less certain that the dominant element of this sum of experiences was provided by Ady's political and social experiences in the period beginning with the spring of 1905. Hungarian national sentiment had become ever more diluted, a process that had begun with the compromise of 1867 and reached a climax in 1906, when the parties of the so-called national coalition came to power, during the obstruction struggles after 1903, and especially in the time when the coalition

began its governmental activities. This process was accompanied by ever more resounding nationalistic slogans. The decline of national consciousness was at the time noticed only by an insignificant minority, but the members of this minority were all the more painfully aroused by the questions: what it meant to be a Hungarian under the given circumstances? What could constitute the real content of a genuine, non-illusory Hungarian national consciousness, the genuine essence of the belief in national coherence and community of destiny?

Ady, returning from Paris to Budapest in early January, 1905, at the time of the electional triumph of the coalition, made these questions the central theme of his poetry; or, to put it more precisely, his poetry, beginning with the *New Verses*, was made fundamental by these questions. In November of 1907, summing up the activity of the coalition, he complained that 'any time the Hungarian people made a move, not only was its blood sucked [...] but even its belief was exterminated.' And, for him, the most recent history of the etiolation of the national idea began with the end of the 1860s, that is, with the appearance of the policy of an opposition whose only activity consisted in the mouthing of irresponsible and empty nationalist slogans.

For, it is only since the sixties that material and ethical corruption is so terrifying and multifarious. What other ideals, European ideas governed this country! Or think of the time before that of the Hungary of the forties. How much closer Hungary had been to the progressive, well-to-do, and educated West in the forties and in the sixties [...] Since then, only feudalism, anti-progressivism, and anti-popularism have increased, but the country has perished.⁴

Ady refers to bourgeois society and to Hungary without bourgeois civilization by means of the terms 'West' and 'East' as their respective symbols. He locates the problem of the Hungarian destiny in the fact that, although the country had set out on the road toward bourgeois society and bourgeois civilization, it was unable to tread a straight path, since the 'culture-creating centuries had fallen out' of its history. According to Ady, Hungarian society was characterized by seemingly irreconcilable contradictions: an isolationist nationalism, a bigoted religiousness, and a feudalistic system of values on the one hand, and an economy turning speedily into a capitalistic one, coupled with a superficial adaptation of the bourgeois way of life and culture on the other. As a result, Hungarian society no longer belonged either to the East or West: "it floats, tragically struggling between half barbarianism and ultra-civilization."⁵ It was as unable to move consistently closer toward the West—"the great swing of the Hungarian society toward the West was but a pendular kind of movement,"⁶ he wrote in 1905—as it was unable to realize a kind of synthesis of the two ways of life and systems of values. The traditional belief in the historical mission of the Hungarians as a people and state serving as a bridge between East and West was, for Ady, a pitiful illusion. We were not a bridge, but rather, a ferry: "Ferry Country, Ferry Country, Ferry Country: even in its bravest dreams it roamed between two shores: from East to the West, but more willingly in the opposite direction."⁷

And one of the most important secrets to the understanding of Ady's poetry, and thus of its influence, lies in the poet's identification of his fate with that of Hungary. In fact, the best commentators on Ady's oeuvre have always centered their analyses about this identificational relationship. Lajos Fülep, as early as March 1906, immediately following the publication of the *New Verses*, wrote that "having no repose, neither here nor there," roving "between East and West," "an echo of thousand years" is mingled in Ady's soul with "today's love, today's pleasures, today's sufferings."⁸ Pál Kéri, in the 1909 Ady

issue of *Nyugat*, observed that 'in each of his poems, his lines and his refrains', Ady expressed 'social turbulences, ambitions and disappointments, struggles and agitations', and he recognized in Ady's spiritual disharmonies, in his disease, the illness of Hungarian society. As he wrote:

The Hungary of today, with its terrible social contradictions, with its strata divided by chasms, with its classes separated by centuries, with its all desperate kinds of misery and deterioration [...] with its border position between fevery Western capitalism, driving at a dizzy speed, and the East, striving to adapt itself to the great capitalist world order by a general, troublesome, epileptic revolution that is perhaps centenarian—this disordered, hysterical, ill country and age cannot find a more expressive and suggestive poet than Endre Ady.⁹

Sándor Makkai, in a book published in 1927, wrote that Ady identified the Hungarian fate with his own and noted, in the style of his age, that "*he experienced in his own soul and bemoaned as his own tragedy*" the destiny of the Hungarian nation. "Amongst our poets," Makkai wrote, "it was Ady's historical mission to experience and bemoan the tragedy of his nation, which, being between East and West, neither Eastern nor Western, remained half-a-man, half-a-nation."¹⁰ Finally, it is worth noting that foreign scholars, too, have acknowledged the centrality of this problematic. As the American historian Lee Congdon most recently affirmed, Ady, in his poetry, "managed to identify himself completely with the historical experiences of Hungary".¹¹

The fact that Ady regarded his own fate as an impression of the Hungarian fate, regarded his own personality as a reflection of the characteristic paradoxes of Hungarian history, of the characteristic tensions and contradictions of Hungarian society, was, above all, determined by his origins and education. Erzsébet Vezér writes of Ady's birthplace:

To ignore the life of this miserable little village behind the beyond is to fail ever to understand how Ady could [...] take notice of such depths, the roots of the problems of Hungarian fate, and how he could raise precisely the most painful questions to the sunlight of the intellect, from a depth where so many good wills had tragically sunk; it is to fail ever to understand [...] how Érdmindszent could be for Ady the dear mother earth, lending one strength, and, at the same time, the sad Hungarian Fallow, exhausting one's strength.¹²

Ady's birthplace is a borderline, in-between province. "As to geography," he wrote in his famous autobiography of 1909, "I came from the Szilágyság, from the old Partium, that is, neither from Transylvania, nor from Hungary. As to family, again, neither from above, nor from beneath. I came from a struggling, noble, gentry family, which, for a millenium, barely managed to survive."¹³ As has been emphasized, especially by Antal Szerb, the obvious common feature of the various 'pre-personality, historical' forces forming Ady was that each of them contained 'a kind of bridge', 'something transitional'. Ady, writes Szerb, inherited the traditions of the Szilágyság province, a territory that had lain between the 'Turkish and Hungarian, Transylvanian—Hungarian, and Hungarian—Hungarian' worlds for centuries.

He was the inheritor of the spirit which resulted from the fact that Eastern Hungary was 'closer' to Europe—a fact due to political, educational, and religious traditions prevailing since the time of the Reformation; and, at the same time, he was the inheritor of the spirit resulting from the fact that Eastern Hungary was closer to the East...¹⁴

The religious education of Ady's childhood and his youth was, again, of an intermediate sort. In his autobiography mentioned above he writes:

On the distaff side, all my ancestors are clergymen, student-like and poet-like people, Calvinists since the time of Protestantism [...] Certainly, I would be a man of different soul had I not been made to change the Calvinists school for the Catholic one, and if, after the Catholic monastic school, the opposite world of the Reformed college of Zilah had not fallen upon me.¹⁵

Ady presented himself as a representative of the new, bourgeois ideas, as opposed to the patriarchal, feudal Hungarian world, often symbolized by motives of the age of the Hungarian conquest, although he did not experience his opposition as a triumphant one, but rather as a painful estrangement. Péter Hanák, in a recent article, emphasized that Ady's generation had to represent bourgeois, liberal ideals in an age when "the salvation of liberal democracy and the supremacy of rational mind were no longer believed in."¹⁶ "Does science progress?" Ady asked in April of 1905. "The disease progresses with it. Does liberty grow? The feeling of suppression will be the more painful and general."¹⁷ Hence, it results from this point of view that the meaning of the pair of symbols East—West sometimes turns into its own opposite: now the tragedy of Hungarian fate is not that our history parted company with Western European history but, rather, that far earlier, this nation of Asian origin had come to the West. 'East', then, means here the contemplative peace, a subtlety, a faculty once possessed and still preserved in the poet, which, in the encounter of the Hungarians with the West became coarsened and turned into imbecility.

Ady did not strive to resolve the paradoxes of choosing between East and West in a conceptual, philosophical form. To be sure, besides his poetry he discussed these paradoxes in his prose works, too; namely, the motif of the tragical hesitation between East and West appeared in an emphasized form in his articles as early as 1905—6. Yet, he merely demonstrated and expounded on the dilemma as a conceptual one—making no attempt at its conceptual resolution. It is perhaps legitimate to call Ady a 'philosophical poet', as Antal Szerb has done, if this term is understood to designate the fact that the social and human paradoxes underlying and expressed in his poems were, or could have been, treated philosophically elsewhere and another time, as the characteristic form of expression of paradoxes such as these is often precisely the field of philosophy. But to assert the existence of an explicit 'philosophy' or 'philosophical task' in Ady's poems is to invite a misunderstanding with grave consequences. Babits must have been right when he wrote that the so-called 'metaphysics' of Ady has nothing to do with the theorems of the metaphysicians, as the former is basically a symbolistic feeling toward the world (*Weltgefühl*). Ady wanted to be a mouthpiece of the soul of the 'Hungarian of Europe' (or, the 'European Hungarian'), but, in place of an analytical and conceptual definition, he portrayed the formative experience of the Hungarian of Europe.¹⁸ Let me quote Béla Balázs, writing in the special Ady issue of *Nyugat* (1909):

For what cannot be explained has to be depicted. Rhythm and rhyme as a frame will hold and press together the words and images that logic could not connect, and, holding them close to each other, there begins a magnetic flow of their secret interrelations [...] This is the sense of the poem; this is its purpose; and somehow its essence, its criterion is illogicalness.—It is an expression of the great and immense world within us, which is already an experience, feeling, life, but is not yet condensed into thought.¹⁹

It was first and foremost Ady's mastery of a new type of poetic language that enabled him to create and mediate a new Hungarian consciousness on the level of the lyrical experience. The feeling that Ady's symbolism, the world of his images, of his fantasy, is fundamentally Hungarian, is connected with the specific features of his language. Mihály Babits, in his 1920 essay on Ady, wrote that fantasy is nothing else but the

poetic language.²⁰ When Antal Szerb chose to believe that "Ady has drawn from the collective subconscious of the Hungarian people, and made explicit those myths that have worldlessly haunted the non-existent Hungarian mythology for a millenium,"²¹ he was a victim of the false psychology of his age. For it was not from any sort of a collective subconscious that Ady had drawn his mythology, but rather, the historical strata of the Hungarian language. Both the spirit and the images of Ady's and István Széchenyi's writings have been found to resemble each other. "I desired to be a poet-Széchenyi," goes the often-cited line of Ady's *Margita Wants to Live*. And Gyula Szekfű has drawn attention to the kinship of Ady's 'Hungarian Fallow' and Széchenyi's 'large waste', or to the compound expressions of Széchenyi such as 'loathly self[ish]-ness and dwarf lowness'.²² But these similarities, too, can be explained by the similarity of Ady's and Széchenyi's attempts at mobilizing—in harmony with, and guided by, their self-avowed goals of national preservation—the more ancient elements of the Hungarian language, without recourse to metaphysical 'explanations'. Széchenyi's enterprise was at once more adventuresome and less successful than Ady's. Pál Kéri, in his above-cited 1909 article on Ady, wrote that

the trim, rhythmical, almost devout form of speech and writing, by means of which Protestants and especially the Protestant clergymen almost singlehandedly watch over and foster this wasted and outraged Hungarian language, appears and flourishes abundantly in the entirely peculiar, new, charming, and still so anciently rooted, so true Hungarian language of Endre Ady.²³

As Makkai formulated it, Ady's language had absorbed

the language and soul of the Bible, of [Péter] Pázmány, of the *Kurucs*, of [Mihály] Csokonai [Vitéz], that is, Hungarian linguistic and spiritual colors and powers that represent the most Hungarian and the most rooted traditions, but which had dropped out of the general Hungarian consciousness.²⁴

As to the latter phenomenon, Sándor Karácsony (1938) went as far as to locate the cause of the 'Ady dispute' in the fact that "at the time when Ady appeared, the upper ten thousand of Hungarian intellectuals no longer understood Hungarian."²⁵ But those who understood it or those who let themselves be guided by Ady were given an experience of a new national consciousness by the 'Ady language', which preserved the decisive historical experiences of the Hungarian nation, and which alloyed this with the feelings of the age.²⁶

Now the young Lukács aimed at expressing in a thoughtful, conceptual, and philosophical form what Ady had expressed in terms of rhyme, rhythm, image, and feeling. Lukács, too, sensed and experienced the paradoxical position of the Hungarian society between East and West. No doubt, he belonged to that stratum of the Jewish intelligentsia which (to quote György Litván), "not only assimilated to the nation superficially, in its language, way of life, and dress, but could deeply identify itself with the fate and culture of the nation."²⁷ At the same time, it is evident that, for Lukács, the world of the Hungarian society of the peasants and of the provinces could not have been experienced as directly as it had been for Ady. Lukács, however, perceived more strongly than did Ady the growing emptiness of the bourgeois way of life, since he experienced that more directly. One could say that, for the young Lukács, not only the East, the patriarchal Hungary, was more alien, more strange than it was for Ady; for him the West, too, bourgeois society—was more alien than it was for Ady.

The fundamental experience expressed in Ady's poetry is very accurately interpreted by Lukács in his first article on Ady dating from 1908. He wrote that it was Ady who first found words for the sentiments of the Hungarian man looking toward the West:

It was in him that the completely special pains and feelings of the Hungarian man of culture, unknown to and barely comprehensible for strangers, have, for the first time, been intoned; the feelings that are present in every Hungarian who lives, by his soul, in the West—until he lives here, until he is bound to live here.²⁸

Ady, Lukács emphasized, realized not only the Hungarian yearning after the West, but also the vanity of this yearning:

the tragedy of the Hungarian man of culture is at this point—namely, that he is Hungarian, he is that much and what is possible today in Hungary, and it is but a pious self-deceit that we, fortnight visitors in Paris, feel like Parisians. Thus, in the words and rhythms of Endre Ady a concrete reality is given to Hungarian life and to the Hungarian man's real Hungarian feelings, begotten only by his situation.²⁹

The subtle remark 'begotten only by his situation' must refer to Lukács's conviction that the so-called 'Hungarian national character' is not a racial specificity, but, rather, a socio-psychological reflection and product of Hungarian history. It is, no doubt, a modern and forward-looking conception, but, nevertheless, perhaps represented by Lukács in a one-sided way, inasmuch as he did not take into account the relative constancy of the national character, the formative power of the national traditions and, especially, of the bequeathed language.

This one-sidedness is especially apparent in his second article on Ady, written in 1909. Although Lukács clearly sensed the 'new Hungarian mythology' springing into existence in Ady's poems, he immediately identified—bafflingly, but certainly obeying some deep motives—myth with mysticism. Thus, he presents Ady not as a hero of the newly-found and appropriated ancient forms, creating a new national consciousness, but as a mystic of today, searching hopelessly for any constancy, certainty, and yearning in vain after the 'formedness' of life and thought. And the "mystic of today", Lukács wrote,

cannot find any forms anywhere, he himself must create all these out of himself: the God and the devil, the earth and the other world, the Savior and the Antichrist, the saints and the damned; he himself has to write the Bible and all the things for the sake of which he would then read it.³⁰

An age that has lost its direction, its form—and the soul that has to create form for itself out of nothing: these are, in fact, no longer the fundamental motifs of Ady's poetry, but rather those of Lukács's philosophy of that age, those of the essays in the *Soul and Form*. The best summary of these motifs was provided by Margarete Susman in a review of the 1911 German edition of the volume of essays. "The desperate tragedy of the modern soul," she wrote, "that it strives for an aim, the contents of which are lost for it, tacitly underlies this book";³¹ and the definitive trait attributed to the Austrian Rudolf Kassner by an essay of Lukács's, namely, "the longing for certainty, for measure, and dogma"³² is definitive for the world of the *Soul and Form* as well. These essays are written from the perspective of the "Platonist", or, which is the same, from that of the "critic"; which is, again, the same as that of the "mystic".³³ The notion of the 'critic' is defined by Lukács in opposition to the notion of the 'poet', the difference being that "poetry receives its profile and its form from destiny, and form in poetry appears always only as destiny; but in the works of the essayist form becomes destiny, it is the destiny-creating principle".³⁴ In other words, it is the poet to whom it is granted, living a preformed life, accomplishing a predetermined fate, to find the essential, the necessity in his life and fate; the critic, on the other hand, is a citizen in a world without any form, any direction and support, where everything is intricately woven into everything

else; and his ambition is aimed at giving, somehow, in any way, a form to his fate. "A real solution can only come from form. In form alone [...] does every antithesis, every trend, become music and necessity."³⁵ But the essays, at least those included in the Hungarian edition, written between 1907 and 1909, suggest that 'formedness' is not possible in life—only in art and philosophy—as Ferenc L. Lendvai summarizes it in one of his papers. The world without form was not, of course, conceived by Lukács as a mere abstract possibility. He saw the formlessness come true around him in Budapest; and he saw it even more clearly in the city of which Budapest was but a remote suburb: in Vienna. "The world of the Viennese aesthetes",³⁶ the Viennese impressionists' conception of art and life, appears in the pages of the *Soul and Form* as a world on which the author wages war, but from which he cannot break away.

Everything whirls, everything is possible and nothing is certain, everything flows into everything else—dream and life, wish and reality, fear and truth, the lying denial of pain and the courageous confrontation of sadness. What is left? What is sure in this life of ours? Where is the place, however bleak and bare, however remote from all beauty and richness, where a man may strike solid roots? Where is there anything that does not trickle away like sand between one's fingers just when one would wish to lift that thing out of the formless mass of life and hold it fast, if only for a brief moment? Where is the dividing line between dream and reality, the 'I' and the world, deep meaning and fleeting impression?³⁷

Ady's problem, namely, to find an alternative to the narrow-minded unambiguities of non-bourgeois Hungary and to the rationalism of Western society (a kind of rationalism becoming shoreless) is reformulated by Lukács, as we have just seen, in terms of the notions of German, and especially Austrian, philosophy, in an abstract form. In fact, he formulated it in such an abstract form that his contemporaries failed to realize the Hungarian roots of his essays. That was the main reason why his essays enjoyed a far greater success and had a far greater influence in German-speaking territories than they did in Hungary. The reasons are, however, partly of a linguistic kind. The essays of the *Soul and Form* were composed in a strikingly bad Hungarian, so much so that they almost strike one as rough translations of German texts, which they were not. But the problem cannot, of course, be reduced to a merely stylistical one. Babits wrote a review on Lukács's essays for the *Nyugat* in 1910, and complained about their style. He found it overly subtle, vague, abstract, and German; furthermore, however, he judged the erudition behind the essays to be a German, or rather, a Viennese one. The abstract search for forms as a renouncement of shaping social reality could be a proper mode of behavior of the Viennese bourgeoisie, doomed to be impotent in the midst of national schizophrenia and the anarchy of nationalities, but could not constitute a proper ideology for the Hungarian intelligentsia looking for a new national community. It is not so much because of the strangeness of its style, but rather because of the overly abstract nature of the volume—overly abstract relative to the concrete Hungarian social and political problems of the age—that the chapter of the history of philosophy in Hungary provided by the *Soul and Form* could not become a real chapter of the history of Hungarian philosophy.³⁸

The situation is different in the case of Lukács's book on drama. *A modern dráma fejlődésének története* is a classic, the starting point of that Hungarian sociology of culture based on a historico-philosophical perspective. The development advanced by it was, of course, ultimately of a sociological and not of a philosophical kind. As Lukács wrote in 1969, recalling his early period:

The inner contradictions that characterized my thought were expressed in the method of my work by the formation of two completely different authorial relations toward reality. I, on the one hand, attempted to grasp the essence of literary phenomena by means of scientific investigations and definition of the mainstreams of the social development, but, on the other hand, I tried to approach the philosophical problems emerging here by means of conceptual and literary methods [...] My literary problem posing of that time is characterized by these two contradicting tendencies. The first was expressed in *The History [of the Development] of Modern Drama [...]* and the second in my volume entitled *Soul and Form*.³⁹

The soul's search for forms, which, in his essays, Lukács experiences from within and describes in a series of conceptual paradoxes, is presented in the book on drama from outside, from the point of view of the sociologist who describes the social processes and structures scientifically and who looks for correspondences between social and intellectual structures. The book on drama aims not at expressing or reflecting, but at analyzing the crisis of bourgeois thought. In this respect, it is not only a successor of the sociological initiatives of the Hungarian fin-de-siècle, also highly esteemed by Ady, but it is related to certain initiatives of the Hungarian sociology of the 19th century as well, namely, to the studies of József Eötvös and Zsigmond Kemény, and to the essays of Imre Madách, since this (one could say, nobiliary) view of society had shown a strong inclination toward an historical (and, inasmuch as it had examined bourgeois formations of ideas, an unmasking, ideology-critical and sociological) approach.

The fact that the spirit of the book on drama is so different from that of the volume of essays is interestingly demonstrated by its style. In contrast with the style of the essays, that of *A modern dráma fejlődésének története* is, while not beautiful, at least as linguistically correct as that of an average scientific treatise of the day. And that this difference in language is really a difference of spirit, of outlook, and not, or not primarily, a consequence of the specific stylistic ambitions of the essayist Lukács, can be clearly seen from the fact that the remarkable changes of style can sometimes be found within the book on drama, as a concomitant feature of the occasional theoretical hesitations. For instance, treating the possibilities and specific qualities of the modern, bourgeois drama, Lukács's language is relatively devoid of the characteristic Germanisms of the language of his essays (abstract deverbal nouns, often contracted from more words, participles used as predicates, demonstrative pronouns as subjectst, etc.).⁴⁰ But the style changes when, for example, Lukács points out that the lack of the 'confidant(e)s' on the stage is in fact a symbol of a general feature of the bourgeois way of life, namely, that people are no longer able to reveal their feelings to each other, that they do not and cannot understand each other any more, that the word has become empty. Here Lukács loses his sociologizing distance, he is not able to contemplate this phenomenon from outside; he feels that, in a real sense, the essence has become inexpressible, and the place of speech should be relinquished for the sake of silence. And he formulates his discovery, joining the mainstream of Austrian philosophy, in undoubtedly Germanic linguistic structures. Or, to remain with the phenomenon of silence, one could quote the point in the book on drama where Lukács gives an account of the Austrian writer Hofmannsthal's so-called "Chandos letter": how much its style resembles that of the essays!

This opposition between science and philosophy in the works of the young Lukács, which can also be grasped in terms of grammar, implies at the same time an opposition between revolutionary action and seemingly radical 'exodus'; the latter opposition is excellently characterized by the mature Lukács. The investigation of Lukács's relation to Ady, and of their dual influence upon Hungarian history, demonstrates again that, in

the Hungary of the turn of the century, it was not mystic-messianistic philosophy, but the sociology of culture as ideological criticism and as a science revealing reality, in which revolutionary content inhered. Lukács, we could say, is in fact a successor of Ady's: not when he interprets Ady philosophically, but rather, when, drawing his lesson from the connection between Ady's poetry and reality, he attempts to examine reality itself.

(Translated by C. György Kálmán)

Notes

¹ The relation of Ady and Lukács is minutely treated in István Hermann's book: *Die Gedankenwelt von Georg Lukács*, übers. von E. Kiss (Budapest: 1978). See especially pp. 30–45.

² *Emlékezések*, ed. by E. Vezér, Irodalmi Múzeum 1. (Budapest: 1967), p. 21. In this interview, Lukács gives an account of his personal encounter with Ady. "I met him once in my life, but I do not remember exactly when. It must have been after the autumn of 1908 because it was at that time that my review on Holnap appeared, in which I first wrote about Ady, and because later I spent a lot of time abroad. Thus, though I dare not say any more specific date, I would say I met Ady in the winter or spring of 1909. It was arranged by a close friend of mine, Dezső Czigány, a painter, who had painted Ady's portrait, and who had been on very good terms with him. It was Czigány who took me along to the Three Ravens and I can say we had quite a pointless time together. It was a night when the Three Ravens was full of Ady's gentry friends and I was absolutely unable to join in the conversation." *Ibid.*, p. 23.

³ The contemporary reception and influence of the image of the 'Hungarian Fallow' is explored in details in István Király's monograph *Ady Endre* [Endre Ady] (Budapest: 1972), Vol. I, p. 144 ff. The thesis that the decisive turn of Ady's career was the political experience of 1905 is a central principle of István Király's book. Ady's position in the struggles of 1905–06 is illuminated by György Litván, when he refers to the poet as one of the best ones whose "careers show how difficult it was for a Hungarian intellectual, especially for those of noble or *honoratior* origin, to join those streams revaluating the national past and challenging the whole present". For "the cruel pressure of the choice temporarily caused trouble in the orientation of even some of the best representatives of the intelligentsia and artistic life striving for the new. It is not accidental that the well-known correspondence of Babits and Kosztolányi on Ady dates precisely from this time, April of 1906. The young Bartók, too, put on Hungarian clothes and was enthusiastic for the 'national claims' in these years." György Litván: *Magyar gondolat—szabad gondolat* [Hungarian Thought—Free Thought] (Budapest: 1978), p. 46 f.

⁴ Endre Ady: "Temető az ország" [The country is a cemetery] in his *Publicisztikai írások* [Publicistic Writings] (Budapest: 1977), Vol. II, p. 617.

⁵ Endre Ady: "Olimpiától az 'Olimpiáig'" [From Olympia to the 'Olympia'] *ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 608.

⁶ Endre Ady: "Bródy Sándor tragédiája" [The tragedy of Sándor Bródy], *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 150.

⁷ Endre Ady: "Ismeretlen Korvin-kódex margójára" [Onto the margin of an unknown Corvinus manuscript], *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 215. This part of the writing was published in October, 1905.

⁸ See Lajos Fülep: "Ady Endre", in his *A művészet forradalmától a nagy forradalomig* [From the Revolution of Art to the Great Revolution] (Budapest: 1974), Vol. 2, p. 144 ff.

⁹ Pál Kéri: "Ady Endre szociális gyökerei" [The social roots of Endre Ady] *Nyugat* (1909) No. 10–11, pp. 525–6.

¹⁰ Sándor Makkai: *Magyar fa sorsa* [The Destiny of a Hungarian Tree] (Budapest: 1927), p. 13; cf. also p. 21.

¹¹ See Lee Congdon: "Endre Ady's Summons to National Regeneration in Hungary 1900–1919", *Slavic Review* (1974) No. 2, pp. 305, 307.

¹² Erzsébet Vezér: *Ady Endre élete és pályája* [The Life and Work of Endre Ady] (Budapest: 1977), p. 15.

¹³ Ady: *Publicisztikai írások*, Vol. III, p. 193.

¹⁴ Antal Szerb: *Magyar irodalomtörténet* [The History of Hungarian Literature] (Budapest: 1935), p. 449 f.

¹⁵ Ady: *Publicisztikai írások*, Vol. III, p. 193.

¹⁶ Péter Hanák: "A megcsenvedett közéletiség: Két magyar sors a korfordulón" [Atoning for public life: Two Hungarian fates at the turning point of an age], *Élet és Irodalom* (September 24, 1977).

¹⁷ Endre Ady: "Költözik a Morgue" [The Morgue is moving], in his *Publicisztikai írások*, Vol. II, p. 115.

¹⁸ See Mihály Babits: "Tanulmány Adyról" [A study on Ady], in his *Gondolat és írás* [Thought and Writing]

(Budapest: 1922), p. 275. Sándor Sík shares Babits's position: the pantheism of Ady, he writes, "is not a conceptual, philosophical, but a sensual, instinctual pantheism"; and "to look for philosophy by any means in Ady's poetry, done again and again, is a naive thing and leads to almost comic results". See his *Gárdonyi, Ady, Prohászka: Lélek és forma a századforuló irodalmában* [Gárdonyi, Ady, Prohászka: Soul and Form in the Literature of the Turn of the Century] (Budapest: 1928), p. 239. Ady introduces himself as a "mouthpiece of the soul of the Hungarian of Europe" in a preliminary report on his *New Verses*. See Ady: *Publicisztikai írások*, Vol. II, p. 265.

¹⁹ Béla Balázs: "A versről" [On the poem], *Nyugat* (1909) No. 10—11, p. 359 ff.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

²¹ Szerb: *Magyar irodalomtörténet*, p. 456.

²² See Gyula Szekfű: *Három nemzedék* [Three Generations] (Budapest: 1920), pp. 33, 315. Since then many have pointed out the kinship of Ady and Széchenyi, e.g., Makkai: *Magyar fa sorsa*, pp. 25, 140, or—with a great emphasis but on a low level—Lőránt Hegedűs: *Ady és Tisza* [Ady and Tisza] (Budapest: 1940), *passim*.

²³ Kéri: "Ady Endre szociális gyökerei", *op. cit.*, p. 526.

²⁴ Makkai: *Magyar fa sorsa*, p. 126.

²⁵ Sándor Karácsony: *A magyar észjárás* [The Hungarian Turn of Mind] (Budapest: 1939), p. 160.

²⁶ The linguistic strength of Ady is interestingly characterized by Aladár Schöpflin: *Ady Endre* [Endre Ady] (Budapest: 1934): "Even if the best Hungarian poets are taken into account, it is not an everyday phenomenon how he exactly sensed in any case the weight, the substantial and atmospherical value of the word, the associations linked to it (all what is called by Ignotus the halo round the word), and this cannot be a result of conscious ambitions alone. There must have been inside him a certain innate instinctive sense, some in-explainable identity of language and blood. He sensed in an entirely peculiar way the positional energies of the word and its changes, according to how it is situated in the poem. He can attach an enormous emphasis and expressive power to words having, as to their dictionary contents, no significance. He put new life and excitement into them by subtle modifications of the word order [...] No word ever slips out of his hands." p. 174.

²⁷ Litván: *Magyar gondolat—szabad gondolat*, p. 67.

²⁸ György Lukács: *Ifjúkori művek 1902—1918* [Early Works 1902—1918] (Budapest: 1977), p. 181.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 250, 251.

³¹ Appeared in *Frankfurter Zeitung*, September 5, 1912.

³² Georg Lukács: "Platonism, Poetry and Form", in his *Soul and Form*, trans. by A. Bostock (Cambridge, Mass.: 1974), p. 24.

³³ Georg Lukács: "On the Nature and Form of the Essay", in *ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³⁶ Georg Lukács: "The Moment and Form", in *ibid.*, p. 109.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

³⁸ Naturally, any hypothesis concerning the underlying reasons for the style of the *Soul and Form* is meaningful only if the possibility that the essays are really translations can be excluded, that is, if Lukács did not in fact write the essays in German. Now it can in fact be proven by archival materials that the original language of the essays is Hungarian and that most of the work of translation was not done by Lukács himself. I myself treated this problem in details, see "Lukács *Die Seele und die Formen* c. esszéjének fordítástörténetéhez" [On the history of translating Lukács' volume of essays entitled *Die Seele und die Formen*], *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle* (1974) No. 2. Babits's review appeared in *Nyugat* (1910) [No. 21]. Lukács replied to this review in a letter, as well as publicly. On this question, István Gál published a rich material in *Irodalomtörténet* (1974) No. 3.

³⁹ György Lukács: "Előszó" [Preface] in his *Magyar irodalom magyar kultúra* [Hungarian Literature—Hungarian Culture] (Budapest: 1970), pp. 10—1.

⁴⁰ Some of the authors of *Nyugat* are stylistically treated by János Horváth in his article "A Nyugat magyartalanságairól" [On the 'non-Hungarianisms' in the *Nyugat*], *Magyar Nyelv* (1911) No. 2. He also scrutinizes the Germanisms of the language of Lukács's essays.

Hermeneutic Elements in the Shared Ideas of the Young Lukács and Leó Popper

by

Gábor Bonyhai

The philosophy of art of Leó Popper and the young Lukács is an important, but thus far virtually unexploited contribution to the question of hermeneutics and morphology. It was Gadamer who pointed out the interrelation between philosophical hermeneutics and some of Lukács's early views. In the first part of *Truth and Method*, in the criticism of aesthetic consciousness, Lukács and Paul Valéry are viewed as the representatives of that turn in the thinking about art that led from the conception based on the genius of creation to the conception that stressed the genius of reception. In this view, the work of art cannot in principle be completed. As creation, it does not have fixed goals that can be given in advance, so that—in contrast to technical products—its perfection or imperfection cannot be measured by its achieving or failing to achieve such goals. The work of art is that into which the recipient is able to convert it, and each reception is equally warranted. According to Lukács, the aesthetic sphere has a Heraclitan structure, and the mode of existence of the work of art is absolute point-like being. This unmistakably ontological character of posing the question then acquired a formal—ontological status in the work of Oskar Becker who in turn relied on Lukács: 'Now the work of art is the same work, and at the same time, it is no longer the same'. Hereby, according to Gadamer, it becomes perfectly clear that this 'untenable hermeneutic nihilism'¹ has its roots in an ontology that rests on extreme discontinuity: this is the best example of the fact that the extremely refined aesthetic consciousness annihilates the basis of our existence, that is, continuity. What becomes obvious here is the corruption of aesthetic existence (as even Kierkegaard put it).

As far as hermeneutic nihilism is concerned, this characterization of Gadamer's is disputable. But the fact that the question at issue is ontological in nature can be supported even with reference to Lukács. In the study to which Gadamer refers,² Lukács calls the aesthetic sphere mentioned above 'Luciferian', and stresses that this structural property of art was recognized by the great enemies of art, Plato, Kierkegaard, and Tolstoy, much more clearly than by its defenders, who aspired after harmony. Lukács even at the time of writing *The Ontology of Social Being*, strongly emphasized that he had already taken a turn toward ontology in the *Heidelberger Philosophie der Kunst* and *Heidelberger Ästhetik*, which were written between 1912 and 1916 (that was the wider context of the study referred to by Gadamer). That was the point where Lukács, according to his own judgment, turned from the Kantian question that was no longer Kantian and epistemological: 'There are works of art, how can they be?'.

Apart from the fact that this question is again the slogan-like paraphrase of a Kantian question—namely, the question of the possibility of the actually existing mathematical natural sciences, with which the investigations of the *Critique of Pure Reason* begin—the Lukácsian self-interpretation is acceptable, and Gadamer elsewhere repeats the assertion that Lukács's views in this regard are ontological in nature. How is it possible, Gadamer asks at this point, that the work of art that has come down to us is still valid, and that each time we encounter it, it is as 'absolute' present, this, despite the fact that it has lost all its relations to its own past present, and that the world of gods and men inherent in it is 'valid today almost only as the document of the past'? Why is it that the work is still valid? Before answering this question, Gadamer distinguishes between three traditional answers, which he rejects: (1) that of formalist aesthetic, which holds that we admire the (high) formal level of these formations; (2) that of the young Lukács: the ontological status of the work of art is constituted by the single and non-recurrent meeting-point of our aesthetic sensibility and the formation, viz. by that of subjectivity and objectivity; and finally, (3) the view according to which it is historical distance that gives prominence to something novel and different in the work of art, in the course of returning to one and the same work of art.

Hence, according to Gadamer, too, Lukács gives an unacceptable answer to a hermeneutic-ontological question. Nevertheless, the character of the question remains such, and for us today, precisely this hermeneutic-ontological character is of interest. This aspect of Lukács's formulation of the question finds expression even in his study on the subject—object, most explicitly in the fact that, in the description of the aesthetic attitude, he refers to the key concept of hermeneutics, namely, to understanding: 'In this sense, the aesthetic attitude might be called, as it has indeed been called in phenomenology, normative misunderstanding'.

The phenomenology at issue is put forward in the chapter of the *Heidelberger Philosophie der Kunst* entitled "Phänomenologische Skizze des schöpferischen und receptiven Verhaltens". But the use of the concept of normative or necessary misunderstanding is by no means restricted to this chapter; on the contrary, this concept provides the most striking characteristic of the book. We are informed in the first chapter ("Die Kunst als 'Ausdruck' und die Mitteilungsformen der Erlebniswirklichkeit") that this rather surprising concept, which is still, no doubt, a hermeneutic one, originates from the best friend of the young Lukács, Leó Popper, who applied it concretely in his art criticism.

In addition to Lukács, it was Károly Tolnay who emphatically called attention to Popper's thoughts concerning the theory of art. Since his guiding principle was not merely historical interest, Tolnay stressed that Popper's essays enjoyed relevance and remain somehow current even after the passage of sixty years, and he expressed the hope that these writings would have a fruitful influence on modern scholars of aesthetics and the history of art.³ This hope has not been realized, and for several reasons. The size of Popper's oeuvre is rather slight—a few essays, art critiques, and letters, most of them written in the affected style of the turn of the century, which is extremely alien to us now. Their contents also seem foreign: the outlines of a new normative aesthetic, conceived of from the angle of Cézanne's and Maillol's 'classicism', which was new at that time, and cast in opposition to Monet's and Rodin's 'impressionism'; the doctrine of 'necessary misunderstanding', the theory of the 'necessary gap between artistic intention and its realization in the work', which holds also for the relation between the realized work and the recipient's understanding (double misunderstanding). In Tolnay's words:

Grundlegend ist auch Poppers Theorie der notwendigen Diskrepanz zwischen künstlerischer Intention und der Realisation dieser Intention im Werke und seine Doktrin des 'notwendigen Missverständnisses' zwischen dem realisierten Werk und dem Verständnis desselben durch den Betrachter.⁴

But it is precisely these oddities that make Popper interesting for reception aesthetic and hermeneutics today: his conception might be regarded as an intentionally 'anti-divinatory' theory of understanding.

Recently, however, the Lukács Archives and Library also published certain materials—for example, the first volume of Lukács's correspondence—which shed more light on Popper, too. Popper's theory, as Hans Robert Jauss writes in his latest book, is the 'aesthetic of non-identity':

Poppers Theorie des 'doppelten Missverständnisses' ist eine Ästhetik der Nichtidentität. Sie entspringt der Einsicht, dass das Kunstwerk nicht monologisch einen transzendenten Sinn offenbart, in dem das Wollen des Künstlers wie das Verstehen des Betrachters aufgehoben wären, sondern dass zwischen der Intention des Autors, dem vollendeten Werk und seiner Bedeutung für den Betrachter ein doppelter Hiatus entsteht, der die Sinnkonstitution zu einem unabschliessbaren Prozess zwischen Produktion und Rezeption des Werkes werden lässt [...] Poppers Theorie einen Anfang der Entwicklung zeigt, die von der monologischen Werkästhetik zum dialogischen Verstehen, zur wirkungsgeschichtlichen Hermeneutik und Rezeptionsästhetik unserer Gegenwart geführt hat.⁵

Popper's conception presents again an ontological position: he does not ask how the cognition of artistic objectifications is possible, but, instead, wherein the objectivity of objectifications lies—and he gives an unambiguously anti-divinatory answer to this obviously hermeneutic question. It is no longer the case of any empathy, any inner, historicist identification with alien subjects or ages, and the 'communication' of experiences by means of signs. The objective form is the intellect itself, although the former cannot be achieved without efforts on the part of the creator as well as the recipient: this effort is a fight, in which, paradoxically enough, defeat to failure in advance, and the limited and restricted nature of man is the source of productivity.

This idea plays a prominent role in all of Popper's writings. The Bruegel essay is centered around the thought that 'it is an ancient fact of all painting that one must paint in colors, and that the homogeneous material of colors should reflect the full-scale materials of nature; but it is unable to do so'. This task, bravely undertaken and combined with the unavoidable failure of the enterprise, becomes, in Popper's thought, the vision of the universal material or substance of art (*Allteig*). The critique of Rodin, in which Popper's criticism is directed to the artist's impressionism, asserts: the stone forces the sculptor, who searches for nature but does not find it, to the unity of the enclosed-in-a-block. And in his paper entitled "Volkskunst und Formbeseelung" we can read that we can find the same mysticism that we can experience in nature and try to unfold from it as resolved and plain in folkloristic works when looking at a colorful chest or a black apron. In his article, "Goya-kiállítás Bécsben" [Goya exhibition in Vienna], he points out that in Goya's etchings the ghostly world of the *Caprichos* comes into being as a result of the partial untestability of the technology of etching and, on the artist's part, the loss of the sense of equilibrium (the loss of his hearing)—which is, then, annihilated by the crudely moralizing comments, attached to it by the artist, for the recipient who aesthetically enjoys, too will result in failure. He wants to 'shatter the heart of capital' by means of sculptures depicting proletarians who are miserable and poorly dressed, and yet bursting with energy—but since the sculptures as works of art are far too good, 'capital' sees only what it finds useful for itself, and says: 'What do you want in fact?—You are as beautiful as the smiths of Olympus.' Hence, man

promotes the development of music when searching for the dictionary of 'musical language' and the 'language of life', when he wants to find some meaningful text for all pieces of music (however absurd an aspiration). Thus, as Popper writes in his sketch "A szó ereje a muzsikában" [The force of word in music], programmatic music, by means of its tricks, ultimately keeps absolute music alive, precisely because its goal, the musical representation of the sound of machines and big cities, and so on is theoretically impossible. Finally, here lie the origins of the work of art as such:

We put onto things the same hobbles in which we find ourselves: beginning and end [...] By means of art, we take from nature what it took from us by means of life: infinity. Art creates the picture of man, not that of the world [...]. Its borderlines are just like birth and death, and aren't its accentuations [contrasts] just like emotions? Birth, death, and emotions are man's distinctive features, as opposed to the cosmos. Beginning, end, and accentuation are the distinctive features of the work of art, as opposed to the object. Thus, it becomes obvious that we have created art for ourselves as the highest standard in an anthropological form, in order to discover the same order in the objects as the one we can see when looking into ourselves, in order to be able to evaluate and to love.⁶

With this undeniably ontological line of thought Popper wants to establish that argument according to which the work of art will become 'closed' only in reception, and "the final completion of every work of art is the recipient".⁷ This standpoint, as Jauss has also stressed, implies the recognition that the work of art is dialogical in nature, and we must add that the ontological thought underlying this recognition, which was to found the latter, is also dialogical in nature: it is centered around the interaction between man and nature, that is, the fight between man and nature, which is dialogical in the sense defined above. It is true that here man appears as some sly creature, who, in the struggle with his greatest enemy, nature, converts his weakness into strength, and defeats his enemy with its own weapon, rendering it finite; but no doubt: finality proves to be the source of productivity.⁸ The decisive point here is not the rather subjectivistic formulation, but the fight, the struggle with an enemy that is absolutely superior. It is precisely this ontological 'trick and revenge' of man that Popper later inverts, and interprets similarly to what Lukács, in the *Heidelberger Ästhetik*, putting it in a Kantian manner calls 'transcendental chance'. The matter in question is the undeducibility of the fundamental values. In his obituary of Popper, even Lukács avoided the Kantian phraseology, and characterized the activity of form as 'having no foundations', as the great chance, which, driven by its own metaphysical impetus, breaks into life. Ontological trick becomes ontological chance ('glückspendender und gebärender Zufall'). This favorable chance has its roots here not yet in the nature of values, but in the material of the artists. Matter and its 'own demand' are those absolutely superior enemies against which the creator fights. For example, by means of the material, he tries to express his own 'experiential reality' (Lukács), to communicate it 'adequately'. If the artist gains seemingly victory, or rather, if the material is defeated, then it is actually not the defeat or failure of the material, but that of the artist—naturally, the point is not the failure of the dilettante, but that of the virtuoso.

According to Popper, for example, Paganini is the absolute master of the violin, and, hence, he creates anti-violin works, as playing the violin does not raise any difficulty for him; and the essence of violin lies in the difficulty of playing it.

Auch der Virtuoso ist ein Feind, ein 'Überwinder' seines Materials. Aber weil dieses den anderen im täglichen Widerstand sein Wesen eingeprägt und vertraut gemacht hat, weil es durch die Mühe wie menschlich

geworden, und mit seiner Widerstandsvaleur nun dem Organismus gleichsam einverleibt ist: emtet sein Überwinder nicht viel Dank.⁹

In Popper's view, Rodin is a virtuoso, too; he defeats the basic law of sculpture—the own demand of the material of sculpture, of stone—heaviness. He does not know weight and difficulty. He creates with emotions, but without sensibility; he mars his material, and does not improve his theme. While working, he has only stimuli and subtleties in mind, not rest or noble roughness (*edle Grobheit*). That is his greatest deficiency because the sculpture must always remain under the direct rule of weight. 'And even if a work managed to bribe stone to take shape, with flapping limbs, still, in a hundred years there comes heaviness, breaking down the limbs and changing the work of art into a torso'; and, further:

Man spricht vor den berühmten Torsi gern von einem 'grossen Meister Zufall'. Das ist sehr falsch. Es war die tiefste Notwendigkeit selber, die hier ihre Korrektur vornahm und aus einem Unwahren ein Wahres machte. Denn für die Bildhauerei ist unwahr, was ohne die Schwere geschieht.¹⁰

Here, naturally, the point is not physical breaking down, but what is felt by the recipient to be breakable.

Thus, what can be interpreted only as a great accident when viewed empirically, is in fact a deep necessity: a transcendental enemy set against life and experiential reality, that is, material with its own demand, may refrain from struggle not only in the completed work of art, but also in the course of artistic creation; it might be the case that it does not implement its corrections, and that the conquerors—the artist and the work of art—consequently will not be greater, but smaller. As regards the positive counter-example, the Egyptian sculptures and Maillol's works—works that are ruled directly by heaviness—the state of oppression is the source of a higher life and growth. The historical aspect of Popper's view is already stated explicitly in the first sentences of his critique of Rodin: 'The enormous and rigid gesture of the Egyptian sculptures preserved its holy nature against and above all changes. Only the sense of this gesture has changed: it pays homage not to the deity, but to stone.' This sentence sounds as if it were an answer to the above-mentioned question posed by Gadamer: how is it possible that the work of art of the past is still valid today, even though the world of gods and men that is inherent in it is now virtually nothing but a historical document? Popper's answer cannot be classified as any of the three types categorized by Gadamer as deficient standpoints that run counter to his own. But neither is it identical with Gadamer's. On the contrary, here the unity of change and continuity of meaning is outlined in such a way that material and form play a much more obvious and essential role in it, as does the relation between them, the relation of both to the creator and to the recipient, and, last but not least, to truth.

These, then, are the ontological bases of the Popperian 'theory of misunderstanding' in outline form, and if we search for the exemplars of this ontology in the contemporary philosophy or literature, we shall arrive at Rilke. For the sake of philological justifiability, this will be done indirectly: we are going to proceed from one of Károly Polányi's letters, written to Lukács in August, 1908. Besides Lukács, Polányi was Popper's best friend at that time, and he held in high esteem the theory of misunderstanding (even though, in the course of their long talks, he never became acquainted with it in detail). As Polányi explained in his letter to Lukács:

Du bist wirklich gut und lieb, ich weiss es jetzt besser als je zuvor. Darin ist Dein Briefschreiben verständlicher als Deine literarischen Sachen—aber in beiden geht es um das Gleiche. Der Brief ist ein Dialog, in dem einer zuhört. Die literarischen Sachen sind Monologe, die von zweien angehört werden: den hellhörigen Kämpfern der zwei Standpunkte. Was Du schaffst, ist immer 'Sache' und nicht 'deren zwei Seiten'. Jede erzählte Sache ist ihrer Wirkung nach solch ein Dialog: jedoch, wie gesagt, ein Dialog nicht des Redens, sondern des Anhörens. Und es ist von demselben die Rede in ihnen: vom Leben und dessen schönen Schwierigkeiten; von Wie-immer-Seienden und von Irgendwie-Seienden, davon, was gegen uns ankämpft und von dem, gegen das wir ankämpfen (was mit uns ringt, wie ist das gross: Rilke)—und so liesse sich die Bilderreihe entlang des genormten und des blinzelnden Phantasiefilms bis ins Unendliche fortsetzen—, denn es gibt kein Mass, das nicht diese beiden beträffe, und keinen Ausdruck, der nicht vom ersten Atemzug seines Entstehens an für diese Grundparadoxe geboren wäre.¹¹

For the sake of precision, the wider context of the quotation by Rilke is also considered here:

Wie ist das klein, womit wir ringen,
was mit uns ringt, wie ist das gross;
liessen wir, ähnlicher den Dingen
uns so vom grossen Sturm bezwingen, –
wir würden weit und namenlos.

Was wir besiegen ist das Kleine,
und der Erfolg selbst macht uns klein.
Das Ewige und Ungemeine
will nicht von uns gebogen sein.
Das ist der Engel, der den Ringern
des Alten Testaments erschien;
wenn seiner Widersacher Sehnen
im Kampfe sich metallen dehnen,
fühlt er sie unter seinen Fingern
wie Saiten tiefer Melodien.

Wenn dieser Engel überwand,
welcher so oft auf Kampf verzichtet,
der geht gerecht und aufgerichtet
und gross aus jener harten Hand,
die sich, wie formend, an ihn schmiegte.
Die Siege laden ihn nicht ein.
Sein Wachstum ist: Der Tiefbesiegte
von immer Grösserem zu sein.¹²

If we compare the gesture of this loser—who has escaped from the clutches of the enemy that has absolute superiority, from the hands of the transcendental other, having found salvation, standing upright, and being great, who has grown as a result of defeat suffered in the 'fight-dialogue'—with the Popperian description of the Egyptian sculptures, we can see a striking similarity: the enormous, rigid gesture (*Gebärde*) of these sculptures does not pay homage to the deity any more, but to stone.

die schweren Gestalten scheinen die Schwere des Steins, als ihr einziges Erlebnis, demütig mitzumachen. Aber der Stein, dem sie geweiht, weiss sie zu belohnen: und lässt so in ihnen seine Kräfte spielen, dass sie sich mächtiger fühlen, als alles Leben, dem sie entsagt haben. Sie haben alle Richtungen in sich unterdrückt, um sich ganz der des Steins, der Richtung-nach-unten hinzugeben. Aber unversehens richten sich die Unterdrückten in der Vertikale zurecht und erfüllen diese mit so mannigfachem Leben, dass wir mit einemmal alle Gebundenheit vergessen und glauben, vor uns stehe wieder die Wahrheit, die mit tausend Armen um sich wirft.¹³

It would be beyond the scope of my present task to examine in detail Popper's relation to Rilke. At any rate, from the relevant textual details one can see what Lukács had in mind when writing that Popper 'brought metaphysics down to earth': here, for example, Popper reflects on the Rilkean thought, embedding it in the material, without stripping it of its speculative-philosophical content and truth. This is again an essential differentiating factor that demarcates Popper's concept of form from the characteristic concepts of that period (e.g., from that of Hildebrand or Wölfflin; in one of his letters Popper refers to the latter as "totally stupid").¹⁴ This kind of bringing metaphysics down to earth, viz. its materialization, was best characterized by Wilhelm Worringer. In a letter to Lukács, he gives an account of the effect produced in him by the *Soul and Form*: "[I experienced] meine eigene Materialisation. Zuerst das Aufgeben der eigenen Materialität, das Sichselbstentrücken, das—in Trancezustand—geraten und dann das allmähliche Sichwiederschauen in einer neuer Materialisation".¹⁵

What Worringer says about himself holds precisely for Popper's metaphysical thought: he sees himself again in an ideal materialization.

The fact that Béla Balázs, who was a member of the Lukács—Popper—Polányi circle, began to examine the phenomenon of the dialogical at that time and even wrote a detailed study of it¹⁶—in a form that was partly artistic, partly philosophical—also points to the essential interrelation between the misunderstanding theory and the dialogical. This fact is particularly interesting because Martin Buber, in his essay entitled "Das dialogische Prinzip",¹⁷ states that the dialogical became a theme of philosophy only at the end of the 1910s in Hermann Cohen's book *Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums* (apart from two references, one made by William James in *The Will to Believe* [1897], the other by Buber himself in *Die Legende des Baalschem* [1907]). On the other hand, the Popperian concept of misunderstanding and the philosophy of art based on it seem to be highly similar to Paul Valéry's concept of '*malentendu*' and to his views regarding the philosophy of art. As we have seen, Gadamer mentions the young Lukács in conjunction with Valéry, and Jauss claims that Valéry and Popper arrived at highly similar positions at about the same time, and independently of one another. This is indirectly supported by a seemingly insignificant remark of Popper's, in his letter to Lukács, dated February 6, 1910:

Ein gewisser Géza Feleky schreibt mit Dir zugleich sehr geschickt über K [ernstok] und seine Sachen im allgemeinen. Er sagt sogar—das ist das höchste Lob—einiges, was ich schreiben wollte, und ich statt dessen jetzt gezwungen bin—etwas noch Genialeres zu erfinden.¹⁸

The congenial Feleky was almost certainly the first Hungarian 'Valéryst'. It should be noted, however, that among Valéry's theoretical writings, only his first study on Leonardo could at that time have been at the disposal of Feleky—and perhaps of Lukács—and it contains the misunderstanding theory only implicitly.

The principle of misunderstanding, or the dialogical principle, was extrapolated to history by Popper himself, too—but, unfortunately, only in the form of a humorous and parodying remark:

Development stands in the interaction of different men and ages (and in the hereditary transmission of these ages). But since no man knows any other man from the inside, he cannot understand what the other wants, and an age can know a previous one still less (as 'investigations' are impossible), but since it still takes over what it sees, it does so falsely, misunderstanding what it takes over, and preparing the way for novel misunderstandings. Thus, the main factor of the development of art is misunderstanding.¹⁹

In his study on the theory of literary history,²⁰ Lukács's ideas are linked directly and at highly significant points with the Popperian theory. Arnold Hauser, supposedly through the mediation of the *Heidelberger Philosophie der Kunst*, also relies on Popper—although without mentioning him by name—in one of his books,²¹ where he devotes a whole chapter to the question of understanding and misunderstanding (connecting them, rightly, to the modern French philosophies of art, and at the same time mentioning that a hermeneutic problem is at stake here). Hence, it seems obvious that, in any future examination of the relation between morphology and historical understanding, we must henceforth consider not only the ideas of Heidegger and Valéry, but also those of Popper and Lukács.

(Translated by Matild Gulyás)

Notes

- ¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer: *Truth and Method*, trans. by W. Glen-Doepel (London: 1981).
- ² Georg Lukács: "Die Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehung in der Ästhetik", in his *Heidelberger Ästhetik* (Darmstadt—Neuwied: 1974).
- ³ Charles de Tolnay: "Leo Popper und die Kunstgeschichte", *Acta Historiae Artium* (1971) No. 1—2.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- ⁵ Hans Robert Jauss: *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1982) 676—77. pp.
- ⁶ Leó Popper: "Dialógus a művészetről" [Dialogue on the arts], in his *Esszék és kritikák* [Essays and Reviews] (Budapest: 1983) p. 9.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- ⁸ For a possible continuation of this interpretation, see Gábor Bonyhai: "Régi és új hermeneutika" [Old and new hermeneutics], *Helikon* (1981) No. 2—3.
- ⁹ Leó Popper: "Die Bildhauerei, Rodin und Maillol", *Acta Historiae Artium* (1971) No. 1—2, p. 14.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- ¹¹ The letter of Károly Polányi to György Lukács, dated August 18, 1908, in Georg Lukács: *Briefwechsel 1902—1917*, übers. von Á. Meller (Budapest: 1982) pp. 37—8.
- ¹² Rainer Maria Rilke: "Der Schauende", in his *Das Buch der Bilder* (Leipzig: 1928), pp. 137—38.
- ¹³ Popper: "Die Bildhauerei, Rodin und Maillol", in *op. cit.*, p. 10.
- ¹⁴ The letter of Leó Popper to György Lukács, dated February 17, 1910, in *Lukács György levelezése 1902—1917* [The Correspondence of György Lukács 1902—1917], ed. by É. Fekete and É. Karádi (Budapest: 1981) p. 176.
- ¹⁵ The letter of Wilhelm Worringer to György Lukács, dated December 29, 1911, in Lukács: *Briefwechsel 1902—1917*, p. 266.
- ¹⁶ Béla Balázs: *Dialógus a dialógusról* [Dialogue on the Dialogue] (Budapest: n. d.); see also his "Dialógus a dialógusról" [Dialogue on the dialogue], *Nyugat* (1908) No. 18, and (1909) No. 3.
- ¹⁷ Martin Buber: "Das dialogische Prinzip", in his *Das dialogische Prinzip* (Heidelberg: 1984).
- ¹⁸ The letter of Leó Popper to György Lukács, dated February 6, 1910, in Lukács: *Briefwechsel 1902—1917*, p. 100.
- ¹⁹ Leó Popper: "Félreértélmélet" [The theory of misunderstanding], in his *Esszék és kritikák*, p. 96.
- ²⁰ Georg Lukács: "Zur Theorie der Kunstgeschichte", *Text + Kritik* (Oktober, 1973).
- ²¹ Arnold Hauser: *Philosophie der Kunstgeschichte* (München: 1958). For the question of understanding and misunderstanding, see esp. part IV, chap. 6.

The Young Lukács and the Fine Arts

by

Árpád Tímár

György Lukács is known to the public mainly as the author of important and enduring works in the field of aesthetics and literary history. Indeed, this view is not entirely groundless, since his vast oeuvre contains only a very small number of articles, studies, or even parts of studies dealing with forms of art outside the domain of literature. The number of writings that he devoted to the fine arts is also small. That fact alone cannot, however, determine the value of his work concerning this topic, and it does not justify the view, widespread among students of art, that Lukács's knowledge of the field and its literature was insufficient, his tastes, dated and conservative. This relationship to art and the role of art in his work were hardly as simple as that.

Lukács began his career as a theater critic but his very first, impressionistic accounts already demonstrate an interest in the fine arts. Having finished his studies in secondary school, he made a tour of Western Europe, from where he sent home a report entitled "Berlin júliusban" [Berlin in July].¹ The article dealing with the Berliner theater season includes a detailed account of an art exhibition. His descriptions and judgments show that he was well informed and had firm views. His use of the most important contemporary terms, such as 'secession' ('*Art nouveau*'), 'naturalism', or 'symbolism', was correct, and the artists that he mentioned by name—Uhde, Klinger, Liebermann, Munch, and, among the Hungarians, Károly Kernstok—are highly regarded up to this very day. It can, thus, be supposed that, already while in secondary school, he was interested in art and it is known for certain that, during his university studies, he also attended lectures on art history. His knowledge became integrated into his works, and he often drew comparisons to art in his theater reviews as well as his subsequent literary studies. Here is how, for instance, he characterized Oscar Wilde's *Salome*:

Wilde's art is reminiscent of Klinger's artfully natural, colored sculptures, of his *Salome*, *Amphitrité*, and *Asenijeff*. This similarity is more than a figure of speech; Wilde's play aims at the same thing as does Klinger's sculpture, or, indeed, as do the greatest artists since Wagner: a total art.²

The names of Böcklin, Ludwig von Hoffman, Hans von Marées, the pre-Raphaelites, Daumier, or Manet also occur in contexts of this kind. In a dialogue, he used works of art to make the environment and the general atmosphere palpable. "There is the same inorganic quality on the walls. Family pictures and Japanese woodcuts, reproductions

of modern pictures and old ones fashionable today, Whistler, Velazquez, Vermeer, etc. A reproduction of a fresco by Giotto above the desk."³

An abundance of comparisons taken from art is also found in one of the most important books of his youth, *A modern dráma fejlődésének története* [The history of the development of modern drama]:

Moving from naturalism toward impressionism, Schlaf becomes increasingly immersed in pathological problems. Coming from the opposite side, the Polish writer Stanislaw Przybyszewski arrives at the same place. When he was staying in Berlin at the beginning of the nineties, the latter was set against Hauptmann the naturalist by the youngest of the young much in the same way as the Norwegian painter Munch was welcomed at the same time by the young painters as a new Messiah, as opposed to Liebermann, who was also a naturalist.⁴

But he did not only sense the changeover from naturalism to symbolism. The phase delay between the evolution of German and French art was equally clear to him.

Maeterlinck is more consistent than Wagner [...] At this point Maeterlinck goes further, and he expresses man only in his relationship to the infinite, and only as something relative. He leaves out of him and removes from around him everything which is intermediate, everything through which he is usually manifested. But his knowledge of art is also greater than that of Wagner. He came after Manet and Impressionism, whereas Wagner never got beyond Thoma or at best Böcklin.⁵

Lukács also used the fine arts to illustrate kinships in genre following from the shaping of the same experience. On examining the potentials of the grotesque and of comedy, he wrote:

The grotesque is always a union between that which is seen from close quarters and of the ornamental or the decorative; one might say that it is the expression of the decorative value of ordinary, trivial, and ugly things. Or more exactly, it is the becoming ornamental of the ugly quality of ugly things, rather than the discovery of the beauty hidden in things that are trivial or ugly in themselves. (Meunier or Millet may be the best examples for this.) [...] Such a depiction of reality was the only possibility of lending a form to a specifically modern life. [...] This is the only way in which the non-believing, all-doubting, nihilistic attitude, the awareness of the relativity of everything, may receive a fully adequate and fully artistic form [...] This was the only artistic form befitting the anarchical, nihilistic world outlook, which, however, had great potential. It offered the possibility of dissolving everything in purely comical effects by turning banality and ugliness into something decorative and monumental. The threat of tragi-comedy would of course still be present, but it is conceivable that it might be overcome, even though such attempts have rarely been successful thus far. It is conceivable that a maximum 'immersion' in the grotesque and the comical could receive a completely pure artistic form, and so is the birth of a contemporary comedy style of this kind which would measure up to those modern works of fine art which follow a similar trend, like the works of Toulouse-Lautrec, Beardsley, and some of the members of the Simplicissimus group, not to speak of earlier artists like Degas or even more Daumier and Guys.⁶

We might add that Cézanne's name crops up already in the drama book as a turning point ending a certain line of evolution: "Hofmannstahl's picturesqueness becomes enriched, and it changes; he completes, in short, the road leading from Böcklin to Cézanne".⁷

Parallels taken from the fine arts can also be found in his subsequent works devoted entirely to philosophy or the history of philosophy. His characterization of Simmel from 1918 is a typical example:

He is the genuine philosopher of impressionism. Not as if he had done nothing more than give a conceptual form to the things expressed by the impressionistic development of music, the fine arts, and poetry. His achievement is far greater than merely describing the impressionistic world picture on a conceptual plane; it

is a philosophical expression of the *Weltgefühl* out of which the greatest works of this trend were born, an expression of the essence of the era that we have just left behind, which is as unmistakable and original—and, of course, as problematical, too—as it is in the works of Monet or Rodin, Richard Strauss or Rilke [...] From this point of view, Simmel's historical place may be summed up as follows: he was the Monet of philosophy, who has not yet been followed by a single Cézanne.⁸

Lukács's views on the fine arts must have been considerably influenced by his way of life and his personal contacts. His family appreciated and supported the most progressive Hungarian artistic trends of the times, and the works of Károly Ferenczy, as well as those of the members of the artists belonging to the group of 'The Eight' could be found in their home. Lukács saw many museums and exhibitions during his travels and study tours abroad, and became familiar with the most important works of both older and contemporary art. His closest friends also included a number of artists. He met Lajos Gulácsy in connection with the theater performances of the Thalia Society (1904–8), developed closer contacts with Dezső Czigány, Károly Kernstok, and Anna Lesznai in the 1910s, and later, during his stay in Italy, also with Márk Vedres. Then, in the period of the Sunday Circle (1915–19), he made friends with Béni Ferenczy and József Nemes Lampérth as well.⁹ Those closest to him—including the love of his youth, Irma Seidler, and his best friend, Leó Popper—were also involved in the fine arts, and both were graduates of the Nagybánya artists' colony. While in the circle of the Thalia, he also came to be on friendly terms with Lajos Fülep,¹⁰ the most outstanding art critic of the period. The two also met again several times in Italy, and together founded and edited *A Szellem*, the highest-quality review of philosophy and art theory of the times (1911). They renewed their relationship during the activity of the Sunday Circle, when their group was joined by several young art historians including Frigyes Antal, Arnold Hauser, János Wilde, and Károly Tolnai, all of whom later achieved a high international reputation, while in exile following the fall of the Hungarian Republic of Councils in 1919.¹¹

Of all these personal relationships, Lukács's friendship with Leó Popper played a decisive role. Several references and remarks by Lukács, both contemporary and dating from his last years, indicate how extraordinarily important he himself considered this friendship to be, and how highly he appreciated Popper's critical talent and the latter's ability "unerringly and subtly to sense the qualities of any particular work".¹² Their friendship originated practically from their childhood, and lasted until Popper's untimely, tragic death in 1911. Their voluminous correspondence, which, fortunately, has survived,¹³ yields a great number of valuable facts concerning the details of their relationship. It includes references to their shared experiences involving art, their joint travels, their readings, and exchanges concerning the intensive discussions and conversations that they had during the times they spent together. Their correspondence also reveals the unselfish, always helpful attention with which Popper followed his friend's intellectual development and the unfolding of his scholarly career. Lukács regularly sent his articles and studies, the major ones still in manuscript, to Popper to read. He appreciated his opinion to a great degree, and nearly always accepted his critical comments and suggestions for changes.

Popper's role in and influence on the evolution of Lukács's knowledge of the fine arts must be regarded as especially important. For, according to the evidence of his letters and surviving articles, Popper, although his studies also covered music, was mainly interested in the problems of the fine arts. His involvement in the field, as we know, was both theoretical and practical. He drew, sculpted, and painted, and his ideals

were Cézanne and Maillol, but his illness and early death prevented his talents from unfolding. Little is known of his creative attempts, as only a part of his studies has survived, and it is quite certain that he never finished the major theoretical works that he had planned. A few drafts and fragments are the only evidence that he actually set out to realize the intentions indicated in his letters. Even so, his oeuvre, however modest in size, is exceptionally rich in profound thoughts and fruitful theoretical ideas. It was, for instance, in one of Popper's dialogues analyzing works of fine art that the opposition of closed and open works of art was raised for the first time;¹⁴ the same idea was developed further by Lukács in his essay "Beszélgetés Laurence Sterne-ről" [A conversation on Laurence Sterne].¹⁵ Already in 1909, Popper informed Lukács that "I am now writing an article in German on Brueghel [i.e., Pieter Brueghel, the Elder] and the problem of matter."¹⁶ It was from this plan that Popper's study, "Peter Brueghel der Ältere",¹⁷ grew, in which he proved a deep-lying art philosophical kinship between the paintings of Cézanne and Brueghel. It was also here that one of the cardinal categories of his art theory, the concept of universal substance (*Allteig*) was explained in detail for the first time. The idea had a decisive influence on the evolution of Lukács's system of aesthetics and art philosophy. This is how he himself put it in a letter: "Besides, although I had sensed the problem of 'organicity' and 'unicity', I have become fully conscious of it through your theory of the *Allteig*."¹⁸

Furthermore, in a letter dated December, 1910, the philosophical generalization of the *Allteig* concept was already contemplated as the possible basis for an art philosophy. Lukács quoted Plotinus at length, and continued:

I think you can see by now what this means: we have here your *Allteig* [...] concept from the Bruegel [...] There exists a profound yearning for the unity of the world as it is. (This is the reason why a Bruegel or a Cézanne thinks of himself as a 'naturalist'.) It is the ultimate aim of all philosophies. The question, however, is not raised by philosophy in a straightforward fashion. The question it asks is: How can unity rise out of plurality? and it gives answers without noticing that the main question has never been asked [...] which is: How can we perceive and experience as One all that plurality contained within it, that which is qualitatively different and incommensurable [...] Your theory had decisive significance for me in that it stated in concrete and decisive terms what I have already sensed: namely, a new kind of activity represented by art. This enables us to arrive at the concept of form [...] I again feel very strongly that you have much to do with my finding my correct path at this time. I know that this is my road. But I also know that without you (the concept of *Allteig* was only the crystallization of many foregoing things) my progress would have been delayed—maybe indefinitely. For me it appears a matter of fate that I met you, and in this respect I regard myself—don't laugh at me—as your pupil.¹⁹

Lukács also quoted the section concerning the *Allteig* from Popper's essay in his *Heidelberger Philosophie der Kunst*, explaining its functions as follows: "Als Prinzip der Gestaltung der einzelnen Dinge bedeutet dies die gemeinsame Schwere der Dinge, die Schwere des Werks, des Materials der Form, das simultan zum Ausdruck der Verschiedenheit wie der Einheit der Dinge wird."²⁰

The category of 'carpet-like' texture as one of the ultimate, ideal forms of visual composition was also raised in Popper's study on Bruegel.

Der Maler, der keine Leere dulden kann, der viele Menschen schöner findet als wenige Menschen, der Themen nur zu Vorwänden braucht, um seinen bunten reichgefleckten Phantasien Gestalt zu geben, ist für uns kein 'Sittenschilderer' mehr; der ist ein Schöpfer von beseeltem Schmuck; der hat die Natur nach dem Takte des eigenen Blutes eingeteilt, bis sie seinem Wesen das Zeichen schrieb. Der hat den Gedanken der Natur gewollt, um schliesslich den Gedanken des Teppichs zu erfüllen. Denn zuletzt hat er für uns alle das absolut Herrliche des Teppichs gewonnen. Seine Menschen können nicht nur leben und schreien, sie können

auch verstummen und innehalten und noch die gräulichsten unter ihnen können in ungeahnter Lieblichkeit erstarren und fast zu Blumen werden im wunderbaren Teppich einer Kreuztragung.²¹

Popper's article on "Volkskunst und Formbeseelung" was also devoted almost entirely to the problem of carpet-likeness.²² Lukács used the same category in his essay on "Das Formproblem der Malerei".²³ In the *Heidelberger Philosophie der Kunst* he wrote:

Wenn ein Wort auch nach den verschiedenen rhythmischen, klanglichen etc. Werten seiner Silben in verschiedene Relationen eingeordnet ist, so ist es doch etwas notwendig Letztes und Unaufhebbares. Gerade so steht es mit einem materiell geschlossenen Element (Mensch, Tier, etc.) in dem Bilde, ja selbst mit den ganz zur Abstraktheit stilisierten, ihre Bestimmtheit nur leise andeutenden Zeichen im Teppich [...] Wenn es dem Relationssystem auch gelungen ist, alles Gegebene in Notwendigkeit zu verwandeln, sind dessen Qualitäten nicht intakt geblieben, und die unbedingte Verknüpfbarkeit von Allem mit Allem und ihre Realisation in der Schrankenlosigkeit des herrschenden Gesetzmässigkeitssystems wird, ohne die eigene grosse Rationalität zu verlieren, tief und geheimnisvoll: unaussprechbare Gesetze scheinen hier zu walten [...] Und die Beziehungen der zu Zeichen gewordenen Dinge zueinander erhalten die gleiche, klare und helle, und doch unaussprechbare Gesetzmässigkeit [...] wenn in der Flächenkomposition des Bildes die Bewegungen der Menschen mit den Bäumen, den Bergen und den Wolken rätselvolle, aber selbstverständliche Ornamente bilden, so ist es gleich geheimnisvoll, wie Dinge in solchen Systemen ihre Antwort erhalten können und wie diese Systeme sich aus den Dingen aufzubauen vermögen. Das ist die Tiefe und die Schönheit des Teppichs, die Leó Poppers Essay über Volkskunst vollendet formuliert.²⁴

Popper's so-called 'theory of misunderstanding' also exerted a great influence on Lukács. This theory has not survived in any fully developed and expounded form,²⁵ and it seems certain that it was never written down, even though it is frequently mentioned in the correspondence between Popper and Lukács. In a letter, Popper wrote that he was to hold a lecture on 'misunderstanding', while Lukács, for his part, urged him several times to write it at last in the form of a dialogue or a study, which he would then help to publish in a review or journal.²⁶ It is also quite certain, however, that it was not merely an idea for the title of a planned study. Lukács's remarks and reference leave no doubt that the theory actually existed. He probably knew it well because Popper was pleased to discuss it with him at length and in detail during their conversations, thoroughly explaining his arguments and favourite examples. One of Lukács's major methodological studies, "Megjegyzések az irodalomtörténet elméletéhez" [Notes on the theory of literary history], was published when Popper was still alive. In that study Lukács wrote:

For literary history, however, influence is a fact that exists as fully and completely as it does in sociology, but there is a possibility of differentiating between various effects, of classifying and evaluating them [...] The main distinction to be made is between adequate and inadequate effects. (This problem and the others to which it is related were first called to my notice by my friend Leó Popper in our conversations, and by his hitherto unpublished studies. He has termed the inadequate influence 'misunderstanding', and since I use the term and its meaning in the same sense as he does, I feel obliged to acknowledge his priority.)²⁷

Not long afterward, in his homage to Popper at the latter's death, Lukács detailed the theory of misunderstanding, which he obviously regarded as the most important achievement in his friend's oeuvre:

Die Form ist der Gedanke Leó Poppers [...] Die Form ist das Bindende und das Bannende, das Lösende und das Erlösende seiner Welt. Die Kluft zwischen Leben und Werk, zwischen Welt und Form, zwischen Schaffendem, Gestaltung, Gestalt und Aufnehmer hat noch nie jemand so weit aufgerissen, wie er. Die grauenvolle Inadäquatheit des Lebens, wo alles von blinden Kräften getrieben und von verfälschenden Fiktionen aufgefangen wird, war die Voraussetzung dieser Formenwelt, das notwendige, irreparable Missverständnis

jeder Äußerung, ihre Wiege und ihr Weg: die trennende Einheit von Sein und Form. Aus der Verfälschung jeder Materie durch jedes Ausdrucksmittel entsteht die Form; aus unserer Armut und Beschränkung wird die Erlösung geboren [...] sie, die Grundlosigkeit selbst, der grosse Zufall, bricht von der eigenen, unerfahrbaren, metaphysischen Wucht getrieben, ins Leben hinein, schiebt sich zwischen Willen und Werk, verfälscht die Absicht und verwandelt die Tat, auf das alles klug oder unbewusst falsch Gewollte der Menschen scheitert und aus dieser Niederlage ihres Willens das Wahre entspringt.²⁸

The theory of misunderstanding also received emphatic treatment in the *Heidelberger Philosophie der Kunst*:

Es zeigt sich [...] dass der Werkgedanke die Heterogenität der auf das Werk zielenden Intentionen zur notwendigen Voraussetzung hat: das Missverständnis. Erst wenn dieses Missverständnis als die allein mögliche unmittelbare Mitteilungsform erkannt ist, wird es möglich das Dasein des Werkes in ungetrübter Weise zu verstehen [...] Es ist Leó Poppers grosse Tat gewesen, dass er diese Grundtatsache der Kunst klar erkannt hat [...] Aber sein hellseherischer Blick hat dieses Eigenleben des Werks klar erkannt und ebenso klar die notwendige Verbindung der beiden inadäquaten Verhalten, des Schöpfers und des Receptiven, zu dem Werk. In dieser Anschauung können alle Einseitigkeiten überwunden werden.²⁹

Finally, it was probably also due to Popper's direct influence that Lukács recognized the extraordinary significance of Cézanne's art. An important element of Popper's work was the establishment of the contrast between impressionism and 'tectonism' (as related to tectonics). This idea was most thoroughly explained in his study "Die Bildhauerei, Rodin und Maillol",³⁰ but a certain remark in his study on Brueghel also shows that he attributed to Cézanne an anti-impressionistic position similar to that of Maillol. (As a matter of fact, he had also planned to devote a separate study to Cézanne, another one that he never managed to accomplish.)

Some of Lukács's views on Cézanne have already been quoted, as well as the comparisons and parallels in which Cézanne's name was synonymous with opposition to impressionism. The excerpt below also testifies to Lukács's recognition of this great change in attitudes and to his profound understanding of what Cézanne had done (the essay from which it is quoted marks out the place of Charles-Louis Philippe in contemporary French literature).

For the atmospheric quality does not divest things from the rigidity of their outlines in order to let them disintegrate into the inessentiality of fleeting moods, into an incorporeal indeterminability, but, rather, to give them something new, a kind of shining hardness, a levitating weight. Atmosphere is a principle for model making; this was understood by Cézanne and his disciples when the general intoxication with impressionist painting had passed, and it seems that in poetry, too, it is going to be France's mission to recreate the old form with the help of these new means of expression.³¹

Popper's and Lukács's admiration for Cézanne, the recognition of the great change that he had brought about, and the drawing of its theoretical consequences were not, however, a unique phenomenon in contemporary Hungarian intellectual life. The evolution of the views of their aforementioned friends and other members of their generation shows similar tendencies. But this change of approach in the sphere of theory also had some highly remarkable antecedents and parallels in the evolution of creative artists in Hungary, especially in the area of painting.

The decisive point in the history of modern Hungarian painting was the foundation of the Nagybánya artists' colony in 1896. Turning against historicism and the obsolescence of academic art, the colony's members tried to develop the means of a more up-to-date artistic expression, largely by following French models. At first they drew lessons from the art of Courbet and the Barbizon artists, but they also learned a great

deal from the so-called 'subtle naturalism', especially from the work of the painter Bastien-Lepage. Later on, the application of the technical innovations and compositional principles of impressionism could also be found among several members of the group. Nevertheless, it took a long time for the Nagybánya art to gain acceptance in Hungary, and its recognition was a result of lengthy critical and art political battles. In these battles the Nagybánya artists were not only supported by the most progressive art critics, but also by the writers, poets, and critics who were concentrating their efforts on the creation of a modern urban literary and theatrical culture, figures otherwise associated with a variety of schools and trends ranging from naturalism to symbolism and *art nouveau*. During the last decade of this century, however, the artists of the Nagybánya group passed the peak of their evolution, and their achievements began to show signs of growing exhaustion and rigidification, as it slipped into what was just another kind of academism.

Another artist playing a major role in the development of Hungarian art at the turn of the century was József Rippl-Rónai. During his long stay in France (1887—1900) he developed direct links with the most up-to-date artistic trends of the time. He met Aristide Maillol and Edouard Vuillard around 1890, and made friends with Toulouse-Lautrec and Gauguin in 1894. He visited Cézanne in 1895, and exhibited his works along with the best of the generation of post-impressionists. His return to Hungary and his subsequent, highly influential exhibition in Budapest in 1906 were another major stage in the history of modern Hungarian painting. As the art critic Lajos Fülep wrote a few years later:

Rippl was the only artist to pump fresh, lively blood into Hungarian painting, and at home he was everything all at once. He was the Cézanne and Gauguin of Hungarian painting all in one, as well as the representative of what could be called impressionism in the best sense, even its Vuillard, Bonnard, etc. He was single-handedly, the only reaction to the Academy and to Nagybánya.³²

The year 1906 was also the year of other extremely significant events. It was the year when Endre Ady's book, *Új versek* [New Verses], was published, a major document which, owing to its wide echo and revolutionizing influence, deservedly became a symbolic turning point, marking a new era in Hungarian literature. Also in 1906, Bartók and Kodály published their collection, *Magyar népdalok* [Hungarian Folk Songs]. It was the first indicator of a change of epoch, heralding the birth of the new Hungarian music. Things began to move faster in painting as well. During the summer of that year, the young artists at Nagybánya began to become familiar with the most recent innovations in art, thanks to the help of their comrades, who had in the meantime visited Paris. (Those young artists included Leó Popper and Irma Seidler.) And in the autumn of the same year, the Hungarian painters Béla Czóbel, Ödön Márffy, and Róbert Berény exhibited their works in Paris at the *Salon d'Automne*, in the company of Cézanne and Matisse. In 1907, works by Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Denis, and Matisse were also shown in Budapest. Catching up with the new trends soon had its organizational consequences, too.

An effort was made in 1908 to rally together the most diverse trends of the new art, from the Nagybánya artists through Rippl-Rónai to the youngest artists, forming a single association. This union of artists was, however, still-born, unable to bridge the gap between such fundamental differences in attitudes and views. The first radical separation within the camp of modern fine art had already come about in 1909, with the foundation of the group of The Eight.³³ The leader and organizer of the group was Károly Kernstok

who, having already begun his career in the 1890s, had himself traversed the entire road from the Munich academic school through naturalism and impressionism to the newest trends. He gathered the young artists, who, influenced by their experiences in Paris and by the art of Cézanne, Gauguin, and even Matisse, wanted to break completely with their forerunners and masters, as well as with the whole Nagybánya school. At the end of 1909, The Eight staged their first exhibition, followed by a second one in 1911, and a third in 1912.

This development was followed with attention by art criticism and the theory of art. Lajos Fülep played a decisive role in the development of the radical criticism of impressionism. Although at the beginning of his career, in 1905–06, he was still an enthusiastic supporter of the efforts of the Nagybánya artists, he recognized the epochal significance of the work of Cézanne and Gauguin as early as the autumn of 1906. “Two crystal-clear sources of a primeval force and health radiate their immense wealth over this year’s *Salon d’Automne*. They are Cézanne and Gauguin,” he wrote, full of enthusiasm; “In comparison to them everything seems artificial, banal, and forced.”³⁴ Fülep was one of the first art critics—and not only in Hungary—to recognize fully the objective greatness of Cézanne. In his view, Cézanne played a major role as a “direct forerunner of the start toward a new development, a reaction against the impressionists.”³⁵ And in his eulogy of the artist, he ranked Cézanne, “yesterday’s greatest living artist of the world”, with the most eminent figures of the history of European painting, according him a status equal to that of Giotto, Michelangelo, and Rembrandt.³⁶ Lukács, too saw Cézanne’s historical place and standing in similar terms. When characterizing Popper’s concept of form in 1911, he wrote: “This is classicism in the sense that Giotto, Brueghel, and Cézanne are classics.”³⁷ In another article, also written in 1911, he remarked: “Today there is only French art; anyone who does not want to learn directly from Giotto or the Greeks can go only to Cézanne’s school.”³⁸

Fülep broadened his appreciation of Cézanne into a more general criticism of impressionism in his theoretical study “Új művészi stílus” [A new style in art] (1908).

The expression of the paintings of the recent past and its manifestations, impressionism—or any kind of naturalism, for that matter—can no longer meet our requirements today [...] The naturalism of the moderns is a naturalism that has a different vision every minute, a naturalism for its own sake, and not for the sake of style, remaining within the frames of the style just as the old ones did. Impressionism has already drawn the final consequences along this path; to go on—at least now—is impossible. Indeed, impressionism today is something closed, finished, from which all roads lead outside.³⁹

Analyzing the work of the great pathfinders of the period, Gauguin, Maillol, Mallarmé, and Gordon Craig, Fülep drew the conclusion: “After complete disintegration we are once again yearning for the great and absolute validity of art.”⁴⁰

These references and sketchy outlines of the artistic developments of the times were necessary to show the environment in which “Az utak elváltak” [The roads have parted], Lukács’s most important work on the fine arts, was born, and to make its weight and historical role more apparent. This study, published in 1910 in *Nyugat*, the most influential Hungarian literary review of the times, was directly connected with the movements among the country’s painters. At the same time, it represented an integral part in the continuation of the intellectual process outlined above, namely, the shift in the views of art criticism and theory.

The first exhibition of The Eight, which opened on December 30, 1909, was chosen as the topic of a debate in the Galilei Circle, the most progressive intellectual group of

the times, in January, 1910. The opening address by Károly Kernstok, the leader of the painters, summed up the group's program under the title "A kutató művészet" [Art in search]. Lukács gave the next lecture, which, written down and edited in the form of a compact theoretical study, was subsequently published in *Nyugat*. The excerpts quoted from various studies by Lukács show clearly enough that he was interested in art and well informed about it. His analogies and parallels taken from the fine arts were right on target, and he recognized the decisive nature of the turn brought about by Cézanne. In this study, however, he did much more. He became personally involved in the events of one of the major turning points in the history of modern Hungarian art as an active participant in the process, the interpreter and ideologue of the movement. The very title of the study, "Az utak elváltak" slogan-like, effective, and to the point as it was, already indicated the substance of the art process in question, the radical character of the evolution taking place in the life of Hungarian art. The study itself begins by declaring that "these pictures manifest clearly and unambiguously for the first time that the roads have parted".⁴¹ Then it refers to Kernstok's address:

Kernstok has told us what this is all about. It means that the pictures painted by him and his friends (and the poetic works created by some poets as well as certain philosophic writings) want to express the essence of things. The essence of things! These simple, unpolemical words indicate the substance of the great debate, the point where the roads part.⁴²

Lukács, of course, did not see the coup accomplished by The Eight simply as an immanent development of art history, a change of style, or an innovation in painting techniques. He analyzed the world view behind the form, the things that these artists rebelled against and surpassed. He characterized the earlier, impressionistic world picture as follows:

For the whole *Weltanschauung* in which we were brought up, the art from which we received our first great impressions, did not know things, and denied that anything may have an essence [...] it did not believe in the permanence of anything [...] Mood was all, and everything existed only for a moment [...] And there was nothing to bring order to the rushing, undivided flow of moments [...] Because there were no things, only the ceaseless flow of moods, and between moods there is not, and cannot be, any difference in value.⁴³

The painters' changing outlook was, for Lukács, a sign of the untenability of the impressionistic world picture.

Everything was reduced to a question of approach, everything was just one's view, a personal matter [...] In such a world anything could be reconciled with anything else, and there was nothing which might have excluded something else.⁴⁴

The need for change was also spelled out.

Today we once again desire an order among things [...] We are yearning for permanences, for the measurability of our actions, and for the unambiguity and controllability of our statements. We want all our things to have a meaning and a consequence, that they might exclude something. We want evaluations. Distinctions. Contemplations.⁴⁵

Obviously, these findings, while totally valid for the changes taking place in the field of painting, also indicate more than that. They indicate the need for a universal world view which was to help Lukács himself to step beyond his essayistic period in the direction of science, philosophy, and metaphysics. His experiences with the fine arts

helped him to become aware of his own desire for a 'philosophy in the classical sense'.

Nor was it purely accidental that the study became centered on the concept of form because form is unambiguous and exclusive of other forms; because form is the principle of evaluation, distinction, and the creation of order [...] The new art is architectonic in the old, true sense. Its colors, words, and lines are only expressions of the essence of things, their order and harmony, weights and balances [...] The new art is the art of the creation of complete things, of going the full road, of immersion in things.⁴⁶

Let us contrast these thoughts with an earlier essay by Lukács, the one on Gauguin, written in 1907, when the artist had an exhibition in Budapest. In this piece of writing, the fine arts were more or less a pretext for Lukács to talk about the problem that took up most of his interest at that time: "Every artist is searching for his own Tahiti, and so far Gauguin is the only one to have found it [...] Gauguin is the answer to a very general question [...] that question is the relationship of today's artist to life."⁴⁷ It is evident that what Lukács saw in Gauguin was not the problems of form, or of painting. Instead, he was seeking possible solutions to the tragic conflict between art and life. The young Lukács was most intrigued by the problems of life style, the way of life. These problems can be followed throughout his early works. This was already recognized by Popper in August, 1908, when he wrote in a letter: "for whatever the title of what you have written, it always deals with one and the same thing, with the great effort to find a place, with the hesitation, escape, and search for a shelter, to and from between life and art."⁴⁸ And it was also Popper who recognized the other tendency, the ability to understand forms, in Lukács's writings. In his review of the *Soul and Form* he made a sharp distinction between two possible types of critics. One type of critic

understands the language of forms that is beyond man [...] The other type, whom we have called the critic of contents, looks for life in its multitude of shapes. He looks for human destinies, people's relationship to fate, to each other, and to themselves, the voice and lyrical flame of this relationship.⁴⁹

Although at the time he still ranked Lukács among the latter ('György Lukács's writings are not really critical reviews, but discourses on life'), he nevertheless admitted that

This path, the path of his development, moves from the criticism of life toward the criticism of form [...] György Lukács's writings [...] will sooner or later be criticism of form, and then they will penetrate the secrets of works of art more deeply than any other critical writings.⁵⁰

Although Popper's prophecy never quite came true, there is no doubt that the two tendencies that he described had always been present in Lukács's early works, though running parallel, manifest side by side—ever since the paper on "A dráma formája" [The form of the drama] (1906)—rather than as successive stages of some kind of evolution. For Lukács never became a 'critic of form' in a narrow sense. The 'form critical' approach, however, is manifest in many of his important works, and it also lends special significance to the study "Az utak elváltak". It enabled Lukács to recognize the fundamental role of The Eight. Such was the character of their art that its essence could not have been grasped from the side of 'life criticism'. The themes used by the painters of the group, the material of life that they portrayed, had nothing to do with any kind of literariness, genre-type painting, naturalistic tendentiousness, or 'paintings of poverty'. There was nothing narrative in them, no historical event, dramatic scene,

or special psychological situation. Only an analysis of the form and the world view behind it could lead Lukács to the recognition of the revolutionary significance of the innovations seemingly involving only the composition and the technique of paintings, to really see the value, as a gesture, of this long-awaited act of artistic policy.

These pictures mean battle [...] This art, one of order, must destroy all anarchy of sensations and moods. The mere emergence and existence of this art is a declaration of war. A declaration of war on all kinds of impressionism, sensation, and mood, on all disorder and denial of values, on every world view and art that starts with, and finishes, with the word I?⁵¹

Moreover, this radical opposition to extreme individualism also demonstrated the possibility of stepping out of the sphere of art, of an evolution in the direction of social criticism and political action.

And the very belief that there must be something palpably permanent in the turmoil of moments, the conviction that there are things and that they do have an essence, already precludes impressionism and all its manifestations. Because, if that is so, then there must also be aims toward which it is worthwhile and even necessary to move, and the direction of the roads is no longer indifferent.⁵²

Thus, there is nothing strange in the fact that the road of the generation taking part in this change in art and world view led straight to the revolutions of 1918 and 1919. Those who had previously fought for a new art also became active participants in the struggle for social and political change.⁵³

All this makes it clear that "Az utak elváltak" is a major document of the intellectual evolution of the early 20th century. It called attention to an artistic act of crucial importance, made its readers aware of the decisive shift in world view that this act involved, revealing its roots, and the possibilities it implied. The birth of this piece of writing can only be explained by a fortunate coincidence of subjective and objective conditions. Lukács, mainly with the help of his friends, became familiar with the most up-to-date developments in modern art, and recognized the essence of the turning-point hallmarked by the names of Cézanne, Gauguin, and Maillol. He knew the achievements of Hungarian painting, the work of the Nagyványa group, of Rippl-Rónai, and The Eight. His family supported these efforts as collectors, thus providing him with an intimate and personal knowledge of the objects of art concerned. His friends and acquaintances included graduates of Nagyványa, as well as members of The Eight.

These experiences and influences found an outlet in the study written on the first exhibition of The Eight. But the coincidence of the external development of art and Lukács's inner evolution was no less fortunate. This was the time of the first radical, organizational break in Hungarian painting, the first act of dissidence, of secession. It was at the same time that Lukács reached the point where he recognized and made others aware of the necessity of overcoming the impressionistic world picture, and spelled out the need for the creation of an art and a philosophy resting on solid ground—on order and genuine values. But the meeting of all these factors was also fortunate because neither the previous nor the subsequent development of the fine arts in Hungary made a shift with which Lukács could identify so completely, which would have suited his own inner demands as much, or which could have been explored to the same depths.

No other writing connected to a topical event in the fine arts can be found in the early period of Lukács's activity, the period lasting up to 1918. Some of his scattered remarks indicate that his relationship to the fine arts did not undergo any essential change in the 1910s. The decisive character of his admiration for Cézanne did not fade;

his contacts with the members of The Eight remained uninterrupted, and the number of those among his friends who devoted themselves to the fine arts—the critics, artists, and art historians—continued to increase. But he no longer followed the subsequent developments of both world and Hungarian art, the efforts and trends after the work of Cézanne or The Eight. His interest turned increasingly toward the philosophy of art. Already in a letter in the second half of 1910, he wrote: “Now will come ‘science’, slowly but surely. Perhaps there will arrive real metaphysics as compensation for the poetic lyricism that couldn’t be.”⁵⁴ In a later reminiscence, he said of this turning point:

My meeting with Bloch (1910) brought me to the recognition that a philosophy in the classical sense may still be possible even today. Under the influence of this experience, I spent the winter of 1911 and 1912 in Florence, so that I could reflect undisturbed on my aesthetic as the first part of my philosophy.⁵⁵

While working on the creation of a philosophical system, however, he continued to think about the theoretical problems of the fine arts. The draft of a lecture on painting and its text based on shorthand notes of the actual lecture have survived among his papers. This lecture is unique in the entire oeuvre of Lukács. Neither before nor after did he investigate the problems of painting as a medium of art as concretely and in the same detail. He had already become aware of the need for approaching the problem of medium, or genre, from a philosophical angle earlier:

Besides that, I would like to write an article (a strictly scientific one) on genre as a metaphysical a priori that is, that we cannot draw conclusions about the genre from the work (this is only the path of our learning); but, rather, the genre comes before the work, and it exists and is valid—even if there were a not single writing in the world that would really befit it.⁵⁶

His “Das Formproblem der Malerei” may be regarded as the realization of this program, demonstrated through the medium of painting rather than literature.

In his lecture, he characterizes the task at hand from the concrete standpoint of painting, as follows:

Das Problem, das hier behandelt werden soll, ist ganz kurz dieses: ob die Malerei an und für sich ein nicht mehr weiter analysierbarer Komplex in der Ästhetik ist, also eine Form, für die nur eine einheitliche Formenlogik gilt, oder ob es innerhalb der Malerei verschiedene Kategorien, verschiedene Gruppen solcher Formen gibt, die eine eigene Struktur besitzen. Die alte Ästhetik hat die Malerei zumeist nach Gegenständen eingeteilt, wodurch selbstverständlich etwas vollständig Inadäquates ausgesprochen wurde.⁵⁷

Lukács started out from the hypothesis that when facing the task of endowing the world with form, the artist who has reached the state of ‘pure visualness’ may choose between three types of ‘attitude’ or ‘sensation’. These are the mood, the soul, and the spirit. It is to these three ‘potential attitudes’ that the three genre categories—still life, portrait, and landscape (now no longer taken in the sense of objects)—correspond. In the course of Lukács’s detailed explanation, they are completed with the fourth genre, ‘great composition’. He sums up his investigation as follows:

Ich muss [...] darauf zurückgehen, dass die Kategorien von Stilleben, Portrait, Landschaft und heroischer Komposition eben Kategorien für sich sind, apriorische Kategorien, deren Apriorität darin besteht, dass die malerische Gegenständlichkeit, die in jedem solchen Stadium ausgedrückt wird, eben nur darin ihre apriorische Idee, den vollständig adäquaten Ausdruck finden kann.⁵⁸

Another remarkable feature of the lecture is that, while Lukács picked his examples from the classics of painting, that is, up to Cézanne, his notes on the literature of the subject refer to the most current works on the theory of art, especially to those of Fiedler, Hildebrand, and Riegl. This, too, points to a philosophy of art in the making. For, in the *Heidelberger Philosophie der Kunst* the use of the achievements and lessons of the literature of the theory of art is more than apparent. Besides the representatives of classical German philosophy, Lukács referred most frequently to authors on the history of art and the theory of the fine arts, above all to Fiedler, although Hildebrand, Riegl, Popper, Burckhardt, Wickhoff, Worringer, and Wölfflin are also frequently mentioned. Therefore, although the text includes few concrete analyses of works of fine art, this book, since it is thoroughly grounded in the history and theory of art, is an important document contributing to our understanding of Lukács's relation to the fine arts.

To sum up, then, it may be safely said that the fine arts played an extremely important role in the first great period of Lukács's career. There is ample evidence to prove his interest in it and his knowledge of its literature. He was well informed about the most modern trends in art in Hungary and the world at the time. His recognition of the turning point represented by the work of Cézanne had a major influence on the evolution of his world view. In developing his own philosophy of art and system of categories, he received considerable inspiration from art historians and from art theorists. In 1910, he himself became actively involved in the events going on in the arts. His study, "Az utak elváltak" registered one of the decisive turning points in the history of Hungarian art, the appearance of The Eight on the scene, explaining the importance of this radical break with the past, and revealing the intellectual and ideological components of this act. The investigation of why this fruitful interaction stopped after the revolutions of 1918–19, why his interest in the fine arts began to wane, why in *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, that major work of his late years, he still used practically the same fine-art examples as in his youth, and why his view of art did not change or develop in the nearly half a century in-between—all this would fall outside the scope of the present study.

(Translated by János Boris)

Notes

¹ György Lukács: "Berlin júliusban" [Berlin in July], in his *Ifjúkori művek 1902–1918* [Early Works 1902–1918] (Budapest: 1977).

² *Ibid.*, p. 41.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 352.

⁴ György Lukács: *A modern dráma fejlődésének története* [The history of the development of modern drama] (Budapest: 1978) pp. 429–30.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 454.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 509–10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 485.

⁸ György Lukács: "Georg Simmel", in *Ifjúkori művek 1902–1918*, pp. 747–8.

⁹ On the artists mentioned, see Judit Szabadi: "The Life and Art of Lajos Gulácsy", *Acta Historiae Artium* (1970) No. 3–4; Béla Horváth: "Károly Kernstok", *Acta Historiae Artium* (1967) No. 4; Judit Szabadi: "Anna Lesznai's Painting", *New Hungarian Quarterly* (1976) No. 62; István Genthon: "Béni Ferenczy", *Acta Historiae Artium* (1959) No. 1–2—also in *New Hungarian Quarterly* (1960) No. 1; Sándor Kontha: "Béni Ferenczy", *Acta Historiae Artium* (1979) No. 3–4.

¹⁰ Árpád Timár: "Lajos Fülepi 1885–1970", *New Hungarian Quarterly* (1985) No. 98.

¹¹ On the members of the Sunday Circle, see Éva Karády and Erzsébet Vezér: *A vasárnapi kör* [The Sunday circle], (Budapest: 1980); Anna Wessely: "Antal and Lukács", *New Hungarian Quarterly* (1979) No. 73; Kristóf Nyíri: "Arnold Hauser on his Life and Times", *New Hungarian Quarterly* (1980) No. 80 and (1981) No. 81; Árpád Tímár: "Charles de Tolnay's Links with Hungary", *New Hungarian Quarterly* (1981) No. 83.

¹² György Lukács: "Kiknek nem kell és miért a Balázs Béla költészete" [Who do not want Béla Balázs's poetry and why] in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 708.

¹³ After Popper died, Lukács's letters to him were returned, and he kept them along with the letters that Popper had written to him. Together with the other letters of his youth, he deposited them in 1917 in the safe of a Heidelberg bank from where, as is well known, they came to light only after Lukács himself had died. A major part of this correspondence was published by Éva Fekete and Éva Karádi in *Lukács György levelezése 1902–1917* [The Correspondence of György Lukács 1902–1917] (Budapest: 1981)—partly also in English as *Selected Correspondence 1902–1920*, trans. by J. Marcus and Z. Tar (Budapest and New York: 1986)—and in German as *Briefwechsel 1902–1917* (Budapest–Stuttgart: 1982).

¹⁴ Leó Popper: "Dialógus a művészetről" [A dialogue on art], in his *Esszék és kritikák* [Essays and Critiques] (Budapest: 1983).

¹⁵ György Lukács: "Beszélgetés Laurence Sterne-ről" [A Conversation on Laurence Sterne], in his *Ifjúkori művek 1902–1918*.

¹⁶ The letter of Leó Popper to György Lukács, dated April 19, 1909, in Lukács: *Selected Correspondence 1902–1920*, p. 75.

¹⁷ Leó Popper: "Peter Brueghel der Ältere", *Kunst und Künstler* (1910. pp. 599–606;—also in *Acta Historiae Artium* (1971) No. 1–2.

¹⁸ The letter of György Lukács to Leó Popper, dated October 26, 1909, in Lukács: *Selected Correspondence 1902–1920*, p. 100.

¹⁹ The letter of György Lukács to Leó Popper, dated December 20, 1910, in *ibid.*, pp. 135–7.

²⁰ Georg Lukács: *Heidelberger Philosophie der Kunst* (Darmstadt: 1974), p. 131.

²¹ Popper: "Peter Brueghel der Ältere", in *op. cit.*, pp. 9–10.

²² Leó Popper: "Volkskunst und Formbeseelung", *Die Fackel* (June 2, 1911).

²³ Georg Lukács: "Das Formproblem der Malerei", in *Heidelberger Philosophie der Kunst*.

²⁴ Lukács: *Heidelberger Philosophie der Kunst*, pp. 99–100.

²⁵ Popper's surviving writings contain but a handful of references to the 'theory of misunderstanding'. The study on Brueghel makes mention of the difference between the artist's intention and the result, and the study on folk art refers to a 'particularly deep misunderstanding' in the process of reception. His review on Lukács's book also includes the sentence 'the critic will recognize the will of the artist; but the other intention, that of the form (which is a wild and autonomous intention) will obliterate and falsify the first, the creative intention'. Popper's papers also include a fragment consisting of a few sentences and bearing the title "A félreértés elmélete" [The theory of misunderstanding].

²⁶ See *Lukács György levelezése*, pp. 168, 175, 252, 254, 256, 311, and 350.

²⁷ György Lukács: Megjegyzések az irodalomtörténet elméletéhez [Notes on the theory of literary history] in *Ifjúkori művek*, pp. 402–3.

²⁸ Georg Lukács: "Leo Popper: Ein Nachruf", *Pester Lloyd* (December 18, 1911), pp. 5–6—also in *Acta Historiae Artium* (1971) No. 1–2, p. 5.

²⁹ Lukács: *Heidelberger Philosophie der Kunst*, pp. 40–1.

³⁰ Leo Popper: "Die Bildhauerei, Rodin und Maillol", *Die Fackel* (April 29, 1911)—also in *Acta Historiae Artium* (1971) No. 1–2.

³¹ György Lukács: "Charles-Louis Philippe", in *Ifjúkori művek*, pp. 469–70.

³² Lajos Fülep: "A művészet forradalmától a nagy forradalomig" [From the Revolution of Art to the Great Revolution] (Budapest: 1974), Vol. I, p. 214.

³³ On The Eight, see Krisztina Passuth: "Les 'Huits'", *Acta Historiae Artium* (1962) No. 3–4; *A Nyolcak festészete* [The Painting of The Eight] (Budapest: 1967); *The Hungarian Avantgarde: The Eight and the Activists* (London: 1980).

³⁴ Lajos Fülep: "Écrits sur Cézanne", *Acta Historiae Artium* (1974) No. 1–2, p. 107.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

³⁷ György Lukács: "Popper Leó", in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 561.

³⁸ György Lukács: "A gall veszély" [The Gaul danger], *ibid.*, p. 562.

³⁹ Fülep: *A művészet forradalmától a nagy forradalomig*, Vol. I, pp. 502, 495.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 515.

⁴¹ György Lukács: "Az utak elváltak" [The roads have parted], in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 280.

⁴² *Ibid.* p. 281.

⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 281.

- 44 *Ibid.* p. 282.
- 45 *Ibid.* p. 284.
- 46 *Ibid.* pp. 283—85.
- 47 György Lukács: "Gauguin", in *ibid.* 115.
- 48 The letter of Leó Popper to György Lukács, in August, 1908, in *Lukács György levelezése*, p. 74.
- 49 Leó Popper: "Lukács György: A lélek és a formák" [György Lukács: The soul and the forms], in *Esszék és kritikák* p. 63.
- 50 *Ibid.* p. 65.
- 51 György Lukács: "Az utak elváltak", in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 280 and 286.
- 52 *Ibid.* p. 284.
- 53 Éva Körner: "Künstler der Ungarischen Räterepublik", *Acta Historiae Artium* (1959) No. 1—2.
- 54 The letter of György Lukács to Leó Popper, dated [October 25] 1910, in *Lukács: Selected Correspondence*, p. 130.
- 55 György Lukács: "Előszó a Magyar irodalom—magyar kultúra c. kötethez" [Preface to the volume 'Hungarian literature—Hungarian culture'] in *Curriculum vitae* (Budapest: 1982) p. 389.
- 56 The letter of György Lukács to Leó Popper, dated October 9, 1910, in *Lukács György levelezése*, p. 255.
- 57 Georg Lukács: "Das Formproblem der Malerei", in *Heidelberger Philosophie der Kunst*, p. 231.
- 58 *Ibid.* p. 241

Lukács's So-Called 'Essay Period' and the Concept of History in His Book on Drama

by

L. Ferenc Lendvai

Already from György Lukács's first dramatic critiques, it is apparent that he was an adherent of the 'grand style', which was recreated from and built on the results of the artistic style of the end of the century. He consciously regarded this grand style, then just coming into being, as the descendant of the great classical arts and measured its results by the standard of the latter. In his article in *Jövendő*, he explicitly points out the contemporary writers regarded by him as classics: "Ibsen, Nietzsche, and Tolstoy will be the classics of today's age. Hauptmann is the poet of today's age."¹

He turns first of all to Ibsen's art and, in one of his early dramatic critiques, compares it to that of Molière: "Ibsen wrote the bitter comedy of his 'ideal demands' in *The Wild Duck*, and Molière, in the *Misanthrope*."² It is also clear from the manner of reference that Ibsen was important to Lukács from the point of view of the problem of 'giving form to life'. He deals with Ibsen on two occasions. In the longer study, "Gondolatok Ibsen Henrikről" [Thoughts on Henrik Ibsen], Ibsen's art is located in the intellectual currents of the 19th century:

Others also felt the pain of the great and lonely man. The same pains tormented the souls of those men who did not know anything of one another and would not have acknowledged one another as relatives. This bitterness runs through Baudelaire's poetry and that is what Flaubert [...] complains about in his letters; that is Grillparzer's secret tragedy and the basis of Schopenhauer's pessimism.³

He particularly stresses the roles of Ibsen and Flaubert ("Ibsen's brother in the great martyrdom of art").⁴ Calling their irony "completely romantic", he places them beside Kierkegaard, the author of the "either-or" principle.⁵

There, he also offers a definition of romanticism:

Romanticism is first of all the revolution of feelings against all hobbles binding them [...] a mystic world view based on artistic feeling. The highest possible degree of individualism, where the object, the reality is excluded (cf. Fichte's philosophy), where all the limits collapse, and the sovereign individual recreates the world in his own image.⁶

It is not the truth of that categorization in which Fichte and Kierkegaard, Baudelaire and Ibsen, Grillparzer and Flaubert are qualified in the same way as 'romantics' that is important for us, but, rather, the way that he describes the position of all of them: "What is their position like? In general: that of those born late. They lived in an age when all

romanticism had already broken down and grown old, when rationalism, their sworn enemy, was ruling over all spheres [...] They had already experienced disillusion.”⁷ The important thing in Lukács’s characterization is that he regards the *fin de siècle* as the age of individuality’s cessation; to recompose his words: as the age of reification. Mind and art are strangers in this age, their representatives are lonely and tragic characters. Their fate is martyrdom—but precisely ‘in the great martyrdom of art’ they constitute the permanent counterpoint of values against disappointing reality.

The classics of the young Lukács are not dead classics; the shorter piece on Ibsen expresses just this conviction. He asks, ‘would Henrik Ibsen, whom we respect and perhaps still even like, but who no longer has any part in our lives, really have become a “notability of world literature”?’ He then answers, “we can cast only our belief against those who would like to place our great poet with one motion among the dead who are loudly respected and embalmed for ever.”⁸ Thus, in a lecture from 1909, he declared that the classics of ancient times are alive even today, or, rather, they are classics only insofar as they are alive even today:

What does it mean that a man who had died long before, has and can have an effect on today’s art? [...] I mean how the art of Velazquez and Frans Hals helped the development of impressionistic painting, how the romantic and comic novel of the end of the 18th century and of the beginning of the 19th century found the decisive elements of its own style in Rabelais and Cervantes.⁹

The classics—and Lukács always has in mind above all Shakespeare—in their own ages, practically holding a ‘mirror up to nature’, at the same time express something general as well:

Every true playwright aspires after tragedy. He searches ever deeper for the causes of conflicts, until finally he reaches those few really great questions to which there are no answers and those collisions that have no solutions; and, in fact, they are always collisions between the individual and that unknown power that can be called either chance, fate, the universal order, or divinity as well, but its true nature is forever unknown. So, essentially, there is always some mystic element in tragedy [...] Rationalism believes that with the change of institutions, with enlightenment, certain conflicts can be avoided. On the whole, its ambition is anti-tragic, it wants to prevent tragic collisions from coming into being.¹⁰

The passion that criticizes the flatness of bourgeois life and positivist rationalism inspired the young Lukács to turn temporarily away from socio-political problems in general. Not a year had passed since his first dramatic critique, in which he discussed with great vehemence the agricultural problem of contemporary Hungary, when his paper “Az új Hauptmann” [The new Hauptmann] was published. He writes in it praise-fully that ‘today’s Hauptmann is not the Hauptmann of *The Weavers* any more.’ He prefers Hauptmann’s mediocre works, written at about that time, which leaned toward mysticism, works such as *Michael Kramer* and *Der arme Heinrich*, rather than his powerful social dramas. According to him, ‘it is in those works that the new, the really great Hauptmann appears’. The manner of his characterization of Hauptmann’s new world view gives insight into his own world view of that time. Hence, he writes that Hauptmann

learned: we can hammer on the big gates, on the last gates, behind which the last secrets are concealed, in vain, we would never open them [...] There are powers. Enormous powers. We cannot see them themselves on the earth, but we can see their deeds. And sometimes we can guess, if we are forced to our knees, if we are humiliated or elevated by something, sometimes we can guess what it was that humiliated or elevated us. It was something great. And we can imagine chiefly two powers of this kind: death and love.¹¹

Of course, the composition is extremely naive, in a way precociously childish (the author of the article is a young man of 18), although the contents are undoubtedly in accordance with the whole intellectuality of the writings of the young Lukács, author of the 'essays' of the *Soul and Form*. Politics and social questions—these are, according to him, what the new Hauptmann shows: 'it is interesting to watch them, it is not worth participating in them: the oppressed are worth just as much as the oppressors.' Thus, Hauptmann is linked up with those who, like Baudelaire and Flaubert, Grillparzer and Ibsen, Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard, 'have already experienced disillusion'.

This disillusion, the disappointment in the society that surrounded him, is a basic experience for the young Lukács, and, as long as he cannot see any force that could radically change that society or at least would be able to announce such a change, it is his basic attitude as well. 'What is disillusion?', he asks in one of his writings, also from 1903 and also published in *Jövendő*. He answers, "There are men who are not alive any more, though they are not dead; they are not living, just watching life. They are standing beside the great road, looking at the by-passers and ridiculing them because they live, move, hope—there is nothing to hope for."¹² Not that Lukács had definitely considered himself such a man. But he is attracted by this way of life, which may mean—because it stands outside life—being superior to the vulgarity and chaos of life. Disillusion is tragic, and true tragedy is disillusion. The world view of the young Lukács inclines toward Hebbel's concept of 'pan-tragedy':

What are the greatest tragedies in human life? Those of which nobody knows [...] And if these great, greatest tragedies are felt only by those who are destroyed by them, and of which the world has no idea, who can assure us whether there is not suffering and tragedy wherever feeling people live?¹³

But common people are not able to reach as far; they cannot reach disillusion and the heroism of tragedy because they wear nets of false illusions around themselves, to secure the tranquillity of their petty lives. The hero of the "ideal demands" always remains a "misanthrope", and the modern misanthrope, Ibsen's Gregers Werle, finally "discovers that truth, that the ideal is only for the privileged few".¹⁴

So, in these early criticisms, two different tendencies make themselves clearly felt: one of them, concrete and social critical, dealing with sociology, the other, abstract and cultural critical, dealing with disillusion. The two cannot be clearly separated; on the contrary, they are intertwined and appear together in almost all his writings. That is the case with respect to *A modern dráma fejlődésének története* [History of the development of the modern drama] and the *Soul and Form*, too. For all that, the former tendency dominates in the book on drama, the latter, in the essay volume (in the German version even more prominently than in the Hungarian one). It would be trivial to explain this difference by saying that the book on drama on the whole (considering the preliminaries leading up to it, too) dates back slightly earlier than the essay volume; or by saying that the book on drama is a 'Hungarian' book, and the essay volume a 'German' one. For what we must ask is precisely why the cultural-critical tendencies—which had been present from the beginning—came into power later, in the form of a 'German' book. As far as the origins of the books are concerned, both works were written simultaneously, and, in fact, the young Lukács deliberately chose to manifest one of the opposing tendencies, which were parallel in his mind as well, in the first book, and the other one in the latter.

The first version of the book on drama was completed in 1907 for the competition of a literary society, where it was awarded a prize. Lukács worked on the book for

years afterward, pursuing his material until 1909. Certainly, there is ideological continuity. As Lukács wrote to his friend, the philosopher of art Leó Popper: "And please think [...] of the first chapter of my book [...] which I have already seen and have written in my article¹⁵ in *Szerda* [...] Regarding the expression, of course, it was immature and uncertain."¹⁶ Popper had earlier written:

The book [i.e., The history of the development of the modern drama] is an entirely different affair [...] As a concept, it is very impressive and the (still to be written sociological) introduction that you've told me about fits so well into the whole even I—who am not very knowledgeable about the subject matter—can feel the ever-present societal skeleton underneath the (not too thick) flesh.¹⁷

It is even possible that if you add a bit of sociological leaven to the dough, the book may be received [...] quite favorably by Simmel and his circle [...] how different you are from the Georg Lukács of yesteryear [...] one can see this right away when comparing the book with your review essays on Schnitzler or on the Ibsen works.¹⁸

The re-elaboration of the material rendered the work quite difficult for Lukács, and he found the composition of the book on drama ever more burdensome. "Unfortunately, I am making very slow progress with my book [...] The work gives me a lot of trouble," he writes in a letter to Popper.¹⁹ And, hardly by chance, he raised the idea of the essay volume in the very same letter. Its contents and order were subjected to lengthy discussions in their correspondence, although the conception had been formed from the beginning. In an undated letter (presumably from June, 1909), Lukács writes:

I am glad that you liked my essay plan [i.e., *Soul and Form*]. I will not include Ibsen, because it is not good, nor the 'Gauguin', because it is not weighty enough. I have a few more reviews like that [...] They are all quite good, but I do not want to publish a sort of 'collected essays'. I'd rather have a few *great* pieces that are profound enough in themselves yet belong together and form a whole.²⁰

Ultimately, seven essays, written from 1907 through 1909, were involved in the Hungarian version of the volume, and Lukács—as is well known—discussed the question of what constituted the intentional unity of the volume in the introductory essay.

While Lukács translated the essays of the *Soul and Form* or had them translated and published them in German with practically no changes, he was considering serious changes in the case of the book on drama. He outlined the German version that he was planning in a form considerably shortened and greatly modified in structure. The outline survived on a letter by Lukács's father written to his son on November 24, 1910, on the first page of the blank leaf. The back page contains Lukács's notes concerning where he had sent essays in German from the material of the *Soul and Form*. From this work, as is known, in the end only fragments were published in German, and only from those two introductory chapters that Lukács had sent to Paul Ernst in 1910,²¹ although it was not until 1914 that the details were published in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*. The totally different manner of treatment in the two works that simultaneously came into being indicates that, while the author found one of them (the essays of highly Germanic style of the *Soul and Form*) to belong almost as a matter of course to the sphere of thought of the German-language territory, in the other (the book on drama), he deliberately took the point of view of the Hungarian sociologist of art who looks on the development of the European 19th century—so to speak—from the outside, with coolly inquiring attention. Contrary to the essay volume's cultural critical and existential-philosophical way of looking at things, the book on drama aspires after a certain historicity. The most serious part of the book, even from the point of view of the philos-

ophy of history, is no doubt the art sociological examinations following Simmel—and via Simmel, following Marx—around which a picture of the history of the modern age appears in outline, already preparing the way for the philosophy of history of *The Theory of the Novel*.

Of course, the young Lukács was interested first of all in great artistic form. In the preface to the book on drama, he already refers to his “Megjegyzések az irodalomtörténet elméletéhez” [Notes on the theory of literary history]²² which, published around the same time, can be regarded as the methodological foundation of the book, and repeats several thoughts of the article in it.

What is really social in literature is: form [...] The receiver does not recognize that [in art] there does not exist anything that is not formed, and thus, what he feels as an effect of content, is such only to a very slight extent [...] But even the creator awakens to the consciousness of form very rarely. It is experiences and technical problems that creators have.²³

Likewise, as regards history:

In certain times, only certain concepts of life are possible and even if the sociology of literature cannot deal with what this concept of life was, or what generated it, it must declare: a certain world view brings about certain forms, makes them possible, while ruling out others in advance.²⁴

When examining any of the artistic forms, we are finally led to world view: “This final cause cannot be but one feeling, the writer’s feeling, thinking, view, and evaluation [...] of the world; grouping it and specifying its pace, rhythm and stresses; in short [...] his world view.”²⁵ Already here (the main text itself of course came into being earlier than the “Notes on the theory of literary history”) he emphasizes the symbolic character of great forms:

Perhaps the world view might have become obsolete in its contents, but the spectator, under the impression produced by form, projects a world view that corresponds to his own way of seeing, but which is surely different from that of the writer, [...] behind the events. The most prominent example of this is perhaps the effect of King Oedipus.²⁶

These symbolic characters are certain types: ‘the dramatic character is always a type’;²⁷ “if one man plays in it (vis. in drama), it is necessary that he should represent, should symbolize, the man (or a certain kind of man) [...] it is necessary that that very man and that very fate should be a typical man and a typical fate for the actual mass.”²⁸ That is why even the cultic origin of tragedy is no accident: “that drama can be heightened to mystic extasies, explains most clearly drama’s origin from religious roots”.²⁹ Nevertheless, the point is not the abstract-metaphysical, but all the same, for too concretely bourgeois theory of the ‘eternally human’. In fact, the author explicitly rejects it: “But this ‘eternally human’ at the same time meant the extension of bourgeois humanism to everybody, meant a pan-bourgeoisism, what Sieyes had in mind, when he said that *tiers état* was everything in the state.”³⁰ Hence, he praises Hebbel, as “with him there are no ‘eternally human’ tragedies that happen nowhere and anywhere, situated in a certain age only for the sake of nice decorative effects”.³¹

The young Lukács already applies the symbol-versus-allegory opposition. The essence of the former manner of description is that the symbolic object or person

should be life and symbol at the same time and at every moment, organical, inseparable even in thought, so that these two qualities of the object or person should never diverge. For it is quite clear that as soon as

they diverge, symbol becomes allegory: I infer a certain thing to mean this and that, and the inexplicable, mystic unity between them having ceased, the whole thing becomes prosaic; if I want, I accept it, if not, I won't accept it.³²

Lukács makes the reference in connection with Ibsen, and sharply criticizes him because "his symbols often decline into allegories",³³ as for example in *Baumeister Solness* or even more in *Ghosts*: 'perhaps Ibsen managed to solve this problem perfectly only in *The Wild Duck*'.³⁴ The same thing emerges similarly in the case of Strindberg, but paradoxically, it is true that 'in the description of his characters and in their motivation his aim is the greatest comprehensiveness'.³⁵ Still, his detailed description—drawn in a naturalistic manner—serves only as the illustration of the obsessively asserted pre-existing tendency toward hatred of women, and thus 'his plays, full of the description of intricate inner lives and instantaneousness [...] create an almost abstract general effect'.³⁶ Lukács further cites what 'the great realist Fontane' said in praise of Hauptmann: "there is everything that he finds valuable in Ibsen and nothing of that what always hurt him so much in him [i.e. Hauptmann] [...] Therefore he calls him a true realist with good style."³⁷ Here, the mention of 'the great realist Fontane' is hardly coincidental. The concepts of 'great classicism' and 'great realism' had played a part in Lukács's thought from the beginning, and were to be perfected in his later periods, although, of course, he had never spoken of 'great realism' or 'great classicism' as such.

It is first of all the interest in great art that defines the theory of the young Lukács, as he examines the position of modern drama in the culture of the age from this point of view.

The tragic position of modern drama, which naturally displays the same situation as the other arts, but perhaps in the most exposed manner, lies precisely in that its deepest and purest generalities can address the fewest people [...]. As they do not exist in the great mass of people as desires that are unconscious, although waiting for satisfaction all the same. And most of the aesthetic minority will always [...] adhere to the lyrical, intimate and impressionistic arts [...]. The results of aspirations after the great monumentality of the fine arts display quite the same situation (Marées, Gauguin etc.). Today every direct sense of deep and monumental form is missing so much that the most conscious of contemporary writers concerned with stylization, Paul Ernst, concludes that great art has always been practically foreign to people. 'Man muss sich deutlich machen', he writes, 'dass das grosse Kunstwerk an sich durchaus gegen die Instinkte der Menschen geht'.³⁸

The gap between the common and art is wider than ever: "Modern art has no public. Most people have not the slightest idea that art exists at all, and should they know it, they would not understand and would not enjoy it."³⁹ It is not only in drama that the impressionistic attitude towards life and naturalistic style prevails as the dominating tendency of the "fin de siècle":

that was the essence of the technique of the modern painting of that time, too. Breaking with the exclusive cult of line, the relegation of local colours into the background, the object's colours that depend purely on accidental and atmospheric conditions, the replacement of the composition's strict regularity by a more direct and more instantaneous arrangement; so everything, done by so-called impressionistic painting is basically the same [...] in this new sense everything will be nice provided it is seen in the right way; what is more, they search for repulsive topics, to show by them that everything can be expressed by everything. 'I have never seen an ugly thing in all my life', Constable, one of the forerunners of impressionistic painting, once wrote.⁴⁰

He further expounds the same thought elsewhere, in connection with tragedy:

In most naturalistic comedies there are elements of grotesque comedy as well, which, on the other hand, is extremely close to the elements of naturalism [...] The grotesque is always the unity of the thing seen up

close and the ornamental, the decorative; in other words: it is the expression of the decorative value of common, trivial, ugly things. Even more precisely: the ugly quality of ugly things becoming ornamental; and not the discovery of beauties trivial in themselves or perhaps hidden in ugly things (Meunier and Millet, respectively, may be the most characteristic cases in point here).⁴¹

He thinks it conceivable that, from this point of view a literature of a rank roughly equivalent to that of impressionistic and post-impressionistic painting might arise: although, in consequence of his having placed tragedy in the centre of his view, he abides by the more idea:

It is imaginable that maximum 'deepening' should be given in grotesque-comicalness a very clear artistic form. One can imagine a contemporary comedy-style of this sort, which would be of the same rank as the works of similar nature in today's fine arts (Toulouse-Lautrec, Beardsley, a few members of the Simplicissimus-group; not to mention earlier ones, such as Degas, or rather Daumier and Guys).⁴²

And that is the case not only in the fine arts and in the literature of the age: "in naturalism, where the stress on the main motif is intentionally less strong, the accompaniment, the orchestration rises almost to the same importance as melody. This development is again parallel with that of modern music, a quite different art, absolutely independent of it."⁴³

Thus, drama displays this situation in a more obvious manner than the other arts. What is drama? The first lines of the book answer in clear-cut fashion, indeed in an almost school-bookish manner:

Drama is the kind of literary work that wants to produce a direct and strong effect in some crowded mass, by events happening among people. Generally and briefly this would be the common characteristic of all dramas, so common that it is known almost as a triviality, stripped of all qualities generated by historical and thus accidental circumstances.⁴⁴

It has already been noted that the public of the drama should recognize symbolic types and fates in dramatic characters. Now, he writes:

What is it that most clearly symbolizes the whole life of a man?—It is known to everybody that drama is the poetry of will, that it is only the strain of his will that can render a man and his fate dramatic [...] Drama is the poetry of will because man's whole being can manifest itself with direct energy only in his will and in his deeds borne by his will.⁴⁵

True drama is always tragedy: "Since, what else is tragedy—quite generally—if not a man's struggle, fought with maximum efforts, against the outer world, against fate, around the central problem of his life? Drama always reaches its highest point in tragedy; perfect drama cannot be anything else but tragedy."⁴⁶ So, dramatic form cannot be separated from dramatic character: 'Dramatic character is the abstraction of will.'⁴⁷ What is it that dramatic character symbolizes? "Human will, man [...] will always symbolize the principle of liberty, the action starting from itself, and everything opposing it, whose resistance or attack makes that force break down, symbolizes necessity that triumphs over it, symbolizes fate."⁴⁸ The fate of the hero of tragedy is death, which brings his life to a conclusion; "as [...] one can hardly imagine a sensual expression of conclusion other than death or at least a trauma of such power that it puts an end to the whole life of the actual man".⁴⁹ Not everyone can be the hero of tragedy:

Tragic man is the only kind of man who can be symbolized by a sole adventure of his life [...] the man still developing, that man who is still on the way towards something, or with whom development is life itself (Goethe), cannot be dramatic, for the simple reason that for him each event can be just a stage, just an episode [...] And neither can the wise man be dramatic, the man for whom everything is symptomatic only, so much so, that deeds no longer oblige him to do anything, the man for whom, in addition—for other reasons and from other perspectives—each event is but an episode, and the whole substance of life, provided he feels it expressible at all, can never manifest itself in a sole action. Likewise, the resolutely religious man is also excluded from drama, as he can be overcome by brutal outer violence alone and therefore—just as in the case of the wise man—his life does not come to an end with his death, his death is not the conclusion of something, not tragedy.⁵⁰

The world of the hero of tragedy, in other words, of the tragic hero, is the deadly serious world of ethics;

a certain measure of ethics [...] is needed in order for someone to be expressed by his deeds; to feel himself the performer of his deeds and not only a medium of fortune to whom events happen this way or that; so that one should not simply walk through them without feeling them binding for, and characteristic of himself.⁵¹

Although the terminology here is too vague to justify substituting Kierkegaardian terms for the Lukácsian ones that originated in German classicism, it, nevertheless, suggests the characters of the aesthetic, ethical and religious stages—the aesthetic, the naive and self-developing character, who is on the inside of morals; the religious, or mystically wise man who is beyond them, and in between, the tragic hero, the man of ethical laws. Behind the characters of the young Lukács those of Kierkegaard are only faintly visible. At any rate it is unmistakably the tragic hero who stands in the center of his interest when he writes that 'pain is the source of pleasure's sensation: that is the paradox of tragic effect'.⁵² Here the tragic hero is the most exquisite type:

When in life its chief values are destroyed, pettily, nastily, or perhaps amid terrible pains and cruelties, then a sensation of pleasure must derive from the description of glorious death: when in the unintelligible but always recurrent experience the restlessly annoying phenomena of life gain a majestic, metaphysical necessity in tragedy. Tragedy brings processes of life to consciousness and it is an ecstatic intellectual joy to face them and to understand their necessity. Besides, tragedy—and this is the essence of its effect—owing to its condensed power, includes a richness and intensity of life that would never manifest themselves in life itself, in tragic experience; it raises the man who, in life corresponds to the tragic character far above his highest conceivable possibilities, precisely by his fall.⁵³

Not that, according to the young Lukács, one could not speak (or, rather, could not have spoken) of great comedy too; or of great epic. Yet drama (tragedy), as opposed to epic, is a genre par excellence, a form closed in itself.

The world of drama means the whole world of life, but as the possibilities of its contents cannot afford more than to present just a few adventures from the life of a few people, its universality cannot be that of its contents like that of epic poetry (epic, novel), which describes its own universe universally, of which there are no limitations of means of expression even for expressing the unlimited (or rather there are, but only insofar as all kinds of verbal expression have). So, contrary to the content universality of the epic, the universality of the drama is formal; contrary to the former's extensive quality, the latter is intensive: contrary to the former's sensual and empirical nature, the latter is abstract, metaphysical, symbolic and mystical.⁵⁴

Modern bourgeois life, the young Lukács writes, is not favorable for dramatic form. Hence, in several cases, epic (first of all, the novel) replaced it. His question in fact is precisely that: 'in what ages and to what extent is drama possible'?⁵⁵ It is at this point

and in this respect that he is interested in history, without history itself—for the time being—becoming a problem for him. For:

It can hardly be regarded as an accident that there are only dramatic ages but there are no isolated geniuses appearing in undramatic ages. It is known of every great playwright that he lived in the very middle of the brightest periods of great dramatic ages, that he had strong connections with his predecessors as regards style, and that many successors carried on his work, that he was only a *primus inter pares* in a great age abundant in individuals [...] Perhaps this circumstance alone would be sufficient to us [...] to search for the deeper causes that are beyond individual talents: for sociological causes.⁵⁶

Still, here, too he applies the restraint known from "Notes on the Theory of Literary History". He speaks of the 'greediness' of sociology, with which 'it wants to make prevailing economic conditions, which are, according to it, the final and deepest causes of all the social phenomena, appear as the direct causes of artistic phenomena'.⁵⁷ In the examination of dramatic form, the sociological point of view is indispensable precisely because drama and theater are inseparable and mass effect pertains to the effect of theater. 'Only generalities can have effect on masses [...] that very event must be of the kind that should affect all that mass at the same time.'⁵⁸ And here he refers to mass psychology as well. He summarizes sociological points of view as follows:

Social are first of all the circumstances of the effect of drama. A mass is always more social than the isolated individual; the historical circumstances of the age define much more strongly the mood of a mass than the mentality of the single man and the man in the mass can hardly withdraw himself, at least while being in the mass, from the influence of these needs. The subject matter of drama is once again social: as we have seen, it is a sociological event, happening exclusively among people, the sociological nature of which is even more greatly increased by the fact that, according to the demands of form, the actual masses should feel it as an event typical of themselves, symbolizing their own fate, defining their own lives. And lastly, the final element to arrange dramatic stylization—world view—is, for the same reason, social.⁵⁹

He continues:

Hence, when can drama come into being? Social possibilities can perhaps be divided most simply into two groups: into an outer and an inner one. The first one: is there such a mass at all, on which a spontaneous effect can be produced by the means of drama; and what is it like? The second one: what is this community of worldview between mass and drama, demanded by form, like, and what are its social preconditions? The first question implies in fact the following: is theatre possible in a given age?⁶⁰

According to Lukács, there are two basic preconditions for the rise of theatrical culture. One is that

theatre presupposes a certain liberty of morals, of political and religious life [...] The other is a certain sensual culture: the desire for and the culture of the delight in the pleasing or expressive motions of the human body, in the beauty of the human voice, [...] the love of splendour, of ornaments (procession, chorus etc.).⁶¹

But theater itself is only a negative precondition: drama will emerge from the stage only if tragic experience is mutually shared in the culture of the public and the writer. Now then:

"Every culture is dominated by a certain class; or more precisely: it is the economic and political conditions of that class, its form, pace, and rhythm generated by its whole way of life that determine the forms of manifestation of that culture. But with the bases on which the actual class's rule—and thus culture's dominance—was settled, becoming problematic, all the feelings, thoughts and values of that class, which were created in a non-problematic age for its non-problematic conditions, must become problematic [...] Thus, the dramatic age [...] is the heroic age of the decline of a class. When a class (that dominates the public of drama) feels the tragic fall of typical experience, of an event symbolizing its entire life, in the men representing its

chief abilities, in the heroic types. A rising class, which does not still find life problematic from the point of view of its own ideology, and which, when struggling for power against another class, will consider the sources of these troubles in the institutions of the other, that is, in temporal and changeable causes—cannot have any drama.”⁶²

The typically chosen, favourite ages of Hebbel’s pan-tragicality are “those times when a world falls down in ruins and a new world is about to take shape from the ruins; when the necessity of development is the most prominent; when even the greatest man’s deeds are only small links in the chain of the great regularity”.⁶³

Why is modern bourgeois life unfavorable for drama? First, because estranged commonness dominates all the other spheres.

Modern urban life runs most contrary to all solemnity and the possibilities of the theater can be increased to the solemnity of the highest expressions only because of the theater’s solemn character. Here we can refer to the fading of periodicity, stressed by Simmel as the effect of money; how much every possibility of all loftiness is lost as soon as something is permanent and always available.⁶⁴

This dominance manifests itself in boulevard theater: “And it is precisely theater that is especially endangered by [...] becoming a completely empty show, devoid of content. And we can see indeed that, precisely in the biggest metropolises, in Paris and in London, theater and poetry of high quality most energetically diverge from one another.”⁶⁵ In the age of the *fin de siècle*, in the age of ‘impressionism’.

Goncourt’s prophecy that circus, orpheum, will kill theater and will succeed it, already has almost been fulfilled. It seems as if the anarchistic trends of modern life that take everything to pieces and break it up into atomistic moods [...] could not tolerate such an intricate synthesis as theater merged with drama.⁶⁶

But the effect of modern bourgeois rationalism, “the wish for rationalization, to trace everything back to numbers and formulas is continually growing. The tendency of modern science, to use Simmel’s words, is: to trace qualitative attributes back to purely quantitative ones”.⁶⁷ This process necessarily has an effect on drama itself, too: “Intellectualization brings a certain objectivity to every relation; rationalizes conflict itself, drawing pure struggle nearer discussion.”⁶⁸ People’s rule over things ceases and turns to the reverse. “The crucial thing is: the cessation of people’s rule over things [...] The fate of the individual slips out of the hands of others everywhere, and even things will have an independent existence from those who supposed to control them.”⁶⁹ In the examination of alienation and materialism the young Lukács uses Simmel’s theory to a great extent, and, to a lesser extent with the latter’s mediation, Marx’s theory as well. Even in the definition of dramatic form, he already applies Simmel’s concept of the artistic stylization, and as sociological points of view come into prominence, the number of references grew accordingly. Direct references to Marx are more scattered, although highly characteristic. Hence, for example, he uses the concepts of basis and superstructure,—albeit slightly modified and in quotation-marks, respectively. Also remarkable is the following definition of nature; ‘now, here I mean by that everything that surrounds man’;⁷⁰ for it is highly reminiscent of Marx’s definition in his introduction to the critique of political economy. This text must almost certainly have been known to the young Lukács, a reasonable supposition strengthened by his reference to Greek civilization as the childhood of mankind, in *The Theory of the Novel*.

How does the young Lukács describe the phenomena of alienation and materialism? Besides certain scattered references, a summarizing characterization appears:

To regard only the most outward appearances, it should be striking at first glance how the life that brought into being this theoretically most extreme individualism has become standardized. Clothing is standardized; traffic is standardized [...], jobs, from the working people's point of view, have become more uniform (bureaucracy, work in machine industry); education will be more uniform, as well as experiences of childhood [...]. Life's objectivization goes with it, too. Perhaps the point of the modern division of labor (regarded from the viewpoint of the individual) is that the workman always aims to detach work from his irrational faculties, which, being irrational, can be determined only by qualitative measures, and to arrange it according to objective, practical purposes that stand apart from him and bear no relation to his individuality [...] With capitalistic economy it is an objective abstraction, capital, that becomes the actual producer, and hardly bears any organic relation to the personality of its accidental owner any more. It is, moreover, often quite unnecessary that its owner should be a personality at all (share company) [...] Work gains a separate and objective life against the individuality of the single man, whose individuality must manifest itself elsewhere, not in what he is just doing. Human relations will also be more impersonal [...] The whole state organism (voting system, bureaucracy, the present form of the army etc.), all the phenomena of economic life (monetary system ranging over everything, credit-system, the Stock Exchange, clearing-account etc.), all show the same tendency: depersonalization.⁷¹

Beside Simmel's influence, other ideological influences fade into the background, but they are present all the same. Hence, to select only a few examples: Writing about Hebbel's tragedies, he recognizes their—evaluated—intellectuality in Schopenhauerian pessimism; he characterizes Nietzsche as one of the greatest men of his age who stands outside time and style; he gives Dilthey as a powerful reference when characterizing German classicism; he cites Kierkegaard in connection with Ibsen; he makes use of Kassner's cultural-criticism. So those thoughts, known from other writings of that time as well, colour the sociology that has its basis in Simmel: the overlasting difference between man and woman and their irreconcilable conflict, the true nature of the soul and the primacy of intention as opposed to deed, and the characters of Kierkegaard's stages. Hence—in connection with Hebbel—even behind the type of the tragic hero there glimmers the self-realizing aesthetician ('tragedy necessarily sets in at summits and it is irrelevant whether it is the summit of good or evil'⁷²) and the knight of faith ('the most deeply tragic side of life is that it forces pure people toward the devil, that it is not possible to remain pure and still to live'.⁷³) Mentioning Ibsen, he offers a specific paraphrase of Kierkegaard's stages:

This path leads from doctrinaire romanticism, through the recognition of real life, back to romanticism. But it is arrival and not return to the starting point, rather the summary of all the preceding. The young Ibsen stood aside from life and looked down on reality; at the end of his life he rose above all reality; in between he was a revolutionary and anarchist who wanted to overthrow completely the whole world [...] His is the typical process of development of today's man, but not everyone runs through it completely, for most of them remain standing at an intermediate station. Only the most outstanding ones can reach the final grade, the resigned and heroic comprehension of the tragic necessity of the laws of life.⁷⁴

Lukács hereby declares once again, more or less in the fashion of the essays of the *Soul and Form*, what he regards as 'the tragic hero of our age'.

Therefore, 'the chief question of the book is: is there modern drama, and if there is, what is its style like?'⁷⁵ For example:

It cannot be a mere chance that, in England, where the bourgeois was the strongest of the time, the Swifts, Sternes, Goldsmiths, Fieldings, and Smolletts, apart from some isolated trials, expressed what they wanted to say, in novels, and, the more crucial things exclusively in novels. Neither is it mere chance that the dramas of Diderot, who fought so hard for bourgeois drama, are dry and cool, his characters, lifeless, although what vigorous a character he can create, when it might be typically nondramatic (Le neveu de Rameau).⁷⁶

It is not by chance, since 'life, as the subject matter of poetry has become epic, or, more precisely, more novel-like, than it had ever been (of course, I mean here the psychological and not the primitive novel)'.⁷⁷ But, insofar as there is modern drama at all: 'modern drama is the drama of the bourgeoisie; modern drama is bourgeois drama'.⁷⁸ The young Lukács's essay on Storm bears the title "The Bourgeois Way of Life and Art for Art's Sake"; he might as well have given his book on drama the title 'the bourgeois way of life and drama'. Bourgeois drama is problematic, "all of its bases are problematic—but today aren't all the arts problematic? [...] the decisive yes or no can at any rate be pronounced only when the true cultural quality of our whole culture will be judged in the future".⁷⁹

There are, no doubt, several question-marks at this point, in connection with drama. First, 'modern drama is the first and the only drama so far, that has not originated from mystic, religious feelings';⁸⁰ second, in the case of modern drama 'there is drama first and the stage comes only afterwards';⁸¹ what is more, 'new drama had already existed as a programme, as a hot desire, as *pium desiderium*, and dramas themselves came into being only afterward'.⁸² The people of Shakespeare's world live still under the commands of ethics, which rules like a natural law, but

in the bourgeoisie, partly simultaneously with its great struggle against the nobility, partly preceding it, there takes place the great transformation from the guild system—through manufacture—into factory, into industrial, capitalistic production. [...] With this, a great inner schism set in the bourgeoisie.⁸³

(It is Lille's *London Merchant* that the young Lukács regards as the first bourgeois tragedy.) Traditional community breaks down into individuals, the world breaks down into atoms. Therefore, 'new drama is the drama of individualism, with such a power, intensity and exclusiveness, as drama had never had'.⁸⁴ The people of modern drama are all solitary individuals:

In new drama there is no 'confident': this, as a symptom, means that life terminated people's belief in understanding one another: '*nous mourrons tous inconnus*', Balzac writes somewhere [...] The true character of each man is a solitary island in the middle of the roaring sea, and there is no voice that could carry far enough to reach him, without the voices of the roaring sea in-between, mingled in its speech, falsifying it; unless they do not suppress its speech completely, so that he can see only the arms of the other, stretched towards him with desire—even then misunderstanding their gestures [...] People cannot even tell what is really important in themselves, what really drives their deeds, and should they find words for the inexpressible at rare moments, they would slide past the soul of the other, without having been heard, or would reach him only changed in meaning.⁸⁵

By these Kierkegaardian words we are led to a Kierkegaardian thought. If isolated individuals act as they must, every one of them will be right and every one of them might doubt his own truth; 'everything becomes a matter of viewpoint [...] as to whether something is tragic or not'.⁸⁶ However, in Lukács's view, the so-called 'tragicomedy' also emerges in this way;—truth is subjectivity and subjectivity is truth, Kierkegaard said.

Modern bourgeois life (as subject matter) 'is not dramatic any longer, it is less dramatic, than it was at other times'.⁸⁷ Heroism 'retires inward'; the hero, the notable is he who 'mutely passes along what bothers him';⁸⁸ the extremity of the hero's spiritual world is pathological, as 'if this maximalism is to be justified by spiritual reasons, they cannot at any rate be chosen from the field of ordinary psychology'.⁸⁹ The bourgeoisie *prima facie* does have heroic epochs, yet

where in reality there was the great, heroic pathos of life, where after the disappearance of all details there is some mythological power (the French Revolution, Napoleon, Bismarck), even there, only totality has this power [...] and from this distance there is no individual drama any more.⁹⁰

Therefore the stylistic problems of modern drama can be formulated as follows: 'how can the eternal irrationality of the human soul, now increased to impressionism and pathology, be unseparably, organically connected with the rigid regularity of schema with a power arousing the illusion of growth-from-each-other'.⁹¹ And formally, the point of the solution is:

Thus the link, on the whole, is ideology; that is, when the man struggling in drama looks at theoretical struggle, he regards it as theoretical. By the power of his view he gives it its abstract symbolic characters, by his feeble apprehension, which manifests itself against it, he gives it its endless power and, by the fusion of these two qualities, its necessity.⁹²

Milieu, which, naturally, is stylized and symbolic, the symbolism of which is 'the symbolism of realities', represents fatalism here. This is, in fact, the consequence of the world's alienated and materialistic nature; 'the substance of the concept of milieu is the power of things, eternally alien from man, over him; although things are driven by other necessities, they still drive man with the force of necessity'.⁹³ From problematic bases there emerge problematic solutions. For:

Perfect, nonproblematic tragedy [...] can come into being, moreover, is imaginable at all, only if the tragic solution follows from the poet's world view and from his emotional world with the pressure of necessity; and modern tragedy, only if this world view grows organically from today's life.⁹⁴

Hebbel and then, following him, Ibsen made the greatest attempts in this direction, it was they who tried to describe with the greatest power 'the great necessity that rules over everything with absolute force and the desire of individuality to reach its summit with demonic and irresistible force—and the eternal and irreconcilably tragic struggle between the two'.⁹⁵ As noted above, in connection with Ibsen, there was a danger that symbolic representation might shift into allegoric, and the same holds true for Hebbel, too. But with them symbolic representation—following from the above—is necessary; in consequence of which, Hebbel "gives every piece its own particular atmosphere of place and age, but the whole, though much more 'real' than that of Shakespeare, is still not 'real', only the symbol of something".⁹⁶ For, what they already face to the greatest extent is the manifest of unsuitability of modern life as a subject matter of drama. In short, they face the problem of how to find a plot taking place among contemporary people, which is not trivial and still symptomatic.

When surveying the evolution of modern drama, the young Lukács actually sketches the main lines of the development of art in the nineteenth century. He reckons the beginning of the development of modern drama from Hebbel and specifies German classical drama and French *Tendenzdrama* as its historical predecessors. Hence, as the first phase of the nineteenth century development he discusses classicism (the greatest representative of which is no doubt German classicism). Although Lessing is still a man of the eighteenth century, of the '*siècle de la raison*', precisely for that reason 'with him the chief point is that, from a way of feeling that purely and relentlessly belongs to the eighteenth century, drama cannot emerge'.⁹⁷ And yet, thanks to his transitional position—which follows from his being German—'new drama still begins with Lessing'. For it is with him that 'new fates of new men' appear, it is with him that 'man's

helplessness against the power of conditions'⁹⁸ appears. That is, Lessing was the first to describe—although, as Lukács points out, almost *malgré lui*—the great topic of German classicism (and romanticism): alienation. From here originates the transition to Schiller, the main representative of the 'abstract idealism' of German classical drama, so that later, through the Kleistian turn, with Hebbel and Ludwig—albeit, as Lukács writes, under the influence of the German Revolution of 1848 as well—abstract idealism should be sharpened to the point at which it became not only doctrinaire, but even quixotic. The hero of abstract idealism is the doctrinaire: 'the blindness of Shakespeare's heroes (Brutus, Othello etc.) was that of nobility, the blindness of these is that of doctrinairism, or of a sort of fanaticism, of a power at least equal to that of the former'⁹⁹ throughout the piece, the point is that 'the true nature of struggle is determined precisely by the incongruity of the abstract idea and the concrete fact'.¹⁰⁰ Goethe is an exception and yet

whoever is more intimately acquainted with the position of Goethe and [...] the position of theater in Weimar knows, that the matter in question is definitely not the satisfaction of an unexpressed although organic necessity, but the genially isolated and violent experiments of a genial man.¹⁰¹

Classicism: it is of fundamental importance, producing extraordinary summits, and yet it remains a feeble and almost strange interlude between Enlightenment and Romanticism.

But the age of Romanticism in Western Europe does not follow the pattern of drama, where theater is dominated by the first form of boulevard theater, by the '*pièce bien faite*'. Here the exception is Hugo:

In France [...] Victor Hugo is the last playwright who at the same time stands in the centre of literature, but even in his case, not through his dramas, or at least, not only through his dramas. And even his dramas definitely triumphed only after great struggles. Later, more and more, second-rate people, episodic in the great development, had decisive parts in drama.¹⁰²

The point under discussion is the plays by Scribe and Sardou, Dumas fils and Augier. All of them 'want to educate. They point out faults to be avoided and portray ideal figures as examples to follow; they attack obsolete institutions but defend what is good in the prevailing';¹⁰³ in short, they play more or less the same part as positivism in philosophy. 'To put it in one sentence: strengthening bourgeois life and particularly bourgeois family life, to protect them from every inner and outer enemy: that was the chief aim of this whole literature.'¹⁰⁴ Thus, marriage, for example, 'provides those who live in it with protection and security; in a certain respect it offers a guarantee that we deal with an honourable man'.¹⁰⁵ The morality of all this 'to put it roughly, was centred around who was or was not fit for society'.¹⁰⁶ We are not interested in the artistic shallowness of these plays except from one point of view: that is, how the phenomenon of materialism is reflected in them. For here 'everything is done with clear, mathematical precision [...] The people in these plays are dressed machines supplied with names'.¹⁰⁷ But it is all the same the world concept of that bourgeois who—already and still—feels safe, well, and rational in a safe, good, and rational world: thus worldview and artistic shallowness correspond to each other.

The struggle cannot be serious because these writers were writing in defence of that bourgeois system, the defects of which they recognized. They did not recognize, just as they neither wanted nor were able to

recognize the real and deep causes of the troubles that they saw; they did not recognize that those troubles were only symptoms (while the great German drama recognized only the symptomatic).¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, the age of romanticism, precisely in consequence of the retardation of bourgeois development, produced something else as well in Central, Northern, and Eastern Europe: truly great drama, the great drama of the nineteenth century, the same great drama that the young Lukács examines—modern, bourgeois drama. But the matter in question is not the romanticism of the first half of the nineteenth century, which connects directly even with pre-romanticism; but the wave beginning with the forties—to put it one way: “middle” romanticism—, as well as the late romanticism lasting until the end of the century. The great representative of the former is Hebbel: according to the young Lukács, modern tragedy begins with him. ‘With Hebbel the dialectical nature of new life and its deepest dissonances became tragic vision.’¹⁰⁹ (The author summarizes the accomplishments of Hebbel and Ibsen under the title “The Heroic Epoch”.) Hebbel had exceptional subjective faculties for the genre of tragedy:

Hebbel is the τραγικωτάτος among modern playwrights, perhaps among all playwrights of all times [...] with him tragedy is the *a priori* of everything [...] Because with the same power and exclusiveness with which Michelangelo fancied the sleeping sculptures out of the rock, he saw and painted even his pictures with the eyes of the sculptor, likewise, everything that got near Hebbel became tragic.¹¹⁰

Hebbel already writes the dramas of individualism par excellence. “This is an individualism strained to the breaking point, desperate and falling down into itself. The cruelty of tyranny that is nearing its end, the presentiment of destruction, but which longs for ‘glorious death’, which wants that a whole world should be in flames when it is about to die: that is the individualism of *l’art pour l’art*.”¹¹¹ But Hebbel remained only an experimentalist all the same. On the one hand, he strained pan-tragicality to the utmost:

His merciless egoism, trampling on everything and using human fates merely as means, was not only completely unconscious and naive, but also had something in it from the very solemnity of the church. He regarded all his deeds as his duty, as indispensable steps toward an aim that must be reached at any price, even if the way leads through sins. Perhaps his prayer was also that which Judith prayed before her decision: ‘Wenn Du zwischen mich und meine Tat eine Sünde stellst: wer bin ich, dass ich darüber hadern, dass ich mich Dir entsiehen sollte!’ And when it came to his ‘deed’, his human and artistic perfection, then no one felt more subtly all the responsibilities laid upon him than he himself, he whose conscience stirred at the slightest burden, placed himself absolutely outside the borderlines of good and evil.¹¹²

(The criticism of this attitude is no doubt tinged with some sympathy too, which becomes prevalent later on.) On the other hand, pan-tragicality breaks up all tragic forms: “Therefore the deeper he sees the tragic problems, the less necessary they are for the drama. And as he wants to make them perceptible by all possible means [...], more than once he uses them to explode the drama.”¹¹³

Perhaps Hebbel would indeed have become the greatest tragedian of all times: if he had had a public. Schiller still had an organic public—the great effect of *Die Räuber* and *Kabale und Liebe*, in particular, are known to us—, but Hebbel could not find such a public in the Germany of his age, least of all in Austria, in Vienna. Wagner carried on Hebbel’s formalities in late romanticism, and it was no accident that he wanted to create a public for his own *Gesamtkunstwerk* practically by force.

Few people felt all the relativities of modern life more painfully and more clearly than Wagner. Nietzsche very clearly recognized in him the ‘*décadent*’ and, in his characters, in spite of all Wagner’s stylistic aspira-

tions, the spiritual relatives of French decadence. But he, for precisely that reason, was still longing for the simple monumentality of old dramas.¹¹⁴

Wagner did find a public for himself, but it was not the public that, to quote the young Lukács, 'was longing for the simple monumentality of old dramas'; rather, it was 'the spiritual relative of French decadence'. Just as his 'musical dramas' are not dramas, so too, without music, they could scarcely support—to cite but one example—as perplexed a libretto as *La forza del destino*. Whatever is valuable in Wagner, is none other than the music of his operas: "Wagner sounds his spiritual revelations in music, hence, in the softest, most praised, but most intoxicating language."¹¹⁵

Hebbel's true and great ambitions, his efforts to translate the great ideas of tragedy into drama, were carried on by Ibsen. On the one hand, Ibsen's position was less favorable than Hebbel's, for, in the course of bourgeois development, he became, in general, much more endangered by tragicomedy. On the other hand, his position was more favorable in that he had a real and organic public, which Hebbel lacked. Scandinavia had awakened to consciousness of the self. We should not be misled by the fact that his greatest works came into being abroad; if Ibsen felt at home anywhere at all, it must have been in Scandinavia, and Scandinavian situation fundamentally influenced his whole world concept. The former dramaturgist from Bergen and Kristiania (Oslo) wrote first of all for Scandinavia, even while abroad. Ibsen used the technique of French *Tendenzdrama*—whether properly or not, it is all the same here—for the modern representation of the world concept of German abstract idealism. With his heroes, too, 'the fight itself, the struggle for the ideal is the aim'.¹¹⁶ But, as we have already seen, in his works the doctrinaire hero of abstract idealism becomes tragicomic.

The chief importance of Peer Gynt for Ibsen and for the development of the fate of a whole heroic type is that, with him the new idealist becomes tragicomic for the first time [...] From the point of view of the development of heroic types he takes that place in the *débâcle* of modern idealists as Don Quixote in that of the idealists of the Middle Ages.¹¹⁷

Why are Ibsen's heroes tragicomic?

'Nothing is more ridiculous in the world of relativities than the absolute', writes Kierkegaard, the intellectual father of Brand's 'everything or nothing', and the great idealists of Ibsen always become ridiculous at the decisive points [...] They are ridiculous because, opposing them, those who should never be right, are right.¹¹⁸

But by showing this tragicomic heroism and—in the best places—through self-criticism, Ibsen still managed, for the first and last time, to create a bourgeois tragedy that originates from concrete social ground and is of historical importance. It was due to the fortunate moment when the already doubtful self-consciousness of Scandinavia, which was just entering into bourgeois world, and the disillusion of the bourgeois world of Western and Central Europe, still merely doubtful, found each other. The position of other authors in Central and Eastern Europe was not as fortunate. Ostrovsky, of great dramatic talent, could not break loose from his isolation, and so his life's work—from the historical perspective—is merely the forerunner of the great impact of Russian theatrical art, which began at the turn of the century. The Hungarian Madách's only great work, *The Tragedy of Man*, which later attained even some European importance, is not, as the young Lukács points out, a real drama. Although written in dialogue form

and thus reproducible in the theater, it remains essentially a lyric or epic work. However, Lukács here still proposed to admit the depth of Madách's thought that he later denied:

Each event symbolizes, illustrates some world-historical or cosmological thought, but it does not quite dissolve in them, it remains apart. Each scene is a beautiful and allegoric expression of a deep thought; but the only way to express thoughts dramatically is: the symbolic one. Thus Madách's poem is not drama. From the point of view of making things perceptible, it is epic [...] And from the point of view of thought content, it is a didactic poem in dialogue form: thoughts remain thoughts.¹¹⁹

The age of the *fin de siècle* begins with the middle of the nineteenth century, and in fact dates from the end of the revolutions of 1848–49, and especially from the *coup d'état* of Louis Bonaparte. The leading branch of art during that period was painting, namely, French impressionism, in the development of which three great periods can be discerned: the early impressionism of the fifties, the flourishing one of the sixties and seventies, and the late or post-impressionism of the eighties and nineties. But these differences are valid only with respect to the centre of the movement (similar to the trecento-quattrocento-cinquecento periods of the Italian Renaissance). Outside it, that is, in Europe other than Italy and France, they merge into one another. Outside France, it is first of all 'plein air' that is influential, and artists scarcely pass beyond the naturalistic tendencies of early impressionism. Nevertheless, this influence merges into the artistic and literary school called 'naturalism'. Thus, the *fin de siècle* in Europe, on the whole, means first of all, psychological naturalism. In drama it means chiefly German naturalism. 'It was naturalism that formed the connection between the new life and its art, and without this connection, every drama is in danger of falling back into all the clichés of epigone poetry, which have no meaning at all.'¹²⁰ Here, the young Lukács singles out two great theatrical experiments:

This completely new, modern theater, which theoreticians had been demanding so long, was created by Antoine in Paris in '87 and by Brahm in Berlin in '89 [...] The most profound difference between them was that the 'Théâtre Libre' came into being first of all with view to the reform of acting and staging, while the 'Freie Bühne' had chiefly literary aspirations.¹²¹

Hauptmann was the greatest representative of this trend and Strindberg, too, linked up with it. Here Lukács considers—with reason—*The Weavers* as the summit of naturalistic drama, in which 'the interrelation of trivial fates, their wholeness, by the increase of their complete plainness and triviality to symbolism, will become monumental.'¹²² But in their programmatic description of the facts of daily existence, the naturalists came up against the social question, and—disadvantageously contrasted with Zola—they recoiled. Lukács characterizes them very well:

They came to Berlin with obsolete religious and social views, and there, from Marx's class struggle, from Darwin's theory of evolution and from a few racial theories—to which, in the case of some of them, the ideal of the *Übermensch* and Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* also contributed—they built up some confused and mystic catastrophe-theory full of unripe utopian plans to redeem the world.¹²³

And elsewhere:

The literary generation that created naturalism was always hesitating between socialism and pathologically strained individualism [...] They were genuine bourgeois ideologues, who must have been disappointed in socialism as soon as they really became involved in it and knew its true nature [...], and later they took an explicitly hostile stand against it (Ernst, Bahr).¹²⁴

Hence, it was the examination of the anatomy of private life that remained for naturalistic description: Strindberg's whole life work is filled with it, and sin and pathology therefore play a fundamental role in his oeuvre. Hauptmann himself abandoned naturalism and turned toward symbolism. The young Lukács cannot praise his symbolic dramas enough, although in connection with the typical *Und Pippa tanzt* (which, if it can be understood at all, is extraordinarily trivial, and if it is not trivial, it cannot be understood), for example, he admits that 'sometimes in its symbols there is still something uncertain, as a sign that, for its author, there are still many unsettled questions.'¹²⁵ Lukács's judgment of all forms of Western naturalism has remained valid: 'To express myself with Marxist terminology: naturalism is a perfect means of expression of petty-bourgeois ideology'.¹²⁶ In the Eastern European situation, as for example in Hungary, with Sándor Bródy and Zsigmond Móricz, or in Russian, with Tolstoy, naturalistic drama could preserve its original social charge for a longer time.

The turn of the century is characterized by the seeking of ways and means. Thus, when the young Lukács describes the 'disentanglement from naturalism' by means of the vague terms, 'impressionism', 'lyrical naturalism', and 'decorative stylization', it is not by chance. For if today the term 'secession' seems most appropriate to describe the first years of the twentieth century (the relationship between *fin de siècle* and secession being comparable to as that between Renaissance and mannerism), then the original meaning of the term shines through the accretions of meaning all too understandably. Secession is the age when—to use Lukács's expression—'the roads have parted'. And not only in painting: 'We can see roughly the same evolutionary process [...] which, in painting, leads from impressionism towards neo-impressionism'.¹²⁷ (And, naturally, towards symbolism, Art Nouveau, Fauvism etc.) Neo-impressionism here means sceptical aesthetics, which suffuses the literature of secession with such power, that even such representatives of rational humanism as Anatole France or Bernard Shaw formally retire behind the bulwark of an aesthetic scepticism. True and typical aesthetics appear first of all in Wilde and Schnitzler. Although the latter closely approaches Ibsen at several points, a trait even more characteristic of Wedekind's tragicomedies. The reason why neither Schnitzler nor Wedekind reaches further than that lies in the atmosphere of Austria approaching its comic fall; only Kafka, who came from Prague, was in position to experience this fall as truly tragicomic and absurd. But Shaw presents practically the reverse of this aesthetics, emphasizing objectivity instead of subjectivity; as the young Lukács writes, 'this is the first case when in today's drama objects' dominance over people is being glorified'.¹²⁸ Shaw is the liquidator of aesthetics: 'Thinking over his world view absolutely consistently brings about the complete disintegration of dramatic form'.¹²⁹

The ruling tendency of the turn of the century was actually psychological symbolism. Here Maeterlinck's influence was the strongest (Lukács, however, slightly overestimating him, draws a parallel between him and Wagner); the decorative D'Annunzio and Hofmannsthal link up with him. Lukács compares the picturesqueness of the latter (slightly overestimating again) directly to that of Cézanne. But the greatest of these is Chekhov. Although the young Lukács discusses him apart from these other writers, even if—as a first and formal approximation, since, as regards contents, that is simply not the case—naturalism of neo-impressionism unites his plays with symbolism. Perhaps the greatness of these plays lies precisely in the fact that, in them, 'the drama of the non-dramatic is written'. For, the crucial point of the whole process is that, in the world of increasing materialism, bourgeois drama ceases to exist. And, while Shaw could give

only negative expression to this process, Chekhov was able to provide a positive one. Shaw does not feel remorse over this, as there had been great English drama before; but Chekhov and his public—that of Stanislavsky's Art Theatre—do feel it: because they consciously strove to create a great Russian drama. The beauties of Chekhovian melancholy originate from this phenomenon although the young Lukács does not really appreciate them, since he finds that his age, on the contrary, is advancing toward the 'great drama' that he had imagined.

Just where did the young Lukács expect to discover this great drama? No doubt, neither in psychologizing, nor in symbolism. Psychologizing has as its permanent danger pathology. He even twice quotes Kerr's aphorism to the effect that pathology is the poesy 'allowed' to naturalism; while symbolism runs the risk of slipping into allegory. (Concerning Chekhov's *The Sea Gull* he notes that the influence attained so far is not deeper, since we doubly feel the unnaturalness of such comparison.) The beginnings of great modern drama for the young Lukács were marked by the poets submitting to fate, reconciling themselves to the necessity of an estranged world resignedly and got heroically, the poets of classical dramatic form: Wilhelm von Scholz, Paul Ernst and—with a slight difference as regards form—Richard Beer-Hofmann.

These writers are all conservative in a great and deep sense. In that they looked through and experienced the necessity of all this, which dominates life, holds life together and manifests itself in all the phenomena of life [...] But they do not experience it in a romantic manner any more; they resign to it without gnashing their teeth [...] With them, it is this connection of things which is the existing, which is life, and since it is existing, therefore it is the right, the good, reality, or rather; the only reality.¹³⁰

Although he recognizes their basic fault the utmost abstraction of all characters and their fates he nevertheless imagines the new, great drama basically in this way.

Two main trends can be recognized today: approach to tragedy (also approaching the style of *tragédie classique*) [i.e. Ernst's type] and departure from it, towards a life-mystery consisting of pictures of strong sensualism and deep lyrical connections [i.e. Beer-Hofmann's type].¹³¹

The two tendencies—which actually anticipate the two differing tendencies of modern bourgeois art, the abstract and the expressionist tendencies—of course in fact are not so far from each other, which is why he can then say: 'Perhaps young writers who believe in the possibility of the synthesis of the two will be correct.'¹³² Presumably, Lukács here already had in mind first and foremost his friend, the poet and film aesthete Béla Balázs. In fact, in 1909, he had published two articles on the latter's play, *Doktor Szélpál Margit*, one of them under the title of "Jegyzetek Szélpál Margitról" [Notes on Margit Szélpál] in *Nyugat*, the other entitled "Doktor Szélpál Margit", as an 'ordinary' dramatic critique in *Huszadik Század*.

According to the young Lukács, in Balázs's work

light rays that provide symbolics fall upon things from the inside. But here only the rays fall upon them and things stand in their three-dimensional materiality that cannot be changed by the light. They begin to gleam, but still remain things. As in this drama everything is real and still everything grows symbolic.¹³³

In the beginning the concrete social quality of things, from which problems emerge, is also stressed. Balázs asks:

How can an event that takes place merely among today's people reach the pathos of true tragedy? [...] Some quite primitive sort of mystery sounds from many recesses of this piece, the music of the final causes

that cannot be formulated, the great amazement, the deepest silence, the pathos of feeling fatalism. If our life still projected its questions and answers concerning the final problems of life in the form of gods, perhaps this struggle would be a fight between Apollo and Dionysos, but perhaps, that of Artemis with Aphrodite or that of Hera with Zeus protecting Heracles.¹³⁴

Later the matter in question is increasingly the following:

So this lyricism is that of the inward, purely spiritual culture. [...] The deepening of the soul, the drawing aside of all veils that conceal and cover it, does not result in sentimental emotions, not in a resigned gaze at the greatness of life, but in the mutual archetypal experience of all true men: in tragedy.¹³⁵

The young Lukács seriously believed that 'the new psychic drama, the dramatic equivalent of Dostoevsky's epic can be expected of and must be demanded from Béla Balázs'.¹³⁶ Thus, starting from the drama book, we are led to Dostoevsky and from there, to the problem of *The Theory of the Novel*, although this transition, as can be seen, is indirect. Yet this indirectness of the transition also holds true for the relation of the *Soul and Form* and *The Theory of the Novel*.

Retrospectively—as the young Lukács himself could hardly see—we must say that, of the Hungarian and German versions of the *Soul and Form*, the former is the more unified. It represents a certain characteristic stage of his career, while the two newly-added essays in the German-language edition represent a mentality hardly compatible with the other essays but quite reconcilable with his later writings. (It is highly characteristic from this point of view that, instead of the last two pages of the original introductory essay, there are five pages in the German edition, with new thoughts of decisive importance.) The difference can be characterized briefly as follows: while the essays of the Hungarian edition, written in 1907 through 1909, represent with fair unity the point of view that, 'form-giving' can only be possible in art, philosophy, and so on, but not in life itself, the newly added essays from 1910, together with other contemporary and subsequent writings, have as their central concern precisely the problem of giving form to life, which was now over more definitely thought and said to be possible. In 1910 there occurred noticeable change in Lukács's point of view. The shift, in connection with the Messianic Hungarian poet, Endre Ady, had already begun in 1906. It increased under the influence of Dostoevsky, Béla Balázs and Paul Ernst, and, finally, deepened under the influence of the personal tragedies that happened around him. The turning-point is definitely marked by a piece of a programmatic nature, "Az utak elváltak" [The roads have parted], certain thoughts of which are repeated almost word for word in "Ein Brief an Leo Popper". It is followed by "Fülep Lajos Nietzsche" [Lajos Fülep on Nietzsche], "Arról a bizonyos homályosságról" [On that so-called 'obscurity'], "Esztétikai kultúra" [Aesthetic culture], the Philippe essay, "Félnek az egészségtől" [They are afraid of health], and "Die Gedichte von Béla Balázs", which presents more and more definitely the young Lukács's turn toward mysticism. Finally, in the obituary on Leó Popper, life—contrary to the tragic problematic character of the Kirkegaard-essay—already appears as formed.

Yet, to a certain extent, even Lukács himself felt the change, first of all in connection with the Philippe essay. As his diary reads: "It seems that the Philippe is indeed the end of something";¹³⁷ and later: "Let's close the diary: sentimental times are over."¹³⁸ Almost simultaneously, in a letter of May 28, 1910 to Leó Popper, he writes: "the sentimental period is over, and the subjective indications are all there that one day I'll become what you call a 'critic of the form'".¹³⁹ The events that took place in 1911—his

unsuccessful plan to become a *Privat-Dozent* in Budapest, the suicide of his love Irma Seidler, and the death of his friend Leó Popper—brought the crisis to a climax. Its solution clearly led to the development of a religious-mystical world view for Lukács, whose demonstrative conversion from Judaism to Lutheranism in 1907 can justifiably be compared to the demonstrative conversions to Catholicism on the part of English nonconformists of mystical tendencies in the twentieth century.

Mystical writings took the place of the works of literary theory and sociology in the notebooks of Lukács at that time, and his diary notes bear witness to conscious seeking of paths from the 'ethical' sphere to the 'religious' one. The same tendency appears in his plans of dramatic theory, too:

Besides, I have two other plans: 1. *Der Aesthet*. If something might be done with Buber; 2. Agathon—*Zwei Gespräche über das Märchendrama*. Where a new literary genre would be courted (as, e.g., in the Philipe before). Late drama, the end of drama. What, among the Greeks, followed Sophocles, partly with Euripides, with psychology, and with Agathon (I know nothing of him: that is why he would serve as the title of the project). In England at the end of Shakespeare (*The Tempest*), Beaumont—Fletcher, Ford, etc. There it is called 'romance'; it is there in Spain, too. Today: *Pippa tanzt*, Strindberg, *Traumspiel*, etc. And chiefly: the drama of India. What is important here: the drama that came *after* tragedy. Where tragicity had been swallowed up by philosophy [...] The most important is the Indian: there it was carried out by the Vedas; drama had ceased to be tragic even before coming into being.¹⁴⁰

He finds even Paul Ernst already not so much the author of the tragedy *Brunhild* as of the mercy play (*Gnadendrama*) *Ariadne auf Naxos*.¹⁴¹ The tragic hero yields his place to the mystical one. Hence, the end and the conclusion of the book on drama and the essay volume, respectively, point alike toward *The Theory of the Novel*. We can say that in the 'Hungarian' book on drama and in the 'German' essay volume, the young Lukács formed, or at least tried to form, two different tendencies of the same period of his development, then synthesized the sociological line of the book on drama and the existential-philosophical line of the essay volume in the philosophy of history of *The Theory of the Novel*.

Yet another possibility arose for him in the book on drama, but only as an abstract one indeed: the possibility of a truly 'social drama'. At that time Lukács, of course, regarded even Shaw as a socialist, although he rightly discovered in Gorky the truly socialist (that is communist) artist—and that not in the writer of *The Smug Citizen* or *The Lower Depths*, but in that of *The Mother*. But it is a novel, what is more, a novel with the qualities of heroic epic:

That is why the 'tragic' heroes of Gorky's novel are not tragic: moreover, some deeply comforting, purely epic-like atmosphere wraps up their 'fall'. We can feel: their true life is not this fall, it is just an episode in it; perhaps it is nice, perhaps not—but it is not the essence of their lives by any means. Their lives are somewhere in a quite different place: in that endless rhythm with which they hurry toward an aim unknown even to themselves; toward an aim that they know they will never reach at all and, considering its endless distance from them, the small difference of the distance having been covered, which is the consequence of their breakdown, cannot be important. This breakdown is just an episode with then, as they feel their whole lives as episodes, in their relation to the great aim. In this feeling, only the whole is whole and every detail, every individual fate can be only episode, cannot be dramatic. '*Die Bewegung ist alles*', Bernstein says, and endless movement can never be dramatic and tragic; everything that seems 'tragic' in it is episode only, as it is a detail, a fragment, as its 'tragic'-ness is temporary only.¹⁴²

Let us disregard the name of Bernstein (all the more so because the phrase "aim is nothing" was—characteristically—left out, anyway), let us consider the problem. For, accordingly, Marxism cannot have drama, just as Christianity can have none, for they are similar in their essence. And indeed, we can read as follows:

The system of socialism, and its world view, Marxism, are synthesis. The cruellest and strictest synthesis—perhaps since the Catholicism of the Middle Ages. Only that form would be suitable to express it, when the time that it should gain artistic expression comes, which is of similar strictness to that of the true art of the latter (I mean first of all Giotto and Dante) [...] Today even most of the true socialists are socialists only in their mentality, in their political and social beliefs etc., their ways of life that have no direct connections with these, cannot yet have been imbued at all by their worldview. Only a few feel today that their views on art cannot be but dogmatic [...] that their art cannot be but that of the great order, cannot be but monumental.¹⁴³

This possibility, still abstract here, ultimately—viewed from the perspective of the turning point of 1918—played a decisive role in the development of the young Lukács.

(Translated by Matild Gulyás)

Notes

- ¹ György Lukács: "Az új Hauptmann" [The New Hauptmann], in his *Ifjúkori művek 1902—1918* [Early Works 1902—1918] (Budapest: 1977), p. 89—also in *Jövendő* (August 23, 1903) No. 28.
- ² György Lukács: "Nemzeti Színház: A regényesek; Léha világ" [National Theater: The Lovers of Romance; Frivolous World], in his *Ifjúkori művek 1902—1918*, p. 75—also in *Magyar Szalon* (May, 1903).
- ³ György Lukács: "Gondolatok Ibsen Henrikről" [Thoughts on Henrik Ibsen], in his *Ifjúkori művek 1902—1918*, p. 90—also in *Huszadik Század* (1906) No. 8.
- ⁴ Lukács: "Gondolatok Ibsen Henrikről", in his *Ifjúkori művek 1902—1918*, p. 105.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 91.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 90, 92.
- ⁸ György Lukács: "Könyvek Ibsenről" [Books on Ibsen], in *ibid.*, p. 187—also in *Nyugat* (1908) No. 22.
- ⁹ György Lukács: "Shakespeare és a modern dráma" [Shakespeare and modern drama], in his *Ifjúkori művek 1902—1918*, pp. 476—7—also in *Magyar Shakespeare Tár* (1911) No. 2.
- ¹⁰ Lukács: "Gondolatok Ibsen Henrikről", in *op. cit.*, pp. 99—100.
- ¹¹ Lukács: "Az új Hauptmann", in *ibid.*, p. 89.
- ¹² György Lukács: "Bang Hermann" [Hermann Bang], in *ibid.*, p. 77—also in *Jövendő* (June 7, 1903) No. 16.
- ¹³ Lukács: "Bang Hermann", in his *Ifjúkori művek 1902—1918*, pp. 77—8.
- ¹⁴ Lukács: "Gondolatok Ibsen Henrikről", in *ibid.*, p. 101.
- ¹⁵ György Lukács: "A dráma formája" [The form of the drama], in *ibid.*—also in *Szerda* (November 14, 1906) No. 7.
- ¹⁶ Lukács's letter of October 27, 1909, in *Lukács György levelezése* [György Lukács's Correspondence], (Budapest: 1981) p. 163.
- ¹⁷ The letter of Leó Popper to György Lukács, dated November 23, 1908, in Georg Lukács: *Selected Correspondence 1902—1920*, trans. and ed. by J. Marcus and Z. Tar (New York: 1986), pp. 58—9.
- ¹⁸ The letter of Leó Popper to György Lukács, dated January 6, 1909, in *ibid.*, pp. 62—3. Here Popper refers to Lukács's article, "Der Weg ins Freie: Arthur Schnitzler regénye" [Der Weg ins Freie: Arthur Schnitzler's novel], *Nyugat* (1908) No. 19, to his writing "Könyvek Ibsenről", in *op. cit.*, and to his volume *Eszttétikai kultúra* [Aesthetic Culture] (Budapest: 1913), which was then in preparation.
- ¹⁹ The letter of György Lukács to Leó Popper, dated May 22, 1909, in *ibid.*, p. 81.
- ²⁰ The letter of György Lukács to Leó Popper, dated [June] 1909, in *ibid.* p. 89. The original letter is in possession of the Lukács Archives and Library. Besides the *Soul and Form*, references are made to "Gondolatok Ibsen Henrikről", in *op. cit.*, and to "Gauguin" in *ibid.*—also in *Huszadik Század* (1907) No. 6.
- ²¹ The letter of György Lukács to Leó Popper, undated (about December 10, 1910) in *Lukács György levelezése*, pp. 288—92.
- ²² György Lukács: "Megjegyzések az irodalomtörténet elméletéről" [Notes on the theory of literary history] in *Ifjúkori művek*, pp. 385—421.
- ²³ György Lukács: *A modern dráma fejlődésének története* [History of the development of modern drama] (Budapest: 1911). Page references follow the new edition (Budapest: n.d.). pp. 18—19.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

- 28 *ibid.*, p. 30.
- 29 *ibid.*, p. 43.
- 30 *ibid.*, pp. 86—87.
- 31 *ibid.*, p. 253.
- 32 *ibid.*, p. 296.
- 33 *ibid.*, pp. 295—96.
- 34 *ibid.*, p. 296.
- 35 *ibid.*, p. 334.
- 36 *ibid.*, p. 334.
- 37 *ibid.*, p. 377.
- 38 *ibid.*, p. 78.
- 39 *ibid.*, p. 353.
- 40 *ibid.*, p. 370.
- 41 *ibid.*, pp. 508—9.
- 42 *ibid.*, pp. 509—10.
- 43 *ibid.*, p. 370.
- 44 *ibid.*, p. 27.
- 45 *ibid.*, pp. 31—32.
- 46 *ibid.*, p. 35.
- 47 *ibid.*, p. 45.
- 48 *ibid.*, p. 46.
- 49 *ibid.*, p. 49.
- 50 *ibid.*, pp. 50—51.
- 51 *ibid.*, p. 51.
- 52 *ibid.*, p. 61.
- 53 *ibid.*, p. 62.
- 54 *ibid.*, p. 37.
- 55 *ibid.*, p. 53.
- 56 *ibid.*, p. 53.
- 57 *ibid.*, p. 18.
- 58 *ibid.*, p. 28.
- 59 *ibid.*, pp. 53—54.
- 60 *ibid.*, p. 54.
- 61 *ibid.*, p. 55.
- 62 *ibid.*, p. 57.
- 63 *ibid.*, p. 246.
- 64 *ibid.*, pp. 68—69.
- 65 *ibid.*, p. 90.
- 66 *ibid.*, p. 78.
- 67 *ibid.*, p. 73.
- 68 *ibid.*, p. 120.
- 69 *ibid.*, p. 167.
- 70 *ibid.*, p. 31.
- 71 *ibid.*, pp. 105—6.
- 72 *ibid.*, p. 247.
- 73 *ibid.*, p. 248.
- 74 *ibid.*, p. 273.
- 75 *ibid.*, p. 18.
- 76 *ibid.*, p. 59.
- 77 *ibid.*, p. 111.
- 78 *ibid.*, p. 64.
- 79 *ibid.*, p. 145.
- 80 *ibid.*, p. 65.
- 81 *ibid.*, p. 65.
- 82 *ibid.*, p. 66.
- 83 *ibid.*, p. 91.
- 84 *ibid.*, p. 102.
- 85 *ibid.*, pp. 116—17.
- 86 *ibid.*, p. 122.
- 87 *ibid.*, p. 124.

- 88 *ibid.*, p. 124.
- 89 *ibid.*, pp. 128–29.
- 90 *ibid.*, p. 131.
- 91 *ibid.*, p. 135.
- 92 *ibid.*, p. 135.
- 93 *ibid.*, p. 137.
- 94 *ibid.*, pp. 225–26.
- 95 *ibid.*, pp. 232–33.
- 96 *ibid.*, p. 249.
- 97 *ibid.*, p. 149.
- 98 *ibid.*, p. 155.
- 99 *ibid.*, p. 165.
- 100 *ibid.*, p. 169.
- 101 *ibid.*, p. 198.
- 102 *ibid.*, p. 70.
- 103 *ibid.*, p. 200.
- 104 *ibid.*, p. 201.
- 105 *ibid.*, p. 202.
- 106 *ibid.*, p. 204.
- 107 *ibid.*, pp. 210–11.
- 108 *ibid.*, p. 216.
- 109 *ibid.*, p. 225.
- 110 *ibid.*, pp. 227–28.
- 111 *ibid.*, p. 242.
- 112 *ibid.*, pp. 230–31.
- 113 *ibid.*, p. 265.
- 114 *ibid.*, p. 446.
- 115 *ibid.*, p. 449.
- 116 *ibid.*, p. 282.
- 117 *ibid.*, p. 276.
- 118 *ibid.*, p. 279.
- 119 *ibid.*, p. 585.
- 120 *ibid.*, pp. 336–37.
- 121 *ibid.*, pp. 358–59.
- 122 *ibid.*, p. 400.
- 123 *ibid.*, p. 364.
- 124 *ibid.*, p. 387.
- 125 *ibid.*, pp. 575–76.
- 126 *ibid.*, p. 392.
- 127 *ibid.*, p. 412.
- 128 *ibid.*, p. 529.
- 129 *ibid.*, p. 532.
- 130 *ibid.*, p. 541.
- 131 *ibid.*, p. 579.
- 132 *ibid.*, p. 579.
- 133 György Lukács: “Jegyzetek Szélpál Margitról” [Notes on Margit Szélpál], in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 231.
- 134 György Lukács: “Doktor Szélpál Margit” [Doctor Margit Szélpál], *ibid.*, pp. 238 and 240.
- 135 György Lukács: “A vándor énekel” [The wanderer sings], in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 472.
- 136 György Lukács: “Halálos fiatalság” [Deathly youth], in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 694.
- 137 György Lukács: *Napló—Tagebuch 1910–1911; Das Gericht 1913* (Budapest: 1981) p. 39.
- 138 *ibid.*, p. 39.
- 139 The letter of György Lukács to Leó Popper, dated May 28, 1910, in Lukács: *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 112–13.
- 140 The letter of György Lukács to Leó Popper, dated October 9, 1910, in Lukács György levelezése, pp. 254–55.
- 141 See Georg Lukács: “Ariadne auf Naxos”, in *Paul Ernst: Zu seinem 50. Geburtstag*, ed. by W. Mahrholz (München: 1916), p. 11 ff.
- 142 György Lukács: *A modern dráma fejlődésének története*, p. 395.
- 143 *ibid.*, p. 392.

Béla Balázs and György Lukács: Their Contacts in Youth

by

Júlia Lenkei

Malicious readers of this book will say: here is another clique, another mutual admiration society, where friend reviews friend. Statements of this kind, of course, deserve to be laughed at, for nothing is as ridiculous as saying this precisely here, where, in the case of practically every review that appears, anyone who knows about personal relations will be able to see at first sight for whose favor or whose annoyance it has been written. And mutual praise has become common practice. This is not to suggest that these odes to each other are composed in something other than good faith. I do not mean to doubt the good intentions, and not only because of scant first-hand knowledge in the field, but also because the usual tone of adulation seems spontaneous enough. What I do have to diagnose with sincere astonishment is that in this country practically everyone—except for those directly concerned—shows a degree of scepticism and looks for cause and effect in these cases. This does not hold for me. Nevertheless, on account of my observations of others, and because there may be some people of good faith who, hearing about such things, might believe that this book has been of similar conception, merely and exclusively for their sake—and not in defense against the rest—I must state: Béla Balázs has never publicly expressed any opinion about the writer of these lines, and I cannot conceive of any situation in which he would. At the same time I must also say, yes, it is true, Béla Balázs has been a close friend for long years; but I can document the fact (I am putting down this personal statement only for people of good faith) that my support of his oeuvre in my capacity as a critic has been of longer duration and earlier derivation than our friendship; that we have become friends because our shared convictions—beyond all personal sympathy—have made this friendship inevitable, and it has not been the other way around, with a community of interests developing out of friendship, which uses the similarity of views as an ideological cover.¹

The above quotation is the introductory part of György Lukács's book *Balázs Béla és akiknek nem kell* [Béla Balázs and Those Who Want None of Him]. The volume is a collection of Lukács's reviews and critical works, and documents decades of intellectual cooperation between the two men. Lukács took note of Béla Balázs's works from the beginning; in his private correspondence he paid tribute to him, considering him a playwright who had brought about a new synthesis, and a poet of equal stature with Endre Ady, an heir to and in some ways even greater than Ady—whose greatness both of them recognized very early despite the initial reservations of a Hungarian literary life which was resistant to anything genuinely new. According to Ferenc Fehér, who analyzed the Balázs—Lukács alliance in the context of Hungarian intellectual life, the cooperation of the two men became a symbol of opposition to academicism in the arts and sciences in the public life of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and its stale intellectual atmosphere.²

Béla Balázs's poetry, like that of any genuine dramatist, proclaims in its deepest roots the firmness of convictions, the need for choice in the face of dilemmas, with the joy and triumph of such choice, and the

unpolemicizing acceptance of one's convictions over the compromise ideologies of 'yes, this could be the case, but perhaps it is something else.' Those who are angered by his mere existence may not know the fact—may refuse to recognize it—that they hate him for this reason, and that any aesthetic objections that they make are merely subsequent reasoning to explain this predetermined rejection, the making of which seems to be a vital function of his adversaries.³

This firmness of conviction gave rise to Lukács's oeuvre and also to Béla Balázs's lifework.

A Play of Light and Shadow: A Close-up of the Relationship between Lukács and Balázs

There is no documentation on the first meeting between Béla Balázs and György Lukács. All that we know is that the young arts student and the law student (who was even younger) both attended the constituent meeting of the Thalia Society at the apartment of the Lukács family, in 1904.

The following is an entry from the diary of a third participant, Marcell Benedek:

On January 24 we had the first meeting at Gyuri's flat [...] About thirty of us were present—young teachers and philosophers, Sándor Szilágyi, Miklós Lengyel, Herbert Bauer, who began to write under the pseudonym of Béla Balázs, Kálmán Glück, Bálint Hóman, Géza Polgár, and András Tóth, and also musicians like Zoltán Kodály, László Toldy, etc.⁴

For a while the Thalia Society was successfully engaged in efforts to modernize the play-acting style and theatrical programs prevalent in Hungary, although without any lasting trace on Lukács's and Balázs's collaboration. Apparently both were affected by the stultifying atmosphere of the times, and both of them concentrated on the preparation of their careers. Endre Ady's volume, *Új versek* [New Verses] which opened a new era in Hungarian literature, appeared in 1906. In the general condemnation, two voices—Lukács and Balázs—sang out in unison about the significance of the volume. The literary periodical *Nyugat* was launched in 1908. Balázs made his presence felt in the famous literary periodical right from the beginning, and soon Lukács also started to publish pieces in it. The same year marked the appearance of the lyrical anthology *Holnap* [Tomorrow], likewise distinguished by Ady's name, but also including works by Béla Balázs.

In Balázs's diary, which contains regular entries dating all the way back to his student years, the first mention of Lukács's name occurs only much later. No record of it can be found from the Thalia period, nor from times from which letters have been left to posterity. There is evidence, however, of close contact starting with 1909 and intensive correspondence from 1910 on. This was the period when Lukács, after his break with Irma Seidler, briefly courted Hilda Balázs, Béla's sister. At that time Balázs was compiling a book of poetry, writing plays—and expecting review from Lukács. Lukács was preparing the German edition of a volume of essays to follow the Hungarian one (Balázs, who was of German origin on his mother's side, did a lot of translation work for him), and this was the period when his book on drama and that on aesthetic culture appeared. Having graduated from the university, Balázs taught in Budapest and spent his summers away from the capital. For the school year of 1911–12 he won a scholarship to go to Switzerland, France, and then to Germany. During that time Lukács was in Budapest,

Italy, or Germany; the days spent together were few and far between. Apart from the works and shared problems of life, there was a lot of everyday business—the placement and reception of works, financial problems, opportunities for publication—and that provided opportunity for writing letters.

Their correspondence mirrors the struggle that young intellectuals who represented an ideology considered alien in the Hungary of the times had to wage, not only against academic intellectual life, but often also with some of its adversaries, who were, however, opposing it from a different platform, people who in their own way also desired a change. Correspondence was the venue of discussing administrative tasks (Balázs made enthusiastic efforts to get everyone known in the field to write about Lukács's works), and also—chiefly on Balázs's side—for developing certain lines of thought and discussing each other's works. In his letters, Balázs often asked Lukács for books or theoretical advice and looked forward eagerly to the latter's response to his latest works. In connection with his play *Végzetes ifjúság* [Fatal youth], Balázs wrote to Lukács: "Thank you very much for the criticism. You know how much it means to me because it does not come from the *outside*, but somehow from deep inside."⁵

In their letters, they always evaluated their momentary state with reference to the whole of the career that each planned for himself. The intensity of work which they were capable of at the moment was the measure of all things, and self-realization was a strategic issue. The cause that they had set for themselves was so clear and sacred that it would not brook even momentary vacillations in self-confidence. As Balázs wrote to Lukács in the spring of 1911:

I both understand and refuse to understand your depression. I cannot understand, and thinking of you I simply cannot comprehend, that you should be able to regard yourself as a 'worthless nobody' under *any* circumstance. In fact it shocks and angers me. 'Was aus einem werden kann, das ist er schon', and this splendid aphorism applies not only to the next twenty years, but also for the next hour. If I have it in me to become brilliant again tomorrow, then I have the obligation to respect and like myself already today. (That past victories in battle do not support one's self-respect, I know very well myself. But tomorrow's possibility?!) It is strange, but your writing in this tone about yourself hurts me almost as much as if *someone else* dared to say something like this about you.⁶

Balázs was very grateful to Lukács for all the intellectual and material assistance, the appreciative criticism sent in letters or published in periodicals, and apart from the admiration expressed personally and in his letters, he would have liked to pay him back in kind. Early in 1912 he wrote to Lukács—probably with reference to the German edition of the latter's volume of essays:

By the way, as to that I should not write about your book, I am sorry about that. I did want to do it—and in Nyugat at that. I have grown fairly resolute here, and I think I have also learned to lash out [...] Is there any new, special reason why you don't want me to write about your book?⁷

We do not know what Lukács's answer was, and Balázs made no additional reference to the topic. Nonetheless, this abortive gesture was typical of their relationship; for it points to the tragic divergence that existed between them in the way they evaluated and experienced their friendship. Béla Balázs was deeply involved in it, Lukács—as he himself said—considered it imposed on him because of his commitment to serve the highest aims and their community of ideological convictions. This was not an obligation that was actually alien to him, but it was certainly an external factor, ideological expediency.

Of course, the impertinent thought occurs to one—and is a difficult one to fend off—that, in January, 1912, Lukács forbade Béla Balázs to write a review of his book, in order to provide 'documentary' evidence six years later that: 'Béla Balázs has never publicly expressed any opinion about the writer of these lines, and I cannot conceive of any situation where he would'. Lukács expected to protect the purity of their collaboration through this disclaimer, but this stance of absolute freedom from bias may in fact have meant the recognition of the legitimacy of counter-arguments, hinting at the fact that Lukács himself recognized that he was able to write 'honorably' about the works of someone only if the person concerned had never written about him, although if the basis for their relationship was in fact a community of ideological convictions, this lack of public expression of commitment to each other was immaterial. It was not this traditional 'honor' that Lukács intended to question, although he certainly did not ignore it. He soberly adjusted himself to this principle in order to proclaim his ideas, the tenets of shared ideological conviction.

Balázs was in all his manifestations—both in his works and in his human relations—a more extreme and more open person, the kind who often bangs his head against a wall, Lukács's deliberately sober calculations were alien to him. Balázs was the one who experienced their friendship more intensively, it was he who considered it fate or destiny—an inevitable meeting. As he wrote to Lukács in 1910: "More and more I feel as if I were sailing on the same boat with you, so that all my vital functions seem to be somehow addressed to you."⁸

"We are *continuing* things to such an extent that it is impossible for us to think in two ways."⁹ And then again in 1912, in connection with a problem: "I think that if I were not afraid that you may not come home in autumn, I would not be writing this letter. I would wait for one more month. Our contact is not of the kind where differences that arise in the course of a month matter."¹⁰

It was Balázs who manufactured his own ideology even for the dissonances between them, for the sake of the cherished myth. He wrote in 1910:

I have probed again and again into our old common finding that if two people are really close to each other, they always discuss the same thing over and over with each other as a matter of fact, to the point where it has become an effective myth, and I have put this into the context of a great many things [...] That the two of us are 'not meant to correspond' also seems to be associated with this. Two people not only keep saying the same thing to each other, but they always speak with each other in the same manner, too. This latter aspect is even more important. If I would really study the process that takes place—or rather does not take place—when I write a letter to you, I would probably find some kind of a 'male' difficulty at the bottom. When one writes to a woman, he will relate a thousand-and-one minor impressions, and does put them down on paper, but is averse to writing these things down to you. Of course, there are some important things. One writes even about those when writing to a woman, but is averse to correspond about them when writing to a man. I would almost say that true correspondence (not like this) is somehow an erotic need even between men. Where the intention is really no more than the wish to 'provide information', very little is left.¹¹

And then in a later letter:

Our relationship arose from a need that derives from our higher, ultimate goal. And the two of us never found in each other unselfconscious vegetative relaxation—that amoebic flow into each other—merely for its own sake. Nor shall we ever. But then we do not want it either, we have been fleeing from it.¹²

Obviously, they were not on the same wave-length, and not only because of the different temperaments of the poetic and the scholarly personality. Lukács did not feel

for Balázs all the things Balázs felt toward him. Lukács always stressed that their friendship was the alliance of comrades in arms.

And yet, in the everyday sense, Lukács was a devoted friend. He freely used his contacts to help Balázs, to render him financial assistance. Balázs, who was poor, was proud, and found this support difficult to accept, and he always tried to offer his work in strict compensation.

In my letter in which I wrote to him about my anxiety about *Világ*, Gyuri answered that it is *my duty* to tell him when I need money or other kinds of help. Both he and his father are absolutely at my disposal. This is a magnificent thing if one thinks over the fact that Gyuri does not even actually 'love' me, that our friendship is, as he calls it, just being comrades in arms.¹³

But in another entry in his diary he admits that this is not what he regards as the height of friendship.

Not to accept someone's last morsel of food is honorable. But to be able to ask for it with a pure heart is much more than that. It is a good thing to love people, but to believe without suspicion and hesitation that I am loved, to take for granted the other person's sacrifice, is the real breakthrough over barriers.¹⁴

Lukács was never in a position to need anyone's 'last morsel', but if he had been, he certainly would not have asked for it from anyone except Leó Popper. For Lukács, Popper meant what he—Lukács—meant for Balázs. For a while Balázs tried not to admit this to himself.

'It is strange that no letters take shape between us', you write. Of course, if we intend to be frank, no conversations have taken shape either [...] You resolved to shun 'human relations' and to emphasize camaraderie in regard to me. I respected your wish and saw reason. You wanted it, and I really accepted it. But it seems, Gyuri, that this won't work. It's not up to us—fate does not want it! I believe in the superior importance of our camaraderie in arms, and I am sure that there is no similarly pure internal evidence of the need for a human relationship between us. But in this case fate really speaks with frightening clarity and tendency. Our *human* paths keep crossing again and again; now with such stubborn and alarming rationality that pure camaraderie between us seems to be 'technically' unfeasible. Fate does not want us to pass each other or just to coexist side by side.¹⁵

This is an exaggeration of Balázs's friendship myth, of the friendship myth that he formulated in his mystery play entitled *A Szent Szűz vére* [The Holy Virgin's Blood] but failed to realize in his own life. In vain did he try to demonstrate to himself and to Lukács what the will of fate was—in his franker moments he admitted to himself that they were not Baldwin and Bohémund.

He jotted down for himself in 1915 the following:

Our relationship has improved considerably, but it is more like an intellectual camaraderie. Indeed, it was never anything else. I like Gyuri for his immense honesty and kindness (he is not good), I am impressed by his tremendous intellect and wealth of metaphysical experience, but [...] he never inspires me. I don't get excited and stirred up when I see him as I was in the past in connection with Zoltán [Kodály] and still am in connection with [Béla] Bartók. I am not prompted to stop whatever I am doing and dash out after him. We always talk philosophy. This is not very good because it distracts me from the emotional and practical part of my craft, and it is not very good because it is arranged by Gyuri's egocentric interests and dominant philosopher's pride, and is damaging for my self-assurance. Of course, it is difficult to argue, and often even difficult to *converse* about my affairs, and I am more at home with him than he is with me.¹⁶

Nonetheless, Balázs took to heart Lukács's cool response. As he wrote in his diary in 1917:

I have noticed that Gyuri is really hurtfully indifferent in regard to my affairs. The other day I wanted to show him one of my poems ("Tristan hajóján") [On Tristan's Ship], and saw a kind of bored displeasure on his face. I took the poem to Edit's. It lay on the table. He must have seen it all night long while we were talking about the most insignificant things, but did not reach out to read it. When he was preparing to leave, I said, 'Well, we have not read my poem'. He made no response, but pretended not to have heard my remark. A few days later he said, 'I have not yet read that poem. But I will some time.' He has never asked for it. I won't show anything to Gyuri in the future, not unless he asks for it. At other times, too, I saw his indifference in other ways. As if he considered my writings—no, not exactly bad—just unimportant. This would be a disaster. For although a lot of people praise me, that is no support for me. Only Gyuri's faith was positive support for me. Anna's faith does not count. That is not faith from the outside. That is my own faith in myself. With her I am alone by myself. Obviously, I'll survive, but I have to learn a different attitude. I was not prepared for this. This is a disastrous shock and terribly disappointing.¹⁷

To be sure, Balázs wrote this when, on the one hand, there were many instances of Lukács's active support, and when, on the other, the major Lukács book that was to sum up Balázs's early oeuvre still lay ahead, when the study that treated the very volume whose title poem is precisely "Tristan hajóján"—which Lukács had neglected to read for some time—was not yet written.

Oversensitivity and deliberate coldness, shyness and impudence alternated in the day-to-day course of this relationship. The asynchronism of it was, however, a definite fact; Balázs did not receive from Lukács the intimacy of tone, the self-revelation that was a part of his poetic attitude. That was something that Lukács permitted himself only in his relationship with Leó Popper. For him, friendship with Béla Balázs manifested itself on a different level. Lukács wanted and received from Popper the inside criticism that Balázs wanted from him:

Through this criticism of yours, all of your and any future approval of me and my work has gained an additional weight. I cannot tell you what a great feeling of security a critique such as this, *coming from the inside*, gives me. It is even more important if the critique is a negative one. I don't want to talk much more about it, but you should be aware of the fact that you were the only one to have ever understood me, and in this respect (but not *only* in this respect, of course) you have become even more important to me. Your word has significance; it gives me pause and makes me reflect and can be the source of either joy or sorrow.¹⁸

Lukács also accurately described that other level where he was present for other friends:

Everything has been getting far removed from me. What is left is my externally patient manner toward clever people—but behind it every accent may change. The only thing that counts is whether they are comrades-in-arms in some way in the struggle that I expect to fill my life. And the selection is stricter and more arbitrary (in its human aspect) than it ever was. I know such feelings may become friendship—they did become that, for instance, in regard to Herbert [Bauer, i.e. Béla Balázs] and even Paul Ernst. But that is different. Here, joint progress is what matters, and when the courses of progress branch out, each of the individuals concerned goes his own separate way.¹⁹

The distinction between these two levels explains why Lukács and Balázs worked together best when they were in different geographical locations. This was clear to Lukács. He wrote about it to Popper in the following terms in 1911:

Baumgarten left for Munich and I don't mind; I still like him very much (and respect him for many reasons), but he was sometimes hard to take. It'll do our friendship good not to be together so often. It is the same with Herbert. It is only with you that things are different.²⁰

When, a few months after Irma Seidler's death, Leó Popper also died, Lukács apparently closed that innermost door of his soul to the world outside for good.

If we look at the Balázs—Lukács relationship from the more remote point of view of the oeuvre, all this decreases in importance. The intensity of the personal relationship, its ups and downs—these are indifferent from the point of view of the work. What matters is the objectification produced by the relationship—the work itself. We are faithful to Lukács's spirit if we keep our distance and proceed parallel with this relationship. (In the meantime, we may reserve our sympathy for the other man, who always wanted to reveal himself, who longed to love and be loved, who so easily wounded others and was himself so vulnerable.) It was not when he tried to transgress this distance that Balázs lost his real contact with Lukács—indeed, such attempts were directly doomed to failure because of Lukács's hardness and reserve, and their camaraderie, on the other hand, was not eroded by private problems—but when, after timid attempts, he finally chose a different path for himself. The key to the difference lies in matters of the theory of art and, more broadly, in matters of ideology, although in the background, the asynchronousness of their relationship was probably also at work.

The Lukács—Balázs Relationship from a Distance: The Omnipotence of Form

Before we take a look at these questions from a different angle, we should refer to another source that can illuminate this relationship. The fact is that the two men's shared thinking as comrades in arms extended beyond the Balázs works that bear the marks of Lukács's criticism, the Lukács articles about these works, the letters that they exchanged, and the notes in their diaries, for there was also a 'human achievement' to be listed among the fruits of their collaboration. This was the Sunday Circle organized by Balázs—a group of people who met from 1915 on at his flat as an intellectual club basking in the halo radiated by Lukács. Interesting personalities, such as Károly Mannheim, Károly Tolnay, Arnold Hauser, Frigyes Antal, and others, started their intellectual careers in the Sunday Circle. It was probably the scene for the first formulation of a great many significant thoughts and ideas, a magnetic field, which was created by Lukács together with his associates, but, at the same time, reacted to their activity, stimulating still newer ideas and compelling the participants to think things over and then reexamine their conclusions. In this group, the alliance between Lukács and Balázs expanded, and even other members of the group spoke about ideas that Lukács or Balázs could have considered their own in formulation—and sometimes even in wording.

Culture was the central concept in the philosophy of Lukács and his circle. "Culture is the integrity of life," Lukács wrote in 1910.²¹

Any culture takes life into possession, unifies all manifestations of life (not turning it, of course, into conceptual unity) with such strength that whatever aspect of it we view from the totality of life, we must really see the same thing. In real culture everything becomes symbolic because everything is merely the expression—and therein lies the uniformity—of the only important thing: how one reacts to life, how the entire being of man faces life as a whole.²²

A decade later Lukács formulated the same idea in the following words: "Culture is the embodiment of the idea of man."²³ His concept is suited for approaching social development as a whole.

The development of society is a unified process. This means that no given phase of development can take place at a single point in the life of society without its effects becoming perceptible in every other point. This unity and interconnection of social development make it possible that we should examine the same process from the point of view sometimes of this, sometimes of that social phenomenon, and yet always arrive at the understanding of the same process. That is why it is possible to speak about culture in apparent *isolation* from other social phenomena. But if we grasp the culture of some period properly, we have got hold of the roots of the *total development* of the given period, and we have reached the same point as if we had started out from an analysis of the economic conditions.²⁴

This was the philosophy that bound together the members of this group, among them, Balázs and Lukács.

In the program-setting lecture for the Free School of Humanities, which developed from the Sunday Circle, Mannheim described their intellectual community in the following terms:

In my view the by now frequently mentioned unity lies in the fact that in regard to each and everyone of the cultural objectifications—in regard to religion, philosophy, ethics, art, social life, and history—we have a unified approach, our insight is similar, and we try to look at their structure and significance in a special way [...] By objective culture we mean all the objectifications of the mind as they have been passed down to us in the course of our historical development as the heritage of the human race: namely, religion, science, art, the state; and the modes of life. Subjective culture is—as was very correctly seen by Simmel—when the soul wants to achieve fulfilment, perfection, not through itself by introversion, but through these very objectifications, making a detour through them and to some extent assimilating them.²⁵

This is the structure through which the history of human development—which reached a particular phase in the modern age—is observed.

In the course of development alienation develops in every branch of culture. This becomes truly perceptible for the individual when already here and there new experiences, new primitive facts of the soul, produce their impact on us. That is when it first becomes clear that the old contents are no longer present, and the old forms have grown alien to us. It seems to us that now we are living in such a stage of the philosophy of history, and the new contents emerging—even though they are still barely crystallized—render a great many old meanings untimely.²⁶

It is not by mere chance that Mannheim refers to Simmel. The main currents of the life philosophy that was prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century were transmitted to him and his group by Georg Simmel. Lukács and later Balázs were pupils of Simmel's in Berlin, and it was through him that they first experienced the influence of Marx. In his conception of cultural crisis, Simmel interprets the objective existence of the world as an objectification of life that evolves on its path from itself to itself. Life, which is vital in its basic nature, tries to assume form again and again, but as soon as it has assumed a form that becomes alien to it, the laws that govern the moment start to rule, and form becomes estranged from life, which is thus compelled to leave that form. In this way life creates a series of cultural objectifications, its substance always trying to find a form for itself because without form it cannot exist, although, on the other hand, there is no form in which it can exist. This is the universal tragedy of culture, and economic alienation is also a manifestation, a subcategory of this eternal and universal alienation process that characterizes the world.

The tragic feature of culture, the conflict between the vital soul and the forms, insight into the cultural crisis, these constitute the most abstract foundation of the Balázs—Lukács alliance. In their approach, an eminent role in this crisis may be ascribed to the *Werk* (a work deriving from creativity), which, building a bridge between people, may

be able to overcome alienation. The concept of *Werk* was borrowed from medieval mystics; at first it meant a religious act, later every objectification of the vital soul, namely: "When the soul wishes to reach itself through matter that is alien to it."²⁷

This alienation is the eternal problem of man. According to Mannheim:

For, if someone asked me, what is the essence of our being human, I would say that it is the circumstance that we can make ourselves known to someone else—in fact, we can make ourselves known to ourselves—only if we interpose the *Werk*—something that is of a substance entirely different from our own—between ourselves and the other person, or between ourselves and ourselves.²⁸

This results in double isolation, double anonymity, and double longing to get to know others and ourselves. Nonetheless, this alienated *Werk* is our only chance to overcome the sense of alienation: "it means a provisional bridge between man and man," thus, "in its original mission it is a manifestation of the soul that wants to fulfil itself for itself."²⁹

In this concept, form has an ethical significance.

For form, genuine form, is domination over things—with the accent on actual superiority. It is the subordination of everything, but whatever is subordinated is also vitally alive, just as is the case for whatever is the ruling force. This is the vital force of form because this is its ethic.³⁰

In this sense form is redemption itself; it links ethics, art, and religion.

The essence of art is giving form, the overcoming of resistances, the subjugation of hostile forces, the creation of wholeness from discordant elements, from whatever has been deeply alien until then and has not been incorporated in it. Giving form to them is the last judgment over things, the kind of last judgment that redeems everything redeemable and with divine force superimposes redemption on everything. Form is maximum exertion of strength under the given possibilities of a given situation—this is the true ethic of form.³¹

Thus, the primary problem is life, the problem of the malleability of the spirit, the question of creating genuine life, the question of surmounting estrangement between man and man. Within this, the aesthetic shaping of life represents a possibility, a means by which perhaps this alienation can be overcome.

Absolution—the redeeming power of form—occurs only at the very end of all paths and all torments, in the faith—vital beyond any proof and totally unprovable—that the divergent paths of the soul meet, for they must converge, as each of them started out from a single center. And form is the only proof of this faith because it is its role realization—a fulfilment more vital than life itself. Let me repeat: the aesthete applies the concept of form to life; aesthetic culture is giving form to the soul.³²

Form, imparting form to things, is a momentum that plays a decisive part in Balázs's approach as well. Already in his first paper on aesthetics, in his "*Halálesztétika*" [Aesthetics of death], which he wrote for Simmel's Berlin seminar, form was the focal point. The concept of death leads to form through a simple sequence of synonyms: death is always the closing, the end of something, thus, it is a borderline, in other words, it represents contours, in the final analysis, form.

Art is the perception of the transcendence of life. In other words, art is the consciousness of life [...] The consciousness of life depends on death, in other words, art depends on death. *Death is the form of life*. It is its end as the contours are for a drawing; it is the limit, the bordering line of the figure that imparts its form.³³

In his "*Dramaturgia*" [Dramaturgy], Balázs formulated the same idea in the following words:

Death means an end and a boundary, the drawing of a limit, which is contour, which is form. Death is the form of life, the chance for its manifestation. If we lived forever, we would not know that we are alive. It is death that makes one aware of life. Death is the dark background against which the living soul gains visible form. Therefore, death is the precondition and most fundamental generator of art because it vests life with the possibility of form.³⁴

This is the metaphysical foundation of art: "it grasps a feeling, a mood, and lifts it out of time. It is not merely an after-image. One can stop beside it and return to it. One can touch and assimilate it. But then isn't perception a kind of detachment? Doesn't death supply the background for it?"³⁵ Then, in his diary he wrote:

When I look at a painting, drama, or anything else (i.e., art), I perceive its unchangeably *finished* quality that affects me with that wonderful, painful, and lofty feeling. It is finished! It cannot be changed, for it is complete! This stirs my innermost unnamable longings.³⁶

The realization of this significance of form took Balázs—and also Lukács—to an analysis of tragedy as the most perfect form. It is in tragedies that the ethical and artistic functions of form can be the most perfectly linked.

Death imparted through form appears as a contour-line in tragedy. In Tragedy death is the symbol of closing form. After all, wherever the life of the spirit is portrayed as fulfilment, as form, as something that has been closed and cannot be continued, there death itself has been defined as the only proper principle of form.³⁷

In other words: "the tragic spirit is the soul that has been given form, that has perceived itself and has become a genuine character."³⁸ Thus, the soul and the form!—that was the problematic that engaged Béla Balázs's attention, too.

Similar theoretical formulations were not, however, the only common platform for the two men. More important was the parallel between their ideological and belletristic work. The plays and poems written by Balázs express this ideology. Lukács found in Balázs's dramas a satisfactory portrayal of the tragic spirit, which is why he welcomed the attempt to unify the Shakespearean and Alfierian (or, elsewhere, Sophoclesian) method in Balázs's drama, *Doktor Szélpál Margit* [Doctor Margit Szélpál]:

In this drama everything is realistic and yet assumes symbolic stature, and yet nothing becomes fully the symbol of anything. (Perfect success in precisely this [regard] drove people to desperation in Hauptmann's beautiful *Pippa*.) Superhuman forces interfere in the lives of people and carry them along with irresistible power. And they live amidst a thousand trivial and insignificant little things until a moment comes when they sense—in a way inexpressible in mere words—what is sweeping them along. And then everything seems as if it were merely the ghost of that divinity, as if its distantly rustling wings were moaning in every bush, and its shadow were cast over everything that is dark. But these are only moments, and as they pass, the trees remain trees and the people ordinary people, with the memory of their fates vibrating in them only in the form of an inexpressible shudder.³⁹

That is why, on the basis of *Az utolsó nap* [The last day], Balázs's powerful drama about the Renaissance, Lukács declared: "Béla Balázs is literally the *only* Hungarian dramatist,"⁴⁰ for in his case,

dramatic quality itself becomes the subject of drama: earlier seeking for a style for drama was merely oriented to find the fate, which is the most adequate manifestation of the heroism that is today presented ready-made by the period even in its form; today one has to dig out and shape a destiny that is able to give to this postulated reality of heroism a genuine reality, life and form.⁴¹

And that is why Lukács wrote about Balázs's chamber dramas—his mystery plays—which depict bare tragedy in an ultimately simplified form:

Surely, few poets live today whose artistic forms are so deeply rooted in the forms of human experience and grow so naturally out of them as is the case with Béla Balázs. That is why his development has been so slow and difficult: he is a naive poet in the most serious sense of the word; he expresses his own experiences alone, and does not have either the gift or the inclination to hide with skilful tricks anything that has not grown to perfection in him, that is still only incomplete in him. But precisely because his tremendous artistic talents are *a priori* linked to the eternal forms, because he approaches them not as historical circumstances, which can only be seen from the distance of historical perspective, but returns to them as to natural forms of expression for the innermost contents of his own soul, his path to reaching perfect solutions was very difficult. His 'naturalistic tendencies' resisted the similarly vital aspiration for concise form, and he was able to achieve ripeness as an artist only when he was able to resolve this conflict. That was what happened in these one-act plays, most clearly in the last of them, in *A Szent Szűz vére* [The Holy Virgin's blood]. In this little drama the sort of tragedy that is possible today finds such emotionally expressive final form as apart from it only in Paul Ernst's *Brunhilde*. This is the aspect of tragedy according to which it is not the 'sin', or tangle of circumstances, or any similar motif that fits the general view, generates tragedy; rather, tragedy is precipitated by the very existence of the tragic human being. A tragic person is he or she who as a human being achieves perfection, who lives life without byways and compromises; who finds the meaning of life in its truth, depth, and fullness, rather than its breadth, colorfulness, and contents; for whom his own personality presents a responsibility, a road that has to be traveled to the end. But at the end of any road reached by man, tragedy is there waiting, as the glorious culmination of everything, as the glorification of the deepest pain of being, as the redemption of the soul from the confusion of life—as unambiguous clarity, truth, and genuine reality.⁴²

To live life without byways and compromises appeared for both of them as a personal problem, too. In his diary, Balázs often treated the possibility of an 'adequate' life. "I think", he wrote in 1907 with naive charm, "that I am going to begin again the aspect of my life that is form. Or, rather, I will only now begin it—because until now I neglected it with splendid arrogance."⁴³ And then, in 1914:

I often think nowadays about the form and contours of my character. We often speak about it with Anna. Every contour draws a line, it keeps distance and alienates. Thus, it is the abandonment of curiosity about something, of participation in something. It is an alienation, an uncaring attitude about certain directions and orientations. Many people draw the contour-lines of their character too early, and unthinkingly shut out too many things. Or they are simply indifferent to an awful lot of things. In their case, character is a kind of poverty, and their 'own world' is the closed area of their shortsightedness. But if one has love and the wish for understanding and forming links, one does make extroverted efforts and one has to travel long before finding what is really and thoroughly alien.⁴⁴

Yes, Balázs was trying to shape his life as a work of art. "The world process is continuing, and one must know how to live. By this I do not mean the 'art of life' in its disgusting interpretation, but mean it literally. Life is not a chance fact, but an aptitude and ability, a talent, a lifework."⁴⁵

This private life principle of Balázs's is closely akin to Lukács's thinking about the subject at the time:

Aesthetic culture is the shaping of the soul. Not its ornamentation but its shaping; not its moulding into attractive situations, but the polishing of its truest substance, cleansing it from the chaos of reality, events, and experiences; it is not its jellification, but its shaping; it is not a result, but distance traveled, an endless journey, on which progress is marked by episodes of life that have already taken shape.⁴⁶

Clearly, Lukács was the dominant partner in this partnership. Nonetheless there are moments when one can sense the imprint of Balázs's influence on him, too. That this

is a reasonable conclusion is shown among other things by the fact that the article from which I have just quoted bears on the top two lines by Béla Balázs from the Prologue of *Bluebeard's Castle*:

The world outside is full of arms,
They won't kill us, though foul their harms.

Although Lukács was no poet, he seems to have watched his own life course with the same naive remoteness. Let us cite a 1910 entry from his diary:

I am beginning to have confidence in myself again. But: this confidence (if I analyze the reasons for it with attention) should actually be reason for maximum lack of confidence. Very deep within, of course. After all, why has my mood changed? Because I am writing, and because it is going fairly well, and I am proving to myself that I have talent. But: is it not a sign of weakness that this needs proof at all? Is it not my deepest—and very long ago noted—human inferiority that it is my deeds that turn me into something even in my own eyes? I am who did or thought this or that. Instead of: this act is my act, and it is important because it expresses me perfectly and powerfully. I lack real, taken-to-be-for-granted greatness that relies on itself—it always has to be proven. That is why Leó's feelings toward me and Karli are so deeply right (quite independently of how much he overestimates in this way Karli, and also independently of the reality of this insight), namely, that his faith in Karli is *a priori*, while his faith in me is only a *posteriori* faith. In order words, the first needs no actual demonstration by deeds, but the other does.⁴⁷

And the self-analysis performed when he lost the two people closest to him led Lukács to extremely tragic formulations, which, however, suggest narcissistic overtones reminiscent of Balázs: "One thing is clear (but it only makes things more dialectical): I am no normal person".⁴⁸

Soon, however, there came a time that made it imperative that one's interpretation of form and culture should have manifest consequences even outside of the field of theory and abstract character formation. War broke out and Béla Balázs enlisted to go to the front. "My soul desires the adventure of war, too," he wrote in his diary; "A scene of life in which I can be entirely me, I can be completely free as myself, is an adventure. This is really never the case in ordinary middle-class life."⁴⁹ "Once I go to war, I will be confronted with my fate eye-to-eye."⁵⁰

Until this point, this had been Herbert Bauer's private affair. At the point, however, where these individuals greeted war in the expectation that it would create the new collectives that would be able to overcome the all-comprehensive rule of alienation, it became Béla Balázs's problem as well. And it manifested the shared approach to culture of the Sunday Circle—and in fact (as we shall see later on) also the view of Simmel, who had been their master. Lukács was the only one of them—and this was his first obvious and admitted divergence from the alliance with Balázs—who saw that the formation of communities by war was only a pseudo-solution, and he, therefore, resolutely resisted this interpretation.

Let us see how and why Lukács attached certain hopes to the war, as he formulated his thoughts on the subject in his paper on "A német értelmiség és a háború" [German intellectuals and the war]: 'Let the isolation of culture and of the carriers of culture, which all of them considered so oppressive before the war, disappear, let the collective that joins all arise'. Or, still more resolutely (and applying more definitely to the specific situation of the intelligentsia):

Let that overstrained individualism which not only separated intellectuals as a stratum from other groups, but also sharply separated and isolated every single genuine personality from everyone else disappear, and let the way be opened for a new fraternal community. The cohesive force of such a community is given in war;

it is tantamount to the spirit of camaraderie that develops through the experience and conquest of danger in a community.⁵¹

This view, which Lukács interpreted in a condemnatory way, was expressed also by Georg Simmel:

That is the unique factor in our times that, at last, the requirement of the day and the requirement of the cause are one and the same. Of course, this can be grasped only 'intuitively'—or, rather, only as practical experience, and since Lukács has not had this experience, one cannot demonstrate it for him. Then it is undoubtedly entirely consistent for him to see 'militarism' in the very thing that for him should mean precisely release from everything that is militarism because it has been divested from militarism for its own sake (presumably a threat exactly in peace time) and has turned into a form and means of the general advancement of life.⁵²

That was something that Lukács radically denied, whereas Béla Balázs went to the front in the spirit of this idea (he, too, being completely consistent with himself) and entitled his war diary *Lélek a háborúban* [The soul in war].

The endeavor of the soul to find its own form created, however, other opportunities for action, too. For György Lukács, Béla Balázs, and for some other members of the Sunday Circle, this meant participation in the revolutions. When the members of the circle learned that Lukács had joined the communist party in 1918, they were so flabbergasted that they considered the step a complete about-face—as when Saul of Tarsus turned into Apostle Paul—and this reaction can be partially understood in the light of the fact that the Sunday Circle was expressly apolitical. If, on the other hand, we consider the fact that the crisis of culture was at the focus of their entire thought, and that some of them even regarded war as redemption, it becomes clear that for Lukács and also for Balázs, both of whom were among the leaders of the Hungarian Republic of Councils in 1919, revolution appeared as something transcending alienation and as a possible means of resolving the crisis of culture. The ethical consistency behind this apparent volte-face is indicated in Balázs's Vienna diary: "Individualistic ethic (Kierkegaard), which has been our line of development so far, took us to the point of yielding to a movement that precludes this individualistic ethic."⁵³

Ernst Bloch, an ally at the time, is also wrong when he reminisces as follows: "When Lukács became a communist, he denied everything that he had until then admired—Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky."⁵⁴ Obviously, it was not in opposition to such ideals but exactly in their spirit that Lukács opted to become a communist. The denial of earlier ideas came much later.

In Balázs's case, the main motif is once again finding a community, overcoming solitude. As emotions and emotional attitudes were more determinative in his case than in Lukács's, his decision making lacked the definite sociological factor that was part of the philosophical aspect of Lukács's thought, and according to which Lukács expected culture to be freed from an alienated economic life that had become a 'thing for itself', rigidified according to its own laws. For Balázs, revolution was an intellectual and moral act, and socialism a religion. As early as 1916, he pondered in his diary: "It is a new problem as to whether I would participate in a revolution. I would not. It is not my life work. (In the revolution of the soul I would take part.) [...] Moral revolution should be prepared; it is more badly needed than any social revolution."⁵⁵

Nonetheless, in the Republic of Councils Balázs assumed an important role at the People's Commissariat for Education. After the defeat of the Republic of Councils, however, he drew the following conclusion: "I don't want to take part in politics ever

again [...] As to communism, for me it is my religion, not my politics."⁵⁶ The Republic of Councils fell, and its leaders emigrated. The alliance between György Lukács and Béla Balázs gathered new momentum, but their cooperation became exhausted, and their paths definitively diverged. The explanation lay not only in the hardships of life in emigration. As Gergely Angyalosi emphasized, Balázs continued to draw for some time from the fruits of this collaboration and did not become immune to the influence of Lukács's oeuvre in the twenties either.⁵⁷ To be sure, their once shared world view led him to a theory of art very different from Lukács's. Lukács was soon to work out his theory of realism, in which 'the work' as a closed form has an eminent role. Béla Balázs developed a conception that negates this role. To explain this in greater detail, we have to return to the years of harmonious cooperation.

The Roads Diverge

For the members of the Sunday Circle, the *Werk*—the independent, closed form as the carrier of value—means the chance to overcome alienation among people and is the symbol of this possibility.

Already in the days of the Sunday Circle, Béla Balázs struck more tragic overtones in his *Werk* interpretation than did Lukács. For him, the value-carrying function of form was not always as clear, as much to be taken for granted. In both his poems and his plays, Balázs lamented the fact that life rushed by so quickly; in other words, the implications of their originally shared life philosophy remained more active in his case. Simmel described this contradiction between life and forms in the following terms:

Through theoretical or practical creation, man puts intellectual products or contents into his field of vision and looks at them as an independent cosmos of objectified intellect. An externalized or immaterial work in which intellectual life has become precipitated is regarded as a unique value; however much life comes to a *cul de sac* as it flows into it, or however much it deposits only a formation as it rushes on and leaves its sediment to its own fate, the fact that, at the same time, the products of subjective life belong to the non-amorphous objective order of values, to the logical, moral, religious, artistic, technical or legal order of values, is pregnant with a specifically human richness. If these products prove to carry such values, to belong to such categories, then, through their interlacing and systematization they not only escape the rigid isolation that distances them from the rhythm of the life process, but they also impart to the process itself a significance that it could not have gained merely from its own inevitability once it has started. On the objectification of intellect there is a value that derives from subjective consciousness, but through which subjective consciousness points to something that is external to it.⁵⁸

Thus, even though culture exists only in these formations, its tragedy nonetheless lies in the fact that these objectifications, for all the accented value that they carry, are forever antagonistic to the vitality of life.

These formations are homes of productive life, to become deserted again and to be taken up as homes for those that follow, and yet, at the end do not look for accommodation in them. They display their own logic and laws, their own sense and resistance in a certain self-reliance and detachment from the intellectual dynamism that created them. At the moment of creation they may be adequate for life, but as they continue their evolution they become rigidly alienated from life and may even become antagonistic to it [...] Because of its very essence, which is restlessness, development, and a rushing by, life is in constant struggle with its own solidified creations, which do not extend it; but as it cannot find its own external being in anything else except in some form, this process can be visibly and manifestly depicted as the driving out of the old forms by the new ones. [...] Life considers form as something forcibly superimposed, it wants to break through not

only this or that form, but form in general, and absorb it into its own immediacy, to put itself into its place and let its own richness and vigour flow freely just as it gushed forth from its own source, while any cognition, value, and formation can gain validity only as life's own manifestation without detours.⁵⁹

This conflict is the basic motif of all Béla Balázs's works.

The heroes of his dramas perish because they cannot find themselves in this or that life mold, but apart from these externally given modes of life, it is impossible for them to live. Stopping by to make a choice is tantamount to death. The hero of *A tündér* [The Fairy], one of his mystery plays, describes this state of mind in the following terms:

No, I am never by myself, alone.
All the days I have not lived keep me company,
Facing me with a thousand open doors
Looking, waiting, calling, and beckoning.
All the things that are not here are with me,
All the things that may chance and are still possible,
And their cries are heard: fetch me, come for me!
Haunting me are all the things that could have been --
A troupe of ghosts ghoulishly at my heels.
Oh, no, I am not alone, not alone.
A thousand sounds stir in the evening wind,
Words of friendship, sighs of women who loved.
New, unknown faces call and look at me,
And I see my far self a hundred times
With a new past and new cravings in the heart.
And a hundred times my own eyes I see,
Reflecting images I have not known.
All this dies if I move not from this place!
A hundred friendships, love and works will perish
And a thousand tough times; his own self kills
Who friendless fades and refuses to roam.⁶⁰

He laconically expresses the same thing in his "*Halálesztétika*" [The aesthetics of death]: "If death is what imparts form, I kill whatever I make."⁶¹

For Lukács, the work, that slice of the world subjectively formed and embraced by sense-giving form to stand in itself, represents fundamental value against everything else that he does not regard as value. For Balázs, form does not mean the transcending of alienation and the possibility of creating value over and beyond existing non-authentic assets in the same way as it does for Lukács. For him, form is something that separates; that is its crucial principle, while creating a link is of but secondary importance. ('Is not perception getting detached?') In his *Dialógus a dialógusról* [Dialogue on the dialogue] he writes:

Dialogue is a tragic thing. It is the only means for the union of our souls, and yet it is the thing that separates us [...] the innermost sanctum of community must be secret, it must not be talked about—otherwise it stops being a community. A dialogue splits it into two halves.⁶²

Let us imagine that we lay out a picture showing several figures out of colored marbles.

The contours of the figures are clean and definite. Yet the spaces in between are not different in substance, each of them has its own definite form, defined by two figures on each side. By the same token, the margins between any good pattern of ornamentation each make equal ornamental sense. That is how, between our two

beings, there is a separate being of a substance of equal rank, between our two souls, an invisible spirit whose contours are drawn on each side by the contours of the two of us.⁶³

In this case, the primary function of form—as contour—is to delineate, and creation is only its secondary function. This something to which form has been imparted, though it may bear the accent of value, is not an authentic, value-creating transcendence of life, but its mere negation.

That is why Balázs felt nostalgia for all the kinds of art that leave open the road toward life, and he began early to look for the possibility of an art that made this openness feasible. That is why he regarded as an authentic genre fragments that only suggest or signify something but do not form a whole that reflects reality. (Simmel also wrote an essay about ruins!) He praised in Maeterlinck, too what is behind and beyond form. "It is nowhere, so as to be everywhere," wrote Balázs about the vagueness of the locations where Maeterlinck sets his plays.⁶⁴ "Some dramatists draw only sharp contours, others fragment the contours with details to make their figures more individualistic. Maeterlinck on the other hand draws only the details of the core—there are no contours—they fade into the mist."⁶⁵

East Asian art won Balázs's interest as an unoutlined, unclosed ideal of an art that does not turn against life.

Any reality represented by art suggests *being* and any vitality suggests life. This is what our philosophers say. Whatever style, rhythm, composition, and harmony there is in European art, means law and order, which—although it may have been cut out from a remote corner of the world, suggests and implies *totality*, applies to the whole. This law turns every artistic work into a microcosmos that has its own center, a microcosmos that is isolated from the world not only by its framework, but also in its internal organism. It is then a little world on its own, which resembles *Totality* [...] Thus, the essential criterion of European art, according to the European philosophy of art, lies in the fact that in representation consciousness turns against nature. It is symbolical and transcendent. All this is old hat. What is new and not so generally known is the fact that this theory—although it explains not only individual forms of art, but also its basis, its possibilities and meaning—nonetheless cannot be applied to East Asian art. For we have to stop at the criterion of 'representation'. East Asian art is not always representation. Japanese ceramics has a great many products that do not resemble anything, nor is it ornamental decorative art, for it is completely irregular. There is no trace in it of symmetry, divisions, or even rhythm; it is almost completely amorphous. There are vases that may recall the knotted limbs of a dead tree of random form, although they actually do not express anything else apart from their own substance—clay or porcelain. The creases and indentations on it suggest the cohesion of the material of which it is made, and the glaze that has dried on it while still running, suggests the original liquidity of that glaze. Why, then, are such bowls and vases beautiful? Undeniably they delight us, although they do not depict anything and no decorative motif can be discovered in them; in other words, they lack all the criteria of European art.

If nonetheless someone entertained doubts (especially if he has never seen such strange vases) and suspected that the involuntary associations produced by some hidden intention to represent something are effective in these mysterious forms, let us tell him about the observations that Kurt Glaser made following his East Asian tour. The varieties of the 'art' of the Japanese are more numerous than ours. They have, for instance, their 'finding artists'. People who do not make anything. They do not carve and do not paint, thus they certainly do not represent anything. They walk the woods and the mountains and 'find'—they find strange boles, twigs of pleasant shape, and beautifully colored stones. They gather these and sell them to fellow orientals who then decorate their homes with them. Their exceptional ability or talent for which they are paid and respected as other artists lies in their taste. But they neither depict nor forcibly impose form with the rhythm of ornamentation on the arrhythmic happenings of life.

The Japanese have a highly appreciated art that consists in *finding landscapes*. For some people this is a trade out of which they make their living: they find observation points from which in a certain part of the day the Fujiyama, another mountain, or a lake presents an exceptionally beautiful view. Such a discovery is then considered the work of the artist concerned, for which he is praised, and his name is remembered as that of those who paint pictures or sculpt statues. And yet he has not made anything. He never turned to nature in order to create some work that is a microcosmos that resembles the world. He, too, like the finding

artist, stays inside nature, extends it and puts a slice of it in his field of vision. This continuation of nature from within has brought into being their strange and magnificent landscape gardening and gardens [...] The 'art' of the Japanese is only partially fine art, probably not in the greater part. What is on the other hand certain is that the same spirit that makes them arrange their gardens and flowers produces their paintings and sculptures. In other words, they do not consciously confront nature for depiction; they extend and *shape nature itself*.⁶⁶

In the article from which the above citation is taken, there appears for the first time the story that Balázs was later to cite often in his film aesthetic, too.

This is a classical and old anecdote that corresponds to our legends of Zeuxis and Apelles. They, of course, recount how Apelles painted vines that bore genuine natural grapes—with such authenticity that the sparrow perched on them. The Chinese tale, on the other hand, says that once upon a time, there was a painter who painted a landscape, a beautiful valley with a road leading into it. The painter got to like his own painting so much that he once set out on the road, and went into the valley—never to return again. In other words, there the painting did not *represent* a landscape but *was* the landscape. Artists do not portray anything, they create real nature. The tale is also told of another painter who painted a dragon so well that it flew off. Chinese tales are full of the motif that statues converse and drink wine with humans. People suddenly find themselves *in* a picture, live in it for a few years with a painted woman and then come out of it, but since this visit the girl has put a kerchief over her hair, for she has become a woman!

Pygmalion prayed to the gods to bring his sculpture to life. The Chinese artists pray lest their works grow alive, for they do not depict nature in dead pictures, but create new creatures already alive, increasing in this way the number of the creatures of nature. The grapes of Apelles deceived the sparrow: it remained hungry. If this is a Chinese fable, the sparrow *eats the grapes off* the picture. For Chinese art is not symbolic. A picture or statue means only itself and nothing else [...]

The Chinese and the Japanese are not familiar with symbolism, a basic form of European thinking. According to Greek mythology, every spring and tree has its god. The Chinese myths hold that the spring and the tree are God Himself. And the brook leaves its bed if it feels like it, and the tree speaks to you. The Shinto religion has no thought of the other world. Nothing means anything, everything is only for itself. Thus, Chinese art is *not transcendent*. (This can be shown in its literary forms, too, but that would take us too far.) In other words, their art has different psychological and metaphysical foundations. It is not the isolated confrontation and perception of nature by consciousness, but the intellectual further creation of nature. In fact, it is not art, but nature. This is just as far from 'art' in the European sense as the colors of the peacock or the song of the lark—although the latter are also pleasing. Simmel, who was also aware of this problem, expressed it very cleverly: as the fruit grows at the end of the apple-tree branch, so the vase springs into being in the hand of the Japanese artist.⁶⁷

Béla Balázs set off to seek an immanent art. Lukács would never follow him on this path, but there was, nonetheless, a timid step that he did take in the direction. Although strictly defining the scope of this possibility and comparing it to other genres, as Euclidean geometry can be compared to non-Euclidean geometry, he made the reservation that there is one genre that is immanent, namely, the fable—the fable that is Béla Balázs's own genre, for he was the poet of roaming.

In Lukács's interpretation the fable is the proper genre for roamers.

Any genuine fabulous tale is about how the soul gets lost in the infinite land of the spirit, about its frightening loneliness in its wonderful and yet alien integrity with itself, and a final, all-resolving and all-obscuring home-coming, a blissful plunging into its homogeneous cosmos.⁶⁸

The fable transcends the conflict of soul and forms and eradicates alienation: "In the world of fabulous tales empiricism and transcendentalism are inseparable even in thought."⁶⁹ There the Dostoevskian utopia comes true: "the fabulous tale [...] depicts a changed world."⁷⁰ The fabulous tale does not point farther than itself; it is identical with itself; it is self-contained and self-sufficient. In the fabulous tale, "everything is literally what it seems".⁷¹ The fabulous tale does not reflect nature—it enriches it; it is

not transcendent, but immanent art. Its metaphysical basis is different from that of all the other genres:

It is only in the fabulous tale that we find something absolutely new (and for this reason the fabulous tale is the really primeval genre). For what is new in it is not relatively new—in comparison with other things, in comparison with old things, as is always the case on the level of our reality, whether it be empirical or metaphysical. The new in this case is not the extension of the contents of our experience, it is not the assimilation of new observations, but the expansion of the meaning of the idea of experience, the broadening of the foundations of our existence without which we could not hypothesize any reality, neither empirical nor metaphysical, for any such hypothesis would be based on relative things (and not extension).⁷²

Of course, if the fabulous tale broadens the concept of experience, then writing fabulous tales is not creation, but discovery. The fabulous tale is found in the same way as the oriental 'finding artists' find their works. Lukács, the believer in the omnipotence of form, accepts the theory of 'finding' in regard to the fabulous tale. 'Once upon a time there was, believe it or not,' so the fabulous tale begins and this negation of presence and presentness is more than the mere lack of 'being', of what characterizes every narrative work: this 'was' is not a no longer actual present that has become past; it is something that has never been, that in its essence can never become present. That is why the idea of 'newness' in regard to the fabulous tale has no antonyms. Any other 'newness' derives from time and is thought of as being part of a reality in time, that is, it is a relative newness in comparison with something else. The newness of the tale is on the other hand absolute, it is the result of something discovered rather than invented.⁷³

Balázs, a poet of fabulous tales, put this into the following words: "The fabulous tale is a common property of mankind, and fabulous tales need not be thought out and written: one simply reaches out one's palm and catches them out of the air."⁷⁴

Béla Balázs looked for art that extends nature, an art of non-European character, because for him, as a pupil of Simmel's who believed in life philosophy, amorphous ephemeral life itself represented the prime value. Lukács, on the other hand, having left behind his ideas on the fabulous tale, no longer wanted anything to do with life philosophy as such and stuck to the power of form, or, what is the same, to 'transcendent' art that is built on closed, world-like artificial wholes.

Hence, Béla Balázs went on from here on his own. In his view, even the idea is form; he thought that the most essential human meanings can be better expressed through movements and mimicry, and that the idea—like any form—separates and conceals souls from each other, rather than forming a link between them. 'A topic, a topic! We keep speaking forever about some specific topic put into the focus!' laments a character in *Dialógus a dialógusról*. "A topic or theme raised in such a formal way is always something which the partners in a conversation set between themselves to keep their distance—sometimes out of modesty, sometimes out of impotence."⁷⁵

Balázs would have liked to find a more direct path between soul and soul. "We think most forcefully without thoughts,"⁷⁶ he wrote with reference to Maeterlinck. Silence, the great mystery that governs all, is the hero of Maeterlinck's plays. "In silence the soul rings out." "Between two words he reaches out toward the still nameless,"⁷⁷ he wrote about Maeterlinck. In his theory of poetry he developed in greater detail the concept already hinted at here. There, too, he perceived primarily whatever reached out beyond the world of words, the well-definable closed quality of idea. The subtitle of his theory of poetry alludes to Maeterlinck on "Saying What Cannot be Said"—and in it he analyzed the three basic methods of poetry, the techniques of description, omis-

sion, and sound effect.⁷⁸ These are used by poetry, for "the spirit cannot be made to think in ideas; they can only be suggested in its material. An abstract idea does not become detached from consciousness as an object in itself that consciousness can confront; it has no substance of its own that could reflect my soul."⁷⁹

From here, it is but a step to film theory. "Human culture would be conceivable even without speech,"⁸⁰ he wrote in *Der sichtbare Mensch*.

Is it an accident, that gerade in den letzten Jahrzehnten gleichzeitig mit dem Film auch der künstlerische Tanz zu einem allgemeinen Kulturbedürfnis wurde? Offenbar haben wir viele Dinge zu sagen, die mit Worten nicht zu sagen sind. Man geht zurück auf die ursprüngliche Ausdruckbewegung, deren sekundäre und abgeleitete Formen unsere Kultur in die verschiedensten Sackgassen getrieben zu haben scheinen. Das Wort scheint den Menschen vergewaltigt zu haben. Prokrustes-Begriffe warfen vieles über Bord, was uns heute schon abgeht, und die Musik allein genügt nicht, um es uns wiederzugeben. Die Kultur der Worte ist eine entmaterialisierte, abstrakte, verintellektualisierte Kultur, die den menschlichen Körper zu einem blossen biologischen Organismus degradiert hat. Aber die neue Gebärdensprache, die da kommt, entspringt unserer schmerzlichen Sehnsucht, mit unserem ganzen Körper, vom Scheitel bis zur Sohle wir selbst, Mensch sein zu können (nicht nur in unseren Worten) und unseren eigenen Leib nicht mehr als eine fremde Sache, als irgendein praktisches Werkzeug mit uns schleppen zu müssen. Sie entspringt der Sehnsucht nach dem verstummt, vergessenen, unsichtbar gewordenen *leiblichen* Menschen.⁸¹

Überhaupt scheint die Kultur den Weg vom abstrakten Geist zum sichtbaren Körper zu gehen. Sieht man denn nicht den Bewegungen, den feinen Händen eines Menschen den Geist seiner Ahnen an? Gedanken der Väter werden zur Empfänglichkeit der Nerven, zu Geschmack und Instinkt bei den Kindern. Das bewusste Wissen wird zu unbewusster Sensibilität: *es materialisiert sich zur Kultur im Körper*. Die körperliche Ausdrucksfähigkeit ist immer das letzte Resultat einer Kulturentwicklung, und darum, mag der Film von heute ein noch so primitives, barbarisches Sammeln im Verhältnis zur Literatur *von heute* sein, bedeutet er dennoch die Entwicklung der Kultur, weil er eine unmittelbare Körperwerdung des Geistes bedeutet.⁸²

In the motion picture Béla Balázs found the kind of art that is able to overcome the alienation of the soul. In it he found the very openness that is also manifest in oriental art.

Die Distanz zwischen Mensch und Kunstwerk ist ein Grundprinzip der europäischen Ästhetik und Kunstphilosophie gewesen seit der griechischen Antike bis zum heutigen Tag. Dieses Prinzip besagt, dass jedes Kunstwerk eine in sich geschlossene Totalität sei, eine Welt für sich, ein "Mikrokosmos" mit eigenen Gesetzen, eigener Homogenität. Die Kunst — heisst es — möge eine Darstellung der Wirklichkeit sein, habe aber keine unmittelbare Verbindung, keinen Kontakt mit ihr. Das Kunstwerk ist umrahmt, nicht nur durch den äusseren Rahmen des Bildes, es ist isoliert vom Zuschauer nicht durch das Piedestal der Skulptur und nicht durch den Rahmen der Bühne und durch die trennende Rampe. Das Kunstwerk hat seinen inneren Rahmen durch seine geschlossene Komposition und den besonderen "ad hoc" Gesetzen ihrer besonderen Welt.

Die Distanz, die hierdurch entsteht, ist nicht nur eine räumliche. Es ist vielmehr eine Distanz im Bewusstsein des Zuschauers. Die Welt eines Gemäldes ist unnahbar und ohne Eingang, auch dann, wenn ich es in der Hand halte. Und die Welt der Szene ist ebenso geschlossen und unnahbar auch dann, wenn ich meinen Sitzplatz auf der Bühne selbst habe, oder die Bühne mitten in den Zuschauerraum hineinreicht. Denn die Isoliertheit und Distanz im Bewusstsein besteht darin, dass ich in den Raum der *Handlung* nicht eintreten kann, mich nicht unter die Figuren mengen kann, nicht *innerhalb der Komposition des Kunstwerkes erscheinen kann*. Wenn ich auch ganz nah bin, schaue ich doch nur durch den Zaun in einen Garten, der ein eigener Globus ist.

Der Film hat dieses Prinzip der alten räumlichen Künste — die Distanz und die abgesonderte Geschlossenheit des Kunstwerkes — zerstört. Die bewegliche Kamera nimmt mein Auge, und damit mein Bewusstsein, mit: mitten in das Bild, mitten in den Spielraum der Handlung hinein. Ich sehe nichts von aussen. Ich sehe alles so, wie die handelnden Personen es sehen müssen. Ich bin umzingelt von den Gestalten des Films und dadurch verwickelt in seine Handlung. Ich gehe mit, ich fahre mit, ich stürze mit — obwohl ich körperlich auf demselben Platz sitzen bleibe.⁸³

It was in the open-form film that Béla Balázs saw the hint of the utopistic possibility of souls' meeting. Lukács, the social philosopher, sought after this possibility on other

paths, and, therefore, had to transcend utopia. He believed in the ethic of form to the last, in the living but completely unprovable creed that the divergent paths of the souls eventually meet—they must meet, for all start from the same center. Balázs's faith was less firm, but, in its own way, it also bore fruit.

(Translated by Éva Rácz)

Notes

- ¹ György Lukács: "Kiknek nem kell és miért a Balázs Béla költészete" [Who want none of Béla Balázs's poetry and why?] in *Ifjúkori művek* [Early works] (Budapest: 1977) pp. 695–96.
- ² Ferenc Fehér: "Das Bündnis von Georg Lukács und Béla Balázs bis zur ungarischen Revolution 1918", in his *Die Seele und das Leben: Studien zum frühen Lukács* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1977).
- ³ György Lukács: "Kiknek nem kell és miért a Balázs Béla költészete", in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 696.
- ⁴ Marcell Benedek: *Naplómat olvasom* [Reading my diary] (Budapest: 1965) pp. 123–24.
- ⁵ The letter of Béla Balázs to György Lukács, dated March 1, 1912, in *Balázs Béla levelei Lukács György-höz* [The letters of Béla Balázs to György Lukács] ed. by J. Lenkei (Budapest: 1982) p. 78.
- ⁶ The letter of Béla Balázs to György Lukács, dated May 4, 1911, in *ibid.*, p. 48.
- ⁷ The letter of Béla Balázs to György Lukács, dated February (?) 1912, in *ibid.*, p. 77.
- ⁸ The letter of Béla Balázs to György Lukács, dated May (?) 1910, in *ibid.*, p. 15.
- ⁹ The letter of Béla Balázs to György Lukács, dated March 30, 1912, in *ibid.*, p. 85.
- ¹⁰ The letter of Béla Balázs to György Lukács, dated August 2, 1912, in *Lukács György levelezése 1912–1917* [György Lukács's correspondence] ed. by É. Fekete and É. Karádi (Budapest: 1981) p. 493.
- ¹¹ The letter of Béla Balázs to György Lukács, dated February 21, 1910, in *Balázs Béla levelei Lukács György-höz*, pp. 4–5.
- ¹² The letter of Béla Balázs to György Lukács, dated March 24, 1910, in *ibid.*, p. 8.
- ¹³ Béla Balázs: *Napló* [Diary] (Budapest: 1982) vol. I, p. 514
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 154.
- ¹⁵ The letter of Béla Balázs to György Lukács, dated November (?) 1916, in *Lukács György levelezése*, p. 652.
- ¹⁶ Béla Balázs: *Napló*, vol. II, p. 101.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 135–36.
- ¹⁸ The letter of György Lukács to Leó Popper, dated October 26, in Georg Lukács: *Selected Correspondence 1902–1920*, trans. and ed. by J. Marcus and Z. Tar (New York: 1986) p. 146.
- ¹⁹ The letter of György Lukács to Leó Popper, dated November 9, 1910, in *Lukács György levelezése*, p. 266.
- ²⁰ The letter of György Lukács to Leó Popper, dated February 11, 1911, in *ibid.*, p. 347.
- ²¹ György Lukács: "Eszztétikai kultúra" [Aesthetic culture] in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 422.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 424.
- ²³ György Lukács: "Régi kultúra, új kultúra" [The old culture and the new culture] first published in *Internationale* June 15, 1919, also in *Történelem és osztálytudat* [History and class consciousness] (Budapest: 1971) p. 46.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.
- ²⁵ Károly Mannheim: "Lélek és kultúra" [Soul and culture] in É. Karádi and E. Vezér, eds. *A Vasárnapi Kör* [Sunday Circle] (Budapest: 1980) pp. 188–89.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 194.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 190.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 190.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 190.
- ³⁰ György Lukács: "Eszztétikai kultúra", in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 426.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 434.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 435.
- ³³ Béla Balázs: "Halálesztétika" [The aesthetics of death] in *Halálos fiatalság* [Deathly youth] (Budapest: 1974) pp. 293–94.
- ³⁴ Béla Balázs: *Dramaturgia: Előadások a szellemi tudományok köréből* [Dramaturgy: Lectures in Intellectual Sciences] (Budapest: 1918) p. 35.

- ³⁵ Béla Balázs: *Napló*, vol. I, pp. 424—25.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 357.
- ³⁷ Béla Balázs: *Dramaturgia*, p. 36.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- ³⁹ György Lukács: "Jegyzetek Szélpál Margitról" [Notes on Margit Szélpál] in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 231.
- ⁴⁰ György Lukács: "Balázs Béla: Az utolsó nap" [The last day by Béla Balázs] in *ibid.*, p. 601.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 602.
- ⁴² György Lukács: "Balázs Béla: *Misztériumok*" [Mysteries by Béla Balázs] in *ibid.*, pp. 581—82.
- ⁴³ Béla Balázs: *Napló*, vol. I, pp. 415—16.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 644.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 28.
- ⁴⁶ György Lukács: "Esztétikai kultúra", in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 435.
- ⁴⁷ György Lukács: "Napló" [Diary] in *Curriculum vitae* (Budapest: 1982) pp. 421—22.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 448.
- ⁴⁹ Béla Balázs: *Napló*, vol. II, pp. 12—13.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- ⁵¹ György Lukács: "A német értelmiség és a háború" [German intellectuals and the war] in *Ifjúkori művek*, pp. 831—32.
- ⁵² Éva Karádi: "Dokumentumok Lukács György heidelbergi korszakából" [Documents from György Lukács's Heidelberg period] *Valóság* (1974) No. 11, p. 41.
- ⁵³ Béla Balázs: *Napló*, vol. II, p. 475.
- ⁵⁴ Jean-Michel Palmier: "La traversée du siècle d'Ernst Bloch" *Les nouvelles littéraires*, April 29—May 6, 1976.
- ⁵⁵ Béla Balázs: *Napló*, vol. II, pp. 149 and 167.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 354.
- ⁵⁷ Gergely Angyalosi: "A lélek kálváriája és diadala" [The tribulations and triumph of the soul], in his *A fiatal Lukács dráma- és művészetelmélete* [The young Lukács's theory of drama and art] (Budapest: 1979).
- ⁵⁸ Georg Simmel: "Der Begriff und die Tragödie der Kultur", in his *Das individuelle Gesetz* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1968) pp. 122—23.
- ⁵⁹ Georg Simmel: "Der Konflikt der modernen Kultur", in *ibid.*, pp. 148—51.
- ⁶⁰ Béla Balázs: "A tündér" [The fairy] in *Az álmok köntöse* [The mantle of dreams] (Budapest: 1973) p. 247.
- ⁶¹ Béla Balázs: "Halálesztétika", in *Halálos fiatalság*, p. 310.
- ⁶² Béla Balázs: *Dialógus a dialógusról* [Dialogue on the dialogue] (Budapest: n.d.) p. 9.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- ⁶⁴ Béla Balázs: "Maeterlinck", *Nyugat* (1908) vol. I, p. 448.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 454.
- ⁶⁶ Béla Balázs: "A kelet-ázsiai művészet filozófiájához" [To the philosophy of East Asian art] in É. Karádi and E. Vezér (eds) *A Vasárnapi Kör*, pp. 152—54.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 155.
- ⁶⁸ György Lukács: "Balázs Béla: Hét mese" [Béla Balázs: Seven fairy tales] in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 721.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 715.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 717.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 721.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 713.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 714.
- ⁷⁴ Magda K. Nagy: *Balázs Béla világa* [The world of Béla Balázs] (Budapest: 1973) p. 116.
- ⁷⁵ Béla Balázs: *Dialógus a dialógusról*, pp. 20—21.
- ⁷⁶ Béla Balázs: "Maeterlinck", *Nyugat* (1908) vol. I, p. 450.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 450 and 453.
- ⁷⁸ See Béla Balázs: "A lírai érzékenységről" [On lyrical sensitivity] in *Halálos fiatalság*.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 355.
- ⁸⁰ Béla Balázs: "Der sichtbare Mensch" in *Schriften zum Film* (Berlin: 1982) vol. I, p. 55.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 56.
- ⁸³ Béla Balázs: "Zur Kunstphilosophie des Films", *Das Wort* (1938) No. 3, p. 111.

Béla Bartók and György Lukács

by

Miklós Szabolcsi

Béla Bartók and György Lukács figure in Hungarian popular consciousness as members of a great constellation. They belong to the 'second Hungarian reform generation' of the turn of the century, which included the poet Endre Ady and the composer Zoltán Kodály, the sociologist Oszkár Jászi and the psychoanalyst Sándor Ferenczi, the prose writer Zsigmond Móricz, and the painter József Rippl-Rónai. Béla Bartók was born in 1882 and György Lukács in 1885. Hence, the question arises: did they know one another, and what opinions did they hold of one another?

Personal Relations

From the year 1900 on, both Lukács and Bartók lived in Budapest and frequented circles which, if not identical, still overlapped. Yet, as there is nothing that would indicate any closer or friendly relations between them, their connection can be best characterized perhaps as a superficial social acquaintance. Beyond all that, to my knowledge they had not written one another's name before 1919.

It is, however, well known that the atmosphere of the Lukács home was imbued with music. György Lukács himself learned to play the cello, and although he later on gave it up, he remained a concert-goer throughout his youth. He was involved with music for his sister's sake; Ernő Dohnányi and Dávid Popper appeared as guests at his father's house, as did Bartók, who was giving his sister lessons once a week. Besides, the best friend of Lukács's youth, Leó Popper lived—so to say—in music. The young Lukács himself was enthusiastic about Wagner, and the music of the *fin de siècle*, that of Brahms and Wolf, was also heard in their house.¹

There was yet another way in which György Lukács could come in contact with music. A probable intermediary was Béla Balázs—the would-be aesthete and poet—who at the time still went under the name Herbert Bauer. An arts student from Budapest and member of the Joseph Eötvös College (the Hungarian equivalent of the École Normale Supérieure), he became acquainted with Lukács around 1904–5, and from 1906 on they belonged to one and the same narrow circle of friends; more precisely, Balázs was drawn toward Lukács's scope of intellectual attraction. Balázs shared the same room with Zoltán Kodály in the Eötvös college from 1902 on, and later became his intimate

friend.² So it was Balázs who could have played the role of the connecting link between Lukács and the giants of Hungarian music. For Béla Balázs—according to his diary notes—became acquainted with Béla Bartók in August, 1906, when they were collecting folk songs together around Szeged, in the south of Hungary;³ at that time, Balázs was already Lukács's friend, too. (All this can be followed in his diary. The portions relating to the years 1908—11 are missing, but in the 1911 notes, Lukács is mentioned in rather intimate terms as 'Gyuri'.) His friendship with Kodály and the latter's wife was the most intimate in 1911, when they spent two weeks together in Waidberg; in the autumn of the same year, Balázs traveled to Italy together with Lukács. Bartók and Lukács were the members of two related circles. One, which was marked by the names of Lukács, Emma Ritoók, Ernst Bloch, and Balázs around 1911, became the so-called 'Sunday Circle', and later, during World War I, the Free School of Humanities. The other was characterized by the friendship of Kodály and Bartók. Kodály was at home in both circles, while Bartók was not—in spite of the fact that Balázs wrote as follows in his diary: "Ady has arrived and phoned me. How glad I was of him. Besides my friends—Gyuri, Bartók, Zoltán [sic]—he is the only one I like."⁴

Now it is common knowledge that, a few years later, it was the words of Béla Balázs that Bartók chose as his libretti for *The Wooden Prince* and then *Bluebeard's Castle*. Hence, Béla Balázs, one of the intimate friends of György Lukács, became the collaborator of Béla Bartók. The circles came into contact; yet, there is no sign that would indicate that the two men in question would have known each other intimately.

But it remains true: both were 'difficult persons'. Béla Bartók was a highly introverted and taciturn man, difficult to get along with, who concentrated exclusively on his music. And György Lukács, although he had some inclinations to become a teacher-master and harbored ambitions of creating an intellectual circle, by and large remained reserved, defending his own 'walls'; at times, and especially at that time, his behavior was arrogant and even aristocratic. All the same, Lukács, as he stated in one of his late recollections, saw and valued highly Bartók's works of that period (1919), particularly those for the stage.

For our generation—here I can speak only about myself and a few persons who were near me—it was a tremendous experience to hear not only the first concerts of the Waldbauer quartet, but, above all, *The Wooden Prince*, which actually was the first example in Hungary of the fact that high [vs pop] Hungarian art seriously raised the problem of alienation. It is a different question that Bartók, shortly afterward, increased this enormously in *The Miraculous Mandarin*, which, I admit, I did not know yet during the dictatorship. In this respect, it was *The Wooden Prince* and *Bluebeard's Castle* that represented, for me, the pinnacle.⁵

As is well known, during the 1919 Hungarian Republic of Councils, György Lukács became deputy commissar of education. In that capacity, he was entrusted with the direction of the newly established Musical Directory, of which Béla Bartók also became a member.⁶ We do not have any certain knowledge of their personal contacts in this period and can therefore only suppose that they met at the People's Commissariat for Education, or at some sessions of the Musical Directory. At any rate, Lukács's recollections, his later references to Béla Bartók, relied on the events of this period.

Lukács spoke about this in most detail at the end of his life, in an interview. "I, as a commissar, was a 'yes-man' in the field of music, doing what the directory, or, more precisely, what Béla Bartók demanded."⁷ According to György Lukács, it was Bartók on whom the choice fell because

In that age, Bartók was the only one among the great artists who turned frontally against the gentry and 'gentry' Hungary. One simply had to understand what popularism meant for Bartók. It meant the destruction of the popularism of 'the Hungarian make merry in tears', that of pseudo-popularism, which spread over to the field of everyday music—and for this purpose music was most suitable. The clear-sighted democrats already recognized at that time that from among the living Hungarian artists Bartók was the most passionate and the most consistent in this respect. And now, if I return to my role as a 'yes-man', the point is indeed that Bartók was the only artist living then in whom one could trust, as he represented the interrelation between great art and democracy in his works and in his arts policy with equal consistency. Therefore, the dictatorship gave Bartók and those surrounding him the opportunity to implement their ideas; and here I take into consideration, too that Bartók's colleague at the commissariat was [Béla] Reinitz. So, when remembering the dictatorship, we have to bear in mind that the cultural policy of the dictatorship was at the same time a 'Bartókian' cultural policy.⁸

In the interview he emphasized several times Bartók's initiating role (contrary to Dohnányi), and, in response to a question, stressed their steps taken in the interest of democratism in music:

It is certain—and I find it highly important—that it was due to Bartók's and Kodály's deep democratism that they used the dictatorship for the realization of the program of musical democratism. Kodály had not elaborated his new pedagogical method yet, but I am sure that it would have met with a warm reception on the part of the dictatorship, had it been completed then. As regards their future development, there was a difference between Bartók and Kodály, but this difference had not yet existed at the time of the dictatorship.

I think the difference lies in the fact that Bartók's democratism was a peasant, a plebeian democratism, directed against the upper classes and against the people's distortion by the upper classes. This becomes manifest clearly and unambiguously in the *Cantata profana*. Kodály held views, full of romantic illusions, about a past age, when there had flourished a patriarchal unity in the nation, there had been a unity between the landlord and the serf. I could never discern any signs of this illusion in Bartók, so on this point there is a difference between them, which—if we examine the question today—can be followed up in their musical development, too. But I have to add: I do not think that it would have been a clearly defined standpoint of theirs, respectively, as early as in 1919—at that time the harmony between them seemed to be perfect in every question. The divergence of opinions set in later, which seems to be quite clear even from the fact that Bartók felt the need to emigrate from Hungary, while Kodály—apart from the scandals in 1919—always avoided conflicts with the ruling circles. But I would find it highly dangerous if this difference, which had not existed yet in 1919, were projected back to the time of the dictatorship.⁹

I have to add to the above comments that the reader of the Lukács interview conducted in 1969 cannot help forming the suspicion that here Lukács himself projected back the later developments to 1919, that is, antedated the pieces of information and knowledge that he obtained later on. In general: his is a case in which it is difficult to judge how much in these opinions can be attributed to actual memory, and how much to the effect of the literature that he had been reading during the preceding fifty years.

Further, it should be added to the personal history that the paths of Bartók and Lukács met again, indirectly, shortly afterward: from 1920 to 1922, the Bartóks lived in the house of György Lukács's father, the banker József Lukács, at No. 2, Gyopár Street.¹⁰ (Thomas Mann also stayed there as a guest for a short period of time; his oeuvre has some points of contact with those of Lukács and Bartók, on the pages of *The Magic Mountain* and *Doctor Faustus*.) At that time, György Lukács was already in exile in Vienna, but he kept in touch with his father, and, hence, perhaps could have been aware of the Bartók's stay at their house.

Bartók's Work as a Paradigm of Cultural Policy

In the 1920s and 1930s—as far as I know—neither Bartók nor Lukács mentioned the other man in his writings. In Bartók's case, this remained true until his death.¹¹ As for György Lukács, he began to refer to Bartók again in 1946, after his return to Hungary. He mentioned it for some years, in the context of cultural policy. It occurs as a justification of a political and cultural political conception, thus, with no aesthetic evaluation, not as an artistic example. For example, in his 1946 study, "Irodalom és demokrácia" [Literature and democracy], Lukács wrote as follows:

Gorky stressed in one of his speeches that every truly great culture not only originates from the people, but it is folklore-like even in its contents [...] Here, in Hungary, it is particularly natural to renew the culture starting from such popular contents. The real pinnacles of our culture (Petőfi, Ady, Bartók) have also sprung from here.¹²

In his "Népi írók a mérlegen" [Populist writers in the balance], he mentioned Bartók and Attila József among modern artists, as the "magic influence of great realism".¹³ Finally, his programmatic lecture, "A magyar irodalomtörténet revíziója" [The revision of Hungarian literary history], reads as follows: "During the counterrevolution, the camp of true progress lost—not by chance—their best (Bartók, [Gyula] Derkovits, [István] Dési Huber, Attila József, [Miklós] Radnóti)."¹⁴

Nevertheless, these scattered references trace a definite line, namely, Lukács's intention to use Bartók's example to support his own conception concerning the new, democratic and plebeian Hungarian culture, and, at the same time, to cite it as an example of a valid great realism considered to be the keystone of his own conception. On the other hand, by virtue of Bartók's name, Lukács joined the tradition and consensus of the best representatives of the Hungarian leftist intelligentsia—accepting Bartók in this sense, but 'displacing' him from the side of Kodály or Lajos Kassák, and elevating him beside Ady and Attila József.

In the following years, Lukács mentioned Bartók's historical role several times, using him as an example of his own historical explanations. In an interview of 1969 he said that, with Bartók, "there exists the policy of consensus with the nationalities to the greatest extent."¹⁵ He took a step further when elevating Bartók, mainly in this respect, beside Ady:

it was just Ady who was the first Hungarian poet to see the connection between the fate of Hungary and the national minorities. Petőfi was not conscious of this in 1848; he had no realization of this problem as Ady and one other had—Béla Bartók—the only other person in Hungary to be aware of it. The fact that Bartók extended his work of collecting folk songs to Rumanian and Slovak territories amounts to the same awareness in the sphere of music as Ady's more general perception. Bartók's music was a protest against the kind of gypsy music the gentry favoured; it was anti-gentry, not anti-Rumanian or anti-Slovak Magyarism.¹⁶

He sharpened this thought further, in another interview given at the same time:

when Ady, as it were, left alone, denounced the provincial compromise, an enormous democratic breakthrough came into being around Bartók simultaneously. If we truly want to evaluate Bartók's music, we should keep in mind that it is a showdown with the gypsy folk song form that was assimilated to the gentry. If we do not recognize this achievement, we shall never understand the significance of Bartók's music and that of such an excellent work as the *Cantata profana*. Furthermore, it seems to be the case that this Bartókian line has a certain positive role in the development of the late Ady and the later [Mihály] Babits, that is, that Babits, during the last years of his life, obviously came under Bartók's influence a good deal more strongly,

and that what the young Ady could not attain in the young Babits was attained by the mature Bartók in the mature Babits. I would deem it a highly important task of literary history to explore this interrelation. The data have been exposed, but so far nobody has drawn the conclusion.¹⁷

Lukács expounded his views concerning Bartók's and Kodály's breakthrough and their place in history in greatest detail in his only study having music as its theme: the foreword (1967) to the complete works of Aladár Tóth, musical aesthetician and critic.

Today it is impossible to understand the development of music, and the direction and future of this development, unless one takes sides with respect to Bartók's oeuvre [...] Since the time of Bartók's appearance, the democratic spirit turning toward the people has asserted itself precisely in the field of music much more definitely and consistently than anywhere else. As for Bartók's music, it is well known. So it is, as regards the artistic activity of Zoltán Kodály [...] Bartók and Kodály have always closely connected the quest for true folk art with the exploration of the essence of art of the highest quality. Thus, the aesthetic results of Hungarian folk-music research show such a method of approach which, from Bach and Händel through Musorgsky, has always shed light on the populist foundations of art of the highest quality. Secondly, it should be stressed that over here in Hungary, emphasizing the value of Hungarian folk art has always been an expressed declaration of war against the Hungarian gentry culture that became bourgeois-minded. By virtue of this radicalism, the trend of musical revolution went far beyond the literary attitudes of the *Nyugat*. Here, naturally, we do not have in mind Ady, but the actual leaders of everyday practice, such as the attitudes of, for example, [Ernő] Osvát, [Aladár] Schöppflin, Babits, *et. al.*, in terms of criticism and literary policy. Thirdly—and this relates first of all to the personal activity of Bartók—the discovery of folk music and its musical application were far from content with the material to be found in Hungarian regions, they spread over to the traditions of the neighboring peoples and, furthermore, even of rather distant peoples (Arabs). Hence, in the discovery of true Hungarian art, we can never encounter nationalistic accents. On the contrary: Bartók has always despised the nationalism of the gentry culture and has always professed the brotherhood of all nations.¹⁸

From a historical point of view, the portrait of Bartók offered by Lukács and the place that he assigned the composer can hardly be contested, although the contrast between Bartók and his contemporaries, the representatives of the new literary movement—particularly Babits—seems too starkly drawn. But I would like to reiterate that we may well agree with Lukács on Bartók's democratism, and his turning toward the people and non-Hungarian folk music, particularly if we see the objective historical place of these developments, and if we do not examine the subjective motives of the artists himself, his own ideological construction. Nevertheless, I have to add that, by 1967–69, the aforementioned views had already been voiced repeatedly by Hungarian historians of music, musical critics, and aestheticians; by this time, they had virtually become clichés. Above all, Aladár Tóth and Bence Szabolcsi had sounded these calls for decades and expressed them in print as early as in the 1950s. Seen in this context, the importance of Lukács's articles and declarations lies mostly in the fact that he espoused them and built them into his own system of ideas, setting the Bartók paradigm beside the Ady paradigm.

All this meant the espousal of the Bartók heritage as concerned history and cultural policy; its specifically aesthetic and musical espousal took place in his great work on aesthetics.¹⁹

Bartók's Work as an Aesthetic Example

György Lukács again encountered the music of Bartók at Ernest Ansermet's 1946 concert in Geneva. In the 1960s, we find him speaking about his own Bartók experiences

in a personal tone, more precisely, even discussing the ideological impact that they had on him. In connection with his development after 1950—subsequent to the “Rudas tézisek” [Rudas theses]—he said in 1969: “When trying to characterize this entire period of my development ideologically, I have to stress that besides Ady, the plebeian democratism of Bartók’s art (*Cantata profana*) exerted an increasingly strong influence on me.”²⁰ He mentioned neither any musical experiences nor even Bartók’s name in his 1971 notes of *curriculum vitae*, “Gelebtes Denken”; he just touched on the Wagner problem, and that only in connection with 1905–6. And yet: Lukács began to occupy himself more intensively with Bartók’s music in 1959, and this interest would last until his death.

I myself can bear witness to this: my uncle, the musicologist Bence Szabolcsi, formed a close friendship with György Lukács at that time, and he told me several times how he played the piano and explained music—chiefly Bartók—to György Lukács, beginning in 1955, but particularly from 1959 on. The acknowledgment at the end of *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* preserves the memory of this relationship: “Ich möchte dieses Buch nicht der Öffentlichkeit übergeben, ohne meinen Dank abzustatten: an Prof. Bence Szabolcsi, der mir mit unermüdlicher Geduld half, meine dürftige musikalische Kultur zu verbreitern und zu vertiefen.”²¹

Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen bears the marks of these ‘musical lessons’; in it, there occur the names of J.S. Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, A. Dvorák, Händel, Ferenc Liszt, Mozart, Schönberg, Stravinsky (the latter two only once), as well as those of Vivaldi and Wagner—but far less frequently than those of painters and sculptors, and, naturally, far less frequently than those of writers. He refers to Béla Bartók, too, once in the company of Giotto, Courbet, Aeschylus, Thomas Mann, and Mozart—all of whom he cites as examples of a common historical and aesthetic principle:

Sie verallgemeinern eine neue Lage in der Menschheitsentwicklung, indem sie ihre konkrete Typik aufdecken, sie machen ihre Entdeckungen zum dauernden Besitz des Menschengeschlechts, indem sie das noch chaotisch scheinende oder—in bezug auf den Menschen—noch nicht erschöpfend formulierte in neue Ausdrucksmittel ihres homogenen Mediums umsetzen.²²

Taken in a wider sense, all this was written in order to highlight the role of the ‘homogeneous medium’, and, more specifically, that of ‘signal system I’; so it served the purpose of supporting an aesthetic thesis by examples.

In the same vein, Lukács explicitly mentions Bartók again, in order to support another thesis of his own aesthetic:

Die menschlichen, ja die sozialen und historischen inneren Motive der menschlichen Beziehungen zur Natur können eine in anderen Künsten kaum überbietbare Deutlichkeit erlangen, besonders, weil die Musik, als Mimesis der ästhetisch gereinigten Innerlichkeit das Ja oder das Nein des Künstlers zu diesen menschlichen Beziehungen in höchster Plastik hervortreten lassen kann.²³

Lukács refers to Bartók as an illustration of his more specifically musicological views when discussing the fundamental questions of musical mimesis. Here, he writes that the internal boundaries of the autonomy (*Selbständigkeit*) of music are determined very precisely and states that “das ästhetische Erkämpfen der Selbständigkeit beinhaltet keineswegs eine radikale Trennung von jeder Verbundenheit mit Tanz und Gesang.”²⁴ According to Lukács, it is not a case of ‘external coercion’, for even when the ‘social commission fades out’, there yet remains this connection: “Oper und Ballett, Kantaten etc. bis in die Produktion solcher Künstler wie Schönberg und Strawinsky, wie Bartók

und Alban Berg [spielen] eine wichtige Rolle."²⁵ He concludes this argument as follows: "Der geistige Gehalt, die gesellschaftlich-menschliche Schicksalsatmosphäre ist aus der Musik der *Zauberflöte* ebensowenig wegzudenken, wie aus dem *Wozzek* Alban Bergs oder aus der *Cantata profana* Bartóks."²⁶

The most significant sentences concerning Bartók are to be found in those parts of the work in which Lukács analyzed certain theoretical questions that were of chief importance for him. One such point occurs when, discussing the possibility of musical realism, he challenges the dogmatic views advanced by some critics:

Wichtiger sind die Betrachtungen, die, wie bei einzelnen sektiererischen Verteidigern des sozialistischen Realismus, die sogenannte Grundidee eines Werks zur begrifflichen Allgemeinheit erheben und in deren Wahrheit oder Unwahrheit das gesuchte Kriterium des musikalischen Realismus zu finden meinen. Damit erhält aber die unbestimmte Gegenständigkeit der Musik eine unzulässige und darum verzerrende gedankliche Fassung. Denn so sicher es möglich und sogar notwendig ist, den Gehalt der unbestimmten Gegenständigkeit auch begrifflich zu formulieren, so sicher hat auch diese Verallgemeinerung, wenn sie gegenstandstreu bleiben soll, eine deutliche Grenze; in jeder Kunst, vor allem aber in der Musik, wo, wie gezeigt wurde, schon in der bestimmten Gegenständigkeit ein stärkeres Verblässen, eine weit restlosere Aufhebung des Allgemeinen vor sich geht, als etwa in der Gestaltungsweise der Wortkunst. Die nachträgliche gedankliche Verallgemeinerung kann sich deshalb sehr leicht in Gebiete verirren, die mit der konkreten Musik, die sie zu erklären beabsichtigt, schon gar keinen oder kaum einen Zusammenhang haben; natürlich desto stärker, je mehr die Verallgemeinerung nicht einmal auf dem Werk selbst basiert, sondern sich auf einzelne Äußerungen seines Verfassers stützt. Da diese Tendenz weit über den Kreis der obenerwähnten Sektierer hinausgeht, führen wir einige Aussagen Adornos über Bartók an. Er geht von einer Erklärung des Künstlers über seine Verbundenheit mit der Volkskunst aus; findet diese 'erstaunlich' bei einem Menschen, 'der als Person allen völkischen Versuchungen unbeirrt widerstanden'. Das Wurzeln in der Volkskunst wird hier so abstrakt gefasst, dass es sich bereits mit dem faschistischen Begriff des 'Völkischen' zu verschmelzen droht, und von hier aus soll der Abfall Bartóks von der musikalischen Avantgarde 'abgeleitet' werden. Es ist verständlich, wenn auf derart abstrakte Auslegungen der unbestimmten Gegenständigkeit von seiten der Formalisten so reagiert wird, dass diese ihr überhaupt keinen begrifflich fassbaren Inhalt zubilligen; die psychologische Verständlichkeit solcher Reaktionen kann ihnen jedoch selbstredend keine sachliche Richtigkeit verleihen.²⁷

In connection with the foregoing, Lukács arrived at the problem of analyzing undetermined objectivity in music. In what follows, he puts forth his most comprehensive views about Béla Bartók, that is, his earlier scattered remarks and partial observations here achieve a new unity:

Um diese—an sich selbstverständlichen—Gedanken durch ein Beispiel methodologisch ganz klarzumachen, sei auf die zusammenfassenden Schlussworte von Serenus Zeitblom zu Adrian Leverkühns 'Apokalypse' in Thomas Manns *Doktor Faustus* hingewiesen. Es heisst dort: 'Das ganze Werk ist von dem Paradoxon beherrscht (wenn es ein Paradoxon ist), dass die Dissonanz darin für den Ausdruck alles Hohen, Ernsten, Frommen, Geistigen steht, während das Harmonische und Tonale der Welt der Hölle, in diesem Zusammenhang also einer Welt der Banalität und des Gemeinplatzes, vorbehalten ist.' Und wenn wir diese Methoden auf Bartók anwenden, so ist deutlich der Kampf des Humanen gegen die überwältigende Macht des Gegenmenschlichen in der Periode des entstehenden und des zur Macht gelangten Faschismus der Grundgehalt seiner im obigen Sinne gefassten unbestimmten Gegenständigkeit. Auch ist es leicht ersichtlich, dass die in Bartók lebendige Gegenkraft gerade die Verbundenheit mit dem Volk ist, eine Gegenkraft, die sich bis zum Gegensatz von Natur und Unnatur steigern kann. Dieser Kampf darf aber nicht, wie bei Adorno, zur abstrakten Begrifflichkeit gesteigert und von dort aus aufs Tagespolitische rückbezogen werden. In der *Cantata profana*, wo Bartóks tiefste Verzweiflung paradoxtragisch zur Gestalt wird, wäre es leicht und wohlfeil, aus dem Text voreilige und abstrakte Folgerungen über sein Verhältnis zu Volk und Natur zu ziehen; die Musik selbst spricht aber hier—ohne die Worte zu verleugnen—Tieferes und Weiseres aus. Der Gesang, in dem die sich in Hirsche verwandelten Söhne den Ruf zur Heimkehr, zu Vater und Mutter, zurück ins Leben der Menschen schroff ablehnen, lässt musikalisch in diesem Neinsagen zum Dasein des heutigen Menschen eine echtere vox humana erklingen, als im elterlichen Sehnsuchtschrei enthalten war. Hier wird der Gegensatz Bartóks zur modernen Leverkühnschen Art künstlerisch fassbar, zusammen mit dem Appell an Volk und Natur, der seinem Schaffen zugrunde liegt. (Dass der Verfasser nicht imstande ist, seine Beziehung zu dieser unbestimmten

Here, György Lukács connects Bartók with one of his favorite 'model-like' authors, Thomas Mann; more precisely, with *Doctor Faustus*, which he valued most highly among Mann's works. It seems to me that he is right—as regards his concrete statement; for, although it is well known that Arnold Schönberg served as the principal model for Adrian Leverkühn, Bartók's figure and work had a share in the formation of that character, too, and the relevant sentence of the quotation above may indeed be related to the music of Bartók. As for the interpretation of *Cantata profana*, today perhaps many people see it differently, but Lukács remained true to his own system of ideas here as well: for him, the *Cantata* became an example simultaneously of the complicated relationship between the work and the thought, more generally, between art and society, whose relationship does not allow for any simplification (and, thus, also an example of Lukács's struggle against the sectarian-dogmatic views), on the one hand—and of the nearness to the 'people and nature' (thus, of Lukács's basically humanistic, anti-avant-garde, and classicistic system of values and standards), on the other. That was one reason why Béla Bartók came to occupy such a prominent place in György Lukács's chief aesthetic work.

Lukács's view of Hungarian development was an organic part of his historical and cultural historical conception. Throughout his life, he held the opinion that Hungarian culture had been and was imbued with gentry and 'gentroid' elements and remnants. For him, the fight against them was also important throughout his life, and that was the reason why, for him, first of all at the end of his life, Bartók's work became such a powerful counter-model.

Bartók's significance in Hungarian culture cannot be overestimated, as he went even further than Ady in breaking with the gentry and 'gentroid' culture. In fact, Bartók's break with this culture was so radical that it is without any analogies in Hungary. The Hungarian literature of the period lasting from the laying down of arms at Világos to the revolution was interlaced with the praise of the gentry and 'gentroid' culture, which by then had lost its world historical sense. It was that tendency with which Bartók radically broke, and no analogies of this break can be found in any of the Hungarian cultural spheres, except music. I am glad to see that Hungarian musicologists have drawn the lessons from this. As compared with their colleagues dealing with the history of literature or the history of art, that is one reason why they are superior. Bartók's significance in Hungarian culture cannot be valued highly enough. There remains a good deal of investigation to be done, so that we may be able to evaluate rightly his universal significance that transcends far beyond music.²⁹

Hence, György Lukács eventually did meet up with Béla Bartók in his own way. He espoused, interpreted, and even transformed Bartók's work, drawing it closer to his own.

(Translated by Matild Gulyás)

Notes

¹ See Mici Lukács Mrs Popper: "Emlékezések Lukács Györgyről" [Memories about György Lukács], *Nagyvilág* (October, 1975), pp. 1562, 1569. Lukács, at the end of his life, called himself, in connection with Bartók, "a common dilettant [...] a season-ticket-holder of seat 3, row 7" (cf. his "Bartók és a magyar forradalom" [Bartók and the Hungarian revolution], in his *Magyar irodalom—magyar kultúra* [Hungarian Literature—Hungarian Culture] (Budapest: 1970), p. 646.

² See Magda K. Nagy: *Balázs Béla világa* [The World of Béla Balázs] (Budapest: 1973), p. 64.

³ Béla Balázs: *Napló 1913—1914* [Diary 1913—1914] (Budapest: 1982), Vol. I, p. 512; cf. Zoltán Novák: *A Vasárnap Társaság* [The Sunday Society] (Budapest: 1979), p. 58.

⁴ Balázs: *Napló 1913—1914*, Vol. II, p. 23. According to Zoltán Novák: "In 1911, Zoltán Kodály, Béla Bartók, and Béla Balázs were together in Florence, and György Lukács joined them here" (Novák: *A Vasárnap Társaság*, p. 44). I would like to add that, so far, there is no evidence to confirm this assertion. In April, 1911, Bartók and Kodály, together with their wives, attended a congress of musicologists in Rome. In July, 1911, Bartók travelled alone to Munich and from there to Paris and Switzerland, where he met again the Kodálys. In the following years, however, neither of them mentioned having met Lukács (Professor Denijs Dille kindly provided me with this information in his letter of June 14, 1984). In the correspondence of Bartók there is one postcard dated February (3), 1911 from Italy. But Lukács was in Florence in April and May of 1911, and then in the autumn and winter of the same year, from the end of October through January, 1912. Hence, the two men did not travel together in Italy.

Zoltán Novák calls into question statements made in some memoirs, to the effect that Béla Bartók attended the meetings of the Sunday Circle (cf. his *A Vasárnap Társaság*, pp. 70—1). Now, as regards the lecturers of the Free School of Humanities, the names of Béla Bartók and György Lukács were indeed announced together among them already in 1918 (in the company of Frigyes Antal, Béla Balázs, Elek Bolgár, Béla Fogarasi, Lajos Füle, Arnold Hauser, Zoltán Kodály, Károly Mannheim, Emma Ritoók, and Ervin Szabó; cf. *ibid.*, p. 105). But we do not know whether Bartók actually held his lecture announced there under the title of "Népzene és modern zene" [Folk music and modern music]. According to Erzsébet Vezér, Bartók attended one meeting of the Sunday Circle, when he played the piano transcription of *The Wooden Prince* (cf. *A Vasárnapi Kör* [The Sunday Circle], ed. by É. Karádi and E. Vezér (Budapest: 1980), p. 8). We do not know whether Lukács was present at the meeting in question.

⁵ Lukács: "Bartók és a magyar forradalom", in *op. cit.*, p. 648.

⁶ For further details, cf. János Demény: "Bartók Béla megjelenése az európai zeneéletben 1914—1926" [The appearance of Béla Bartók in the European musical life 1914—1926], in *Zenatudományi tanulmányok VII* [Studies in Musicology VII], ed. by B. Szabolcsi and D. Bartha (Budapest: 1959), pp. 116—7; and *Dokumentumok a Magyar Tanácsköztársaság zenei életéből* [Documents of the Musical Life of the Hungarian Republic of Councils], ed. by J. Újfalussy (Budapest: 1973), p. 48.

⁷ Lukács: "Bartók és a magyar forradalom", in *op. cit.*, p. 646.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 646—47.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 651—52.

¹⁰ For further details, cf. Demény: "Bartók Béla megjelenése az európai zeneéletben 1914—1926", in *op. cit.*, p. 140. Here he republishes the interesting and colorful recollections of Albert Gyergyai, too. Gyergyai, who later became a professor at the French Department of the Loránd Eötvös University of Budapest, was then a family tutor in József Lukács's house.

¹¹ It is Tibor Talián who has recently discussed the influence that Lukács's theoretical works exerted on Bartók in the years before 1918, writing that "It was Béla Balázs who tried to put into practice the theoretical conclusions of Lukács (sometimes as a forerunner, sometimes as a mediator). Bartók connected to Lukács's tragic outlook through him [i.e., Balázs], but Bartók personally experienced it only too emotionally, not as a theoretical reflection. Just think of how closely Lukács's definition of the tragic world view—'God leaves the world'—can be related to the ideas of the young atheist Bartók, and how precisely Bartók formulates the sentiment that, in this cosmic loneliness, artistic activity constitutes the only 'substitute'" (cf. his *Cantata profana — az átmenet mítosza* [Cantata profana—the Myth of Transition] (Budapest: 1983), p. 197). In my opinion, what is at stake here is rather a deeper typological kinship, and not some direct influence.

¹² György Lukács: "Irodalom és demokrácia" [Literature and democracy], in his *Magyar irodalom — magyar kultúra*, p. 317.

¹³ György Lukács: "Népi írók a mérlegen" [Populist writers in the balance], in his *Magyar irodalom — magyar kultúra*, p. 372.

¹⁴ György Lukács: "A magyar irodalomtörténet revíziója" [The revision of Hungarian literary history], in *ibid.*, p. 503.

¹⁵ György Lukács: "Az irodalomtörténeti periodizáció" [Periodization in literary history], in *ibid.*, p. 643.

¹⁶ Georg Lukács: "The Importance and Influence of Ady", *The New Hungarian Quarterly* (1969) No. 35, pp. 57—8.

¹⁷ György Lukács: "Magyar irodalom — világirodalom" [Hungarian literature—world literature], in his *Magyar irodalom — magyar kultúra*, p. 624; further, see "A filmművészet az új magyar kultúráért" [The cinematic art for the new Hungarian culture], in *ibid.*, p. 592; "Bartók és a magyar forradalom", in *ibid.*, pp. 646 ff.

¹⁸ György Lukács: "Tóth Aladár zenekritikái" [The musical critiques of Aladár Tóth], in *ibid.*, pp. 583—85.

¹⁹ Let me add to this Lukács's assertion that it was the "development of the peasant democratic initiatives" in the work of Kodály and Bartók that led toward "laying down the Marxist foundations of Hungarian mu-

sicology" (*ibid.*, p. 586). I find it rather controversial, particularly when taken together with his contrasting the 'musical revolution' with literary criticism. Finally, let me remark that Lukács referred to Bartók in his famous speech delivered in the Petőfi Circle in 1956, too, saying that "The Miraculous Mandarin could be put on the stage of the Hungarian opera only after the 20th congress [of the C/b/PSU in Moscow, in 1956]"; here he refers to Bartók as an example of the fact that the age of dogmatism 'debunked' phenomena of the first rank while favoring the untalented (cf. his "A marxista filozófia időszzerű problémái" [Current problems of Marxist philosophy], in his *Curriculum vitae* (Budapest: 1982), pp. 167—68).

²⁰ György Lukács: "Előszó" [Preface] to *Magyar irodalom — magyar kultúra*, p. 20—also in his *Curriculum vitae*, p. 397.

²¹ Georg Lukács: *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* (n. p.: 1963), Bd. I, p. 31.

²² *Ibid.*, Bd. II, p. 121.

²³ *Ibid.*, Bd. II, p. 643.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Bd. II, p. 382.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Bd. II, p. 383.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Bd. II, p. 383.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Bd. II, pp. 392—93.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Bd. II, pp. 394—95.

²⁹ Lukács: "Bartók és a magyar forradalom", in *op. cit.*, p. 653.

The Young Lukács's Conception of Tragedy and Hungarian Literature

by

András Veres

The question of the tragic occupied a central position in the young Lukács's system of thought. He attempted to clarify the modern sense and significance of this concept with a comprehensive demand in two of his writings: first, in his monograph on the history of the development of modern drama, written in the winter of 1906—7 (and later revised),¹ and, secondly, in his essay on "The Metaphysics of Tragedy", published, in Hungarian, in 1911.² Besides, however, to a greater or lesser extent, he touched on the question of tragedy in each of his writings of that time.

Several works have profoundly treated of the young Lukács's conception of the tragic, and a perhaps too uniform opinion has been formed. It runs as follows: Lukács regarded tragedy as the only authentic and, at the same time, a deeply paradoxical, form of life. That is, life has to be negated, so that its sense be elucidated; the process has to be finished, closed, so that its completion be evoked, even in its partiality. Tragedy is not only a prominent view of life. By means of its directness, which estranges from life, and of its force, which gives form to the process, it is also a representative species of art, especially of dramatic literature.³

The main defect of the interpretation summarized above is that it identifies Lukács's theory of the tragic with the point of view put forth in "The Metaphysics of Tragedy", and thus, makes his thought seem too uniform. In fact, however, it is not uniform: the conception of the monograph and that of the essay differ in several significant respects. In his work on the history of drama, Lukács investigates the tragic, not as a question of morality, but as a question beyond morality. And he does so in two senses.

Firstly, he sharply rejects the explanations of the 'tragic flaw' offered by some contemporary established aesthetics, which render Lessing's conception insipid. Referring to Hebbel, he writes:

Dramatists have long since felt that, while looking for the necessity of the modern life in their dramas, the traditional 'tragic flaw' has become more and more problematic. It has been either an inorganic and superfluous ornament stuck to the drama, or it has produced a contradiction within the play. In the dramas of Hebbel the notion of sin is unknown; even if he sometimes uses the expression, for him it has got an entirely different meaning. The true connection between sin and punishment has two—tacit—worldview conditions: the moral world order and the freedom of will. Modern man's belief in both of these conditions has been shaken, and without this belief, sin can be brought into connection with punishment only by very exterior, inorganic, unartistic means (intrigues, etc.).⁴

Secondly, Lukács also rejects the tradition which, taking classic tragedies for its model, finds the basis of the tragic in the necessary connection of greatness and fall. Moreover, he calls this point of view an 'aristocratic' one. This is the reason why he passes stricture upon Jenő Rákosi's conception of the tragic (his is the only conception of Lukács's Hungarian contemporaries taken into account).⁵

Jenő Rákosi, too, refuses the notion of tragic flaw because he does not believe in the ideological guarantee of moral world order and freedom of will. For him, every order is this-worldly and, thus, incomplete and insufficient. Its maintenance, however, is necessary.⁶ For, "death is the common tragedy of mankind,"⁷ and society is a formation "created to defend the individual in his struggle against death".⁸

The creator and supporter of the world order is the 'mediocre' man, the man of the street, who adores, envies, and is frightened by the 'great' man, the tragic hero who does not accept this order, does not give up his rights, goes to meet death. The great man is predestined to this fate by his own stature; it is not his sin, but his absurd desire for completeness that drives him into perdition.⁹

That is, according to Rákosi's conception, although we are all tragic, only a few of us is suitable to make a tragic hero. Lukács greatly appreciates this interpretation, which shows 'striking resemblances in certain aspects' to his own viewpoint, formulated on Hebbel's track. But the difference is that while for Rákosi 'only greatness can be (truly) tragic, for Hebbel and, after him, in modern literature, mere existence is tragic'.¹⁰

And, to be sure, this is not a slight difference. Rákosi's interpretation is full of ambiguities; it is not clear whether he sympathizes with mediocre or great men. The solid point here is death. Lukács is thinking in absolute terms, and, thus, he does not assign too much significance even to death: 'Death is but a symbol in tragedy, and it is to such an extent that it is not always needed.'¹¹ Here the source of the tragic is not greatness, not even death, but 'mere existence'.

But what is to be meant by the tragic nature of 'mere existence'? Lukács writes:

Tragedy follows from mere existence, from individuation, from the fact that, though the individual's capacity of movement is free [...] still he remains part of the whole; and the whole is moved by rules different from those moving him, and here collision must come into being: the tragic element of human will is not its direction, as in the case of original sin [...] but directly will itself. So that it is entirely indifferent, from the dramatic point of view, whether the hero is destroyed by good or evil ambitions. Thus, for Hebbel, the struggle of the entirety is nothing else but a concurrence of energies, a general human duel, and the struggle is always settled the same way regardless who is right, according to necessities beyond all moral valuation.¹²

Let us expatiate a bit on the text cited. It is evident that even the morally conceivable value difference underlying Rákosi's distinction between mediocre and great men is eliminated by Lukács. For him, the tragic is not a consequence of deviance in morality or in character, but 'is nothing else but a concurrence of energies', that is, it is a function of the inequality of the power relations. The connection of man with the world, with the 'whole', or with the 'entirety' is necessarily tragic.

It is less obvious that Lukács's interpretation is based on two assumptions. One is that 'the whole is moved by rules different from those moving' the individual. The second is that mere existence comprises, from the outset, individuality. Neither of these assumptions is self-evident and moreover, the latter implies an identification of existence and essence, without even touching on the problems involved.

To be sure, Lukács himself feels that the interpretation of individuality is of crucial importance, and distinguishes between individualism of the classic and the modern age:

The change could, quite briefly, be formulated as follows: long ago life itself was individualistic, now, however, people, or rather their convictions and life programs, are individualistic. Long ago ideology was that of constraints, inasmuch as people regarded their engagement in connections as a natural fact and as part of the world order. But each detail of the actual life offered the opportunity for their individuality to emanate into their actions, into things. That is why individualism of this kind could be spontaneous and undiminished; today [...] it is conscious and problematic.¹³

The historical opposition follows on the track of Schiller's well-known typology. It refers to the general attitude and, at the same time, to the artistic (here: dramatic) world concept of the age. According to Lukács, the old, especially Renaissance, drama was 'the drama of individuals, the drama of today is that of individualism'; 'long ago it was the direction of the will that produced tragedy; in the new tragedy the mere fact of will suffices to evoke it'.¹⁴ That is, in the modern age, individuality is a far more accepted and a far less realizable value than it was before; it is not the existence of individuality, but its absence, that makes mere existence significant.

Lukács makes a restriction: he interprets the tragic from the point of view of the drama; for him it is from this angle that it is indifferent 'whether the hero is destroyed by good or evil ambitions'. As if the poetical point of view justified the interpretation beyond morality. For the point in question is not simply life, but the tragedy of the hero as appearing in the drama.

Drama symbolizes life but their dimensions differ. Dramatic form strictly delimits its subject matter, and, thus, a dramatic work, if it strives for completion, wanting to show the whole in the part, can choose for its subject matter exclusively the tragic life situation. "Tragic experience is the only thing", Lukács writes, "which means the whole though being only part of it; the only thing which becomes a symbol of the whole life. Tragic man is the only kind of man who is symbolized by a single adventure of his life."¹⁵

The question emerges: If the value background of the tragic is lost by the rejection of moral interpretation, will it not be given back to the tragic by the 'aptness' of the tragedy as a genre? And is the tragic so significant only 'from a dramatic point of view'?

For Lukács, in the final analysis, tragedy is the true realization of the drama and tragic experience is the only possible symbol of the whole life. That is, the interpreter is not at all unprejudiced, for he obviously thinks in terms of a value hierarchy. But he assigns values, not by opposing life and art, but by arranging gradations within life and art, taking their parallels into account.

Yet, in order to do this, Lukács had to assign the value of individual to mere existence in itself. That is, he had to find general and, at the same time, immanent (this worldly) values on which tragic poetry can rely, and on the basis of which the theory of the tragic can be built even in the modern age, when beliefs in moral world order and freedom of will are shaken.

Our age, however, is by no means favorable to tragedy, and Lukács had to admit this. "In our times the power of comprehension of the crowd is not favorable to the real great drama", he complains,¹⁶ and he criticizes the aestheticist orientation of high culture for similar reasons:

The aesthetic culture brings the chances for the effectiveness of art to the surface. It feels that every monumentality is outdated; it calls tragedy untimely, unworthy of modern man because today we 'understand' everything, we 'fully enter into' everything.¹⁷

He reformulates his conception of the tragic. In his essay on "The Metaphysics of Tragedy", it is not the experience or life situation elevated by tragic poetry to the heights of art that he takes as his starting point, but the unbridgeable gap between life and tragedy.

"Life is an anarchy of light and dark," he writes; "nothing is ever completely fulfilled in life, nothing ever quite ends [...] what men love about life is its atmospheric quality, its uncertainty [...] which is like a monotonous, reassuring lullaby."¹⁸ Tragedy, as opposed to life, is a miracle: revelation and consummation. It does not know any accidents and compromises, "It snatches from life all its deceptive veils, woven of gleaming moments and infinitely varied moods. Drawn in hard and ruthless outline, the soul stands naked before the face of life."¹⁹

According to Lukács, the world of 'life', of the everyday constantly renewed by its compromises, makes it impossible that man could in fact take responsibility for himself, without any loop-holes or pretexts. The directness of life is an illusion, is phenomenal, since it makes impossible the identity and the real immediacy of the self.

In the tragic experience, man finds himself (on the level of essence), while losing himself (on the level of existence). The essence of tragedy is not fall but the undertaking of fall, the taking responsibility of ourselves—and for this, God can only be a "spectator",²⁰ That is, the tragic, as regards its essence, is immanent. But it presupposes transcendence, too; if there were no God, at least as a spectator, if there were no value to tempt us to transcend the world of banality, then tragic sacrifice would be senseless.²¹

Here, again, it is the individual that is the basis of the tragic.

Tragedy gives a firm and sure answer to the most delicate question of Platonism: the question whether individual things can have idea or essence. Tragedy's answer puts the question the other way round: only that which is individual, only something whose individuality is carried to the uttermost limit, is adequate to its idea—i.e., is really existent.²²

But since individuality is not given by mere existence, it cannot be general. It is a 'miracle', a mystic revelation, that is, an exceptional benefaction of fate. Moreover, life itself becomes fate only by virtue of the tragic, only in tragedy; it is here that width becomes depth, uncertainty becomes certainty.

Now Lukács not only looks for an appropriate starting point for the tragedy acceptable in the modern age, but also struggles for the tragic, that is, tries to persuade us to face failure. Failure helps us to set things in order.

He describes the tragic experience as something bordering on the mystical, as if the two completed each other. Both are direct and exceptional; both are unconditional, striving after the final essence. But while tragedy is the complete autonomization of the individual, mysticism elevates man beyond all the common human dimensions by the complete subordination of individuality. For the tragic hero, the world gains form; for the mystic, it loses its form. Pure tragedy is pure form. Mysticism is the impossibility of forming. One is strict limitedness, the other is pantheistic unlimitedness.²³

But another kind of drama is also possible, and Lukács now attempts to demonstrate the peculiarities of non-tragic drama, which he calls 'romance'. He finds that this genre obscures the strict borderlines between the worlds of existence and value: divine grace intervenes in the plot and unravels the knots. Thus, passion and risk taking lose their significance. Although non-tragic drama is a 'democratic form' (as opposed to tragedy conceived of now as a non-democratic one), Lukács nevertheless has strong doubts as far as the future of this genre is concerned.²⁴

Consequently, the young Lukács's theory of the tragic is not as uniform as it is purported to be by the secondary literature. At the same time, it has a far more import than to be regarded merely as one of Lukács's 'essays', in which he asks for and presents different answers to the possibility of authentic existence.

The description of the tragedy is of modeling value in the world of the young Lukács, a world split antinomically into 'life' and 'soul'. The fundamental life situation and feeling toward life (*Lebensgefühl*), the repeated starting points of Lukács's search for an answer, are perhaps most exactly expressed by the words of the hero of "A lelki szegénységről" [On poverty of spirit], an artist who, finally, escapes to suicide:

No, I won't stand any more that troubledness and insincerity of ordinary life, which wants everything and in fact gets everything, because it does not want anything true, and does not want anything truly. Everything pure is unhuman. For so-called humanitarianism is nothing but a permanent blurring and troubling of the territories and of the borderlines.²⁵

Goodness or mystical insight is a miracle or a 'state of grace', just as will having tragic consequences: both represent unambiguity and sincerity, as opposed to 'ordinary life'. Both are beyond morality and are 'pure', hence, 'non-human'. But the question is, is any of this realizable? Exceptionality is persuasive only if it is manifested, if it becomes a pattern of behavior or a work of art.

Precisely for this reason, the position of the essayist is very delicate: the surveying of the possibilities excludes exclusiveness, the demonstration of the process of judgment makes judging uncertain. If we are always 'before' the miracle, we always 'prepare' for it, but never get within reach of it, and the pathos of the questioning will sooner or later be drowned in ridicule.

Waiting for grace is an absolution from everything, that is, it is the embodiment of frivolity,²⁶ permanent tragedy [...] is the greatest frivolity [...] because, waiting for a great show-down (which, however, will never come) to follow, everything is permitted; because on the day of judgment everything will, in any case, be found wanting [...] the awareness of perpetual tragicalness gives absolution from every idleness.²⁷

There is an interpretation according to which the lines of "Esztétikai kultúra" [Aesthetic culture] cited above are nothing but a criticism of "The Metaphysics of Tragedy".²⁸ In fact, however, the point in question is the opposition between dramatic and essayistic form, between the situation of 'within' and of 'before'. Lukács, the essayist, writing on drama, states almost self-critically:

One thing is certain—that if the drama stood at one end of the scale, the essay (to use just one word to describe all the Platonists' writings) would have to stand at the other [...] For a dramatic character is unthinkable without permanent characteristics; in the perspective of the drama we simply do not see people without such characteristics; their momentary ones are forgotten in an instant [...] The Platonist [...] does not believe in repetitions, which for both spiritual and technical reasons are the fundamental precondition for creating characters.²⁹

After discussing the young Lukács's conception of the tragic, we can go further. It is obvious that he enforced his theoretical points of view even in his literary critical practice, in his shorter critiques. From this perspective, it is worth examining his views concerning Hungarian literature.

We should not think exclusively of dramatic works. 'Tragedy' and 'the tragic' are synonymous terms in Lukács's vocabulary. In the case of the short stories of Theodor Storm and the poems of Béla Balázs alike he speaks of 'tragedy'.³⁰

As for Hungarian dramatic literature, the last—and rather short—chapter of his book

on the drama is on this topic. Here we find several apt statements on the genre of Imre Madách's *The Tragedy of Man* (actually a didactic poem in dialogue form, and not a drama), on the original, organic structure of Mihály Vörösmarty's *Csongor és Tünde* (Csongor and Tünde), and on the non-dramatic character of *A dada* (The Nurse), by Sándor Bródy.³¹ As a whole, however, the argumentation is rough-and-ready. It is characteristic that, in almost every case, the same argument is repeated: according to Lukács, the structure of the works analyzed is of more epic than dramatic character; the adventures of different sorts are connected not by the unity of conflict, but by the identity of characters.³²

It is no less characteristic that his own conception of the tragic is best revealed when he reviews and criticizes the theory of Jenő Rákosi.³³ (He does not have too much to say about Rákosi's plays, though this fact may be explained by the discrepancy between the level of Rákosi's theory and dramatic practice.)

But it can also be supposed that Lukács here took the edge off his criticism because his work was a paper submitted to the competition of the Kisfaludy Society. This supposition is supported by the fact that he later formulated his opinion more sharply and, let us add, more unjustly. His standpoint is not justifiable even in light of the passions evoked by his debate with Mihály Babits. According to Lukács, the reasons for the present-day acceptance of József Katona's drama, *Bánk bán* (Bánk Ban) are "partly its thematic accidents, partly its imperfection, the fragmentariness of its architecture, and not its dramatic virtues"; and Madách "exemplifies keenly the poet without any depth, who, thus, could not even get close to the true dramatic character"; Béla Balázs, in contrast, is "the first Hungarian poet to be a dramatist and truly tragic to the root".³⁴

A more concrete and passionate complaint is lodged against *The Tragedy of Man* than before:

Even in my secondary-school years, though I was a passionate atheist at that time, I was deeply shocked by the Byzantine scene of *The Tragedy of Man*: Tankred's (and with him, one can feel, Madách's) position taken up in the debate on *homousion/homoiousion*. Because I felt then and I feel today, and everybody with the least sense of religious life, of a life lived on metaphysical level, will feel: why else should one die, if he is a Christian, if not for the belief—holding either that Christ is of the same substance as God, or that he is just similar to Him? Isn't this the question on which everything depends?³⁵

The citation is from the middle of the 1910s, and it demonstrates well the spirit of "The Metaphysics of Tragedy". There is no tragic without a task in which we risk our lives, without accepting a (transcendental) value that guides us beyond existence and fills everything. Lukács found this moment so important that, four decades later, writing on Madách's work, he repeated his objections (albeit, in the meantime, having withdrawn considerably from the convictions of his youth).³⁶

A theoretical sensitivity is not necessarily accompanied by a critical one. Lukács—in my opinion, and as even those in close touch with him admitted—lacked sensitivity for the quality of works of art.³⁷ On the other hand, he had an abundant sensitivity for the 'religious', for 'life lived on a metaphysical level'. He subordinated the judgment of works of art completely to his historico-philosophical standpoint.³⁸

This explains why he had such a bad opinion of the (few but significant) achievements of Hungarian dramatic literature. This explains his ahistorical and, at the same time, consistent stand against the liberalist vision of Madách's work. This explains his overvaluation of the tragic world of Béla Balázs's art. And, moreover, this explains his own experience of Endre Ady.

Both the revolutionary and religious poems of Ady, in his judgment, have the same function. Namely, in the final analysis, they are religious poems, "an emanation of a great, mystical, religious feeling, toward everywhere and into everything".³⁹ By calling Ady's poetry 'mystical', he aptly points out one of the most prominent features of this poetic world view; that is, that this world view is close to the tragic, but is not tragic. The lyrical hero of the pre-war poems of Ady is, in fact, never defeated completely; either the greatness of the risk or the boldness of the expression raises him above the tragic situation.⁴⁰

Lukács explains the 'completeness' of Ady's poetry once again, by means of Ady's mystical *Lebensgefühl*: "for the mystic, there are no contradictions, and there is no difference of 'opinions'; he is everything and, at the same time, the opposite of everything".⁴¹ For this reason, a sociological approach is rather senseless, since it is not aimed at the essence: "it is fruitless to talk about the nature of Ady's relation to socialism; socialism is but a form here, in which his feelings find their form."⁴² It is worthwhile to note here the similarity of Attila József's account of his own sociological linkage, set forth in a letter to Gábor Halász:

I regard the proletariat as a form, too, in a poem as well as in social life [...] a frequently recurrent feeling of mine is that of desolation, and for my [...] expressive intent the province of the deserted sites, which makes its own desolate state intelligible by the notion of capitalism, just 'comes in very handy'.⁴³

Thus, in Lukács's view, there is a connection between Ady's 'religiousness' and his 'revolutionariness', and, moreover, his 'socialism'. As he writes:

The socialism of Endre Ady is a religion (in the case of lesser men, it is only a drug); a cry in the desert, a howl for help of a drowning man, a fastening on to the only possibility given, only adoring (or sometimes cursing) it.⁴⁴

The difficulty of the interpretation of this statement lies perhaps in the fact that, in his monograph on the history of drama, Lukács judged the religious force of socialism that thoroughly fills the soul in quite a different way, and hoped that this force would bring into being the new style, the art of monumentality, of 'great order'.⁴⁵

But he now derived Ady's socialism not from the persuasive example of this world picture, but from the pressure resulting from the hopeless state of Hungarian destiny. As if the term 'socialism' had different meanings in the different texts. There, it was the 'cruellest and strictest synthesis since the time of the Catholicism of the Middle Ages', that is, a comprehensive explanation, a system of ideas. Here, it is only a fragment, a slogan, a remote promise, to which the drowning man can fasten on. There, Lukács had great expectations concerning socialism. Here, however, he looked at it rather sceptically. And, not too much later, in his essay "Eszttétikai kultúra", he lost all his confidence in it.⁴⁶

That is, the mystical completion of Ady's poetry is guaranteed by socialist belief. The problem of the expression of mystical experiences is solved, in Lukács's opinion, by Ady's creation of a private mythology. But this private mythology is of common interest because it can represent others' background of experiences. In this way can Ady become "the poet of the 'revolutionless' Hungarian revolutionaries".⁴⁷

Lukács attempted, for the first time, to demarcate the 'tragic' and the 'mystical' experience in his review on Béla Balázs's volume of poems, *A vándor énekel* [The Wanderer Sings]. According to him, the lyric poetry of Balázs is able to create the felicitous

balance of the two experiences. The intimacy of the mystical experience protects him from overly strict formalization, and the tragic *Weltanschauung* protects him from communicating the experience in its final directness as it goes beyond all form, that is, from communicating it as experienced.⁴⁸

The examples could be multiplied. It is obvious that, in his interpretative-critical writing, Lukács makes considerable use of the points of view and notions of his theory of the tragic. But it is also apparent from the above examples that, for the justification of his conception, he did not find, and could not have even found, Hungarian literature too appropriate a material. One can justly claim that Lukács approached a number of phenomena of Hungarian literature uncomprehendingly, and that he judged them unjustly. We have to admit, however, that for the 'pure' tragic demanded by him, no really attractive model was offered by Hungarian literature.

Nor by Hungarian history; only later, in 1919.

(Translated by György Kálmán)

Notes

¹ György Lukács: *A modern dráma fejlődésének története* [The history of the development of the modern drama] (Budapest: n.d. [1911])

² Georg Lukács: "The Metaphysics of Tragedy", in *Soul and Form*, trans. by A. Bostock (London: 1974).

³ György Márkus: "A lélek és az élet: a fiatal Lukács és a 'kultúra' problémája" [Soul and life: the young Lukács and the problem of 'culture'], *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle* 1973, pp. 742—60. István Hermann: *Die Gedankenwelt von Georg Lukács*, übers. von E. Kiss (Budapest: 1978). László F. Földényi: *A fiatal Lukács* [The young Lukács], (Budapest: 1980). I myself shared this conception in my essay entitled "Tragikumelmélet a századfordulón" [The theory of the tragic at the turn of the century], in: András Veres: *Mű, érték, műérték*. [Work, value, value of a works] (Budapest: 1974).

⁴ György Lukács: *A modern dráma fejlődésének története*, p. 234.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 549.

⁶ Jenő Rákosi: *A tragikum* [The tragic] (Budapest: 1886). For a detailed analysis, see Béla Németh G.: *Tragikum és történetfelfogás* [The tragic and the conception of history] (Budapest: 1971).

⁷ Jenő Rákosi: *A tragikum*, p. 21.

⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 22.

⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 72—78.

¹⁰ György Lukács: *A modern dráma fejlődésének története*, p. 589. According to Béla Németh G., Lukács's opinion or Rákosi's 'aristocratism' is unfounded. See his *Tragikum és történetfelfogás*, pp. 61—62. (The identification of the 'mediocre' man does not seem to be unequivocal, and even if it did, would not eliminate Lukács's objection.)

¹¹ György Lukács: *A modern dráma fejlődésének története*, p. 228.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 247.

¹³ *Ibid.* pp. 106—7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 107.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 50.

¹⁶ György Lukács: "Balázs Béla: Misztériumok" [Béla Balázs: Mysteries], in *Ifjúkori művek* [Early works] (Budapest: 1977) p. 579.

¹⁷ György Lukács: "Eszztétikai kultúra" [Aesthetic culture], in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 427.

¹⁸ Georg Lukács: "The Metaphysics of Tragedy", in *Soul and Form*, pp. 152—53.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 153.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 152.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 154. (I tried to give a more detailed analysis of this problem in my essay cited above.)

²² *Ibid.* p. 162.

²³ *Ibid.* pp. 159—61.

²⁴ György Lukács: "A nem-tragikus dráma problémája" [The problem of non-tragic drama] in *Ifjúkori művek*, pp. 522—23.

- 25 György Lukács: "A lelki szegénységről" [On poverty of spirit], in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 546.
- 26 *Ibid.* p. 543.
- 27 György Lukács: "Esztétikai kultúra", in *Ifjúkori művek* pp. 430—31.
- 28 György Márkus: "A lélek és az élet: a fiatal Lukács és a 'kultúra' problémája", in op. cit. p. 746.
- 29 Georg Lukács: "Platonism, Poetry and Form (Rudolf Kassner)", in *Soul and Form*, p. 25. See also László Földényi: *A fiatal Lukács*, pp. 45—6.
- 30 Georg Lukács: "The Bourgeois Way of Life and Art for Art's Sake (Theodor Storm)", in: *Soul and Form*, p. 71.
- 31 György Lukács: *A modern dráma fejlődésének története*, pp. 585—86, p. 596.
- 32 *Ibid.* p. 584, pp. 595—96.
- 33 *Ibid.* pp. 588—89.
- 34 György Lukács: "Kiknek nem kell és miért a Balázs Béla költészete" [Who want none of Béla Balázs's poetry and why?], in: *Ifjúkori művek*, pp. 702—3.
- 35 *Ibid.* p. 703.
- 36 György Lukács: *Magyar irodalom — magyar kultúra* [Hungarian literature—Hungarian culture] (Budapest: 1970). This problem is treated by Zoltán Kenyeres, "Lukács György és a magyar kultúra" [György Lukács and Hungarian culture], *Kritika*, 1970, No. 12 and by Mihály Szegedy-Maszák: *Világkép és stílus* [World picture and style] (Budapest: 1980) p. 327.
- 37 See Arnold Hauser's recollection in: *A század nagy tanúi* [Great witnesses of the century], ed. by Rózsa Borus (Budapest: 1978) p. 327.
- 38 See Ferenc Fehér and Ágnes Heller: "Az esztétika nélkülözhetetlensége és megreformálhatatlansága" [The indispensability and non-reformability of aesthetics] *Filológiai Közöny* (1979) No. 3—4, pp. 218—19.
- 39 György Lukács: "Új magyar líra" [New Hungarian lyric poetry] in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 250.
- 40 See András Veres: *Mű, érték, műérték*, pp. 216—19.
- 41 György Lukács: "Új magyar líra", in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 251.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 250.
- 43 Attila József: *Irodalom és szocializmus* [Literature and socialism] (Budapest: 1967) p. 263.
- 44 György Lukács: "Új magyar líra", in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 249.
- 45 György Lukács: *A modern dráma fejlődésének története*, p. 392.
- 46 György Lukács: "Esztétikai kultúra", in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 428. Further, see István Hermann: *Die Gedankenwelt von Georg Lukács*, pp. 39—44.
- 47 György Lukács: "Új magyar líra", in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 248.
- 48 György Lukács: "A vándor énekel" [The wanderer sings] in *Ifjúkori művek*, p. 475.

Lukács in 1919

by

Béla Köpeczi

1

Lukács's activities in 1919 have provoked many arguments, due in part to his controversial ideological evolution and his somewhat unexpected decisions, and in part to his actions and the views that he held. The counter-revolution vilified him and all the policies of the Council Republic. Gusztáv Gratz, Jenő Szathmári, or Cecile Tormay¹ considered the cultural programmes of the dictatorship of the proletariat to have been anti-national, Jewish, or obtuse avant-garde experimentation on the part of a narrow-minded intelligentsia. Praise from the bourgeois radical Oszkár Jászi did not mean true recognition either. He maintained that the cultural policy supported by Lukács was the

creation of a new spirit in the community, a new popular faith and a new morality. This part of the activities of the Soviet dictatorship showed the new régime under its most attractive aspect. Unquestionably there was a certain greatness, and a consolation for much else, in the seriousness and the enthusiasm with which the proletarian dictatorship took in hand the things of the spirit. A small group of its leaders were filled with an apostolic fanaticism for a new religion, the first concern of which was for the spread of education and art. Of course, exclusively, Socialist, Marxist education; all other intellectual interests would have found a welcome only in the esoteric circles of the universities.

The ultimate aim was the creation of a new religion of the State.²

As can be seen—utopianism, religion, and fanaticism—this was Jászi's opinion.

Bourgeois historiography in the main perpetuates these two schools of thought to this day. The counter-revolutionary propagandist Victor Zitta wrote in his book, which came out in 1964, during Lukács's lifetime; "His measures, inconceivable under normal circumstances, were capable of being hidden only in the mind of an intellectual and moral delinquent with exotic and extravagantly grotesque tastes".³ The author falsifies Lukács's relations with the scientific and artistic world, identifies his programme, which served the cultural enrichment of the masses, with that of Hitlerism, and accuses him of having provided circuses instead of bread.

David Kettler, who in his book entitled *Marxismus und Kultur* investigates the views of Mannheim and Lukács in 1918—19, is closer to Jászi. He presents the affinity between the two in their views on culture and the cultural crisis, but recognizes that, while the first only approached the problem from the cultural side, Lukács was also aware of the economic and social factors involved in the cultural crisis. At the same time, he, too, reverses the thesis, alleging that, for the Lukács of 1919 everything occurred in cultural categories and was only seen in a cultural context—even the political sphere

lacked an autonomous character. But the author considers it a merit of Lukács's that—in contrast even to Mannheim—he tried to transform his views on culture into practice. “We see a complex attempt to demonstrate the relationship between the revolutionary process and the cultural crisis. His experiment has no millenarian features, he does not expect any miraculous and immediate change. He does not expect the rapid flourishing of a new culture.”⁴ He therefore recognizes Lukács's sense of reality and to a certain extent goes even further than Jászi.

Michael Löwy's book, entitled *Pour une sociologie des intellectuels révolutionnaires*, which is about Lukács's critical evolution from 1919 to 1929, was published in Paris in 1976. The author tries to reconstruct the path taken by the Hungarian philosopher on the basis of thorough documentation and with reference to writings by Lukács thus far little-known in the West. He rejects openly reactionary distortions. Nevertheless, he does not consider Lukács's espousal of communism to be the result of a scientific analysis, but rather “an act of ethical and political faith,” and here again we are back with Jászi.⁵ Further he writes that in 1919 Lukács was nearer to the ethics of conviction than to the ethics of responsibility, that is he was more strongly exercised by the correlation between his own practice with political moral principles than by the effects of his own actions on objective reality. He claims that “as people's commissar he carried out his tasks like somebody who in his thoughts is constantly confronted by the great inquisitor,” that is, Dostoevsky's ethical problems. Löwy deals little with Lukács's actual cultural and political activities in 1919, which he squeezes in their entirety into the category of leftist ethics. He recognizes, however, that “the experience of wielding power exercised a great influence on Lukács. His political thinking became richer, often more concrete, he began to outgrow the leftist ethic and—regretfully—to recognize the inevitability of compromise.”⁶

I have not only quoted these views in order to pick arguments with them, but also to show how much Hungarian historiography still has to do to analyze the 1919 Council Republic and to make it properly understood internationally. Here I shall describe Lukács's views and actions concerning only the theory and practice of culture. I cannot undertake to examine these activities from the point of view of his whole ideological evolution, or of the Hungarian Republic of Councils as a whole.

2

Lukács was already a well-known aesthetician and literary critic when, at the end of 1918, he joined the Communist Party of Hungary, which was formed on the initiative of Béla Kun and former prisoners of war who were full of enthusiasm for the ideas of the Russian Revolution.

In 1969, in his volume published under the title *Utam Marxhoz* [My road to Marx] Lukács recalls his intellectual (largely philosophical) evolution of that period as follows:

My philosophical starting-point was the examination of the problems concerning the connection between ethics and aesthetics. As I have already explained several times, the foundation of this evolutionary stage was my seething dissatisfaction with the way Hungarian life was becoming capitalized and gentrified. This was also the foundation of my unconditional devotion to Ady, without of course ever seeing the way out of this situation in the importing of Western civilization, as the leading ideologists of the Hungarian left did. It would of course hardly have been possible then to call me a socialist—with the exception of French radical syndi-

calism, I had a very negative attitude towards the socialist theoreticians whom I knew then. However, for all my theoretical confusion, I still saw the only way out of the cultural contradictions of the time in the revolutionary abolition of the status quo.⁷

In respect of aesthetics and ethics, he was primarily under the influence of Kant, but tried to shed this influence early and to accept Hegel's philosophy of history. Hegelian philosophy did not satisfy him from the ethical point of view since Lukács never considered the idea of compatibility with reality to be valid, namely the view according to which moral imperatives lead to the actual needs of existing society. Inspired by Kierkegaard, by medieval Christian heretics and by oriental ethical philosophy, he attempted to lay the philosophical foundations for an ethic surpassing the limitations of morality and law. This view gave rise to his interest in Dostoevsky, who raises ethical questions in the most stimulating and most radical literary form.

But the political and social problems of the period induced him to examine the problems of the labor movement. Although he had read Marx, he was attracted in the beginning by the ideas of Georges Sorel and by the anarcho-syndicalistic Marx interpretation propagated by Ervin Szabó. During the war, he became acquainted with some of the writings of Rosa Luxemburg. He first read Lenin, in particular his "State and Revolution", in 1918.

In the preface to the new edition of *History and Class Consciousness*, and elsewhere too, Lukács emphasizes the contradictory nature of his development in this period; it represented a mixture of leftist ethic and an idealistic view of history. But he also points out that the Russian Revolution brought about a transcendence of these contradictions.⁸ Nevertheless, this new recognition only gradually changed his thinking.

In December 1918 he published an article entitled, "A bolsevizmus mint erkölcsi probléma" [Bolshevism as a moral problem], in which he finds that there are two trends in Marxian theory, one of which is the sociological, which explains the past through class struggles, and the other a philosophy of history which "makes the proletariat the carrier of the social redemption of mankind, the messianistic class of world history". The dilemma that arises is the following: should the dictatorship of the proletariat be erected immediately, in the hope of creating the classless society and consequently the development of democracy, or should one wait for the new world order to come about, wait for the long time it would take for the majority of mankind to approve of the radical transformation of society? Lukács's opinion was the following:

Bolshevism relies on the metaphysical assumption that good can come from evil, that it is possible—as Razumikhin says in *Crime and Punishment*—to lie our way through to the truth. The writer of these lines is not able to share this belief, and therefore sees an insoluble moral dilemma at the root of the Bolshevik stand, while democracy—in his belief—only demands superhuman resignation and self-sacrifice from those who want to carry it through consciously and honestly. But this, even though it perhaps demands superhuman strength, is not an essentially insoluble question, as is the moral problem of Bolshevism.⁹

He changed this opinion after a few weeks, which became clear from an article entitled "Tactics and Ethics", published in May 1919, but written before the proclamation of the Council Republic. In this article, he points out that, for a socialist, the ethical problem is always strictly bound up with the given situation of the philosophy of history.

The class interests which will bring about socialism, and the class-consciousness in which they find expression signify a world-historical mission—and hence, too, the objective possibility mentioned above implies the question: has the historical moment which leads—or rather leaps—from the stage of steady approach to that of true realization already arrived?¹⁰

Science is unable to predict whether the moment has indeed arrived, and ethics cannot provide recipes for correct action.

Ethical self-awareness makes it quite clear that there are situations—tragic situations—in which it is impossible to act without burdening oneself with guilt. But, at the same time it teaches that, even faced with the choice of two ways of incurring guilt, we should still find that there is a standard attaching to correct and incorrect action. This standard we call sacrifice.¹¹

As can be seen, Lukács accepts the idea of the purely moral action, which so occupied Russian anarchists at the beginning of the century, and then he makes concrete reference to a novel by Boris Savinkov, where the writer explains this idea as follows:

only he who acknowledges unflinchingly and without any reservations that murder is under no circumstances to be sanctioned can commit the murderous deed that is truly—and tragically—moral.¹²

Lukács finally adopted the cause of the revolution, which of necessity meant for him the dictatorship of the proletariat, the dictatorship which must bring about the classless society by one historic leap, the latter being not an end in itself, but, rather, a means of moving toward communism. His joining the revolutionary cause implied the acceptance of the substance of Marxism, but with a particular, individual interpretation, primarily as concerns the political and ethical aspects.

3

In the Council Republic, György Lukács was a deputy commissar, and then commissar for education. For some time, he was also the political commissar of one of the armies sent against the Czech interventionists. Action by itself did not satisfy him, for he also attempted to formulate the fundamental problems of the new society on a theoretical level, taking the practice of the dictatorship of the proletariat into consideration.

On April 13, 1919 he published an article with the telling title "A kommunizmus erkölcsi alapja" [The moral basis of communism]. In this article, he declared that, at the given stage of development, the principle behind every action is the class struggle, since the achievements of the struggle of the proletariat are threatened by the enemy. In spite of the pressures of the moment, the question arises concerning the future: what will the characteristic features of the new society be, what will life be like for those living in it? Lukács asserts that we can only receive an answer to this question by looking at the ethical side.

The radical extirpation of class differences only makes sense if it has removed everything that separated people from each other: all ire and all hate, all envy and all arrogance. In a word: if the classless society is the society of mutual love and understanding. But the transformation of social and economic life can only lay the foundations for such a society, they can only create the opportunity; in order for it to be put into reality the people themselves must be transformed.¹³

This change is to be promoted by culture and primarily by education, whereby education must always reflect the principle of full equality in spite of the implacable class struggle conducted at any given moment.

In an article published on April 20, 1919 he analysed the characteristics of revolutionary action, pointing out that the measure of the latter is the preference of the interest of the totality, that is, the community over individual or group interests. The rule of the

totality over the minorities carries in itself the concept of sacrifice. "All real strength is determined by the degree of willingness to make sacrifices. He who is ready to sacrifice everything, is invincible."¹⁴

Lukács's optimism was nourished not only by the domestic experience, but mainly by his hopes for the world revolution. He believed, as he explained in his article, entitled "A győzelmes proletariátus taktikája" [The tactics of the victorious proletariat], that the world would be polarized and that the struggle would be fought by the international bourgeoisie and the international proletariat. The international proletariat would be victorious and would introduce its dictatorship everywhere in the world. What was true in Hungarian conditions would be true elsewhere, too. "Dictatorship offers the possibility and the pledge for the final victory. But the victory itself will in reality be achieved only by the clear class consciousness and the conscious class struggle of the proletariat in the future."¹⁵

In the practice of the dictatorship of the proletariat, he attributed great importance to the relationship between the party and the class. In his opinion, the party structure was the first active step of the proletarian movement after the period of mere opposition; it was the first attempt at the transformation of the whole of society. Lukács pointed out that in Hungary, the merger of the socialists and the communists was realized by the proletariat itself, and that thereafter the party in the old sense of the word ceased to exist, and only the unified proletariat existed. "The party today is the expression of the united will of the united proletariat: it is the executive organ of the will which prevails in the new society and which is composed of the new forces."¹⁶

Since he attributed a crucial role to class consciousness, he began to examine the role of historical materialism, and in one of his articles—published in July, 1919—he deals with the changes in the function of historical materialism. Surveying the historical evolution of Marxism, he finds that historical materialism is valid insofar as the new society is still a mixture of the old and the new, and, consequently, that the sociological interpretations of the old society can be applied to it. At the same time, what was the superstructure in capitalist society will become the base in the new society, and the base of capitalist society will become the superstructure. "The essence of the transition to socialism, of socialist construction can be summarized in the following way: the ideological elements, the human idea, the idea of the liberation and changing of man will become the dominating idea of constructive work and the economy will become merely a tool, a simple function of this idea."¹⁷ Dialectical materialism ceases to be a sociological theory, and in the new society becomes the method of scientific research.

As we can see, Lukács exaggerated the role of subjective factors in historical evolution, idealized the function of the working class, underestimated the importance of organization, but at the same time accepted the principle of the class struggle and of the historical mission of the proletariat, as well as the necessity of the revolution and of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We have quoted Lukács's ideas, because these also formed the ideological and political basis of his cultural and educational political concepts.

It is impossible for us to understand the cultural concept professed by Lukács at the time of the Council Republic unless we look at the debates that took place during the

war in Hungarian intellectual circles. In the Sunday Circle, whose members included Lukács, Karl Mannheim, Arnold Hauser, Béla Fogarasi, Lajos Fülep, and others, culture was considered the only way out of the intellectual and moral crisis of capitalist society.¹⁸ (In 1918 Mannheim published a study entitled *Lélek és kultúra* [Soul and culture], in which he explained this view, one also shared by Lukács.)

At the time of the Council Republic, Lukács was of the opinion that the revolution was an instrument to bring about the rule of culture. He accepted Alfred Weber's theory, which differentiated between the concepts of civilization and culture. In June, 1919 he published an essay entitled "Régi kultúra, új kultúra" [The old culture and the new culture] in which he expounded his view on this distinction. In his opinion the concept of culture (as opposed to civilization) includes all those valuable products and activities unnecessary for the direct preservation of life. Capitalist society is unable to ensure the evolution of culture in this direction, since the economy dominates the whole of life, man becomes subordinate to production, ideology and production contradict each other. In a communist society, the planned and organized economy will terminate the phase in which things are ends in themselves, since the social processes in which they operate are influenced by economic factors. Man's external and internal life will be dominated by human and non-economic factors. This functional change will pave the way for the new culture, which will lead to man's internal domination over his environment, where formerly, civilization only brought the external domination over nature. "Human autotelism is the sociological precondition of culture."¹⁹

In his article entitled "A kultúra tényleges birtokbavétele" [The actual taking culture into possession], published on April 20, 1919, he states that the seizure of power by the proletariat and the nationalization of cultural institutions are only the first steps.

The placing of art treasures, theatres, schools, etc. in the hands of the proletariat is only the precondition for the creation of the new culture, for its real acquisition, for the era in which all the products of culture will become the inner property of all workers. It is this true acquisition that education must bring about [...]. The process of interiorization will lead to the disappearance of the difference between physical and intellectual work [...]. It should be open for any person at any time, in accordance with the external and internal development of his life, to find employment in society either as a physical or as an intellectual worker.²⁰

Thus, culture is the main instrument for the radical transformation not only of society, but of man in general.

This view helped bring about one of the most important aims of the dictatorship of the proletariat: the democratization of culture. A movement was started to eliminate illiteracy, the eight-year primary school was established, a workers' university was founded. All cultural institutions—libraries, museums, theaters—were opened to the people, concerts were arranged for the workers. It was chiefly this democracy that characterized the cultural policy that was carried out so enthusiastically by the Hungarian intelligentsia, and of which Lukács was the principal spokesman.

Lukács tried to win the support of the most outstanding representatives of the creative intelligentsia for this policy. He asked the most outstanding writers, including non-communists such as the novelist Zsigmond Móricz and the poet Mihály Babits to guide literary life. Béla Balázs helped in the reorganization of the theatre. As we know, he was later to become one of the world's most outstanding theoreticians of the film as an art form. Among the members of the musical 'directorium' we find Béla Bartók, Ernő Dohnányi and Zoltán Kodály.

In order to ensure the success of his policy, he tried to create the proper economic

and institutional foundations. In establishing the institutional system he took into account questions of both expertise and democratic principles of course on the basis of the policies of the Council Republic. A unique institutional system was established, which tried to draw on the experience of the French Commune, the Soviet state, and some of the organizations of Hungarian progressive movements. The Council Republic—even in the difficult circumstances that obtained—provided considerable financial support for scholars, writers and artists.

As far as ideological and artistic developments are concerned, he conducted an open policy. The Commissariat for Public Education was accused by some right-wing social democrats of giving preference to artistic trends alien to the proletariat, especially to the expressionist Lajos Kassák and his periodical, *Ma*.²¹ Lukács published a statement giving his opinion on this question:

The Commissar for Public Education will not officially support the literature of any particular school or party. The communist cultural programme only differentiates between good and bad literature, and is not prepared to discard either Shakespeare or Goethe because they were not socialist writers. But neither is it willing to lay art open to dillettantism under the pretext of it being socialist. Communist cultural policy is to provide the proletariat with the best and purest art, and will not permit its taste to be corrupted by editorial politics, reduced to being no more than a political instrument. Politics is only the means, culture is the goal.²²

It was very difficult to put this tolerant approach into practice in conditions that were becoming more and more tense. In the same statement Lukács also recognized the primacy of politics in cultural questions, but rejected the formation of artistic monopolies.

The political aspect will continue to be a selective aspect for a long time, but it cannot dictate the direction of literary production. It should only be a filter, not the sole source! The Commissariat for Public Education has not yet interfered with literary life: in the last resort it will entrust guidance to the organization of the writers.²³

And from a statement by Béla Balázs we learn that the writers themselves (they received a commission from the Directorium of Writers for a period of six months) wished to exercise censorship, which they considered a necessity in view of the given situation.²⁴

Lukács's tolerant but principled policy was considered by some influential leaders of the Council Republic to be an extension of the rigorous principles of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the area of culture, which could have detrimental results. At the party congress in June 1919, the Commissar for Public Education, Zsigmond Kunfi, raised the question of intellectual freedom under the dictatorship, and, opposing Béla Kun, declared that freedom could not be restricted in this area, and that its absence had already paralysed intellectual activity.²⁵ Lukács answered very vigorously. He declared that, although the dictatorship of the proletariat was the rule of a minority, this minority was that of 'the conscious, organized workers', who were acting in the interests of all workers. In this dictatorship, criticism was needed, but criticism directed at the whole must be opposed, criticism 'capable of arousing counter-revolutionary feelings in less conscious souls'. Lukács continued:

There is no need to fear for the sciences and the arts. But it is impermissible for the organizations of bourgeois intellectual oppression in education and the press, to preserve their freedom. These must be transformed into proletarian organizations and we cannot tolerate viewpoints other than those of the proletariat being advanced in them.²⁶

In his reply Béla Kun took the same stand, adding that decadence in intellectual life was limited exclusively to those areas of culture that stood in the service of the bourgeoisie. And then he continued:

A new intellectual life, a new culture must come from the proletariat itself, and I have faith in the creative power of the proletariat, and in the creative power which destroyed institutions and created new institutions in their place, I have no doubt that proletarian culture will flourish as well.²⁷

On this occasion Kun, identified the avant-garde trend represented by Kassák and his group with bourgeois decadence. Kassák publicly protested against this accusation and defended the autonomy of art against politics. Lukács himself took no stand in this argument, but we know that he was not in favor of the avant-garde.²⁸ His standpoint is explained by his philosophical views, his classical tastes, but also by the reaction of the working class. Taking a stand in the polemics surrounding Kassák, the *Iffjú Proletár* advised young workers to read Ady and Dostoevsky rather than the works of the avant-garde.²⁹ But there were workers who defended Kassák. All this proves that the debate on this question was open-ended and that there were different views on the orientation of the new literature and art among followers of the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the other hand, the relative freedom of literary expression—with the exception of the most reactionary—was a fact, and here Lukács carried out well-founded and principled policies, which even went beyond his individual taste.

Lukács was to return to the question of his cultural policies in 1919 many times. In 1952 he emphasized their openness, at the same time stressing that he opposed both rightist social democratic writers and Kassák and his circle who, he maintained, wanted to declare their ideas as the 'official art' of the dictatorship. "The commissariat tried to wage a struggle on two fronts, but it was not always able to carry out this fundamentally correct line properly and consistently."³⁰ He explained this by the weakness of the party. He claimed, however, that the assertion of the communist concept was successful in spite of social democratic attacks.

In 1969, he drew attention to the theoretical weaknesses of the Hungarian Republic of Councils, pointing out that the leaders of the dictatorship were only acquainted with a few of Lenin's writings. He expressed the opinion that cultural policy then had a very 'broad popular base'.

If the dictatorship of the proletariat has a cultural influence and tradition which can be built on, then it is precisely this popular base. By popular I mean that it united the country's best and most progressive forces, while trying to preserve excellence—one only has to think of Bartók and other outstanding personalities—and to avoid everything that could lead to the bureaucratic administration of culture.³¹

He confirmed that the Council Republic enabled all artistic trends to develop, allowing none a monopolistic position.

It is open to argument how well thought-out the cultural policy of the Council Republic was from the theoretical point of view, and by what strata it was supported. It remains a fact, however, that in this area, the dictatorship of the proletariat achieved great things. Lukács's theoretical and administrative activities in 1919 are an important element in this, not only from the Hungarian point of view, but also from that of the international labor movement, and even if we admit its idealistic features, we must consider it as a precedent for what we are doing today. Incidentally, Lukács's idealism came more to the fore in theory than in practice. In practical matters Lukács was much

more realistic. The Lukács of 1919 can only be analyzed if we remember that social reality, action and theoretical thought are all closely interrelated. The principles of the democratization of culture, of keeping the sciences and arts abreast of modern developments, of the freedom of literature and art, of relying on the best creative forces in the intelligentsia—all these principles are still valid today.

Notes

¹ Gusztáv Gratz: *A bolsevizmus Magyarországon* [Bolshevism in Hungary] (Budapest: 1921); Jenő Szatmári: *Das rote Ungarn* (Leipzig: 1920); Cecile Tormay: *An Outlaw's Diary* (New York: 1924).

² Oszkár Jászi: *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Hungary* (London: 1924) p. 144.

³ Victor Zitta: *Georg Lukács' Marxism, Alienation, Dialectics, Revolution* (The Hague: 1964) pp. 98–99.

⁴ David Kettler: *Marxismus und Kultur* (Berlin: 1967) p. 49.

⁵ "... le passage au communisme relève chez lui d'un acte de foi éthico-politique". Michel Lőwy: *Pour une sociologie des intellectuels révolutionnaires* (Paris: 1976) p. 168.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁷ György Lukács: "Előszó", *Utam Marxhoz* [Foreword] to [My road to Marx] (Budapest: 1971) vol. I, pp. 11–12.

⁸ Georg Lukács: "Preface to the new Edition (1967)", in *History and Class Consciousness*, ed. by R. Livingstone (London: 1971) p. XI.

⁹ György Lukács: "A bolsevizmus mint erkölcsi probléma" [Bolshevism as a moral problem] *Szabad gondolat*, December, 1918. Republished in *Forradalomban* [In the revolution] (Budapest: 1987).

¹⁰ Georg Lukács: "Tactics and Ethics", in *Political Writings 1919–1929*, ed. by R. Livingstone (London: 1971) p. 9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹³ György Lukács: "A kommunizmus erkölcsi alapja" [The moral basis of communism] in *Forradalomban* — originally appeared in *Az ifjú proletár*, April 13, 1919.

¹⁴ György Lukács: "Mi a forradalmi cselekvés?" [What is revolutionary action?] in *ibid.*, p. 109—originally appeared in *Vörös újság*, April 20, 1919.

¹⁵ György Lukács: "A győzelmes proletáriátus taktikája" [The tactics of the victorious proletariat] in *ibid.*, p. 95—originally appeared in *Népszava*, April 15, 1919.

¹⁶ György Lukács: "Párt és osztály", in *Történelem és osztálytudat* [History and class consciousness] p. 57.

¹⁷ Georg Lukács: "The Changing Function of Historical Materialism" in *History and Class Consciousness*, pp. 252–53.

¹⁸ See Zoltán Novák: "A Vasárnap Társaság" [The Sunday Society] in *A magyar filozófiai gondolkodás a századelőn* [Hungarian philosophical thought at the beginning of the century] ed. by E. Kiss and J. K. Nyíri (Budapest: 1977)—an extended version has been published under the same title in book form (Budapest: 1979); on the Sunday Circle see *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, 1972, No. 47; on Arnold Hauser see *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, 1975, No. 58.

¹⁹ György Lukács: "Régi kultúra és új kultúra" [The old culture and the new culture], in *Forradalomban*, p. 146.

²⁰ György Lukács: "A kultúra tényleges birtokbavétele" [The actual taking culture into possession], in *Forradalomban*, p. 112—originally appeared in *Fáklya*, April 20, 1919.

²¹ Ferenc Göndör: "Kik akarják diktálni a proletáriróadalmat?" [Who are those who want to dictate proletarian literature?] in *Forradalomban*, originally appeared in *Népszava*, April 16, 1919.

²² György Lukács: "Felvilágosításul" [By way of enlightenment] in *Forradalomban*, p. 105—originally appeared in *Vörös újság*, April 18, 1919.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

²⁴ "A Közoktatásügyi Népbiztosság irodalmi programja" [The literary program of the Commissariat for Public Education] in *Forradalomban*—originally appeared in *Magyarország*, April 19, 1919.

²⁵ For Kunfi's address see "Az országos pártgyűlés. A pártprogram vitája" [The national party congress. Debate of the party platform] in *Forradalomban*, p. 494—originally appeared in *Vörös újság*, June 14, 1919.

²⁶ György Lukács: "Beszéd az országos pártgyűlés második napján" [Address on the second day of the national party congress] in *Forradalomban*, p. 142.

²⁷ For Béla Kun's reply see *ibid.*, p. 510.

28 Lajos Kassák: "Levél Kun Bélához a művészet nevében" [A letter to Béla Kun in the name of art] *Ma* June 15, 1919—also in Farkas József (ed.): "Mindenki újakra készül...": Az 1918—19-es forradalmak irodalma [Everybody prepares for new things. The literature of the revolutions of 1918—19] (Budapest: 1967) vol. IV; cf. István Hermann: *Die Gedankenwelt von Georg Lukács*, übers. von E. Kiss (Budapest: 1978) pp. 120—22, and Farkas József: "Proletárforradalom, avantgarde és tömegkultúra" [Proletarian revolution, avantgarde, and mass culture] in *Vár egy új világ* [A new world awaits us] ed. by L. Illés and F. József (Budapest: 1975, Tanulmányok a szocialista irodalom történetéből 4).

29 Lajos Kassák: "Aktivizmus, avagy a kultúrájában forradalmasított ember" [Activism, or man revolutionized in his culture] *Ifjú proletár*, July 20, 1919, also in József (ed.): "Mindenki újakra készül ..." vol. IV.

30 György Lukács: "A Tanácsköztársaság kultúrpolitikája" [The cultural policy of the Republic of Councils] *Irodalmi újság*, March 27, 1952.

31 "Nyilatkozatok a Magyar Tanácsköztársaságról és hagyományainak felhasználásáról" [Statements on the Hungarian Republic of Councils and the use of its traditions] *Társadalmi Szemle* (1969) No. 3, p. 17.

György Lukács's Career from *The Theory of the Novel* to the Theory of Realism

by

István Hermann

In the following pages I will survey György Lukács's oeuvre from *The Theory of the Novel*¹ to the *Probleme des Realismus*. This career can be considered typical of intellectuals even if very few people traversed it in quite the same manner as Lukács himself. The progressive-minded bourgeois intelligentsia in the first part of the 20th century had to face, more or less consciously, those problems that were given voice by Lukács. And these, as questions, are most accurately expressed in Lukács's works. In his writings the theoretical problems and bourgeois mental processes not only end at the practical acceptance of Marxism-Leninism, but also find solution on a high theoretical level, in the spirit of dialectical materialism.

All this is not to say that Lukács's course of development stands without parallel. It cannot even be suggested that many theoreticians traversed the same path that Lukács did. But most of them were able to follow this direction only up to a certain point. From among the literary parallels it will suffice to refer to the example of Bertolt Brecht and Johannes R. Becher, the two characteristic poets of expressionism. From among the theoreticians we may mention Theodor W. Adorno and Karl Korsch. The former, as Miklós Almási has observed,² approached Marxism for a time, only to end up as a philosopher of irrationalism. The latter kept in step with Lukács until the 1920s. Later on he drifted away from the working-class movement and thus proved unable to develop the positive elements of his earlier theoretical endeavors.

Although the parallels are not negligible, it is Lukács's progress that can be regarded as typical. All the more so, because in respect of theory Lukács's path was the most far-reaching. As a matter of fact, the intellectual horizon of Lukács's work was much wider, in both time and space, than that of any of the personalities who can be compared to him. It is due to the fact that Lukács did not view the problems of reality exclusively through German eyes. Among the sources of Lukács's thought there are important motifs that can be traced back to specific Hungarian conditions. While surveying Lukács's early works, I wish to present the dialectic of a way of looking at things that frequently contrasts the German 'intellectual sciences' (*Geisteswissenschaften*) with Hungarian bourgeois revolutionary thought, but essentially intertwines them, and raises theory to a higher level.

When Lukács was writing *The Theory of the Novel*, he had a number of successful works behind him. Both his *A modern dráma fejlődésének története* [History of the development of the modern drama] and *Eszttikai kultúra* [Aesthetic Culture]—a col-

lection of essays—were published only in Hungarian, but the *Soul and Form* appeared in Hungarian, as well as in an expanded German version.³ The works prior to *The Theory of the Novel* are the signposts of both practical-critical and theoretical activities, and indicate that even in the period preceding World War I, Lukács was one of the most able followers of the intellectual sciences school.

These works have a peculiar iridescent quality, a trait that distinguishes Lukács from the average and main line of this approach. In order to understand this achievement, it is therefore worthwhile to cast a glance at the early activities of János Horváth, another able representative of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. While searching for literary and artistic continuity and independence, both men found the Ady problem to be a central question. But there is a noteworthy difference between their respective approaches and conclusions. Although Horváth also fought for Ady's recognition, he wanted to reconcile the new artistic phenomenon with the traditions of the conservative world of thought.⁴ Lukács, by contrast, in his assessment of Ady's poetry, stressed the break with conservatism. He was the first to state clearly: the essence of Ady's poetry was revolution.

To this we may add the following. The essays of the *Soul and Form*, which exerted such profound influence in German literature, indicate that Lukács was, in every respect, a highly sensitive aesthetician, and this applies to his approach to broad problems and his concrete analyses alike. It will suffice to quote one example. After Kierkegaard's death, Lukács was the only noteworthy aesthetician (besides Rudolf Kassner) to rediscover the Scandinavian philosopher. He clearly saw that the latest trends of the intellectual sciences tended toward existentialist philosophy, and, moreover, he saw this at a time when no one else had any inkling of Kierkegaard's significance. The *Soul and Form* was written by a sensitive essayist who had almost been willing to draw the final—if only reactionary—consequences from social development. At the same time, however, Lukács was a thinker who also bore the marks of the most progressive tendencies. He was an adherent of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, who almost approached existentialism, on the one hand, and who participated in the *Nyugat* movement and understood Ady's poetry and importance, on the other. In other words, Lukács drew the most extreme consequences from the intellectual sciences. He grasped the furthestmost possibilities of the discipline, and was thus able to experience its contradictions most deeply.

Lukács gave a messianic, revolutionary accent to the intellectual sciences because it was only in this way that he was able to turn against conservatism. That is why his relationship with the George circle was contradictory. That is why he grappled with the intellectual sciences method and felt out the possibilities of the German intellectual sciences school, combining this experience with the denunciation of conservatism, and of every—but first and foremost Hungarian—conservative trend, and doing so with peculiar revolutionary pathos.

Modern German developments inevitably created the Stefan George-like phenomena. The new tendencies prophetically turned against the Hohenzollerns' Germany. They paid a price, however, in that they did not preserve the true continuity of the German mentality. In essence, they identified continuity with conservatism. And with prophetic airs they drifted away from both.

In Germany these new prophets—whether George or Werfel—expressed the crisis of the bourgeoisie at the beginning of the century. In the field of theory, they interrupted the artistic continuity that had characterized German intellectual life since Lessing. Thus, there evolved a tendency in Germany that was able to turn against the Prussian-like

present only by repudiating the great traditions. These young men saw even Goethe as a servant of a prince, and therefore incapable of providing a tradition for the 'revolt'. In this way there evolved a seemingly traditionless art in Germany.

In Hungary the repudiation of traditions did not mean the break with a millennium of Hungarian history. And vice versa: the break with the millennium obviously did not mean the repudiation of traditions. Thus, it could happen that the most important representatives of the Hungarian intellectual sciences school in that day were able to take tradition as their starting point in striking out toward the new. And Ady himself, with whom the question stood or fell, appeared not with traditionless innovations but with the slogan, 'Petőfi does not compromise'. Thus, the question of tradition was important everywhere. In Hungary it was imperative to prove the interrelation between tradition and the new phenomena. For János Horváth, it meant that he had to set Ady in the row of conservative traditions. For Lukács, however, Ady was the reviver of revolutionary traditions.

Thence it follows that Lukács occupied a special position in both the Hungarian and German intellectual sciences. On the one hand, he was not conservative. He did not want to couple the new phenomena to the train of conservative ideas, as was commonly done in the German intellectual sciences school. On the other hand, while celebrating new phenomena, he was unwilling to tear them down—in the manner of the expressionists—from the peaks of revolutionary development. Here it was the *Nyugat* and Ady's example that proved to be decisive. They demonstrated that the antagonism between tradition and revolution, which was invented by the early avantgarde, was only a pseudo-antagonism.

Thus, Lukács secured a special place for himself in the German intellectual sciences school because the Hungarian experience—although unrecognized—lent a particular accent to his activities. Similarly, he occupied a special place in the Hungarian intellectual sciences school, too. He recognized, namely, that Ady's appearance, rather than preserving the scale of values brought about by the Compromise of 1867, raised the problem of revolutionary traditions.

The portrait that I have tried to sketch shows what a special position Lukács occupied in the literary movements and intellectual trends of the first half of the century. To this I may add another inseparable trait, namely, that Lukács showed no inclination to join the neo-Kantian trends that dominated Hungarian and German universities alike. Turning against neo-Kantianism and repudiating irrationalist trends, Lukács, at this time, was an adherent of Hegelian philosophy (in this respect, see the preface to *Eszttikai kultúra*). Thus, in the field of philosophy, although he belonged to the intellectual sciences school, that is, he sought to understand the course of history by analyzing the development of intellectual trends, Lukács rejected the premises of the neo-Kantian and Diltheyan school of the intellectual sciences. He could examine historical processes only dialectically, and this turned him against Rickert and Dilthey alike. And this feature isolated him again within the intellectual sciences school.

In other words, even a brief survey of the young Lukács's activities will reveal a revolutionary but traditionalist philosopher of the intellectual sciences. While relying on Hegelian philosophy, this traditional and messianic revolutionism tried to preserve continuity in culture. This philosophy enabled Lukács to integrate the progressive traditions of previous ages with the revolutionary tendencies of the modern period. This made possible the appearance of Sándor Petőfi and János Arany, of Goethe and Ibsen, of Heine and Hauptmann in the same sequence of thought. At the beginning of the present

century this mentality had a parallel in Germany and Hungary alike. In Germany it was only Thomas Mann who was able to draw the artistic consequences of the aforementioned opposing tendencies. In Hungary, Béla Bartók was the other artist who, although not independently of Ady, accomplished what Lukács and Thomas Mann were striving for, namely, the creation of a new revolutionary art that at the same time preserved historical and artistic continuity. The first decade of the present century saw the birth of Mann's *Buddenbrooks* and early short stories, Lukács's *Soul and Form*, and Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*. And there is little doubt that Lukács's essay, "Kierkegaard and Regine Olsen" is permeated by the same spirit as *Tonio Kröger* and *Bluebeard's Castle*, a spirit that originated a few years later but essentially belongs to the same period.

This, of course, does not and cannot mean that we wish to equate artistic and theoretical accomplishments. The tendencies, which were expressed on a high aesthetic level, were expressed by Lukács theoretically in an idealistic manner and not even on the highest level of the age. When Lukács presented his philosophy and his aspirations as new, and demonstrated their revolutionary character, he isolated philosophy from true influence. What could remove this contradiction in the situation of the philosopher? The solution, of course, would be for revolutionary philosophy to acquire an adequate class basis. Clearly, however, this possibility was no longer open to bourgeois philosophy. And this is how Lukács's philosophy became a revolutionary philosophy without a class basis.

What we have said above becomes clear from his comments on Ady. His words characterize not Ady but, rather, the inner problems of his own philosophy. Ady's revolutionary thought had real masses of people as its basis, but Lukács was far removed from the masses, the distance having been determined by the intellectual sciences. He drew the first conclusions from the development of philosophy and, above all, from dialectics, but at the same time he kept them in incomprehension and, inconsistently, entwined them with idealistic starting points. All this is manifest from Lukács's statement:

For, in Hungary the revolution is only a state of mind, the only formal possibility of expressing despair caused by utter isolation. It is only a state of mind, a desire so great and so exclusive that not only nothing corresponds to it in reality, but even in the imagination there is nothing in it that is truly comprehensible, nothing that can be connected with even a utopian reality.⁵

1

In essence, these conditions constituted the intellectual precedents of Lukács's theory of the novel. To this one may add the shock occasioned by World War I because under the Monarchy Lukács called for civil disobedience directed above all against the bureaucracy of the Monarchy, and he was disheartened by the bureaucratization of the social democratic movement. It was only natural that Lukács was stunned by the news that social democracy supported the war. Thus the war made the tragic feeling, which had been hidden in his earlier works, universal. In this way *The Theory of the Novel* became not only an analysis of the forms of the novel, but a tragic outcry as well. And the reason why Max Dvorak could regard *The Theory of the Novel* as "the movement's most important publication"⁶ was, in part, that this work embraced the most positive tendencies that existed within the intellectual sciences. It was in this spirit that Lukács cried out in protest against the age of imperialism and war. At the same time this was

a work that, while conceived in the tradition of the intellectual sciences, penetrated the extremes of this trend. For that very reason it reflected the crisis of that approach the most clearly. *The Theory of the Novel* was the last realistic message of the intellectual sciences; hereafter the discipline had nothing historically important to say to anyone.

How does *The Theory of the Novel* begin? The first sentence reads: "Happy are those ages when the starry sky is the map of all possible paths—ages whose paths are illuminated by the light of the stars."⁷ And the concluding sentence:

It will be then the task of historico-philosophical interpretation to decide whether we are really about to leave the age of absolute sinfulness or whether the new has no other herald but our hopes: those hopes which are signs of a world to come, still so weak that it can easily be crushed by the sterile power of the merely existent.⁸

And there is a peculiar interplay of Homer and Ossian locked in between the two sentences. If in his day János Arany could tell Homer to take his starry sky elsewhere, and could instead call out to Ossian with his misty, ambiguous songs,⁹ now Lukács filled Ossian's place with Dostoevsky—for the notion of 'absolute sinfulness' had come to take the place of Ossianic mist.

And this path leading from Homer to Dostoevsky is the path of epic and also of the disintegration of epic. At the same time, it reflects the process that led to the dissolution of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. The notion of 'absolute sinfulness' that served to characterize imperialism on an ethical basis, but in the form and with categories of the intellectual sciences, could be only the last decent word of that school.

From now on, there was nothing more condemnatory and denunciatory that could be uttered about imperialism and its moral state of being in the intellectual sciences. From Lukács's judgment, which was not a simple judgment of the world but also a judgment of mankind, only two possible paths emerged. One was the acceptance of 'absolute sinfulness'—and its glorification, even if in a tragic manner (as was done, e.g., by Adorno)—and the other, resolute opposition to imperialism, the world of 'absolute sinfulness'. This latter, however, demanded a new class basis.

In *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukács was feverishly searching for the historically emerging motifs that somehow could bridge the abyss before him—namely, the gap that existed between Homer's epic and that principle of epic which was not Dostoevsky's epic but which, rather, follows from Dostoevsky's epic. But Lukács's every effort failed when he sought by traditional means to lay the foundations of epic possibilities conceived in the spirit of new tendencies and 'absolute sinfulness'. He attempted to find the tradition capable of bridging the abyss in the oeuvre of Pontoppidan. Yet, in the case of this outstanding artist, Lukács was bound to admit that his great work, *Lykke Peer* stood alone in its age, and as Lukács then knew, nobody followed him. In spite of his greatness, Pontoppidan failed to become a proper link between Homer and the new novel, precisely because of his loneliness and simplicity.

Because of its isolation, Pontoppidan's novel failed to enter the mainstream and thus could not mark out the path of the modern novel; neither could Jacobsen's *Niels Lyhne*. It could not, because it dissolved epic traits in lyricism. Thus, Lukács strove in vain to close the gap between the classics and Dostoevsky with the aid of these novels. It seemed that it was impossible to find a bridge between Homer's 'starry sky' and the world of 'absolute sinfulness'.

From the point of view of his own art, Thomas Mann found that north-German prose bridged the gap between the classics and modern problems. Similarly, Bartók found it

in Liszt and Debussy, although not without contradictions. But Lukács, despite all his efforts, could not find this link in the field of theory. At last he got to the point where he saw the possibilities of the true—more precisely, the modern novel, and that not in Balzac but in Flaubert, and here he became the predecessor of avant-garde literary theories. His attention was absorbed in finding modern, up-to-date problems, which he wanted to substantiate theoretically. At the same time, he took an ethical stand, from which he resolutely rejected the modern world. This is the contradiction of *The Theory of the Novel*.

The result of Lukács's former efforts was that he elevated Flaubert's art over Balzac's, and Dostoevsky's over Tolstoy's. It was from Flaubert's *L'Education sentimentale* that Lukács drew the conclusion that assumed such great methodological importance for the understanding of the modern novel. Starting out from the epilogue of Flaubert's work, Lukács pointed out that, as a result of the modern way of looking at reality, the old concept of epic time, of necessity, had been replaced by a new concept of time. In his new preface to *The Theory of the Novel* (1962) Lukács emphasized the fact that, to his mind, one of its assets was

the analysis of the role of time in *L'Education sentimentale*. The analysis of the concrete work is still an inadequate abstraction. The discovery of a '*recherche du temps perdu*' can be objectively justified, if at all, only with regard to the last part of the novel (after the final defeat of the revolution of 1848). Nevertheless we have here an unambiguous formulation of the new function of time in the novel, based on the Bergsonian concept of '*durée*'. This is the more striking as Proust did not become known in Germany until after 1920, Joyce's *Ulysses* until 1922, and Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* was not published until 1924.¹⁰

Lukács's discovery of the modern importance of time, however, is not homogeneous. He felt, namely, that the new concept of time might contribute considerably to enlivening the epic current, to widening the epic flow. As he put it:

Thus it is that time becomes the carrier of the sublime epic poetry of the novel: it has become inexorably existent, and no one can any longer swim against the unmistakable direction of its current nor regulate its unforeseeable course with the dams of *a priori* concepts. [...] Such an experience of time is the basis of Flaubert's *L'Education sentimentale* [or, more precisely, of its last part] and the absence of such an experience, a one-sidedly negative view of time, is what has ultimately been responsible for the failure of the other major novels of disillusionment.¹¹

That is, Lukács saw the dual function of this modern concept of time, both the possible benefits that it could offer the epic, and the resultant potential danger to epic.

We have mentioned all this in order to make clear that Lukács made almost frenzied efforts in order to establish the new tendencies of the modern novel as examples for artists. This is why he worked out such problems as the question of the possibilities provided by the treatment of time. This is how he discovered the new quality of time in the sense of *durée* and its theoretical possibilities and coherence for the epic. But Lukács ascertained what dangers to epic forms might follow from these in themselves positive occurrences. And I might add that the dangers that he sensed indeed came to pass. Thus, Lukács's enthusiasm for new forms and possibilities has always been coupled with a certain resignation, the essence of which lies in the recognition that all these forms and solutions are the forms of '*vollendete Sündhaftigkeit*', that is, of 'absolute sinfulness' and the road leading to it.

What I have outlined here had some direct consequences. Lukács, who among the representatives of the intellectual sciences in this period most clearly saw the different

tendencies of modern culture and modern epic, who most profoundly perceived which roads might emerge from the works of Flaubert and Dostoevsky, also saw the problematic nature of these roads. He was a disciple of Hegel. Therefore, he had to see reality as reasonable, and he began to prove the rationality of every reality. Accordingly, he had to be enthusiastic about existing new realities and new forms. Nevertheless, he engaged in an ethical diagnosis of absolute sinfulness. Thus, there evolved a contradiction in his oeuvre, to which all the other contradictions can be traced.

Lukács himself called this contradiction the contradiction of 'right' epistemology and 'left' ethic, which means that, while standing on the ground of Hegelian idealism and ethically condemning his age, he found himself mired in hopeless antinomies. He set out in search of the tradition of modern poetry without which he could not prove continuity, but he failed to find the line of tradition. He explained the possibilities of modern solutions, and turned against them with resignation. He placed Flaubert over Balzac and Dostoevsky over Tolstoy, but saw that their example would lead to the dissolution of epic forms. To follow their trend would be nothing but the epic mirror of 'absolute sinfulness'. And the contradictions that led so many artists astray seemed to be insolvable at that time. Obviously, as Lukács mentioned in his new preface, a few thinkers remained captives of these contradictions up to the present. In this sense he correctly referred to Adorno, Ernst Bloch, and Walter Benjamin, stating that Bloch even now continued to grapple with the contradiction of 'left' ethic and 'right' epistemology, while in the case of Adorno and Benjamin the problem evolved only in the 1920s.

The aforementioned contradiction in the works that Lukács wrote within the scope of the intellectual sciences appeared in his efforts to link tradition and new phenomena. At this point, however, the reader has to take note of a new phenomenon which points toward a very peculiar and more general problem. The issue is the following: the situation of ideology has undoubtedly changed in the age of imperialism, for while it is true that some ideologues, such as Nietzsche, already anticipated this problem at the end of the nineteenth century, it is only in the course of the twentieth century that the new ideological situation has become apparent and assumed massive proportions. In our century the typical ideological trends have appeared in the name of the future. This future is, of course, generally fictitious, conceived in avant-garde manner, and in this respect, it is futurism that betrays the secret of various twentieth-century trends. Lukács's book in this respect occupies a marginal position within bourgeois scholarship and intellectual movements such as those represented by Thomas Mann's and Béla Bartók's art. They emphatically aspired to absorb what was historically new, without rejecting tradition, that is to say, they aspired to create the unity of tradition, the unity of the precedent and of the vision of the future.

It can be seen from the work of Mann, Lukács, and Bartók alike that, when they responded to the false alternative of imperialism, which offered tradition coupled with conservatism on the one hand, and a forward-looking modernism that eliminated traditions on the other, they were not taken in by these sham options. On the contrary, Mann and Bartók successfully, Lukács unsuccessfully, aimed at surpassing this false dichotomy. It was an attempt at presenting the past, present, and future in one comprehensive synthesis.

It is not by chance that the method of false alternatives, which is a typically manipulative ploy of imperialism in the field of ideology, too, will occupy a central position in our further treatment of the subject. For the first time in world history, World War I raised the question of the false alternative for every man; either the Entente or the

Central Powers. The age of imperialism is characterized by mistaken, false ways of posing questions. Truth is not to be found somewhere in between the two extremes or along a third path because the third possibility is of quite another sort, of quite another nature. If nothing else, the third-road policy of social democracy has proven that the search for a middle course between false alternatives inevitably leads to yet other mistaken answers. Of course, Lukács, who himself admitted how greatly he was influenced by the problem of World War I when writing *The Theory of the Novel*, wanted to avoid the politically false alternative offered by the war, and similarly, the ideologically false alternative. He searched for the possibilities of overcoming such pseudo-choices, but could not find them. Thus, his whole struggle should be analyzed from this perspective.

Lukács, as a thinker who built on traditions, refused to content himself with these false alternatives. He was unwilling to build the future on the victory of a reactionary power or trend. That is to say, the relation to traditions is not simply a matter of literature or ideology because the adherence to and the preservation of traditions also mean an opposition to false alternatives, the main trends of imperialism. The question, how traditions can be coupled with looking into the future, how the conspectus of twentieth-century problems can be fused with the use of traditions, is not an abstract question, and must rather be regarded as a historico-philosophical problem. Depending on the answer to this question or problem, the writer, thinker, or artist either identifies himself in his mental disposition with the imperialist way of posing questions or refuses it.

The *Theory of the Novel* represents a great step forward compared to the *Soul and Form*. For the first time, Lukács awoke to the consciousness of opposing false alternatives. This, of course, does not mean that the achievement of *The Theory of the Novel* is on a par with that of *Tonio Kröger* or *Bluebeard's Castle*. Lukács had to fight false alternatives in the field of theory, a fight that artists, in the spirit of portraying reality, had to carry on in the field of praxis. And for the time being, Lukács proved to be the losing party. In this period only a very small group, represented by Lenin and his followers, who were not handicapped by 'right' epistemology, arrived at a genuine means of combatting imperialism, by both shunting aside the false alternatives and rejecting the illusory middle road.

Lukács, then, disavowed false alternatives, but at this time could not move beyond searching for a 'third possibility'. At best, as he put it later, he could arrive only at a sort of 'primitive utopianism'. This at least enabled him to oppose something to absolute sinfulness. He felt that Dostoevsky was a herald of the new world, and this world, he supposed, would transcend the painful stage of absolute sinfulness. But however weakly and vaguely this 'primitive utopianism' appeared in the pages of the book, it was the most that could be achieved by the adherents of the intellectual sciences who worked with 'left' ethic and 'right' epistemology.

The structure of *The Theory of the Novel* is, necessarily, rather strange, as the passages on Balzac, Pontoppidan, Jacobsen, and Goncharov are followed by the analysis of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. This structural singularity is due to the fact that Lukács searched in vain for the relieving, transitional element in the aforementioned authors, none of whom could bridge the abyss between the classics and modern problems. That is why Lukács turned to *Wilhelm Meister*. This novel, of course, could not bridge the gap between the classics and absolute sinfulness either, but it could fulfil another role. It could, namely, serve as a transition between the classics and a utopian, visionary world, between the world of Homer and that of 'primitive utopianism'.

But this utopian solution was not reassuring. Nor could it have been if Lukács already

at that time had discovered the successor to *Wilhelm Meister*, that is a 'transitional-bridging' novel nearer to his own time than that of Goethe. This type of novel was Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich*, which he probably discovered only later. Although Lukács had liked Keller in his youth, it was toward the end of the war that he arrived at an ideological appreciation of Keller's great significance, the prerequisite of which was a shift to a more plebeian position. Thus, there is no trace of Keller in *The Theory of the Novel*. Later, in his Marxist period, Lukács wrote one of his most important theoretical essays on *Der grüne Heinrich*.¹³ In this way he created a kind of torso in *The Theory of the Novel*. He worked through the mental world of the intellectual sciences most resolutely, and reached its logical conclusion. He set up a new world opposed to the world of sinfulness based on 'left' ethic, but he had no idea what the basis and structure of this new world might be. After this, Lukács for a time lost the opportunity to create an overall world view, he reached the dead end of the intellectual sciences, and he could not find a trend upon which he could begin anew. In the subsequent passages I am going to treat briefly the problem of this disintegration.

Before turning to the problems of the period of disintegration I cannot fail to observe that Lukács later, as a Marxist, would not use the arguments of *The Theory of the Novel*. At the same time, however, the fact that he took over and elaborated elements from his intellectual sciences period, does not mean that there was any continuity between the Lukács of the intellectual sciences and the later, Marxist Lukács. We must content ourselves with the observation that some of the problems posed during Lukács's idealistic period later reemerged in a new guise and ultimately found their true solution.

2

After this remark let me turn to the problems of Lukács's new period. What could Lukács, an adherent of the intellectual sciences, do during the war in order to arrive at a theoretical formulation of the problems posed by reality? The intellectual sciences, or, more properly, the intellectual sciences claiming 'left' ethic, as noted above, had had their last say in *The Theory of the Novel*. Now the question was whether these 'left' ethics, revolted by militarism and bureaucratism, would become dominant, or the next word would be said in the spirit of idealistic epistemology on account of progressive elements.

Lukács wrote only a few essays in the period after 1915, and they require some comment. Some representatives of impressionist aesthetic regard them as important because they can most readily refer to these essays in order to prove how greatly Lukács was mistaken. They present Lukács's attitude toward Béla Balázs as erroneous, and declare that this mistake in judgment proves the undeniable weakness of the conceptual-critical method as a whole. These critics, however, disregard the facts. I have to emphasize, namely, that Lukács's articles on Béla Balázs were written in Lukács's most critical period, a period during which he had pursued the intellectual sciences to their outer limits, and as a result had to discard that methodology. In this period Lukács tried to formulate his conceptual-critical opinion on the basis of a dissolving, fragmentary ideology.

In this period Lukács expressed essentially, although unconsciously, the ideology of the pacifist-plebeian tendencies of expressionism. This ideology had promoted the creation of interesting works in the expressionist movement: both Georg Kaiser's *From*

Morn to Midnight and Bertolt Brecht's "Legende vom totem Soldaten" were products of the wartime environment. Lukács, the ideologist, could arrive only at a series of inaccurate results.

All this does not mean that there could not be correct elements within Lukács's basically mistaken aesthetic judgment, for his world view had its progressive elements, too. No doubt, the articles on Béla Balázs were results of his alliance with Balázs, and this partnership in struggle did not rest on the latter's 'left' plebeian ethic alone. In addition, we may point to the moral seriousness with which Balázs interpreted the task of literature in contradiction to Ignatius and other critics of *Nyugat*. If posterity looks upon Balázs as a writer of a few interesting poems, and first and foremost as a librettist, it is no wonder then if a philosopher of disintegrated world view perceived in his libretti the possibilities of artistic universality. These factors, in addition to a shared romantic anticapitalism, explain why Lukács overestimated Balázs's art. It was not the consequence of a theoretical and critical attitude based on a coherent view, but a product of a world picture in crisis.

In this period Lukács found himself in a deep ideological crisis, a crisis connected with the dualistic character of his world view. On the one hand, he could not find the connection between past and present, between the classics and the world of 'absolute sinfulness'. On the other hand, he could not see the relationship between the present and the future. He awaited a 'new world', but had no idea how it was possible to get there from the world of 'absolute sinfulness'. Thus there followed an ideological crisis, which was exacerbated by the fact that, in the light of current events, it seemed ever less possible that he might succeed in grasping the relationship between the past and future. And there seemed no way out on bourgeois grounds.

3

And here again Hungarian developments intervened for a second time. On the first occasion, Endre Ady's poetry had given a special accent to Lukács's intellectual sciences period. This influence enabled him to raise his concept above the average, to think more profoundly than the majority of the intellectual sciences school. On the second occasion, the foundation of the communist party and the victory of the proletarian dictatorship in 1919 made it possible for Lukács gradually to overcome the ideological crisis. But it would not be until many years and many detours later that Lukács posted himself on the ground of a new ideology.

Here I want to mention only briefly what Lukács wrote concerning his relationship with Marx in his "Mein Weg zu Marx" in 1933.¹⁵ He was very young when he became acquainted with Marx's *Capital*. Even though the second chapter of Lukács's book on the modern drama clearly indicates this influence of Marx, at that time he thought that Marx's method, although applicable to interpreting concrete historical phenomena, was incapable of elaborating a comprehensive philosophy of history. From that time on, one can perceive a hidden historical materialist tendency in Lukács's work, characteristically interwoven with the fabric of intellectual sciences mentality. Thus, even though this materialist tendency could never become the dominant element within the texture of idealistic philosophy, it could always be detected as an important sub-pattern in Lukács's work.

For Lukács it became an urgent task to study Marx when, as a consequence of his

participation in the communist movement, he solved some of his theoretical problems, only to find that he had raised new ones. It became clear to him that it was the communist movement that could provide a way out of the world of 'absolute sinfulness'. Furthermore, he ascertained that the October Revolution and the Hungarian revolution concretized the 'new world' he had awaited. They concretized it in such a manner that there was no need to break with traditions, and, what is more, the communist movement furnished a basis for the hope that traditions might be preserved and continued. There is no denying that Lukács understood the reality before him and the possibilities of the new world in a messianic-utopian manner. Although this new world was self-evident, it had as yet been incorporated into Lukács's work only in a very abstract, utopian way. In this period Lukács's concept was similar to that of Korsch and later to that of Caudwell.

All this can be proven by a wide range of evidence. The persistence of Lukács's 'left' ethic manifested itself in his activities as commissar of education, and similar traits are revealed in his writings from the time of the proletarian dictatorship. In these writings, the respect for traditions and a messianic-sectarian ideal appear side by side. At this time, Lukács wrote a most intriguing pamphlet, entitled "Tactics and Ethics".¹⁶ (One can study Lukács's new contradictions especially in this work.) He found the possibility that he had searched for (the 'third way' described above) in the Leninist way, which opposed itself to the false alternatives of the age of imperialism. He refused these alternatives on the basis of the Leninist way, and occupied the position of the third, genuine human possibility. Even with this new ideological basis, however, he found himself entangled in a new contradiction, the contradiction between tactics and ethics. According to Lukács, a number of tasks which contradicted the ethical traditions of mankind had to be discharged tactically. For this reason, he quoted Hebbel's *Judith*: "If You [God] place a sin between me and my deed, who am I to quarrel about it with You and to escape from You!" In a given situation one has to kill even if killing is to be ethically condemned as a sin. The interest of proletarian dictatorship, for example, may necessitate killing. It is clear that here Lukács wanted to justify the showdown with the counterrevolutionists. But in the problem one can detect the general question of the relationship between ethics and politics. But in contrast with the manner how Lukács handled this problem, we have to stress that it is very doubtful to justify any ethical question without studying the concrete situation.

Lukács's messianic sectarianism, which he shared with several Marxists of the period—for example Korsch, and later Caudwell—becomes even more apparent if it is compared with his attitude concerning compromise. Concerning the latter issue, Lukács wrote:

That means concretely that every gesture of solidarity with the existing order is fraught with such danger. Deriving though they may well do from true inner conviction, our insistent protests that such and such a gesture of solidarity indicates only a momentary, immediate community of interests, nothing more than a provisional alliance for the attainment of a concrete goal, nevertheless do not obviate the danger that the feeling of solidarity will take root in *that* form of consciousness which necessarily obscures the world-historical consciousness, the awakening of humanity to self-consciousness [...]. Every compromise made obscures precisely *this aspect* of the struggle and is therefore—despite all its possible, short-term (but extremely problematical) advantages—fatal to the achievement of this true ultimate objective.¹⁷

It is beyond doubt that Lukács's hostility to compromise, which continued to distort his world view even afterward, is connected with the fact that he saw the 'new world', this time the concrete new world, in an abstract manner. There was, however, a justi-

fiable motive in this position, namely, Lukács's belief that, in this period, the greatest danger to the working-class movement resided in the opportunism and bureaucracy of social democracy, which he hated. In that regard he was right. Disgusted with the opportunism of the social democrats, he criticized their policy, exposed their *Realpolitik*, and repudiated their compromises, but, in a true neophyte, leftist manner, he also rejected every kind of compromise. For this, Lukács (together with Béla Kun) was rightly criticized by Lenin.

In this case, however, one can see a characteristic and therefore exceptional phenomenon of the working-class movement: sectarianism was usually connected with bureaucracy, with the superabundance or domination of administrative methods. The messianic sectarianism of the sort displayed by Lukács was, by contrast, of a different kind. Although it had some traits in common with bureaucratic sectarianism in theory and practice alike, it came into being precisely in the spirit of hatred for bureaucracy. Messianic sectarianism is not a viable tendency, and nothing better proves its impotence and subjective honesty than the fact that it is incapable of developing an ideology of tactics. For him, as his pamphlet indicated, tactics in a proper sense does not exist. Lukács stated this openly and emphatically. He wrote: "The theory can be revolutionary only in so far as it transcends the difference between theory and practice."¹⁸ Later on he added: "*There is no essential difference between movement and ultimate objective.*"¹⁹

Thus Lukács represented a peculiar kind of sectarianism in this period, and because this sectarianism was not viable, it soon died. Nevertheless, the trait of Lukács's theory that showed no inclination to justify the tactical steps directly, theoretically, endured. From the beginning of the thirties on, this created constant conflict between him and the Stalinist bureaucracy, and it is therefore essential that we understand this peculiar sectarianism, which has nothing to do with later factionalism. It differs even from the *proletkult* inasmuch as it was unwilling to abandon humanist traditions, and thus cannot be considered the forerunner of Stalinist-bureaucratic sectarianism. Because it once again proved to be not viable, it later played no role in Lukács's theory and critical practice.

In short, Lukács found the third possibility in the face of false alternatives, false questions posed by the age of imperialism. He united tradition and new tendencies in the spirit of messianic sectarianism. For the time being this was only a practical answer, a practical *tertium datur*. His siding with the communist movement meant practically the third solution, but from this it did not follow directly (as theory and practice are two distinct domains) that he found the third possibility in the domain of theory, too. Theoretically speaking, the author of *The Theory of the Novel* preserved his utopianism for his communist period. In practice he sided with a movement that meant something new in practice and reality alike, but he interpreted it in a utopian manner.

Now Lukács, who at the time insisted that there was no difference between theory and practice, fused a correct practice (as the place of 'left' ethic was now taken by correct practice) with idealist theory. 'Left' ethic had grown into 'left' practice, but many elements of 'right' epistemology had survived. Thus, the whole complex led, of necessity, to sectarian theory. It is the essence of leftist theories that they produce ideology from sectarian, leftist practice, and that can be done exclusively on the basis of an idealistic, voluntaristic epistemology. In the next chapter I shall survey the theoretical consequences of this contradiction.

The contradiction is reflected in the fact that Lukács, while accepting the reasoning of historical materialism, could not assume the point of view of dialectical materialism in general philosophical questions. In this way he was able to maintain one of the most characteristic traits of the intellectual sciences. Both the intellectual sciences and neo-Kantianism had a common motif, namely to contrast nature with society in respect of the general questions of philosophy. While acknowledging the existence of overall rules in the one, they looked for quite different rules in the other, or neglected their existence altogether. Thus, Lukács acknowledged that the rules of society were dialectical, but denied the existence of dialectics in nature.

This contradiction was, once again, relatively understandable in the context of the time. In comparison to certain trends, above all those of vulgar *Lebensphilosophie*, even this standpoint was positive. In opposition to social Darwinism, Lukács stressed the basic difference between the motion of society and that of nature and, furthermore, pointed out that the laws of the natural sciences could not be identified with the laws of society. In addition, this meant a polemic with certain 'biological' trends of social democracy, and especially with Karl Kautsky, who contrasted the theory of organic development with the Leninist concept of revolution. This division, which is basically mistaken, expressed a relatively well-grounded motif, too. It becomes clear from one of Lukács's articles just what the real target of the polemic was. He states, namely, that the fetishization of scientific methods is the apology of capitalism.²⁰

Lukács put statistical and natural scientific methods in their place in a similar manner when he wanted to face the motion of reality in society and not statistics.²¹ But these relative gains originated in a false concept that separated the two layers of reality, social and natural reality. No doubt, the laws of motion are different in society and in nature. But it is an essential point of dialectics that, while recognizing and admitting the differences, it treats them in their unity.

Lukács's mistake did not mean that he was not right in questions of detail. He was correct, for example, when he criticized Bukharin, and when, upon scrutinizing the overly schematic formula of 'productive forces' employed by the social democrats, and the theory of mixing natural scientific and sociological methods, he arrived at the conclusion that Marxism was endangered first of all by vulgarization in the domain of theory. In 1925 he published a review of Bukharin's *Theorie des historischen Materialismus*, in the *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*.²² His criticism was essentially sound. He charged that Bukharin's theorization, like that of the social democrats, was the result of a simplifying tendency. But he did not realize that, concerning the question of the forces of production, Bukharin did not use overschematic formulae. Or rather, he did not realize that Bukharin's simplification was rooted not in opportunism, but in the characteristically positivist mistake of identifying technique with the forces of production.

This proves that Lukács's messianic sectarianism differed deeply, above all on a theoretical level, from bureaucratic dogmatism. The debate with Bukharin indicates that Lukács sought to refute Bukharin on theoretical grounds. As regards theory Bukharin represented a clean, practical, positivist trend, and his later conflict with Stalin was a theoretical conflict between positivism and Stalinist dogmatism. This had nothing to do with social democracy, as at that time dogmatism was a new phenomenon in the working-class movement. Lukács's sectarianism was abstract but not dogmatic, it was not a

sectarianism that could not differentiate, and he blamed Bukharin for precisely this trait. As against later simplifying sectarianism, whose theoretical basis I have spoken of above, Lukács's sectarianism was far from being overly schematic. Later, all these elements became very important because they enabled Lukács, after triumphing over his own sectarian tendencies, to present his views correctly, to understand the practical objective announced by Dimitrov at the seventh Comintern congress.

In Lukács's oeuvre, messianic sectarianism is best expressed in *History and Class Consciousness*.²³ The claim to have formulated the practice of the October Revolution and social construction on a theoretical, philosophical level emerged in two philosophical works. One was Lukács's aforementioned work, the other, Karl Korsch's *Marxism and Philosophy*.²⁴

Both works were written from the recognition that the theoreticians of the Second International took philosophy to be a discipline alien to Marxism. To some extent this tendency furnished the ideological basis for opportunism. Korsch, for example, quoted Franz Mehring, who was the best and most respectable theoretician of social democracy, but whose views were rigidly hostile to theory. Furthermore, Korsch pointed out that it was possible to publish an essay (entitled "Ernst Mach und die Revolution") in *Neue Zeit* (in 1907), edited by Kautsky, which quite seriously insisted that the tactical differences between mensheviks and bolsheviks had nothing to do with the question of Marxism.

Lukács's first essay in *History and Class Consciousness* was a plea in defence of orthodox Marxism, which the whole book strove to defend against revisionism. Lukács worked out philosophically the problems that were raised by the revolutionary situation, precisely in the defence of orthodox Marxism. But however much Lukács was animated by the highest motives, he ultimately wrote his most imperfect book in *History and Class Consciousness*.

This, of course, does not mean that the book did not have some essential partial results. It will suffice to mention that it was in this book (more precisely, the first essay of the book) that the category of totality was worked out for the first time. Totality, as the category that makes impossible any partition of reality, is of seminal importance for every subsequent Marxist analysis. When one proceeds from the category of totality, neither the statistical method nor the petty-bourgeois contradiction between theory and practice may prevail. Lukács was definitely correct in stating that Lenin, assessing the situation in Russia, did not base his opinion either on statistical average or on the isolated inspection of any of the elements. Lenin grasped the motion of reality, the inner tendencies of this motion, in their totality. And Lukács was again correct when he stated that the greatest thing that the social democrats had lost in the field of theory was their feeling for totality. Their theoreticians grasped now one, then the other motif from its dialectical interrelation, and were consequently never able to grasp totality, the totality of interrelation. I think Lukács did not exaggerate when he said that any break in the examination of totality would disrupt the unity of theory and practice.²⁵

Lukács provided the most effective defence of Marxism when he gave a central place to the treatment of totality, for totality is not only the category of the unity of theory and practice, but also the category of dialectical interdependence. Still, Lukács contradicted this category when he separated the categories of society and history from those of nature, taking the former to be dialectical and the latter not. In other words, Lukács would apply the category of totality only to the motion of history, and was unable to see the whole of reality in its totality. Thus, his opposition to opportunists remained

ambiguous. Unlike them, he understood the role and importance of dialectics and philosophy. It was also his merit that he stressed the importance of method over single tenets. In this period, however, he was unable to treat philosophy as philosophy, and he attributed only historico-philosophical validity to philosophical categories. As a result, Lukács's concept of totality, the Lukácsian explanation of totality—although it contains correct elements—ultimately narrowed down the sphere of validity of philosophical categories. Thus, Lukács embedded the category of totality in a concept based on non-totality.

History and Class Consciousness was an attempt at formulating Marxist philosophy, but in the period in question it could be characterized as Marxist only on the basis of its subjective intents. It, therefore, raises a very important question in the relation of theory and practice concerning the category of totality. The question is, how consciously do people act, in making their individual and especially historical decisions, and to what extent do these acts contain elements of false consciousness even in the period of socialist revolution. The problem of false consciousness, however, cannot be studied merely from the perspective of a partial philosophical aspect.

If we consider false consciousness only as historically false consciousness, if we consider only its historical interrelations and origins, if we analyze only historical appearances as Lukács did, then we ignore the general categories of scientific cognition offered by dialectical materialism. In this way we can grasp, of necessity, only one side of the problems of false consciousness. The book attempts to concretize the Marxist tenet, 'they do not know it yet they do it', and, indeed, the whole book is permeated by the ontological interpretation of praxis, the recognition and justification of historical and revolutionary praxis. But all these correct elements prove to be insufficient and defective because the author examined only one aspect of false consciousness. Thus, the essay on "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat" was bound to be a failure.

When Lukács sought to analyze the characteristics of false consciousness, he rightly examined the categories of alienation, yet he mixed up the notions of reification, objectification, and alienation (*Verdinglichung, Entäusserung, Entfremdung*), which might have prompted Heidegger to observe: 'we know that antique ontology works with notions of substance and there is the danger that it reifies consciousness.'²⁶ It is true, of course, that this mix-up of notions is a Hegelian heritage and that Lukács was not at the time familiar with the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*. It was only in Moscow in the thirties that he became acquainted with this work, in which Marx drew a sharp distinction between these categories and criticized the Hegelian tendency to confuse them.

This question precisely is of fundamental philosophical importance. As long as philosophy does not proceed from the study of actual, social labor processes that express the actual metabolism of nature and man, and instead studies man and nature detached from one another, until it eventually separates society from the reality of nature and vice versa, it is impossible to make a distinction between different processes of consciousness. In this way it is impossible to uncover the specific, inherent laws of these processes. Thus, all these have to be absorbed without distinction into the category of alienation.

Alienation, it must be stressed, is a very concrete process. And from the point of view of false consciousness it has nothing to do with objectification. Objectification is an indispensable category of actual human work. Human plans and intentions assume the forms of objects in the labor process itself, as a result of this process. Since Lukács

regarded the objective world, even the objective world created by man, as suspicious, he misinterpreted the process of objectification. He regarded this process as a negative phenomenon from the point of view of human development and consciousness, although in reality objectification is the characteristic feature of the labor process, and the true purpose of the labor process is to mould human plans into forms of objects.

Objectification in itself is not yet alienation. But it, as an objective and positive process, makes alienation possible on the basis of objectiveness. Here it is interesting to note that Lukács's method of excluding the dialectic of nature has survived in today's existentialism. I have mentioned above to what extent Lukács might be the predecessor of the philosophy of existence. It was not for nothing that *History and Class Consciousness* occupied such a central position in Sartre's and Lucien Goldmann's range of ideas, and that Sartre, obviously following Lukács, stressed in the opening pages of *Being and Nothingness* that he regarded reality as reality created by man, and paid no attention to reality that was not created by man.

If objectification is not to be confused with alienation, neither is reification. Reification is undoubtedly a more negative phenomenon than objectification. Objectification, as has been explained above, is the purpose of the labor process, and reification is a necessary phenomenon in civilized society, but it is of another sort. This category relates to social conditions and institutions created by man. It means that in civilized societies, personal relations become externalized.

It is a utopian illusion to hope that certain institutions that have been created by man to replace more personal institutions of clan system will not take on a relatively independent life in modern society. These institutions will in fact assume a relatively independent function irrespective of personal relations. This also holds true of objectification because, as Hegel and Engels correctly saw, objects in a certain sense become independent of their makers. As a result of this quality of independence, they bring about something else than what they have been intended to. This is well characterized by Engels's example: James Watt wanted to construct only a steam engine and did not know that it would lead to the industrial revolution. The plan does not contain all of its consequences even in case of objectification. In part, this is the situation in the reification of institutions, social relations. After some time, social institutions and the social labor process undoubtedly acquire a partially independent function to replace personal relations. Thus, they become the conglomerate of externalized relations. It is impossible to prevent an institution, a tendency of the labor process or work organization from becoming objective and independent of the personal will of people belonging to the same institution or participating in the labor process. Even the most democratic institutions as, for example, the Revolutionary Convention undoubtedly had certain independent dynamics. Reification is precisely the inner, independent dynamics of institutions that were established on the basis of personal relations and institutions of people within forms of organizations that originally expressed merely the personal interests and relations of people.

Consequently, reification is an unavoidable process in civilized societies. But despite its inevitability, it has negative features. Therefore, the Leninist system of soviets does not aim at abolishing reification, but interprets the problem of reification as a matter of struggle. Reification has two possibilities within each organization and institution. The first one is the tendency to retransform a great part of the relations between objects into personal relations. The other is that reification may deepen into alienation.

In this case alienation operates as follows. The process of objectification, which is

natural and necessary—and, hence, positive in character—brings about certain objects. Reification, however, separates these objects and institutions from man, that is, these objects no longer reflect their human origin. In this way all personal relations become objective, externalized. Consequently, personal relations become rigid. The institutions and objects, as compared to the will of the people who participate in or created them, function not only differently but against the will of these people.

Herewith I have sought to circumscribe the basic features of the categories of objectification, reification, and alienation. Here it is not possible to inquire into these categories more deeply. But this circumscription has been essential in order to demonstrate that any mix-up, interfusion, or exchange of these categories not only leads to absurd results in the analysis of false consciousness, but also precludes the realistic and non-utopian assessment of real processes. It is reality itself that produces phenomena in which the importance of false consciousness can be analyzed only after distinguishing the aforementioned categories.

The theoretical position, however, which negates dialectics concerning the reality of nature, which is unable to examine nature and society organically, which is unable to assess the veritable totality of reality, is in this case unable to make distinctions. That is to say, it is unable to value the positive elements that are hidden in the process of objectification and reification as positive ones. It can reflect only an anti-dialectical, metaphysical necessity everywhere. According to this position, this necessity is not a real, that is, living and prolific one, but the whole process is to be condemned as entirely negative.

The problem of modern bureaucracy is also connected with reification. The labor process reifies and alienates the worker, but bureaucracy itself is the concrete manifestation of alienation. The problem of modern bureaucracy is really connected with reification, but qualitatively it is a different phenomenon. The existence of bureaucracy expresses alienation or reification turning into alienation. Of course, this does not mean that alienation would not apply to the working class; Marx proved that alienation applied to the working class, too. But one has to draw a distinction between reification and alienation. In the existence of the working class alienation is a tendency, whereas in bureaucracy it is at once the basis and a result of the operation of the whole mechanism. (Those who proceed from the Lukács of 1923, as, e.g., Lucien Goldmann does, arrive at the conclusion that Lukács's greatest achievement lies precisely in ignoring this distinction.)

This false conception of Lukács's undermines both his correct and mistaken conclusions. Namely, as a consistent Hegelian, Lukács seeks the unity of subject and object in objective reality, and this is the essential fault of his book, in which both his mistakes originate. In Hegel, the theory of the unity of subject and object logically follows from his belief that the natural world was an alienated form of spirit. Hegel thought that the World Spirit appeared in reality in alienated form, and that there arrived a stage in the development of human consciousness when the human spirit recognized itself in the world, whereupon the object was taken back into the subjective spirit. The necessary result of this idealistic conception was that Hegel regarded natural reality as something imperfect, defective, that is, he did not consider nature to be dialectical. And it also follows from this construction that everything that is not spiritual, that is, objective, is alienated—alienated as compared to the spirit, the world spirit. Consequently, in relation to the world spirit it is no use to distinguish between objectification, reification, and alienation because it is only alienation that can become a central category. Finally, in

Hegel it is, of course, only Hegelian philosophy that creates the unity of subject and object. It is only in this philosophy that the spirit can consider reality as itself.

Consequently, Hegel is extremely consistent, while Lukács repudiates the starting point of Hegelian idealistic construction. He rejects the notion that he should consider reality only as the alienation of spirit. At the same time, however, he accepts the assertion that natural reality is not dialectical, and that its laws are, as a matter of course, of a lower order than those of society. In this way, even if more inconsistently, he arrives at a Hegelian result, and validates dialectics only with respect to society.

From this another step follows. He is bound to suppose an essential identity between objectification, reification, and alienation. He equates everything that is objectified or reified with alienation. But because, from the standpoint of 'left' ethic and materialistic intent, it would be indefensible to express the identity of subject and object only philosophically, that is, only in theory, Lukács is obliged to frisk. He states that it is not philosophy that expresses the identity of subject and object, but, rather, the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. Lukács even praises József Révai's article, "Das Problem der Taktik",²⁷ because, in his opinion, this article concretizes for the first time the tenet that the proletariat is the 'identical subject-object of social development'.

This opinion, which was represented by Lukács and Révai, is not only unnaturally utopian, but harmful as well. For, the Marxist criticism of Hegelian philosophy has two cardinal points. One is the criticism of its idealist starting points. One other is the recognition that the postulation of the identity of subject and object blocks the course of development forever. In Hegel, the terminal point of human development is Hegelian philosophy, and the dialectic of subject and object that heretofore has been the motive force of history, ceases to exist.

Thus, in Lukács's philosophy at that time, development in the philosophical sense was, necessarily, done away with by uniting and identifying subject with object in the movement of the proletariat. Although Lukács correctly stated that, contrary to the theoreticians of the Second International, Lenin rediscovered the "practical core in Marxism",²⁸ Lukács's philosophy expressed the theoretical apology of immediate praxis and not this practical core. He justified social revolution, but was not able to postulate the subsequent development, so, with him, just as with Hegel, the matter in question was the theoretical reflection of previous events.

Here I would like to mention the inner contradictions in Lukács's thought. For one thing, as we have seen, he fails to distinguish between reification and alienation, and from this he concludes (in respect of facts he is correct) that false consciousness also has a role in the struggle of the proletariat. For another, he thinks that the identical subject-object of social development is realized in the proletariat. Thus, on the one hand, there is a class imbued with false consciousness and, on the other, this class represents the apogee of history. Lukács transcends Hegel in acknowledging that mistaken, distorted consciousness exists in his own age even in the proletariat. But he lags behind Hegel because it was Hegel who postulated correct consciousness and hereby interrupted the process of development. Lukács, however, postulates the simultaneous existence of false consciousness and the apogee of development. There is a sectarian notion behind this contradiction, namely, that Lukács, while acknowledging the inevitable distortions, wants to upgrade the given state of development of the working class to the level of absolute good, absolute acceptability. Philosophically speaking, here as well as in a philosophy that starts out uncritically from Hegel, the main mistake is the postulation of the absolute, even if this absolute is not God but the proletariat.

Lukács's mistakes are therefore intertwined. The rigid confrontation of nature with society, the confusion of reification and alienation originate in the fact that he interprets the struggle of the proletariat in an idealistic way, one that represents and realizes the identity of subject and object. All these mistakes make Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* his most imperfect book. This is not to say that those who criticize Lukács from a lower theoretical level are absolutely right; their criticism is, however, relatively correct in the light of what has been said above. Now Lukács's task was to emerge from this confused, messianic sectarianism and attain the level of Marxist analysis.

5

In setting out on this path Lukács had to face two problems. For one thing, he had to discard his sectarian concept concerning compromises in his practice, the incorrectness of which Lenin called his attention to. For another, he had to revise his views concerning the identity of subject and object, the ideological foundation of his sectarianism. Without doing so he would be unable to free himself theoretically of utopian sectarianism. The former was easier to carry out.

In the next period, from 1919 and especially from 1923 on, Lukács was essentially occupied with political work. His literary critical activity was quite casual, for he directed his energies toward political work and toward rephrasing theoretical problems. He did party work in Budapest, later in Vienna, and Berlin. In Vienna he got in touch with Jenő Landler, whose naturalness and struggle against sectarianism fascinated him. It was the activity of Landler and his circle that put Lukács on the path to disavowing every form of sectarianism. Against the false alternatives offered by the age of imperialism, sectarianism, even in a messianic form, postulated only an abstract, third possibility. A truly concrete possibility could be attained only through communist policy free from sectarianism. With Lukács, the first stage of turning against sectarianism was the rethinking of Leninist theory. Thus, Lukács's book on Lenin was the first product of the process of disavowing sectarian theories.²⁹

The reexamination of Lenin's works prompted Lukács to review a number of his former concepts, first and foremost his political-practical views. In Lenin he saw first of all the theoretician who represented the real communist position against both 'left' and 'right' dogmatism. Writing about Lenin's concept of history, he said: "Lenin recognized that it is of the essence of history always to create the new."³⁰ The role of the party is precisely that it always has to recognize the new historical element. Its vanguard character is accentuated by the fact that it always proceeds from new realities. Consequently, any form of dogmatism means opposition to the Leninist party.

Another central step in discarding sectarianism lay in overcoming his hostility toward *Realpolitik*. Lukács recognized here for the first time that, although his fight against the so-called 'Realpolitik' of social democracy was legitimate, he had rejected 'Realpolitik in general' in the name of abstract utopianism. In this sense he stated that "Lenin's realism, his 'Realpolitik' is therefore the final elimination of all utopianism." To this one may add that Lukács now formed an estimate of compromise that differed markedly from his previous one. Formerly he had considered compromises, even tactical compromises, to be harmful and dangerous because they undermined the consciousness of the proletariat. But now he declared that "for Lenin [...] compromise is a direct logical

consequence of the actuality of the revolution".³¹ He acknowledged that, having raised the questions realistically and not in a utopian manner, compromises, of necessity, came about in the course of events when the revolution had become an actual, practical task.

The Lenin book was his first attempt at transcending messianic sectarianism. The second, concrete theoretical step toward this goal was his book on Moses Hess.³² No doubt, the critique of Moses Hess's theory was to some extent Lukács's self-criticism, even if he did not say so explicitly. Hess's situation concerning Marx's and Engels's theory and practice was, *mutatis mutandis*, similar to that of Lukács concerning Lenin.

Hess had tried to approach the theory of the working class on the basis of Hegelian dialectic in much the same manner as Lukács was to do a century later. He tried to develop a theory in the abstract, on the basis of 'left' ethic in the same manner as Lukács did. And the idealist philosophical categories survived in his thoughts, just as they did in Lukács's at the beginning of the twenties. The point in question was the anomaly of 'right' epistemology and 'left' ethic. Thus, Lukács's criticism of Hess was probably the most important step toward theoretical self-criticism. But this step could not be decisive in this period because Lukács did not yet know Marx's early works. Thus, for a time he bracketed out the problem of the dialectic of subject and object. In this way the book reflects Lukács's position in transition: in practice he transcended sectarianism, but in theory he was only approaching Marxism.

In this book Lukács clearly demonstrated how dangerous and inappropriate it was to approach the working class from the standpoint of intellectual curiosity, a fault that Lukács found in Hess. He stated: "The fond belief that he inhabits a sphere above all class antagonisms and egoistical interests of his fellow-men is typical of the intellectual."³³ To this Lukács added that, in Hess's case, the working class was merely the object and not the subject of investigation. In my opinion, the interrelation lies in the fact that this deficiency characterizes the thought of Hess and the early Lukács alike. For both of them, the working class was only an object of analysis and they were unable to assume its point of view.

These similarities exist. But, of course, the parallel should not be exaggerated. There were points of contact between Hess's theoretically established 'true socialism' and Lukács's utopian-messianic sectarianism, but these did not mean similarities in every respect. Moses Hess's idealist dialectic certainly showed the process of the disintegration of Hegelianism in the nineteenth century, and in a sense one could therefore speak of Hess's tragedy. With Lukács, who surveyed the problems raised by Hess from higher, theoretical aspects, one could also witness the same process of disintegration that became the caricature of that process. It is true that Lukács did not see the paradox of his situation even in his Hess book, but his critique of Hess's views helped him to become aware of it.

6

Another step toward transcending sectarianism in practice took the form of an extremely important political piece. The "Blum Theses", which were written in 1929 and almost unanimously rejected by the Hungarian party at that time, for the first time expressed the necessity of a popular front policy in a new situation. For the first time, someone reached back to the actual core of Lenin's conception of 1905. Here the question of the possibilities of compromise came to the foreground so much so that Lukács transcended his former conception, which had tended to consider questions of tactics and strategy

solely in terms of 'compromise versus non-compromise'. (This is so in spite of some sectarian traces that Lukács himself spoke of at the debate on the "Blum Theses" in the Institute of Party History in 1956.)

The alliance with certain bourgeois strata against monopoly capitalist groups and the leading role of the working class in this alliance were not simply a matter of tactics, but also a question of strategy. But the possibility of theoretical compromise, as Lukács clearly saw, would, henceforward, mean opportunism. This meant, in other words, that where final objectives were concerned, there was no place for compromise. Lukács was undoubtedly right when he stated that such a popular front cooperation in a whole phase of conflicts, as was proven by Dimitrov at the seventh congress of the Communist International, was of a strategic character and not merely a question of tactics. As long as this antifascist war, and later the fight for peace against the most reactionary strata of monopoly capital remained a pressing concern, this strategic phase was imperative.

This view of strategic alliance, which entailed a definite repudiation of sectarian messianism, was of immense significance. This was the true sense of the "Blum Theses" and the debate about them. It was not by chance that Révai, at the time of the Lukács debate in 1949, returned to this question. In 1949 Révai, along with the majority of the party leadership, concluded that the compromises of the united front that had existed from the beginnings of the forties to 1948, were entirely of a tactical nature. In reality, these compromises meant strategic alliance because they affected the whole period of antifascist struggle. The essence of this alliance was the establishment of unity in the fight against monopoly capital and the remnants of feudalism. Herein lay the true importance of the popular front. Thus, the united front aimed at solving the overall problems of a period, and not only topical, partial questions. Here I cannot touch upon the question of how this class alliance was transformed after the victory of the popular front under the leadership of the party, after breaking the rule of monopoly capital.

The question was, in what respect and to what extent it should have been necessary to maintain or transform this class alliance under such circumstances. While this question can be debated, it is certain that the later occurrences threw a new light on the seminal importance of the "Blum Theses" even if this problem was expounded in them only inconsistently. The replacement of compromises by positing the problem of a strategic period later prompted Lukács to take up a position on realism on this basis. It was on this basis that he repudiated decadence and the avant-garde. Namely, the alliance with realism corresponded to the new strategic period. (If one is open only to tactical compromise, then one can advocate only socialist realism or a *proletkult*-style avant-garde.) The acceptance of decadence and avant-garde, however, would have meant a compromise on principles. Thus, there evolved the antinomy of evaluating individual artists on a personal or ideological basis. As a token of what has been said before, this anomaly had to be clearly recognized. It was a characteristic feature of revisionism to accept artists simply on the basis of their personal attitude (e.g., Picasso and the expressionists) together with the ideological content of their works. Sectarianism rejected persons and ideology alike, as it rejected realism, too, as a bourgeois tendency, while Lukács, by contrast, again found—if not faultlessly in every instance—that *tertium datur*.

Looking Ahead to the Next Period

Having found the third possibility, Lukács, as both a theoretician and critic, after a long detour returned again to those heights where one could find only Thomas Mann and Béla Bartók in their respective fields of intellectual endeavor. This did not mean that his critical activity was henceforth free of mistakes. Despite all the mistakes, however, the main line of his activity became the most significant accomplishment of both Marxist criticism and critical writings of the age.

Within the limits of the present essay I can only mention what tasks Lukács had to face in the coming period. First of all, he had to take sides within the working-class movement concerning avant-garde trends, new techniques, and portrayal. As regards his criticism of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers, the *proletkult*, and the avant-garde tendencies in German literature, Lukács insisted on his basic views without defending every one of his judgments. Already in his letters to Anna Seghers (1938—39)³⁴ there had emerged the idea that some details might escape his attention when he was concerned with clarifying fundamental questions. That does not alter the fact that, with his methodology, Lukács worked out an exact and highly valuable critical viewpoint in the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

By means of a quotation from the preface to the new edition of *Geschichte der neueren deutschen Literatur* I would now like to illustrate the fact that Lukács's appraisals cannot be presented unhistorically as valuations of the oeuvre of a given writer:

Endlich und vor allem muss ich auf Brecht eingehen. Zu seiner Produktion am Anfang der dreissiger Jahre sowie zu seinen Theorien stand ich ablehnend. Das spiegelt sich in diesem Buche. Erst als ich nach meiner Heimkehr mit Stücken wie 'Der gute Mensch von Sezuan', 'Mutter Courage' usw. bekannt wurde, änderte sich meine Anschauung von Grund aus. Ich wollte immer wieder über die dabei auftauchenden Probleme einen gründlichen Essay schreiben; die Umstände gestatten es nicht; nur in freundschaftlichen Privatgesprächen mit Brecht selbst habe ich diese Anschauungen zum Ausdruck gebracht.³⁵

Then Lukács mentions that in the English edition of *Wider den missverstandenen Realismus* he partly rectified his previous omission and treated Brecht, together with O'Neill, Thomas Wolfe, and Elsa Durante, as one of the great realists of the twentieth century, stressing the socialist tendency of this realism.

There is no denying the fact that Lukács's critical activities in the thirties cannot be analyzed independently of the pressing concerns of the period. Most assuredly, a long list of indictments could be compiled against Lukács because he did not deal with some important artists of the period (Kaiser, Munch, Barlach), and a certain one-sidedness of his polemics, however justifiable it was, played a role in his failure to deal profoundly with such works which were conceived in the spirit of, but, at the same time, pointed beyond, the horizons of expressionism. In the final analysis, however, these shortcomings do not in the least diminish the magnitude of Lukács's accomplishment. A Hungarian Marxist philosopher managed to overcome diverse contradictions and attain new theoretical heights, whose significance proved to be enormous, and, what is more, is bound to prove more important for the future.

(Translated by József Kovács)

Notes

- ¹ *The Theory of the Novel* first appeared in German as "Theorie des Romans — Ein geschichtsphilosophischer Versuch über die Formen der grossen Epik", in the *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kulturwissenschaft* in 1916, and later in book form, published by P. Cassirer. Quotations follow the English edition, trans. by A. Bostock (London: 1971). This edition contains the critical preface that Lukács wrote in 1962.
- ² Miklós Almqvist: "Lessing drámai epilógusa: A Bölcs Náhán" [The dramatic epilogue of Lessing: Nathan the Wise], *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle* (1957) No. 1.
- ³ György Lukács: *A lélek és a formák* [The Soul and the Forms] (Budapest: 1910).
- ⁴ See János Horváth: *Irodalmunk és közönsége Aranytól Adyig* [Our Literature and Its Public from Arany to Ady] (Budapest: n. d.).
- ⁵ György Lukács: *Esztétikai kultúra* [Aesthetic Culture] (Budapest: 1913), p. 46.
- ⁶ Lukács: *The Theory of the Novel*, p. 12.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 153.
- ⁹ János Arany, in his poem "Ősszel" [In the autumn], written in the 1850s, contrasted Homer with Ossian.
- ¹⁰ Lukács: *The Theory of the Novel*, p. 19.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 123—4.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 20—1.
- ¹³ Georg Lukács: "Gottfried Keller" (1939), in his *Deutsche Literatur in zwei Jahrhunderten* (Neuwied: 1964).
- ¹⁴ György Lukács: *Balázs Béla és akiknek nem kell* [Béla Balázs and Those Who Want None of Him] (Budapest: 1918).
- ¹⁵ Georg Lukács: "Mein Weg zu Marx", in his *Marxismus und Stalinismus* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: 1970).
- ¹⁶ Georg Lukács: "Tactics and Ethics", in his *Political Writings 1919—1929*, trans. by M. McCoolan (London: 1972).
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- ²⁰ Georg Lukács: "Zur Frage der Bildungsarbeit", *Jugend-Internationale* (Berlin) (March, 1921).
- ²¹ Georg Lukács: "Spontaneity of the Masses, Activity of the Party", in his *Political Writings 1919—1929*.
- ²² See also, e.g., Georg Lukács: "N. Bukharin: Historical Materialism", in his *Political Writings 1919—1929*—also as "Technology and Social Relations", in his *Marxism and Human Liberation*, trans. by L. Baxandall, et. al. (New York: 1973).
- ²³ Georg Lukács: *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. by R. Livingstone (London: 1971).
- ²⁴ The English-language book is a shortened version of his study, "Marxismus und Philosophie", *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* (Leipzig) (1925) No. 1.
- ²⁵ Lukács: *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 51.
- ²⁶ Georg Mende: *Studien über Existenzphilosophie* (Berlin: 1956). p. 155.
- ²⁷ József Révai: "Das Problem der Taktik", *Kommunismus* (Vienna) (1920) No. 46.
- ²⁸ Lukács: *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 216.
- ²⁹ Georg Lukács: *Lenin*, trans. by N. Jacobs (London: 1974).
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 73—4, 80.
- ³² Georg Lukács: "Moses Hess and the Problems of Idealist Dialectics", in his *Political Writings 1919—1929*.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 197.
- ³⁴ The letters appeared in *Probleme des Realismus* (Berlin: 1955) pp. 240—70.
- ³⁵ Georg Lukács: *Skizze einer Geschichte der neueren deutschen Literatur* (Neuwied am Rhein: 1964) p. 6.

Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* in the Debates of the 1920s

(On the Bolshevik Reception
of the Early Marxism of György Lukács)

by

Tamás Krausz and Miklós Mesterházi

The story of the way in which Lukács's early Marxist works were received in the twenties is of more than mere philological interest.¹ It is both a part and reflection of the theoretical development that internalized the 1917 October Revolution in Russia, and of the contemporary alternatives and milestones in the application of Marxism. It takes world historical dimensions—it is a history of ideas that involves thoughts of practical concerns.

The ideas that grew out of the October Revolution were neither dull nor homogeneous, but an intellectual ferment signaling and mirroring alternative paths of development. This ferment must be seen as the source of modern Marxist thought, as a phenomenon in the history of ideas that reflects the point at which Marxism became a 'practical power', for the understanding and revaluation of which we need a historical view of the mediations that have led to the present.

The trend which, during the period under examination, was mostly associated with Lukács's name—one of his critics mistakenly called even Karl Korsch a Lukács disciple—by now has got rid of the appearance of the 'dead past'. Although Lukács himself once referred to the early twenties as an "entirely closed" period and to his own writings of the time as mere documents of only historical interest,² these ideas are alive. While the historical movements of the politics of the period had run their course, Lukács's philosophical endeavors (and like-minded works) have enriched Marxist theory in such lasting ways that their true significance is becoming clear only retrospectively. The *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács's main work of this period, constitutes the philosophical expression of a new era in world history, the period of the October revolution. In this work, the fundamental issues and key problems of Marxism and the decisive choices of the age—our whole 'utopian concerns'—were formulated. When today's Marxist trends investigate their historical roots, they unavoidably confront this book and its age.

Not only the fate of *History and Class Consciousness*, a collection of Lukács's writings from the twenties can be considered representative of the period, but so can Lukács's intellectual development as a whole. This development, within which the ideas of *History and Class Consciousness* were concretized, changed (and then rejected), reflects the possibilities and dilemmas faced by revolutionary thought in connection with the third, fifth, and sixth congresses of the Comintern, which found itself in the process of analyzing the post-revolutionary development, its reality and possibilities. Further-

more, it reflects the ways (or one type of way) in which the dilemmas and alternatives could be—or could not be—theoretically approached. Thus, the history of the reception accorded the early Marxist work of Lukács is illuminating as regards both the author's career and the history of ideas, both in the Marxist and in the wider contexts.

At the end of the sixties, there was a marked growth of interest in Lukács's works of the twenties, and with it resurfaced the problem of the reception accorded these writings at the time of their appearance. Several anthologies were devoted to the contemporaneous reviews and studies discussing *History and Class Consciousness*, republishing and reinterpreting them.³ Our present work differs on a number of points from the usual approaches that we find in those books which, intentionally or otherwise, a priori confronted Lukács with the bolshevik thought which, as reflected in the pronouncements of Zinoviev, Deborin, and others, passed judgment on Lukács's classical Hegelian world of thought in the name of a definitive, 'complete' Russian Marxism. Let us quote, to illustrate this conception, one of the best authorities on the impact of *History and Class Consciousness*, Paul Breines:

History and Class Consciousness offered such a perspective of communism and such a vision of an emancipatory communist revolution, which was in sharp contrast with the *Verapparatisierung*, to use this apt German expression, which was evidenced in the communist movement.⁴

Iring Fetscher is perhaps an even better representative of the tendency toward abstract confrontation because, although he did a great deal to facilitate the rediscovery of *History and Class Consciousness*, his depiction lacks even an analysis of the history of politics:

Die philosophisch bedeutsamen Marx-Interpretationen von Lukács [...] fanden zwar in Intellektuellen-Kreisen grosse Beachtung und haben auf lange Zeit hinaus das Niveau der Diskussion bestimmt, bei den Vertretern der beiden Marxismus-Orthodoxien, der Kautskyschen wie der Leninschen, stiessen sie jedoch auf einhellige Ablehnung [...] Hinter der Ablehnung dieser echt dialektischen Interpretation stand aber—unbewusst—die Ablehnung einer *Denkform*, die ihrem Wesen nach auf Sinndeutung und Verstehen ausgerichtet ist, das zwar durch kollektive Bewusstwerdung hindurch in Aktion umschlagen kann, aber nicht geeignet ist, in Analogie mit dem naturwissenschaftlich-technischen Denken instrumental als *Herrschaftswissen* zu funktionieren.⁵

It is not the task of this study to deal with those aspects where we are in agreement with those who have written on this subject; at any rate, these points will become clear in what follows. We wish, rather, to focus on a methodological problem. Those approaches which see the fate of *History and Class Consciousness* as a confrontation between a 'leftist' ('Western' etc.) philosopher and a 'bureaucratic' movement and base this view on the different traditions underlying Western Marxism and Russian Marxism, derive their seemingly convincing arguments from a deceptive angle, namely, from the retrospective reference of a later, completed and crystallized, historical constellation to the past. Let us note here a few facts that muddle up the seemingly definitive aspects of these explanations.

Lukács's political stance at the time of *History and Class Consciousness* can hardly be considered 'leftist' within the movement. This is indicated not only by the fact that Lukács belonged to the Landler faction of the Hungarian communist party, but also by his minor political writings, which show that he did not take any 'ultra' positions even in the international movement. Let us note only incidentally, running the risk of aphoristic statements, that it is not at all certain that the older Lukács was correct in all details

when presenting a self-portrait in claiming that his own position of the twenties was characterized by a specific contradiction, namely, by the duality of a political realism within the Hungarian party (where it was represented by the Landler faction) and a (messianic) sectarianism concerning the issues of the international movement. The contradictions in his political thinking were in fact more subtle and more burdened by their ramifications. It is also true that, in the twenties, Lukács was an original commentator on events in the international communist movement—his writings on the Italian, German, and other situations fill volumes⁶—and he wrote not only out of a need for funds. Although he did not cease to be a 'foreign-affairs commentator' of the communist papers, his writings in this area lost their initial liveliness. (It is only a superficial sign, but perhaps not without significance, that, increasingly, he did not sign his articles with his full name.)

There is an even more important document to refute the allegations of Lukács's leftism, and that is through recourse to the political philosophy of *History and Class Consciousness*. But before outlining Lukács's political philosophy, which we shall discuss below, let us linger further over the facts that muddle up the picture suggested by the various aforementioned approaches. Lukács was only a minor figure at the fifth Comintern congress, where Zinoviev, in his speech on the activities of the organization, attacked Lukács, as well as Korsch and Graziadei-Bordiga, calling them 'professors' who delute Marxism with revisionist views, and, in fact, charging them with deviationism. This became clear from the course of the congress, where Karl Korsch was the main target, and not so much in his capacity as a theoretician, but more so as the editor of *Die Internationale*. This is not beside the point because it allows us to suppose that Zinoviev was perhaps thinking not so much of the theoretical content of Lukács's book as of the failures and factional infighting plaguing the German communist party. (And in conjunction with this, he may well have had the factionalism of the Hungarian party in mind, too. At any rate, Zinoviev did not pass up the chance to mention that Rudas, who had criticized Lukács, had chosen the politically correct path when he broke with the Landler faction.)⁷ Lest a theoretical standpoint be carelessly ordered to a political position, it is worthwhile remembering that, at the congress, not only Ruth Fischer (whose position hardly differed from Zinoviev's), but also August Thalheimer, who had long criticized Korsch on theoretical grounds, spoke in defense of Korsch. (It is, at any rate, questionable on just what grounds Korsch may be seen as a 'leftist', since at that time he was still considered the 'official' ideologue of the opposition grouped around Ruth Fischer, and their conflict became an open one only in 1925—26, which was followed by Korsch's expulsion.)

Furthermore, those representing bolshevik ideology welcomed both Lukács and Korsch. Korsch's *Marxism and Philosophy* was published and went into a second edition, even though the latter carried a critical foreword by one of the translators, G. Bammel.⁸ Bammel's criticism was, however, quite mild. As for Lukács, the editors of *Vestnik Kommunisticheskoy Akademii* distanced themselves from him only when it came to publishing the third part of the chapter on reification from *History and Class Consciousness*, but the qualification was couched in very careful terms.⁹ They continued to publish some shorter works by Lukács. His pamphlet, *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thoughts*, met with a more or less understanding critic in the person of Bammel. Even after the critical outburst directed against him, Lukács continued to publish in the leading Soviet philosophical journals, and by no means restricting himself to 'safe' pieces. For example, he published an early version of the Lassalle study and his essay on Moses

Hess—both of them writings that even the old Lukács himself saw as endeavors to concretize the views of *History and Class Consciousness*.¹⁰ In other words, however unified and determined the bolshevik criticism of Lukács may seem if we consider only the Debordin and Rudas type of writings—this criticism in fact by no means meant the ostracism of Lukács the theoretician.

Finally, it must be noted that, while it would have been easy to attack Lukács on the grounds of political mistakes—given that it was practice of the day to believe that theoretical errors were necessarily explained by political mistakes ‘ordered to’ the former—only Nicolai Karev and Thalheimer tried to pin a political offense on Lukács, misinterpreting some of the passages of the Lenin essay. (Incidentally, as regards the aforementioned practice, Korsch himself acted accordingly in his own conflict with Thalheimer, only to fall victim to the same erroneous linkage later on. As for Thalheimer’s attack on Lukács, he was more or less obliged to undertake that role by the factional fights in the German party.) We shall have occasion to return to the quasi-theoretical political classification rendered by László Rudas concerning Lukács. In any case, in his charge of voluntarism leveled at Lukács, Rudas did not provide proof as to what political events and decisions indicated the validity of such a charge. In this context, with regard to the aforementioned methodological characteristic of that time, the absence of such a proof may be seen as strongly indicating that Lukács was not a ‘deviationist’—regardless of how we may interpret this fact today.

If we wish to see clearly in this welter of facts, we have to reject those explanations that see the reception accorded Lukács by the bolsheviks, regardless of its particular approach, merely as a conflict between doctrines and ‘traditions’, just as we must reject those that resort to ahistorical schemes. Lukács’s writings represent the philosophy of the 1917 October revolution in Russia, expressing the force of actualization with which the revolution approached the Marxian thought. The fact that the bolshevik reception of Lukács turned negative was due not to some political ‘deviation’ on his part, or to any theoretical ‘error’, but to a peculiarity of his attitude, which was left unstated by his critics and only circumscribed ideologically, namely, its belatedness. By 1924, Lukács’s works in question were considered ‘backward looking’, as they discussed the revolution instead of looking ahead to the post-revolutionary era. In other words, his attitude was considered untimely in the milieu that approached the ‘Leninist heritage’ from the point of view of the ideological requirements of the post-revolutionary era. (We have deliberately used the expression ‘untimely’, which is especially ambiguous here.) It was this untimeliness that came to be viewed as a theoretical ‘mistake’ within the process of the unfolding reinterpretation of the Marxist-Leninist legacy, which process finally gave rise to its own ideological formulae. Let us add, in order to avoid any misunderstandings, that the point is not that Lukács’s theoretical mistakes—his ‘utopianism’, which was inspired by the revolution—came into conflict with post-revolutionary realism. Lukács’s 1923 interpretation of Marx can hardly be reduced to a utopia (to a mere document of messianic sectarianism) without doing substantial violence to its theoretical content, and it is also questionable just to what extent we may consider ‘realist’—as a theory—what eventually became the dominant doctrine of dialectical and historical materialism. At the time it was not a case of revolutionary thinking versus bureaucratic attitude: the participants had no way of knowing yet what would emerge from the cocoon of ‘intuitive materialism’, which sometimes exhibited naive reasoning, or how Marx’s somewhat ‘uncritically positivistic’ systematization would turn into *Legitimationswissenschaft*, just as those mediating mechanisms that brought this

particular transformation about were still absent in reality. And it goes without saying that we certainly do not mean to imply in any way that in those times both positions were equally correct. A Marx interpretation inspired by the promise held out by revolution came to be confronted by what the revolution itself could grasp of its own achievement, via largely ad hoc means and under the impact of the moment's *Tagesforderungen*.

It is also not the case that Lukács simply came into conflict with an unavoidable tradition of the sort that was 'predestined' to become bureaucratized, etc. and not just because, as one of Merleau-Ponty's writings shows, the language of even this tradition could also be spoken in an 'emancipatory' style.¹¹ It is a fact that, in *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács came into conflict with the tradition that many of the bolshevik ideologues identified with. In his review of the book, József Révai dealt openly and in detail with Lukács's deviation from Plekhanovite 'orthodoxy'. (It is interesting that Lukács, in his book, sharply criticized both the revisionist and the orthodox theoreticians of the German social democrats, but spoke of Plekhanov only approvingly.) But a tradition does not simply exist, it is the result of a creative process. Korsch, who, in his *Antikritik*, was not exactly impartial in voicing his disagreements with the Soviet-Russian trend of the development of the Marxist theory, also referred to the phenomenon when a tradition is being created, when—factually quite correctly—he called attention to the fact that *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* was originally a polemical essay, whereas by that time it was being treated as the *chef-d'oeuvre* of the "philosopher Lenin".¹² Regardless of how the Debordin and Rudas type of argumentation presented the chief theoretical elements of 'dialectical and historical materialism' as a full-blown doctrine, it was only around 1930—and then without Debordin—that it became 'THE' Marxist-Leninist philosophy with binding force. The process that lasted from the early 1920s to the 1930s should be characterized as the divergence of theory and practice. This split meant that, as far as theory was concerned, Marxist and Leninist thinking became a discipline, losing the 'emancipatory' elements from its 'philosophy'; its method, which originally prescribed as a primary methodological dictum a relation to history in 'intimate terms' (to borrow Lukács's expression from his *History and Class Consciousness*) became 'generalized', became a formal means of thinking, a technique of thinking of such a theory which was shaped—partly unconsciously—by needs to attain legitimacy.¹³

Facts

In connection with the facts that 'muddle up' things, we have had to refer to certain propositions that we shall illustrate only later on; for the time being, let us discuss further the empirical material of the reviews and studies written in conjunction with *History and Class Consciousness*.

These reviews and studies on Lukács's book were written in the 1920s, and ceased as if on cue at the close of the decade. Almost as a symbol of the by then hardened 'bad division of labor' in Marxism, two retrospective writings reflect on Lukács's book, as 'farewell works': Walter Benjamin's piece¹⁴ and L. Mankovski's study,¹⁵ in which he repeated the arguments expounded by Rudas, Debordin, and others in the course of 1924. As we have already mentioned, the fate of Lukács's book is representative.

When *History and Class Consciousness* first appeared in 1923, there was a mostly favorable response. Indeed, even before the publication of that work, Béla Fogarasi,

who had even earlier belonged to Lukács's inner circle and who later played a more significant role as an ideologue in the German party, began to popularize Lukács's interpretation of Marx in his 1922 writing entitled *Bevezetés a marxizmus filozófiájába* [Introduction to Marxist Philosophy]. Fogarasi wrote this for people unversed in Marxism, and dealt with all the salient aspects of Lukács's interpretation of Marxian orthodoxy.

Like Lukács's work, Fogarasi's compendium, too, focuses on the issue of the historicity of Marxist dialectic and he, too, closes his historico-philosophical construction with the unity of 'theory' and 'practice' and the identity of subject and object. (In this latter regard, Fogarasi perhaps exercised more caution than Lukács, unwittingly illustrating Nicolai Hartmann's aphorism to the effect that epigons are 'smarter' than their masters.) What is especially noteworthy is that Fogarasi's pamphlet is sharply and tentatively opposed to positivism, in contrast to Bukharin's *Historical Materialism* another Marxist manual issued around the same time, and one that became extremely popular. As Fogarasi wrote in his preface:

The purpose that this study wishes to serve is to avoid any popularizing and vulgar mode of discussion in the wrong sense, which strips the thought of its original form, and to make the philosophical spirit of Marxism generally comprehensible, in a language readily accessible to people who like to think but lack the necessary specialized knowledge.¹⁶

József Révai was another member of Lukács's inner circle to state his views. Commentators' opinions differ in their assessment of his much-discussed review. Some felt that Révai only made explicit, 'blurted out', so to speak, the secret utopianism of Lukács's Hegelian Marxism. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, for his part, charged that, in Révai's hands, Lukács's rational and lucid interpretation of Marx was debased into mysticism. The passage in Révai's review where he sought to extend Lukács's line of thought, but perhaps only succeeded in distorting it, runs as follows:

M[arx] und mit ihm L[ukács] werfen H[egel] vor, dass bei ihm das Denken nur nachträglich erscheint, nur Zuschauer des Prozesses ist und, ausserhalb der Geschichte, sich ihr gegenüber nur rein kontemplativ verhält. Mir scheint dieser Vorwurf Hegel gegenüber teilweise ungerecht, denn es wird ihm eine Kantische Bedeutung der Kontemplation unterschoben. Die Kontemplation im Kantischen Sinn würde eine inmitten des Prozesses vor sich gehende bedeuten, wobei die Kontemplation—im Sinne L[ukács]s—nur die 'Naturgesetzlichkeit' des Prozesses, die Unerkennbarkeit seiner Totalität, seiner Richtung und Notwendigkeit bedeuten würde. Bei H[egel] handelt es sich aber nicht um Kontemplation inmitten eines unbegreifbaren und unbegriffenen Prozesses, sondern um die Kontemplation über einen vollendeten Prozess, dessen Sinn bereits sichtbar geworden ist. Diesen Gesichtspunkt der so aufgefassten Nachträglichkeit muss auch der Marxismus beibehalten, er ist sogar die Voraussetzung seiner Geschichtsphilosophie. Das Wesen dieser letzteren ist die Erkenntnis des 'Reiches der Notwendigkeit' gegenüber dem 'Reiche der Freiheit', wobei die Erkenntnis des zu dem Freiheitsreiche dialektisch hinführenden Notwendigkeitsreiches nur auf Grund seines Beendet-seins, seines Abschlusses durch das Proletariat, durch den Kommunismus, möglich geworden ist [...].

Das Proletariat, das durch seine eigene Unmenschlichkeit das Nicht-Sein des Menschen aller Klassengesellschaften begriffen hat, setzt doch irgendwelchen 'seienden' Menschen, d.h. irgendwelchen bloss negativ bestimmten Menschen voraus, zu dessen 'Natur' das Beherrschtsein durch gesellschaftliche Naturgesetze nicht gehört, dessen Verwirklichung durch das Proletariat das Ziel des Geschichtsprozesses ist, der also als blosses Subjekt-Korrelat dem Geschichtsprozess als ihm transzendent innewohnend zugeordnet werden muss. Der 'Mensch', nicht der Feuerbachsche, sondern der durch das Proletariat zu verwirklichende, ist ebenfalls Begriffsmythologie. Aber eine unvermeidliche Begriffsmythologie [...]. Die Verwandtschaft zwischen H[egel] und M[arx] ist noch grösser, wie in der Einstellung von L[ukács].¹⁷

It may be seen from the above lengthy, although fragmented quote that Merleau-Ponty's sharp rejection of Révai's review is not unjustified—not even when we consider that Révai calls for or approves of the 'conceptual myth' from the point of view of a

rather abstract way of posing the question. It seems that Révai, who was less careful than Lukács when dealing with philosophical trains of thought, and who obviously sought to 'correct' Lukács only in one aspect of the philosophy of historical knowledge, in truth smuggled back the closedness of the historico-philosophical systems into Lukács's thinking that was not one-dimensional at all.

Regardless of how we see this theoretical aspect of what Révai did with Lukács's ideas in his review, there is one point in it, where his reflections influenced the way in which the reception accorded *History and Class Consciousness* developed, and did so in an unfortunate fashion. Révai deserves the credit or the blame for calling attention to the difference between the ways Lukács and Plekhanov (and, further, Engels) interpreted Marx.

Another member of Lukács's circle addressed the question of *History and Class Consciousness*, but only somewhat later—in 1924—and only indirectly. Jenő Landler, who was the leader of the party faction that Lukács also belonged to, reviewed Lukács's pamphlet on Lenin in July, 1924 in the Viennese periodical *Die Rote Fahne*.¹⁸ This was at a time when Deborin had already written his 'anti-Lukács' work, and it was known that Rudas was also preparing to attack *History and Class Consciousness*. Most likely it was no accident that, in his review, the politician Landler focused on the methodological aspects of *Lenin*—the aspects most closely connected with *History and Class Consciousness*. It also cannot be considered an accident that Landler devoted one of his expressly theoretical writings precisely to Lukács: Landler was an internationally recognized politician, and he sought to defend Lukács. The Viennese *Die Rote Fahne*, unlike its sister publication in Berlin, did not present any signs of the flood of criticism directed at Lukács starting in the summer of 1924.

It was only after Korsch had finished his *Marxism and Philosophy* that he could express his agreement with Lukács, in his "Ein Nachwort statt Vorwort".¹⁹ The literature on Korsch wryly notes that Lukács never reciprocated this respectful gesture. Korsch rightly considered his own endeavors parallel to Lukács's; for example, he builds up a conception, centered around the decay of philosophy, on the Marxist method, which is highly similar to Lukács's view. (It is not the task of the present work to show where Korsch oversimplified the description of his topic and where this caused him problems as well.)²⁰ Korsch's "Vorwort" mentions that the author intends to deal with *History and Class Consciousness* in greater detail. Apart from minor asides and a review, Korsch got around to this plan only in 1929–30, in his *Antikritik*, where he replied to his bolshevik-orthodox critics and again raised the problem of 'Marxism and philosophy'. Surprisingly, Korsch, too objected to Lukács's conception of the dialectic of nature and to his criticism of Engels, just like Deborin or Rudas (but, of course, not in the same way). However, it was not the difference in the way the two philosophers saw the 'Engels question' that kept Lukács from reciprocating Korsch's positive gesture, but simply the lack of time. While Korsch was embroiled in the factional struggles of the German Communist Party—in 1924 at Ruth Fischer's side, and then against her—Lukács, who earlier had himself been involved in the internal affairs of the German party several times, for example, in the 'March action', or at the time of Paul Levi's expulsion, was no longer able to support any of the factions.²¹ It was hardly possible that he should support Korsch, given that, in those times, agreement on a given theoretical issue could not have been divorced from political accord. Another outstanding philosopher joined the debate in 1923: Ernst Bloch. We shall return to a discussion of certain conclusions of his excellent study, *Aktualität und Utopie*, below.²²

It may be said that in the year of its publication, the reception accorded *History and Class Consciousness*—aside from Hermann Duncker's critique, which was published in the Berlin *Die Rote Fahne* and is not discussed here²³—was on the whole positive. This holds for its bolshevik reception as well, since, as mentioned previously, the principal study from the book was also published in Russian. It was only in the summer of 1924, before the fifth Comintern congress, that the bolshevik ideologues launched their 'militant materialist' critiques (which, in fact, were intuitive materialist critiques). It was at that time when Debordin published his "Georg Lukács i ego kritika marksizma",²⁴ which was soon translated into German. It was followed by many other writings similar in tone and merely expanding on Debordin's line of argument. Let us take stock of their arguments on the basis of Rudas's critique of Lukács. His series of articles adds nothing to Debordin's much more economically written critique.²⁵ It was not Rudas's aim to contribute anything new, and this was not on account of his lacking any individual philosophical vein—that being another matter—but, rather, due to the general nature of this genre. Rudas was a firm believer in the repetition of fundamental tenets, a penchant that coincided with the principles of this type of political writing of the age. At any rate, Rudas took it upon himself to write a detailed critique of the refutations of *History and Class Consciousness*. Others, such as I. Luppöl,²⁶ J. Sten,²⁷ N. Karev,²⁸ and I. Vainstein,²⁹ only applied Debordin's arguments to various details of the debate, or, relying on them as established and irrefutable truths, simply condemned Lukács in general. (According to one view, Debordin's piece itself relied on Révai's review of *History and Class Consciousness*, rather than on the Lukács work itself.)³⁰

Rudas's "Orthodox marxizmus" [Orthodox Marxism] bears the date June 1, 1924. This puts it among the series of articles written more or less as contributions to the ideological debates of the fifth Comintern congress. Like Debordin's article, this, too deals with the opening study of *History and Class Consciousness*, entitled "What is Orthodox Marxism?", and like Debordin, Rudas also takes exception to Lukács's disagreement with Engels. Rudas's second article, "Lukács osztálytudat-elmélete" [Lukács's theory of class consciousness], summarizes his criticism as follows:

In my first article I was exclusively concerned with comrade Lukács's polemic with Engels. I did so not only because this polemic constitutes a full-blown issue, but also because it best places in sharp focus every basic tendency of Lukács's philosophy. I feel I can justifiably claim that the analysis I provided of Lukács's polemic with Engels clearly showed that

- (1) this polemic is totally doomed to failure;
- (2) it is based on errors in logic and in terms of Marxist thinking, which are most surprising when coming from a philosopher and Marxist of Lukács's caliber;
- (3) these errors, which may safely be called primitive, were only possible because comrade L., who has been an *idealist-agnostic* from the very outset, allows his own bias to influence his reading of Marx and Engels, viewing them through the lenses of *bourgeois philosophy*, which leads to his confusing even the most simple things in the world;
- (4) he is not only an idealist, but an inconsistent idealist at that.³¹

The main aspects of Rudas's argumentation may be summed up as follows. Lukács, to quote Rudas,

simply denies what everyone with even just a superficial acquaintance with the writings of Marx and Engels knows, namely, that Marx and Engels called their theory natural scientific and did not divorce nature and society from each other [...] Society is not *simply* nature: natural laws undergo a dialectical change in society, as a result of human *activity*, and in the course of this activity something *new* and *different* comes into being in society, new laws and new regularities. Thus, for example, individuals merge into classes, from

the animal world's Darwinian 'struggle for life' we reached class struggles, from 'unconscious and spontaneous' nature we rose to human consciousness and goals, etc. (cf. Marx's letter to Kugelmann). But this same thing occurs in the nature of the 'unconscious and spontaneous'! Physical phenomena turn into chemical, then biological ones, and those in turn into social characteristics. Nature is not a deity with different laws hidden in its pockets and which, like a magician, to the wonder and edification of the world, pulls out one or another regularity and applies it to an unsuspecting world. There is only one lawlikeness (existing in both nature and society), and that is *dialectics*, and everything that occurs in the world is subject to the laws of dialectics.³²

Thus, when Lukács regards history as the specific field of Marxist dialectic, he is culpable of dualism. 'Nice. Although every great philosopher was monist, this does not prove them right. According to Lukács, the world is dualistic.' However, if we are to assign such a prominent role to history, the basis of its peculiarity can be nothing other than man; this thought, however, takes Lukács right into the error of subjective idealism; according to Lukács, writes Rudas,

dialectics is a human creation [...] Because man is the novel element that has been added in society to nature. The new that is posited against nature in the laws of society is itself the product of this new element, namely, of man, as otherwise he should have dropped from the sky. In other words, dialectics is either a natural law, or one issuing from a deity, or from man. Thus, dialectics is a human creation, dialectics is the lawlikeness of man. If there were no people, there would be no dialectics.

In the final analysis, this means that *dialectics is not an objective law independent of man, but the subjective lawlikeness of man*.

And that is what I call, as it is generally called, *subjective idealism*.³³

Furthermore, Lukács's idealism is 'at the same time agnosticism, too', in that Lukács does not include all forms of practice, including its alienated forms, in the concept of praxis.

It is not our aim here to follow all the twists and turns in Rudas's line of thought. Nor would that be an easy undertaking, as it is a part of his style to quote frequently and to make sarcastic comments, as well as to dissect words stubbornly and to bring different quotes into parallel in a montage-like manner. Following these and unraveling them would entail a longer article than the originals themselves. We are not about to claim that these articles are totally incorrect in every respect and totally devoid of a sense of wit, but even so and even though at times Rudas does state certain correct theses (however flatly), the truth remains that, essentially speaking, he did not have a clue as to what *History and Class Consciousness* was all about.

Rudas's thinking was based on the simplest of natural scientific principles and remained within the bounds of an extreme naturalism that was practically a caricature. His scientism accorded a clearly primary, although dubious position to dialectics, regarding it as an overall, universal law:

it is as clear as day that Engels, when he discusses dialectics in his *Anti-Dühring*, speaks about it as a universal law, listing its characteristics as being equally valid in nature and society, in existence and in thinking, and not only in those peculiar forms that dialectics assumes in society. Only here do we find an interaction between subject and object. And only in social dialectic can we speak about it as a special case, however undeniably important it is.³⁴

This was Rudas's interpretation of Engels. In this interpretation, dialectics loses its explanatory and exegetic value intended for it by the surpassed Hegel, as it is purged of all content and only a logical skeleton remains, a formal technique of thinking, which,

in Rudas's presentation, is the pale reflection of an unconscious metaphysics. This heuristic loss of values, which is the result of precisely this scientistic 'mania for generality', is the lesser problem. The larger issue is that it had obviously never even occurred to Rudas that, with this methodological 'perfection' of dialectics, he managed to get away from the Marxian specificity of the application of dialectics, namely, from historicity. We shall return below to how energetically Lukács cautioned against segmenting Marxist-Leninist thought into 'disciplines'. Rudas (or, rather, the trend that he was a representative of) executed precisely this 'systemization' of dialectics, that is, made it devoid of content.

Rudas confronts Lukács with a few 'simple' world-view and epistemological theses. At the close of his second article, he sighs that 'it is a truly Sisyphean task to have to repeat the basic tenets of Marxism endlessly.' Perhaps he should not have shouldered this burden, which proved less than fruitful. In the course of reducing everything to the level of a materialist primer, Rudas was no longer arguing with Lukács's book. Indeed, he was not even arguing with Lukács himself. The Rudas articles drew parallels between Lukács and almost every philosophical trend and philosopher of the period, from Rickert to Bogdanov (in order to expose him), and about the only person with whom Rudas did not compare Lukács was Lukács himself. This reduction of the debate to others and other theoretical problems characterized not only the Rudas criticism of Lukács's 'methodological orthodoxy'. In Lukács's concept of 'adjunctive class consciousness', which is not without its problematic features—but not where Rudas was probing—Rudas claimed to have uncovered nothing less than religious mysticism. Lukács, wrote Rudas,

in certain parts of his book writes about the necessary conceptual mythology of bourgeois sociologists, fails to heed his own warning and what we find in connection with his concept of class consciousness and on practically every page of the book is nothing less than conceptual mythology. This conceptual mythology is unavoidable with idealist presuppositions, since the whole of idealism is nothing but conceptual mythology and by no means accidentally related to religion.³⁵

The chapter on reification, which is dealt with in Rudas's third article (hitherto published only in Russian), is also assailed for its 'primitive errors in logic and Marxism'. Rudas wrote that

the 'fetish' theory of commodity, which comrade L. discusses under 'reification', became distorted to the point of being totally lacking in *any objective truth*. The whole of today's science, mathematics, the natural sciences, and by all indications Marxism itself, are the products of 'reification'; however, in this way we have lost all means of ascertaining the *objectivity* of a truth, etc., etc.³⁶

Although for reasons of space we ourselves had to simplify the theoretical arguments that Rudas presented in his critique of Lukács, it should nevertheless be clear that, as a result of Rudas's theoretical scope (or lack thereof), his articles do not constitute a refutation, but only a misunderstanding of Lukács and nothing more. What is not a misunderstanding and what cannot be mistaken is that Rudas assumed the role of the defender of the ideological purity of the party.

What in itself is not a good sign is when a writer or thinker is eclectic. This always reveals that the person in question is either the representative of a yet immature class, or that of an intermediary stratum between mature, decisively thinking classes [...] I emphasize this point if only because in my article I wish to show that Lukács is eclectic not only in his idealism, but also that his theories in important respects contain certain elements borrowed from bourgeois philosophers and sociologists, but *without the premises and especially*

consequences which in the case of the bourgeois thinkers make these concepts or theories comprehensible and without which these elements distort Marxism undigested and as an alien body.³⁷

The pathos of his defence of the purity of the party is indicated not so much by the content of his argumentation as by its form: his debater's attitude.

The emphasis in the character of a communist debater always falls on his political choice. In the name of his political commitment, he seeks to smash his opponents. The commitment of the Rudas articles is to the post-revolutionary party, in defense of the consolidation, against the voluntarist Lukács.

Let us compare how Lenin and Lukács see the transitional period: for Lukács it is 'only' a moment, while for Lenin it is a 'long-lasting thing'. Let us compare what Lukács and Lenin consider necessary for the transition from capitalism to communism, the 'realm of freedom': Lukács, 'only' the conscious will of the proletariat, while Lenin, *only* 'the seven-league step to come in the development of the productive forces'. Let us compare where Lenin and Lukács see the driving forces of all this: Lukács, 'only' in consciousness, while Lenin, *only* in the 'material conditions of large-scale capitalist production' [...]

After all, everything in the world is just a question of consciousness, or, rather, everything can be called that or reinterpreted in that way. Precisely because in the case of man, consciousness is the necessary transit for everything that is material, everything can be conceived of as the content of human consciousness. This is like saying that everything can be dissolved in the 'psyche'. The machines, raw materials, the capitalists are just ideas I have, they exist only in my mind. Undoubtedly, anyone who sees things this way—and comrade Lukács does!—is an idealist philosopher and, to use Engels's expression, a bookworm. And, if on top of it all, he is also a voluntarist, then for him everything really is 'just' a matter of 'conscious will'.³⁸

The charge of voluntarism with which Rudas ingeniously 'retouched' the image of Lukács revising Marx from the 'left'—as it appeared, albeit only for a moment, at the fifth Comintern congress—was again a misunderstanding. Nevertheless, it was not totally without justification that Rudas came to regard himself as the philosopher of the post-revolutionary era. Or, rather, could have seen himself as such had he posed the question in that light, but then his entire means of approach would have been different. The pendant of this misunderstood 'adjunctive' self-evaluation is the misunderstood lateness of *History and Class Consciousness*, to which we shall return below.

Detecting philosophical influences alien to Marxism, revealing 'primitive errors in logic and Marxism', and tracing these to the opponent's dubious philosophical class fetters—these are the characteristics of Rudas's line of argument or gestures used against Lukács. These constitute and are the sum total of the attitude of the (classical type of) communist debater motivated by the pathos of theoretical purity. Let us add, at the risk of getting ahead of ourselves here, that this combative attitude was in line with the ideological and political endeavors of the fifth Comintern congress, that is, the endeavor to bolshevize the communist parties, but as yet Rudas's philosophic reasoning did not represent any sort of official philosophy of the movement. And, of course, neither was it an adequate 'post-revolutionary' philosophy.

However dominant the tone and method represented by Rudas's arguments became in the circle of bolshevik-communist criticisms of Lukács, Marxist analyses agreeing with *History and Class Consciousness* did not cease in 1924. As mentioned previously, Korsch wrote repeatedly and favorably of Lukács's treatment of Marxian dialectic,³⁹ and Gustav Mayer, the respected biographer of Lassalle and Engels, wrote appreciatively of him, too.⁴⁰ Still, increasingly it was only bourgeois thinkers who expressed their esteem for this work and, of course, at the same time, gave voice to their regrets that Lukács's broad philosophical erudition and brilliant mind had been forced within the confines of an untenable Hegelian and naively uncritical system of ideas. (Among these

we may mention Sombart, Marck, Paul Eppstein, *et al.*) It was Marcuse who, at the close of the decade, again mentioned Lukács and his *History and Class Consciousness*, pointing out what other outstanding members of the Frankfurt School had left unsaid, namely, that Lukács's 1923 works had greatly influenced the Frankfurt philosophers. (Bloch and his *Geist der Utopie* have also been little mentioned, as one of the antecedents of the school.) The thoughts of *History and Class Consciousness* were present at the great intellectual event of the end of the twenties and early thirties, the discovery of the young Marx, the second attempt at reconstructing the 'true' Marx. It seems that Lukács was less than pleased.⁴¹ Despite this first renaissance of *History and Class Consciousness*, the judgment passed on the book by the movement as the decade passed endorsed Debordin's and Rudas's analyses and bequeathed them to us—so much so, in fact, that Lukács himself adopted their terminology in summarizing the problem of the book and its reception.⁴²

The views expressed by Bloch in 1923 proved prophetic:

Zwar wird es das Buch nicht ganz leicht haben, seine guten Leser zu finden. Die Russen etwa, welche philosophisch handeln, aber denken wie die ungebildeten Hunde, werden sogar einen Abfall darin wittern. Von den Revisionisten unendlich verschieden, sind sie doch in fast gleicher Weise vom philosophischen Erbe abgetrieben, und manche ihrer werden sagen, Marx habe nicht Hegel dazu auf die Füße gestellt, damit Lukács Marx wieder auf den Kopf stelle.⁴³

'What Lukács Really Said'

Lukács's 'single rightful Hegel renaissance' (to quote Bloch) was accompanied by misunderstandings, particularly among his target audience. Let us now seek to reconstruct the original Lukácsian context, following not so much the structure of *History and Class Consciousness* itself (a task that would take us beyond the scope of this study), but concentrating, rather, on the charges formulated in the criticisms. This is perhaps not without interest: the seeds sown by Debordin, Duncker, and Rudas have continued to bear fruit to this day. The problem of Lukács's 'unrevoked ideological baggage', 'primitive epistemological mistakes', and his 'naive-leftist deviations and the resultant theoretical blunders' is still present in the literature on him, wearing readers down with boring ritualistic exercises in criticism.

The political philosophy contained in *History and Class Consciousness* and the *Lenin* pamphlet does not represent the compromise of a 'leftist' or 'Western' philosopher with bolshevik political orthodoxy. Lukács experienced his own becoming a Marxist, the acceptance of Marxism's revolutionary, 'identity philosophical' and historical attitude as an intensive methodological and theoretical redemption, and already at the time of the Hungarian Republic of Councils he understood and accepted the 'Jacobin' character of the proletarian revolution. True, he did retreat for a moment. As he put it much later in his life:

That is a peculiar thing, but this is often how things happen in reality. Although I was quite clear in my mind about the positive role of force in history and although I had never felt at all critical of the Jacobins, it turned out, when the problem of force became pressing and the need arose to decide whether I would further it by my own activities, that theory does not necessarily coincide with practice.⁴⁴

When we have said above that Lukács understood the character of the revolution, it has been a somewhat metaphorical use of the word, as in fact thinking things over

theoretically 'was in need of' the historical experience. Nevertheless, and paradoxically, the somewhat inexperienced grasp was quite acute; Lukács's 1919 article entitled "The Role of Morality in Communist Production" goes deeply into the problems of alienation in the post-revolutionary situation, deeper in fact than his *History and Class Consciousness*, which conceptually and historically was more sophisticated. Lukács did not join the revolution with the prejudices of a philosopher; the so-called 'actionism and moralism' (Jörg Kammler)⁴⁵ of Lukács in 1919 were not so much 'leftovers' from his previous philosophical orientations, but, rather, a reaction to a unique historical moment. In one of his autobiographical pieces, Lukács wrote as follows: "The political content of my activities as people's commissar matched the general trend of Hungarian communism at the time: it was an experiment to introduce full-blown socialism without a transitional period."⁴⁶

In the period between 1919 and the appearance of *History and Class Consciousness* and the *Lenin* pamphlet, there are undoubtedly signs of a 'period of political apprenticeship'. With increasing decisiveness Lukács accepted bolshevik political practice, without surrendering, but, on the contrary, by thinking through and expressing with increasing acuity his thoughts on the methodological novelty of Marxism and its emancipatory content. It was not accidental that Lukács considered Lenin a philosopher, on the basis of the totality of his activities and not just on that of some of his writings. The danger of being incoherent threatened Lukács not because he accepted bolshevik practice but because, when facing the 'revolutionary ebb' and the new 'post-revolutionary' situation, bolshevik practice and the theoretical reflection to it lost the original, totality-oriented quality of the Leninian thought.

Concerning this aforementioned political apprenticeship, it is worthwhile to quote further from Lukács's autobiographical piece:

in the first years of my activities I was still a long way from discarding my old original ideological baggage. It was due to this that in 1920—21 I put forth ultra-leftist views: in 1920, on the question of parliamentarianism (cf. Lenin's criticism of my article that appeared in *Kommunismus*, in volume 25 of his Works), and in 1921, in my defense of the *Märzaktion* and of the avant-gardism of the youth movement. I managed to overcome this 'infantile disorder' after the third congress of the Comintern, and from then on I had a correct position on all of the important Comintern issues.⁴⁷

Lukács discussed one of the not insignificant driving forces behind his political development in the next passage as follows:

In that period the internal situation of the HPC [Hungarian Party of Communists] was dominated by the struggle against Béla Kun and his followers. From the very outset of this struggle I belonged to comrade Landler's group, which sought to eliminate Kun's harmful influence in the party. However, the Landler faction failed to have the necessary bolshevik strength and determination to execute this task, but it always followed the Comintern line. It had never opposed its line and had never tolerated any deviation in its ranks from that line.⁴⁸

Lukács was being apologetic here, which is not surprising given the time of writing (1944?) and the sort of autobiographical reports that were then constantly demanded of people. There is hardly a sentence that does not require further comment or explanation. However, there are two things that we feel we can agree with. One is that Landler's political realism played indeed a major role in the development of Lukács's political thinking, as did his experiences in the Hungarian movement (e.g., the Hungarian Republic of Councils and its agrarian and alliance policies). Another factor was that, in the Hungarian movement, he had early become familiar with the bureaucratic variant

of messianism in the form of the Béla Kun political line, which sometimes was ready for any sacrifice in order to attain certain objectives that could hardly be supported by political analysis. His article entitled "The Politics of Illusion—Yet Again"⁴⁹ belongs among those early pieces that tried to come to grips with the phenomenon of 'bureaucratic sectarianism' (to use a term used by Lukács himself late in his life), without turning away from the 'Jacobinism' of the revolution. (It is a different matter that Lukács did not and could not go beyond providing a description of this phenomenon, and the only thing that he could hope for was that the experienced revolutionaries of the Comintern would see through that pseudo-revolutionism which aimed at success first of all in the Comintern's offices.)

The other point on which we must agree with the above-quoted autobiographical piece is Lukács's characterization of 1921 as a turning point. By that time, his position on the issue of parliamentarianism was a thing of the past. He closed that chapter with his article entitled "Legality and Illegality" (which he considered important enough to include in *History and Class Consciousness*). Neither did he share the avant-gardism of the Communist Youth International (CYI), and, indeed, he could not, as the Comintern had already decided on the question. (The only thing that Lukács continued to insist on was that the Comintern representatives, who sought tighter control over the CYI, should be prevented from putting through a resolution that would have censured the previous Münzenberg leadership. The debate, which seemed to involve just a question of emphases, between Lukács and Alfred Kurella, whose task was to realize the Comintern's will, affords an opportunity to appreciate Lukács's sophisticated political skills.)⁵⁰ It was not by accident that Lukács mentioned the third congress of the Comintern. Not only were the factional struggles of the Hungarian party on the agenda and not only was the debate so acrimonious that a separate committee was appointed to deal with the cause of the Hungarian party,⁵¹ but, in addition, the congress sought to analyze the 'delay' of the West European revolution and the problem of its characteristics that differentiated its situation from the Russian October. Lukács took a position on this issue, too, and not only to the extent that he joined, as a member of the Landler faction, the so-called 'Russian theses' of the congress, in opposition to the Kun faction, which supported a sectarian 'amendment motion',⁵² but also by bringing up the whole issue of the ideological crisis of the proletariat.

The idea of the ideological crisis of the proletariat contained both positive and contradictory aspects of Lukács's views of the time. It signaled the deep roots of *History and Class Consciousness* in Lukács's historical experiences and political insights, and also the limits to which historical foresight is permitted to abstract thought. In the idea of the ideological crisis of the proletariat, we can see Lukács's anti-fatalist attitude, which was in opposition to the 'impatience' reflected by certain trends within the Comintern. In his article entitled "Vor dem dritten Kongress", written in the course of preparations for the gathering, he wrote the following:

Hierbei verdient ein Moment besonders hervorgehoben zu werden. Die Entwicklung der kommunistischen Partei, so sehr sie das Vorhandensein einer objektiven revolutionären Gesamtlage, die Krise des Kapitalismus voraussetzt, ist keineswegs eine einfache, automatische Funktion der sich auflösenden bürgerlichen Gesellschaft [...]. Dass das ganze Problem des Menschewismus (für das nichtrussische Proletariat) ein so unerwartetes und schicksalschweres Problem wurde, beruht weitgehendst auf dieser Verkennung der aktiven Rolle der Partei in der Revolution; auf dem Glauben, dass das Vorhandensein einer objektiven revolutionären Lage notwendig eine subjektive revolutionäre Reife im Proletariate hervorrufen muss [...]. Auch breiten Massen des Proletariats

fällt es anscheinend sehr schwer, sich von dem ideologischen Verankertsein in der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft loszureißen.⁵³

Lukács could only raise the problem of the 'deeper West European imbeddedness of menshevism', and his article was perhaps primarily aimed at precisely those communist revolutionaries who, despite all defeats, had no doubts about characterizing the situation as a revolutionary one. (See, e.g., what Pogány, a member of the Kun faction, said at the third congress.) The truth is that, even in Lukács's thinking, we can detect the impact of the growing sectarianism of the Comintern (which asserted itself in it gradually, through counter-trends) and a gradual separation of theory and practice in that his 'anti-fatalist' and anti-sectarian attitude could not lead to drawing the ultimate, practical consequences. Nevertheless, this attitude of his is clearly discernible in his writings of the period, and it is profoundly linked to the reification concept in *History and Class Consciousness* as well as there is a connection between it and his 'party theory'. Lukács had an extremely clear theoretical grasp of the 'uneven development' and of the 'impurity' of the revolution and, at least on the methodological plane, surveyed the development of proletarian class consciousness without optimistic illusions, in a non-vulgar way.

In *History and Class Consciousness* Lukács further elaborated his arguments against 'spontaneity', against the fetishization of the proletariat, etc., and took a clearly anti-sectarian position in favor of a policy of alliance in the theoretical debate on the issue of a 'purely proletarian revolution':

a revolutionary party so conceived [seen as a 'purely proletarian revolutionary' one] must necessarily fail to accommodate such [non-proletarian] strata; it will be thwarted both by the impetus of their movement in favour of the proletarian revolution and by the obstacle represented by the fact that their action furthers the cause of counter-revolution.

Such a party will also be thwarted in its dealings with the proletariat itself. For its organization corresponds to a stage in the class consciousness of the proletariat which does not aspire to anything more than making conscious what was hitherto unconscious and making explicit what hitherto had been latent. More accurately: it corresponds to a stage in which the process of acquiring consciousness does not entail a terrible internal ideological crisis for the proletariat [...] the class consciousness of the proletariat does not develop uniformly throughout the whole proletariat, parallel with the objective economic crisis.⁵⁴

The above Lukács quote, from his "Towards a Methodology of the Problem of Organization", and the whole 'composition' of *History and Class Consciousness* had as their objective the demonstration of the necessity for a bolshevik-type party and the correctness of the Leninist party theory. At the same time, precisely these expoundations present the critique of such sectarian views as 'steady revolutionary development', and 'revolutionary optimism', combined with 'economic fatalism'. Lukács's 'party mania'—so often mentioned in the present-day literature—means not only the acknowledgement of the Jacobin character of the proletarian revolution and the recognition of the down-curve of the West European revolutionary trend, but also a theoretical defense against sectarianism. Of course, this is not to say that Lukács's anti-sectarian views provided full protection against the general sectarian tendency taking hold over the Comintern. For, in practical terms, not even Lukács could draw other conclusions from the phenomenon of the 'ideological crisis of the proletariat' than the demand for the 'purity' of the party—a demand that could very easily have led to isolationism.

If we view the Lukács of *History and Class Consciousness* as a 'theoretical Leninist', we do not need to acknowledge any sort of gap between that book and the *Lenin* pamphlet, as did some interpreting the young Lukács's Marxism, although with different

signs. When Lukács wrote that he considered Lenin a philosopher in the entirety of his activities and not simply on the basis of some of his expressly philosophical works, he could point to the methodology of *History and Class Consciousness*. In contrast to the later Lukács's interpretation of his own writings of the twenties,⁵⁵ we fail to see a gap between the 1923 book and his *Lenin* study written a year later, and not only with regard to the aforementioned methodological aspect. The critique of Luxemburg in *History and Class Consciousness*, which is not always fair,⁵⁶ and which is seen by many as that place in the book where Lukács departs from his original revolutionary Marxist inspiration and begins to make his peace with the rule of bureaucracy, is closely linked to those paragraphs of the *Lenin* study that endeavored to think over such concepts as the 'dialectical transition' of the bourgeois and proletarian revolutions, and 'the state as weapon', and in a fashion in opposition to the spirit of the bureaucratic mind. In the chapter "The State as Weapon" in the *Lenin* study, Lukács wrote that

With the help of the Soviet system constituting the state the proletariat therefore conducts the same struggle against the capitalist power which it earlier waged for state power. It must destroy the bourgeoisie economically, isolate it politically, and undermine and overthrow it ideologically. But at the same time it must lead to freedom all the other strata of society it has torn from bourgeois leadership. In other words, it is not enough for the proletariat to *fight objectively in the interest* of the other exploited strata. Its state must also serve to overcome by education the inertia and the fragmentation of these strata and *to train them for active and independent participation in the life of the state*. One of the noblest functions of the Soviet system is to bind together those moments of social life which capitalism fragments. Where this fragmentation lies merely in the consciousness of the oppressed classes, they must be made aware of the unity of these moments. The Soviet system, for example, always establishes the indivisible unity of economics and politics by relating the concrete existence of men—their immediate daily interests, etc.—to the essential questions of society as a whole.⁵⁷

Lukács quoted Talleyrand to the effect that "it is possible to do many things with a bayonet, but one cannot sit on one",⁵⁸ and this leads us to ask whether Lukács's 'messianism' of the early twenties was really nothing more than an embellishing illusion of bureaucratic sectarianism.

At any rate, it does not seem unjust to say that when Zinoviev attacked 'ultra-leftist' deviation at the fifth Comintern congress, leading Lukács to follow suit, this action was seen not as an impetus to analyze in detail the philosopher's political thought, but, instead, only the shadow of the factional fights of the Hungarian party fell again on Lukács, and, perhaps, due to Korsch, even that of the factionalism of the German party.

Just as in the political evaluation of Lukács, in his theoretical evaluation, too there is the element of misunderstanding. If we disregard people such as Bammel, who translated Korsch, and Asmus, who referred to Lukács approvingly, the contemporary bolshevik evaluation primarily (and almost exclusively) focused on the first study in *History and Class Consciousness*, entitled "What is Orthodox Marxism?". Criticism concerning Lukács's idea of methodological orthodoxy—for example, the charge that Lukács divorced Marxist method from Marxist theory epistemologically, in the Kantian sense, that he subjectivized dialectics, negating the possibility of the dialectic of nature—tend to be repeated to this day in the literature on Lukács.

The summation of the Marxist method was too germane to Lukács's work to allow it to be swept aside so readily, describing it in the foregoing, rather simple terms. For Lukács, the Marxist method came as a 'redemption'. The dominant method that he had used before his Marxist turn was Kantianism, but we need to qualify this statement in order to avoid any potential misunderstanding. Already Lukács's 1907 work, *A*

drámaírás főbb irányai a múlt század utolsó negyedében [The Major Dramatic Trends in the Final Quarter of the Last Century] reflected considerably the influence of Hegel's philosophy of history, and he employed numerous Hegelian means in the course of his turn as well. *The Theory of the Novel* is also Hegelian, by virtue of its *Gesinnung*. At any rate, Lukács cannot really be said to have belonged to any school as such; in the early phase of his career, he started off several paths he had access to, but without committing himself to any one of them in particular.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, it can be said that the Kantian methodological restrictions were characteristic features of Lukács's thought, and particularly in the sense in which Ernst Bloch had called Kantianism the philosophy of 'narrow bourgeois subjectivity' in his "Würzburger Dissertation" on Rickert⁶⁰ and in his *Geist der Utopie*, well before Lukács's turn. This is exactly why Bloch formulated the philosophical program of ontologizing Kant's 'self-ness', that is, synthesizing Kant and Hegel. In his Heidelberg philosophy of aesthetics, Lukács takes this trend of Kantianism as expressed here in Bloch's terminology to its most profound tragedy, to the total sequestration from utopia, formulating his own aesthetic as a 'humble negative theology'. It was no accident that Bloch attacked Lukács so vehemently in the *Geist der Utopie*. The charge of inhumanity, even though it is unfair concerning the whole of Lukács's philosophical attitude (which Bloch himself recognized), aptly referred to the inherent absence of utopia in his methodology. Lukács clearly saw the relationship between the tragic nature of his world picture and his methodology, and he stated as much when, in elaborating his early aesthetic, he assigned a constitutive role to the impossibility of understanding among people. However, when historical developments brought the possibility of redemption, which was so much sought after, Lukács turned sharply away from his earlier methodological attitude.

For Lukács, the 'redemptive' quality of Marxism as a method was based on the fact that Marx grasped the whole of the traditional philosophical problem in its historicity. The Marxist adaptation of dialectics was something new, relative to its Hegelian mode as well as to philosophy in general, in that the dialectical categories that had been developed in the course of the development of philosophy and by classical German philosophy in particular, culminating in Hegel, were not viewed as general logical principles of existence, but, rather, as products of historical evolution. Marx had thus resolved the dichotomy between the logical (cf. ideas, the eternal) and the historical-empirical (positivist, relativist) moments and the respective conceptions. *The History and Class Consciousness*—Lukács's statement of faith in the revolutionary nature and the universality of the Marxist method—is based precisely on this idea of historicity, not simply on his view of totality. Lukács's most original thought in the twenties is precisely this view of historicity, as the essential core of Marxist dialectic. Lukács's orthodoxy of method meant the affirmation and elaboration of the universality and revolutionary nature of Marxist philosophy, that is, a sphere of thought that formed the core of the range of ideas of the era, and it is for this reason that he may be considered to have been the philosopher of the October revolution. Let us add here (and, thus, look ahead chronologically) that it was precisely the defense of the notion of historicity that provided the form in which Lukács sought to work out polemically and critically a few of the problems of the post-revolutionary era, when he rejected the tendency to formalize dialectics logically and the ahistorical attempt to break up Lenin's oeuvre into 'disciplines'.

Hence, Lukács assigned the greatest significance in terms of world view and theory to method, and, thus, nothing could have been further from his mind than divorcing

Marxist method from Marxist theory. He wrote with extraordinary irony in a 1926 review that 'it would mean the total misunderstanding of the method of dialectical materialism if someone were to express regret—as it happened at that time in Marx's case—that the "methodological" or "epistemological" elements of the system are, so to speak, just more or less inserted, like detours, into the discussion of the factual questions.'⁶¹ The essence of Marxist dialectic is the historical application of dialectics; it is by virtue of this insight that

the dialectical method and its concept of totality can be seen to provide real knowledge of what goes on in society. It might appear as if the dialectical relations between parts and whole were no more than a construct of thought as remote from the categories of social reality as the unmediated formulae of bourgeois economics. If so, the superiority of dialectics would be purely methodological. The real difference, however, is deeper and more fundamental.

At every stage of social evolution each economic category reveals a definite relation between men. This relation becomes conscious and is conceptualized. Because of this the inner logic of the movement of human society can be understood at once as the product of men themselves and of forces that arise from their relations with each other and which have escaped their control.⁶²

Perhaps we have quoted Lukács at too great a length. But the passage may help to make clear to the attentive reader that Lukács, in his theoretical reconstruction of the Marxist tradition, viewed the notion of the orthodoxy of method as a prominent part of it, and that the emphasis of the special significance of the method was by no means designed to serve as a means for Lukács to excuse either himself or Marx from the obligation to formulate generally valid theses. (Few things could have been further from Lukács's mind. It is another question that, according to the later Korsch—as certain scholars interpreting him state—Lukács makes an attempt in this regard, but by then he was propelled in that direction by the critique of the unfolding dogmatization of dialectical and historical materialism.)

The humanitarianism of Marxist thought and the historicity of the Marxist method constitute the message of *History and Class Consciousness*. At the same time, this is also the content of the book's infamous 'anti-Engels' polemic, since Lukács quite clearly refers to the fact that he considers the presence or absence of the historical substratum of dialectical categories the essential key separating the logical (contemplative) conception of dialectics from its historical mode of treatment. The fact that *History and Class Consciousness* is not about the subjectivization of dialectics in the epistemological sense, as alleged by Deborin and others, is indicated by the following paragraph of the book, which expressly refers to the question and is not quoted by the critics:

Nevertheless Hegel does perceive clearly at times that the dialectics of nature can never become anything more exalted than a dialectics of movement witnessed by the detached observer, as the subject cannot be integrated into the dialectical process, at least not at the stage reached hitherto [...] From this we deduce the necessity of separating the merely objective dialectics of nature from those of society. For in the dialectics of society the subject is included in the reciprocal relation in which theory and practice become dialectical with reference to one another.⁶³

The methodological requirement of the historical application of dialectics occupied Lukács later on as well; that is why he wrote the Lassalle and Moses Hess studies, out of a specific interest in that philosophical peculiarity that separated Marx from his contemporaries who put forward seemingly very similar political and philosophical hypotheses (i.e., the combination of Hegel and leftism). The Lassalle study expressed with programmatic sharpness and conciseness the belief that it is precisely historicity, the

method of historicity introduced into dialectics, that distinguished Marx from his comrades, including Lassalle, who conceived of dialectics in its orthodox Hegelian form and who—as Lukács quotes him—cautioned Marx that if he did not believe in the immortality of categories then he had to believe in God.⁶⁴

In this light, the commonplace charge in the literature on Lukács, according to which the 1923 book was written in a Hegelian spirit, becomes rather doubtful. Those who say this approvingly forget that this view was first raised and then reinforced by that ‘misunderstanding’ which was introduced by Deborin’s and Rudas’s critiques. Concerning Lukács’s 1923 ‘Hegelianism’, we would refer to Bloch, who considered Lukács’s book the only one worthy of being viewed as a Hegelian renaissance, but at this point we would not emphasize this aspect. It is worthwhile considering the book’s preface, written at the end of 1922, from which we can see that Lukács’s interpretation of Marx is not only a revival of Hegel, but also a critique of him. The Marxist application of dialectics is historical, and it is precisely this aspect that, in Lukács’s view, constitutes Marx’s setting Hegel on his feet. According to Lukács, it is not the logical regulatory system of the formal relationships among categories that dominates history, and especially not its ‘historical’ form, some providence-like ‘reason’; rather, this regulatory system is interesting only insofar as it is the product of historically developed movements and to the extent that it preserves the ‘particularity’ of history. Genesis and cognition do no become separated if we see more in genesis than simple annals of history (i.e., if we see the universality of history in it), and in cognition more than simple subjective ‘addition’ (i.e., if we see consciousness in it). In this way, the dialectic of subject and object becomes the central factor in historical dialectic, and their identity becomes a fact stripped of the contradictions of prehistory and suited to accommodate history. The conceptual movement of *History and Class Consciousness*, which is considered especially Hegelian, is in fact very critical of Hegel. The construction, which, viewed directly, seems more Hegelian than Hegel himself (since rather than—in the manner of the master—enveloping the realization in obscurity, with messianic purblindness, it entrusts the proletariat with the fate of the identity),⁶⁵ is in fact the very same construction that, as is known, believed the prehistory to be finite and the ‘realm of freedom’ to be realizable.

It may seem paradoxical that Lukács wrote the best parts of his philosophy of freedom, which are also the most openly critical of Hegel, precisely in the ‘party philosophy’ of *History and Class Consciousness* (in “Towards a Methodology of the Problem of Organization”), but, in any case, it is very much part of what we have endeavored to show when characterizing Lukács as the philosopher of the October revolution. It is far more bizarre that Hegel took revenge on those who wanted to exorcise his ‘devil’ from Lukács by means of smuggling the driest aspects of his philosophy into their ‘materialism’.

On Belatedness

Hence, the critiques of Lukács written by Deborin, Rudas, Duncker, and others thoroughly ‘misunderstood’ the intentions underlying *History and Class Consciousness*, and it seems that this was the most that could be expected from the perspective of Kautskyan orthodoxy, in the atmosphere of the urgent need for ideological demarcations and exposés. It seems that the arguments put forth by Deborin and Rudas sealed the

fate of *History and Class Consciousness*. Their judgment became the dominant line on the book within the communist movement, and to such a degree that, when Lukács himself sought to close the period of the 1920s, in order to gain entry into the philosophical life of the Soviet Union of the thirties, he commented on his book in the terminology of these critiques.

This creates the impression that the relation between Lukács and bolshevik intellectual life and between *History and Class Consciousness* and bolshevik theory had been decided once and for all, as if, in the persons of Deborin, Rudas, *et al.*, Lukács had encountered bolshevik philosophy itself. In fact, however, the 1924 bolshevik critiques were only isolated attempts to provide philosophical arguments for a political demarcation and debate; namely, the endeavor of the fifth Comintern congress to achieve 'bolshevization'. Deborin's aim was obvious: he dedicated his critique (*Lukács i ego kritika marksizma*) to the participants of this congress. Nevertheless, this was just an isolated attempt because, in 1924, there were as yet no philosophical elements employed as criteria in the demarcation between 'Leninist' and 'anti-Leninist' lines. (In 1938, Stalin provided a specific philosophical definition of Marxism-Leninism in his *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, while in his 1924 booklet, *The Foundations of Leninism*, he did not treat philosophical questions.)⁶⁶

What partly underlies this phenomenon is that, at that time, the alternatives of the era were still open to be pondered: opportunities to analyze the Leninist heritage were still present, being of great variety and theoretically volatile, and political analysis could reflect upon itself in terms of its own categories (history, economic theory, etc.), without cutting mediations short in order to justify itself at the 'highest' (logical, formal) forum. Only with the narrowing of the opportunities as determined by historical developments, in the process of the separation of theory and practice, did the naturalist-dehistoricized structure of 'dialectical and historical materialism' become crystallized, and only this could give rise to the 'necessary' and 'proper' logical-theoretical link between theory and political justification.

In all of this, a basic role was played by the debate concerning 'Leninism' in the first half of the twenties, by the 'systemization' of the Leninist heritage, which already carried the seeds of the characteristic tendencies of the separation of theory and practice. These finally led to theory becoming 'abstracted' from political praxis, and to its perversion, as theory became diluted in political praxis. The question of the relation between Marx and Lenin, and the problem of the authenticity and of the essence of the Leninist method simultaneously became the focus of the debate that assumed international proportions. The debate on Leninism, in connection with these theoretical problems, involved, in addition, power struggles taking place within the party; in fact, the debate was something of an ideological cover for these struggles. Naturally, beyond the 'logic of power struggles', the decisive factor in the development of the debate on Leninism was the fact that the victorious revolution had to consolidate its power, ideology, and organizational structure. Thus, within the circumstances of the new historical situation arising in the course of the twenties, a process took place in the sphere of ideology that paralleled the one occurring in the party organizationally. (Let it suffice here to recall the elimination of factions within the party, the 1921 party resolution on its unity.) The economic chaos that was brought about by the civil war in Russia, the declassé state of the working class, and the instability of political power in the 'peasant—petty-bourgeois sea' not only led to the role of the party and of ideology assuming enormous dimensions, but also meant the liquidation of groups within the party, a trend that was

also fueled by the old traditions of the underground. The intraparty ideological confrontation was an unavoidable and natural consequence of this situation, and not only because of the need to make people aware of the new perspectives and of the struggle for them, but also because the bolsheviks were aware that the ideological tendencies that would then become consolidated would determine the nature of the communist movement for a long time to come. G. Bammel, a theoretician of the period, wrote an article for the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution, in which he aptly characterized the situation, saying that "in the ideological sphere, the dictatorship of the proletariat meant a veritable theoretical revolution, which established the 'dictatorship of Marxism'."⁶⁷ Almost until the end of the twenties, the 'dictatorship of Marxism' had still been accompanied by the recognition of the 'necessity of the struggle of trends within Marxism'.

The reception accorded Lukács by the bolsheviks cannot be understood without considering another characteristic of ideological development. In the aforementioned article, Bammel wrote that every question of theory had to be related to the tasks of the political struggle; and, further, that the political teaching of Marxism had to be in the foreground. In his 1924, renowned book, entitled *Literature and Revolution*, Trotsky said much the same thing, although in a theoretically more sophisticated fashion. He wrote that, in the 'transitional period' (i. e., in the course of the development of society from capitalism toward communism), Marxism undergoes an uneven (one-sided) development.

Das Proletariat fand seine Methode im Marxismus nicht auf einmal und bis auf den heutigen Tag bei weitem noch nicht ganz. Diese Methode dient gegenwärtig hauptsächlich und fast ausschliesslich politischen Zielen. Die breite erkenntnismässige Anwendung und methodologische Entwicklung des dialektischen Marxismus liegt ganz in der Zukunft. Erst in der sozialistischen Gesellschaft wird der Marxismus aus einem einseitigen Werkzeug des politischen Kampfes zur Methode wissenschaftlicher Schöpfung, zum wichtigsten Element und Instrument der geistigen Kultur.⁶⁸

Other factors, too played a determining role in this one-sidedness. Foremost among them was the vulgar, mechanistic interpretation of materialism, which belittled consciousness and theory. This 'leftist' voluntarist ideological practicicism was based on sincere revolutionary spirit and was the theoretical version of 'war communism'. Furthermore, the party's basic starting point was the question of how Marxism can be 'passed on' to the masses under the given socio-cultural circumstances. There was a simultaneous development of the need to make Marxism 'teachable' and of a 'revolutionary' disdain for theory. Let us not forget that, at that time, ideological activity mainly meant the struggle against illiteracy and religion and the teaching of the 'ABC of communism'. This was also tied to the fact that the bolsheviks judged every ideological product primarily from the perspective of propaganda and the generally accepted topical political exigency.

All of these factors implicated the homogenization of the theses of 'Leninism', in the name of the realization of the 'dictatorship of Marxism'. This need was met by the leaders' (Stalin, Bukharin, Zinoviev) paradigmatic interpretations of Leninism, which divorced the lessons of the Leninist oeuvre from the Leninist method. A necessary part of this process was the clear and radical rejection of any other attempts at interpretation. As Rudas put it, influenced by the heated debates: "the closer somebody is to us, the more ruthless we must be in our struggle against him if he shows signs of revision"; this attitude was later extended to cover not only the "left-wing opposition", but also social democracy.⁶⁹ However understandable and, in a certain sense, justifiably neces-

sary such a functional reduction of Leninism may have been at the time, objectively it constituted the foundation of an ideological interpretation of Leninism itself.

Trotsky's articles written in the early 1920s in connection with the Leninism debate provide a sophisticated picture of the internal contradictions of this codification of Leninism and some of its theoretically retrograde aspects; above all, of that tradition-creating aspect which took place under the aegis of 'old bolshevism' that liquidated the critical, future-oriented character of the Leninist method and established the past-orientedness of Leninism. Trotsky himself saw Leninism primarily as a guide to (or method of) revolutionary action, but without, however, providing a full historical analysis of it, from within the factional struggles. Rather, he chose to formulate his thoughts on the level of the methodological 'ought' (*Sollen*), stating what Leninism is not:

Leninism is original freedom from formalist prejudices, from moralizing doctrinalism, and from all forms of intellectual conservatism, which seek to curtail the will to engage in revolutionary action [...] Leninism encompasses the morality of mass action and of a mass party [...] and nothing is further from it than the arrogance of functionaries and the cynicism of bureaucrats [...] To claim any sort of supra-theoretical guarantee from the traditions of Leninism concerning the infallibility of the thoughts and declarations of the interpreters of these traditions is nothing but a mockery of the originally revolutionary tradition and transformation into official bureaucratism.⁷⁰

Although Trotsky called attention to the fact that the whole of culture is a constitutive part of Leninism, of the 'self-liberation of the working class', even his approach contained contradictions and one-sidedness. Due to the fact that he was also engaged in factional struggles, his critical analyses of the historical unfolding of the revolution and his delineation of the concrete perspectives were strongly subjective, and he also failed to provide a precise analysis of the political preconditions necessary for the perspectives that he outlined.

All of these factors led to the situation whereby the basic ideological endeavor was to justify the socialist revolution and the Soviet system; a sort of unconscious pragmatism set in, which did not exactly lend itself to the theoretical investigation of internal contradictions. However, the polemics surrounding the issue of Leninism well illustrate the fact that the process of this 'ideological rigidification' was not without contradictions itself and was not something fatalistically predetermined. After the death of Lenin there was an increase in precisely those endeavors that sought to 'discover' the Leninist 'novum' (cf., e.g., Preobrazhensky). They sought to examine those theoretical and methodological results that could have shown how Leninism became 'Leninism'. Of course, by the mid-twenties, the historical situation and party policy did not favor any such radical theoretical analyses of those issues. Nevertheless, a start was made in investigating the historical sources, origins, and changes in the function of Leninism, and the organized uniformity of Lenin interpretations became the general unidirectional trend only in the second half of the twenties.

In its initial form, the ideological aspect of Soviet development outlined above carried within itself the seeds of divergent interpretations of Marxism. Then the realism of 'socialism in one country' and its specific particularities led to the domination of a vulgar materialist trend. It also marked the end to any chance of thinking through the problems of the 'transitional period' in any theoretically adequate fashion. This is not to say, however, that the above process, in terms of ideology, was totally homogeneous internally. Indeed, there were various political and ideological tendencies for which the death knell had already been sounded, but in the second half of the 1960s, in a totally

different historical situation, they were revived and became contributions to the process that Lukács called the 'renaissance of Marxism', including his own endeavors.

In the twenties, the Deborin and Rudas sort of criticism did not discredit Lukács in Soviet ideological life. Nevertheless, we cannot find any sign of such lively, well intentioned interest in his writings (and those of Korsch) as the sort that still existed in 1923. The reason behind this was unwittingly revealed by Bammel in his 1923 collection of reviews, the second part of which discusses Lukács's and Deborin's pamphlets on Lenin. The author of the review, who had nothing but praise for Lukács's portrayal of the interrelation of Lenin's thoughts, paradoxically criticized him for being 'abstract' and for discussing only the way in which Lenin's 'thoughts' are interlinked, and, as opposed to Lukács's discussion, cited Deborin's pamphlet as an example of a concrete approach. Deborin's piece was chosen because it played a pioneering role in divorcing 'Lenin the philosopher' from 'Lenin the politician', and, thus, reduced the philosopher Lenin, who carried on the tradition of the Marxian totality view, to the status of a 'militant materialist'. Lukács's book was discussed only in academic circles (Siegfried Marck, Paul Eppstein), and it was not until around 1930 that various debates touched on it again. The way in which Lukács's book again rose to the surface reflected the problematic and consequences of the separation of 'Western Marxism' and 'Russian Marxism' and those of 'bad divisions of labor'. On the one hand, there was the discovery of *History and Class Consciousness* as a book that had unknowingly postulated the thoughts of the young Marx, which had only just been published around that time and aroused a great deal of interest. With this development, Lukács's book became part of that intellectual process which was inspired by the young Marx, and his methodological thoughts made him the forerunner of critical philosophy. On the other hand, this trend in theoretical development at the same time by and large rejected Lukács's 'party centrism' and generally divorced itself from the 'movement'. *History and Class Consciousness* again became an issue in the movement in connection with the Deborin debate. Deborin, who was then under attack for his 'philosophical menshevism' and was about to be sidelined, referred to Lukács's book in order to show that—as opposed to the charges being made against him—he had taken a militant position in fighting against philosophical deviations. Nevertheless, nothing that he said could save him from being swept aside by the new generation of philosophers, which in principle totally shared his platform, but was even more adept at following the tactical demands of philosophical thought that was by then considered a philosophical 'front' of the class struggle.

What constituted the belatedness of Lukács's attitude?

History and Class Consciousness closed with the revolution. Or, to be precise, Lukács followed the path of the revolution until about 1921, when, in his "Critical Observations on Rosa Luxemburg's *Critique of the Russian Revolution*", he defended some of the measures introduced by the bolsheviks out of necessity. While the last pages of the chapter on reification in *History and Class Consciousness* do raise the problematic observation that the proletarian revolution had yet to have an impact on such social constructs as, for example, the state, the conceptual construction of the book shows that it is really 'at home' within the framework of the revolution. The book is permeated with the thought or expectation that with the revolution and with the proletariat becoming revolutionary, the 'theory of praxis' will become 'practical theory'. The idea of the practical character of Marxism is the basic one of that era, which may be found in Korsch, just as in the work of the bolshevik theoreticians. Lukács developed this idea on several levels. (We cannot go into its methodological meaning at this point.) The

turning point at which the theory of praxis becomes practical theory seemingly means nothing more than what the revolution realized: the transition from the 'weapons of criticism' to the 'critique of weapons'. Lukács, however, dwelled longer on this expression and saw it as the liquidation of contemplation, that is, as the realized identity of subject and object, which was such an expectation that the moment of the revolution had not been able to satisfy.

Thus proletarian thought is in the first place merely a *theory of praxis* which only gradually [...] transforms itself into a *practical theory* that overturns the real world. The individual stages of this process cannot be sketched in here. They alone would be able to show how proletarian class consciousness evolves dialectically (i.e., how the proletariat becomes a class). Only then would it be possible to throw light on the intimate dialectical process of interaction between the socio-historical situation and the class consciousness of the proletariat. Only then would the statement that the proletariat is the identical subject-object of the history of society become truly concrete.⁷¹

Hence, the proletariat becoming a class for itself, its becoming revolutionary, constitutes the 'keystone' of *History and Class Consciousness*. even though—as mentioned—Lukács did touch on the problem, for example, that the state will become dialectical only in the course of a longer process, that it can only gradually be made dialectically 'fluid', and even though one can find numerous statements in the book that almost prophetically seem to foreshadow problems occurring only in the course of subsequent development. (It is characteristic that, in these pages, Lukács mentioned making nature and the state dialectical as homogeneous problems.) Lukács was not alone in 'mixing' the development of proletarian class consciousness and the realization of the identity of subject—object, for analogous approaches may be found in Béla Fogarasi's pamphlet entitled *Bevezetés a marxizmus filozófiájába* and in József Révai's review of *History and Class Consciousness* because such an approach sprang from the messianic attitude of that period. We are not talking here about any logical or conceptual errors, but of the period's brilliant limitations. After all, it cannot be denied that the period's 'messianic emotion-alism' was a fertile ground for the revival of the critical, humanistic, and non-specialized aspects of the Marxian thought, that is, those features that were on the decline in the Marxist tradition. The diminishing of this expectation and perspective led to the fact that not only the bolshevik critics, but also Lukács himself began to feel that *History and Class Consciousness* was no longer timely. Theory became confronted with a new problem—regardless of how and in what state of preparedness it struggled through—that of the 'post-revolutionary' situation.

It was the era and the newly arising problems and not the Deborin and Rudas critiques that led Lukács to turn his attention to new questions after having finished the pamphlet on Lenin. Lukács had shrugged off these criticism. "My first reaction to these critiques was flat rejection," he wrote later in his life; "The studies written before 1930 were experiments at complementing and concretizing the basic idea of my book [*History and Class Consciousness*], but without making any express reference to it as such."⁷²

The problem of facing up to the questions of the post-revolutionary era was best expressed by Lukács in an article on aesthetics entitled "L'art pour l'art, or proletarian poetry". Lukács's attitude here was what may be called 'programmatically antimessianic': 'it is not correct when the proletarian-revolutionary, the Marxist, overestimates in utopian fashion the opportunities inherent in a situation.' This was how Lukács introduced his argument. Concerning the essence of the problem of the post-revolutionary situation and the difficulties of confronting it, he wrote that

not only until [the proletariat] has overthrown capitalism but also—as Marx had pointed out with unparalleled sharpness in his “Critique of the Gotha Program”—in the initial period of communism the proletariat lives in a world, the basic structure of which has retained the structural forms of capitalism (dominance of the law of value, division of labor, equal and abstract law, etc.) despite the revolutionary changes that had taken place. The enormous revolutionary upsurge that we are all experiencing and is being carried out by the revolutionary proletariat, initially does not exercise as much of a revolutionary impact on the *immediate-sensual* reality (the subject and form of poetry) as one would superficially expect. This explains the ‘disappointment’ in the Russian Revolution of those intellectuals who expected the immediate solution of their own particular needs.⁷³

Not only the above-quoted article indicates that, in the course of the twenties, Lukács attempted theoretically to face up to the problems confronting society in the post-revolutionary era. Two reviews that he wrote in 1926 indicate that he made an oblique attempt to defend his books and to take a more active role in the Soviet ideological debates.⁷⁴ This intent is especially signaled by his aforementioned review, that of a German-language anthology of Lenin’s writings. In his review, Lukács strongly emphasized that the history underlying Lenin’s writings is inalienably a part of them without, however, in any way detracting from their theoretical importance. He pointed out that it is precisely the ‘systemization’ of Lenin’s writings, breaking them down into ‘disciplines’, that constitutes restrictions, theoretical and political for them.

We can detect references to concrete aspects of the present in even those of his writings that deal with the past, as, for example, “The New Edition of Lassalle’s Letters” and “Moses Hess and the Problems of Idealist Dialectics”.⁷⁵ The main message of the Lassalle study is that Lassalle had remained an orthodox Hegelian and never attained a real surpassing of Hegel, that is, the grasp of historical dialectic. As a result, as Lukács wrote, he failed to connect the activity and awakening to self-consciousness of the proletarian masses, of the working class movement with socialism—this was something which remained external for him. Lukács saw this as the reason behind the ‘depression’ and ‘reluctance’ with which Lassalle reacted to the slow progress of the movement.

[what] manifested [itself] in such outbursts [...] is the very conception of the relationship between the masses and leader which even the young Marx opposed in his controversy with Bruno Bauer [...] It must be borne in mind that concealed behind this conception of the problems of the relationship between leader and masses, lies precisely this whole problem of ‘idealism’. It is not for nothing that Marx, even as early as in his initial polemics against Bruno Bauer, emphasizes the connection between Hegelian ‘idealism’ (one could also say formalistic philosophy of history) and an over-estimation of the role of the great ‘individual’. And what he stresses as the very characteristics of the coming age, the world-historical period of the proletarian liberation struggle, is in fact the real coincidence of ‘idea’ and ‘mass’, that genuine growth of the ‘idea’ out of the real interests of ‘the masses’.⁷⁶

Our reason for quoting the portion of the essay that touches on the problem of leadership is to show that Lukács did not only want to concretize in these studies the thoughts that he had expressed in *History and Class Consciousness* on the specificity of the Marxian method, on the relationship between Hegel and Marx, and so on, and not only wanted to express his opposition to the Lassalle revival in social democratic circles, but, in addition, to show that Lukács perceived a real danger on the part of Lassalleanism (the ‘bourgeois’ relationship between leader and masses) for the communist movement. For Lukács—as for many bolshevik leaders as well—this threat was represented by Trotsky. (The fact that Trotsky was not to assume such a role is a different matter altogether).⁷⁷

The genre of the writings that we have quoted and the fact that they include ‘hidden’ references in terms of aesthetics and the history of philosophy indicate that the second

half of the twenties failed to provide the sort of opportunity to confront and think over the problems of the post-revolutionary era that was afforded by the early twenties for the expression of the 'redemption' promised by the revolution. Nevertheless, this limit on the experiments in no wise detracts from their theoretical value, from their significance as the implications of *History and Class Consciousness* and as the initial formulations of a problematic, which was novel and laden with consequences. And, finally, neither does it in any wise diminish the significance of Lukács's attitude as a philosopher.

(Translated by Sándor Bándy)

Notes

¹ This study was originally written to serve as an introduction to a collection of the various reviews of *History and Class Consciousness* written in the twenties.

² Georg Lukács: *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thoughts*, trans. by N. Jacobs (London: 1970), p. 89.

³ Alfred Schmidt, et al.: *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein heute* (Amsterdam: 1971); *Debatte um Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (Tokyo: 1977).

⁴ Andrew Arato and Paul Breines: *The Young Lukács and the Origins of Western Marxism* (New York: 1980), p. 170. The totality of the work qualifies the roughness of the quoted passage.

⁵ Iring Fetscher: *Karl Marx und der Marxismus* (München: 1967), pp. 83—84.

⁶ The most extensive collection to date of Lukács's writings from the 1920s is his *Politische Aufsätze I—V* (Darmstadt—Neuwied: 1975—79).

⁷ See Georgi Zinoviev: "Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Exekutive", in *Protokoll des V. Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale 17.6—8.7. 1924* (Hamburg: 1924).

⁸ Karl Korsch: *Marxismus i filozofia, pod redakcii i s predisloviem G. Bammela* (Moscow: 1924).

⁹ See G. Lukács: "Materializacia i soznanie proletariata", *Vestnik socialisticheskoy akademii* (1923) No. 6, p. 186. The editorial comment stated that 'the editors consider comrade Lukács's article occasionally debatable and its terminology sometimes non-Marxist.'

¹⁰ See György Lukács: "Előszó" [Foreword], in his *Utam Marxhoz* [My Road to Marx] (Budapest: 1971), Vol. I, p. 24.

¹¹ See Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *Les aventures de la dialectique* (Paris: 1955).

¹² Karl Korsch: *Marxismus und Philosophie* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1966) p. 50.

¹³ See Oscar Negt: "Marxismus als Legitimationswissenschaft", in Nikolai Bucharin—Abram Deborin: *Kontroversen über dialektischen und mechanischen Materialismus* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1974).

¹⁴ Walter Benjamin: "Bücher, die lebendig geblieben sind", *Die literarische Welt* (1929) No. 20.

¹⁵ L. Mankovski: "Marksizm Georga Lukacsa", in *Protiv noveysey kritiki marksizma* (Moscow: 1919) see esp. pp. 3—5 and 47—49.

¹⁶ See Béla Fogarasi: *Bevezetés a marxizmus filozófiájába* [Introduction to Marxist philosophy] (Vienna: 1922), p. 5.

¹⁷ Josef Révai: "Georg Lukács: *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*" in Tamás Krausz and Miklós Mesterházi (editors): *A "Történelem és osztálytudat" a 20-as évek vitáiban* ["History and class consciousness" in the debates of the 1920s] 4 vols. (Budapest: 1981) I. p. 43 and p. 46—first appeared in *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, XI (1923, 1925).

¹⁸ Eugen Landler: "Georg Lukács: *Lenin: Studie über den Zusammenhang seiner Gedanken*", *Die Rote Fahne* (Vienna) (July 4, 1924).

¹⁹ Karl Korsch: "Ein Nachwort statt Vorwort", in T. Krausz—M. Mesterházi (eds): *A "Történelem és osztálytudat" a 20-as évek vitáiban* I. p. 31—first appeared in *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, XI (1923).

²⁰ See Furio Cerutti: "Hegel, Lukács, Korsch: Zum dialektischen Selbstverständnis des kritischen Marxismus" in *Aktualität und Folgen der Philosophie Hegels* hrsg. von O. Negt (Frankfurt a.M.: 1970) pp. 209 ff.

²¹ See György Lukács: "Preface to the New Edition (1967)", in *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. by R. Livingstone (London: 1971) p. XIII.

²² See Ernst Bloch: "Aktualität und Utopie", in T. Krausz—M. Mesterházi (eds): *A "Történelem és osztálytudat" a 20-as évek vitáiban* I.—first appeared in *Der Neue Merkur* (1923—24) No. 1.

- ²³ See Hermann Duncker "Ein neues Buch über Marxismus", in T. Krausz—M. Mesterházi (eds): A "Történelem és osztálytudat" a 20-as évek vitáiban I.—first appeared in *Die Rote Fahne* (Berlin) (May 27, 1923).
- ²⁴ A. Deborin: "Georg Lukács i ego kritika marksizma", in T. Krausz—M. Mesterházi (eds): A "Történelem és osztálytudat" a 20-as évek vitáiban I.—first appeared in *Pod znamenem marksizma* (1924) No. 6—7.
- ²⁵ See Ladislaus Rudas: "Orthodoxer Marxismus?", in T. Krausz—M. Mesterházi (eds): A "Történelem és osztálytudat" a 20-as évek vitáiban I.—first appeared in *Arbeiter Literatur* (1924) No. 9; "Die Klassenbewusstseinstheorie von Lukács" in *ibid.*, II.—first appeared in *Arbeiter Literatur* (1924) Nos 10, 12.
- ²⁶ I. Luppöl: "A.M. Deborin: 'Georg Lukács i ego kritika marksizma'" in T. Krausz—M. Mesterházi (eds): A "Történelem és osztálytudat" a 20-as évek vitáiban I.—first appeared in *Pravda* (July 25, 1924).
- ²⁷ J. Sten: "Nashy partiya i voprosi teorii", in T. Krausz—M. Mesterházi (eds): A "Történelem és osztálytudat" a 20-as évek vitáiban II.—first appeared in *Bolshevik* (1924) No. 12—13.
- ²⁸ N. Karev: "O novoy knige Georga Lukacsza Lenin, in T. Krausz—M. Mesterházi (eds): A "Történelem és osztálytudat" a 20-as évek vitáiban II.—first appeared in *Bolshevik* (1924) No. 12—13.
- ²⁹ I. Vainstein: "Lukács i ego teoria oveshestvenia", in T. Krausz—M. Mesterházi (eds): A "Történelem és osztálytudat" a 20-as évek vitáiban II.—first appeared in *Pod znamenem marksizma* (1924) No. 10—11.
- ³⁰ See László Sziklai: *Lukács és kora* [Lukács and his age] (Budapest: 1985) p. 174.
- ³¹ Ladislaus Rudas: "Die Klassenbewusstseinstheorie von Lukács", in op. cit. II., pp. 10—11.
- ³² *Ibid.*, pp. 47—48.
- ³³ Ladislaus Rudas: "Orthodoxer Marxismus?" in op. cit. I., p. 203.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 204.
- ³⁵ Ladislaus Rudas: "Die Klassenbewusstseinstheorie von Lukács", in op. cit. II., p. 45.
- ³⁶ Ladislaus Rudas: "Orthodoxer Marxismus?" in op. cit. I., p. 218.
- ³⁷ Ladislaus Rudas: "Die Klassenbewusstseinstheorie von Lukács", in op. cit. II., p. 11.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 72, pp. 73—74.
- ³⁹ Karl Korsch: "Über materialistische Dialektik", in T. Krausz—M. Mesterházi (eds): A "Történelem és osztálytudat" a 20-as évek vitáiban I.—first appeared in *Die Internationale* (Berlin) (1924) No. 10-11; "Georg Lukács: Lenin. Studie über den Zusammenhang seiner Gedanken", in *ibid* I.—first appeared in *Die Internationale* (Berlin) (1924) No. 12.
- ⁴⁰ Gustav Mayer: "Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein", in T. Krausz—M. Mesterházi (eds): A "Történelem és osztálytudat" a 20-as évek vitáiban, II.—first appeared in *Frankfurter Zeitung: Literaturblatt* (1924) No. 26.
- ⁴¹ Georg Lukács: "Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels: Werke und Schriften von Mai 1846 bis März 1848", *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (1933) No. 2., p. 280.
- ⁴² See G. Lukács: "Znachenie Materializma i empiriokriticizma dlya kommunisticheskoy partii", *Pod znamenem marksizma* (1934) No. 4.
- ⁴³ Ernst Bloch: "Aktualität und Utopie", in op. cit. p. 4.
- ⁴⁴ Georg Lukács: *Record of a Life*, trans. by R. Livingstone (London: 1983) p. 54.
- ⁴⁵ See Jörg Kammler's foreword to Georg Lukács: *Taktik und Ethik* (Darmstadt—Neuwied: 1975)
- ⁴⁶ György Lukács: "Önéletrajz" [Autobiography], in *Curriculum vitae* (Budapest: 1982) p. 464.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 465.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁹ Georg Lukács: "The Politics of Illusion—Yet Again", in *Political Writings 1919—1929*, trans. by M. McColgan (London: 1972).
- ⁵⁰ See Lukács's speech at the second congress of the Communist Youth International in *Protokoll des II. Kongresses der Kommunistischen Jugendinternationale: Moskau, Juli 16, 1921* (Moskau: 1921).
- ⁵¹ See Ágnes Szabó: *A Kommunisták Magyarországi Pártjának újjászervezése 1919—1925* [The reorganization of the Hungarian Party of Communists, 1919—1925] (Budapest: 1970) esp. pp. 143—44.
- ⁵² See *Protokoll des III. Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale: Moskau, Juni 22, 1921—Juli 12, 1921* (Hamburg: 1921).
- ⁵³ Georg Lukács: "Vor dem III. Kongress", in *Organisation und Illusion* (Darmstadt—Neuwied: 1977) pp. 79—80.
- ⁵⁴ Georg Lukács: *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 304.
- ⁵⁵ See Lukács: "Preface to the New Edition (1967)", in *History and Class Consciousness*.
- ⁵⁶ See Norman Geras: *Bourgeois Power and Socialist Democracy: On the Relation of Ends and Means: The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg* (London: 1976).
- ⁵⁷ Georg Lukács: *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thoughts*, p. 67.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 65.
- ⁵⁹ See György Márkus: "A lélek és az élet: A fiatal Lukács György és a 'kultúra' problémája" [Soul and life: The young György Lukács and the problem of 'culture'] *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle* (1973) No. 5—6.

⁶⁰ See Ernst Bloch: "Kritische Erörterungen über Rickert: Aus der Würzburger Dissertation", in *Tendenz—Latenz—Utopie* (Frankfurt a. M. : 1978).

⁶¹ Georg Lukács: "N. Lenin: *Ausgewählte Werke: Der Kampf um die soziale Revolution*" in *Demokratische Diktatur 1925—1929* (Darmstadt—Neuwied: 1979) p. 64—also in T. Krausz—M. Mesterházi (eds): A "Történelem és osztálytudat" a 20-as évek vitáiban IV., p. 189.

⁶² Georg Lukács: *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 15.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁶⁴ Georg Lukács: "The New Edition of Lassalle's Letters", in *Political Writings 1919—1929*, p. 155.

⁶⁵ See Georg Lukács: "Preface to the New Edition (1967)" in *History and Class Consciousness*, p. XXXIV.

⁶⁶ See László Sziklai: Lukács és kora, p. 108.

⁶⁷ G. Bammel: "O nashem filosofskom razvitii za 10 let revolutsii", *Pod znamenem marksizma* (1927) No. 10—11, p. 53.

⁶⁸ Leon Trotsky: *Literatur und Revolution* (Wien: 1924) p. 128.

⁶⁹ L. Rudas: "Lenin i zadachi marksistov-leninistov v Evrope", *Vestnik Socialisticheskoy Akademii* (1925) No. 11, p. 34.

⁷⁰ Leon Trotsky: *The New Course* (Ann Arbor: 1965) pp. 53—5.

⁷¹ Georg Lukács: *History and Class Consciousness*, pp. 205—6.

⁷² György Lukács: "Előszó", in *Utam Marxhoz*, I., p. 24.

⁷³ György Lukács: "L'art pour l'art vagy proletárköltészet" [L'art pour l'art or proletarian poetry] *Világosság* (1973) No. 12, p. 532. See also "L'art pour l'art und proletarische Dichtung", in *Demokratische Diktatur 1925—1929*.

⁷⁴ See Georg Lukács: "N. Lenin: *Ausgewählte Werke: Der Kampf um die soziale Revolution*", and "Unter dem Banner des Marxismus" in T. Krausz—M. Mesterházi (eds): A "Történelem és osztálytudat" a 20-as évek vitáiban IV.

⁷⁵ Both the Lassalle and the Moses Hess studies were published in Russian as well.

⁷⁶ Georg Lukács: "The New Edition of Lassalle's Letters", in *Political Writings 1919—1929*, pp. 161—62.

⁷⁷ See Georg Lukács: *Record of a Life*, p. 177.

The "Blum Theses" and György Lukács's Conception of Culture and Literature

by

Miklós Lackó

Before entering into a discussion of the events immediately leading to Lukács's platform outline for the approaching second congress of the Hungarian Party of Communists (HPC) which he wrote in late 1928 and which became known as the "Blum Theses", we need to survey his activities in the earlier part of the decade as well. As we know, Lukács himself considered the mid-twenties—more precisely, his Lenin study, written in 1924—as the period during which he became a genuine Marxist in his intellectual development, when his increasingly realistic outlook came into growing conflict with his messianic and ultra-leftist revolutionism (which was primarily reflected in his assessment of international questions).¹ By his own account, this growing realism particularly concerned questions of Hungarian politics, which means that the fact that Lukács was working during those years in the party apparatus in exile as a member of the Foreign Committee and as an associate of Jenő Landler is quite significant. At that time, his primary interests did not include cultural and literary questions. As he himself wrote in 1968: "Since the years between 1918 and 1930 were the period of my political engagement, it is understandable that questions concerning aesthetics and literary history are barely reflected in my writings from that time."² This statement does not quite correspond to the facts, for today we know of quite a few articles written by Lukács in the twenties, which deal specifically with cultural and literary, indeed, aesthetic questions.³ But it is, nevertheless, true that Lukács was mainly involved in politics, and, as a result, his thoughts concerning literature and art evolved more within the framework of political strategy than within the realm of philosophy or aesthetics.

Factors Shaping Lukács's Conception of Revolution

Lukács's conception of revolution played a central role not only in his political outlook, but also in the development of his ideas on culture. He believed in the inevitability of a revolution that was delayed on account of the capitalist consolidation, but, nevertheless, was seen as occurring in the not-too-distant future, and this belief was based on the same praxis philosophical standpoint that had led to the writing of *History and Class Consciousness* a few years earlier. There were so many changes from the mid-twenties on that he increasingly felt the need to buttress his previous position with historical-realist (or what he so considered) arguments. Three factors exercised a powerful in-

fluence on his 'realized' conception of revolution. Primary was the lesson of the defeat of the 1919 Hungarian Republic of Councils, once the initial state of shock had passed. The entire experience formed a complex web in the political thinking of the Hungarian communists; here we can mention only some of its aspects. One could derive from the lessons of 1919 either 'leftist' conclusions, or ones that led to a recognition of the facts, and many of those lessons were seen only through a filter. It seems that Lukács's thinking reflected both approaches in this regard. There have been cases when various pre-conditions, which sometimes became unexpectedly linked but had widely different roots, had to be present in order for a major revolution to erupt. There is no such thing as a 'pure' proletarian revolution and the Hungarian revolution was no exception, in that the national crisis and peasant unrest played important roles.⁴ The essential factor is that every significant stratum of society should begin moving on its own, almost spontaneously, so that, in that situation, a small revolutionary organization can step in to lead events, and its resoluteness and audacity can decisively influence the fate of the entire revolution. Lukács was quite prone to go along with the common notion that the 'social democrats' betrayal' constituted the major factor in the defeat. According to this view, the revolution had failed because the leading group in the dictatorship could not assert the principle of the final resolve with sufficient consistency.⁵ Eventually, however, Lenin's criticisms after 1919, some of which were directed at Lukács personally, and the lessons of the unsolved or poorly solved democratic tasks led him to become more realistic in his assessment of the situation.

The other important factor in Lukács's conception of revolution in those years, and one that was closely linked to the above factor, was Lenin's influence. One may say that in the mid-twenties he conducted his study of Marx through the mediation of Lenin and, given Lukács's basic attitude of praxis philosophy, this was quite natural. He was particularly influenced by the theory of permanent revolution as found in Lenin's *Two Tactics*, and as it resurfaced in 1917. He had his own interpretation of this theory. On the one hand, it reinforced his opinion on the 'impurity' of proletarian revolution and convinced him that there was no sharp demarcation between the bourgeois and proletarian revolutions, the one being a transition into the other. On the other hand, Lukács applied the concept of permanent revolution not only to the more underdeveloped countries, but to the whole of Europe, and this—as we shall see—is clearly reflected in the "Blum Theses", written in late 1928. Lukács felt that all great revolutions, even if differing from previous ones, had to continue to be people's revolutions. To his mind, the popular aspect made possible the fusion of the explosive energies of the various revolutionary discontents, and, with the unfolding demarcation and crystallization of the class lines in the process, the necessary dynamic force is retained, so that the revolution may be carried through to its final proletarian consummation.

This led Lukács to engage in a thorough study of the great revolutions of the past, especially the history of the French Revolution. With the passing of the revolutionary years, the 'realistic surpassing' of *History and Class Consciousness* was accompanied by a growing interest in history. And this interest primarily meant the investigation of the prehistory of Marxism and the great revolutions of the past. The conclusions that Lukács drew from his study of the French Revolution constitute the third element in his conception of revolution and, at the same time, the component that links his conception of revolution with his views on modern cultural, literary, and artistic development. He considered the great bourgeois revolutions, especially the French Revolution,

to have been events that had created the highest and greatest number of values in the history of mankind. This is where the roots of Marxism were to be found:

The real background to the greatness of Marx and Engels is only to be seen when we show what they inherited from their forerunners [...] This is the only way that we can understand that the basis for their scientific endeavors is that vast historical process which had brought about modern history's major revolutionary movements, the industrial revolution, and, as its consequence, the great bourgeois political revolutions.⁶

Mankind's great intellectual-cultural values of the past were always linked to the great bourgeois revolutions, or to the great and lengthy anti-feudal struggles. This was the case in Hungary even at the time of the cultural ferment—'bourgeois' from the class point of view—in the early 1900s. In this way, his youthful contact with Hungarian literature and the cultural revival at the beginning of the century, indirectly and partly subconsciously, played a role in the development of his views. In Lukács's opinion, the establishment of the great cultural values of the past was closely connected with the fact that the plebeian masses of the revolutionary eras did not want simply a bourgeois revolution. Their intellectuals—the philosophers, writers, and artists—did not see, and could not have seen the bourgeois limitations of their activities, and this was not without a certain reality, for, within their framework of abstract and purely ideal categories, they had utopistically envisioned the real and full emancipation of all mankind, and their work reflects this characteristic, which goes beyond the bourgeois conceptual framework. As Lukács wrote in his study of Lenin, the proletarian revolution is not a simple negation of the bourgeois revolution.

For the real revolution is the dialectical transformation of the bourgeois revolution into the proletarian revolution. The undeniable historical fact that the class which led or was the beneficiary of the great bourgeois revolutions of the past becomes objectively counter-revolutionary does not mean that those objective problems on which its revolution turned have found their social solutions—that those strata of society who were vitally interested in the revolutionary solution of these problems have been satisfied. On the contrary, the bourgeoisie's recourse to counter-revolution indicates not only its hostility towards the proletariat, but at the same time the renunciation of its own revolutionary traditions. *It abandons the inheritance of its revolutionary past to the proletariat [...]* Thus, the proletarian revolution now means at one and the same time the realization and the supersession of the bourgeois revolution.⁷

Lukács's conception of revolution as outlined above also provides an answer to a further question concerning the extent and character of the significance of the ideological struggle against feudal remnants. There was much more to it than the notion that the struggle for the realization of democratic revolutionary demands in a sense clears the way for a proletarian revolution. The bourgeois compromise with the feudal forces became almost inseparably enmeshed with the notion of the late bourgeois decline. The compromise that was forged with the old, conservative forces, what in Hungary is referred to as 'historical Hungary', and bourgeois neo-conservatism thus became practically interchangeable. We can again see how profoundly—among other factors—the social and cultural experiences gained in Hungary influenced Lukács: his articles of Hungarian concerns reflect a blurring of the demarcation between a reconciliation with feudal remnants and modern 'decadence'.

This conception of revolution was closely linked to the internal debates of the HPC after 1919 and was close to the view of the so-called 'Landler faction', or, more precisely, was a particular version of that view. At its first congress in 1925, the HPC adopted the view urged by Lukács and József Révai—who had Landler's support—which, while aiming at bringing about an immediate proletarian revolution, also left

room for the possibility—in view of Hungary's strong feudal remnants—that the road to a proletarian revolution might lead through some sort of a democratic transitional phase. Accordingly, the positions adopted by the congress reflected to a wider extent than previously such questions as the peculiar characteristics of Hungary's modern development, the ways in which Hungary's agricultural development differed from that of the West, the critique of the ultra-radical mistakes of 1919, and the incorporation of unsolved democratic demands into the communists' strategy (land reform, abolition of the semi-feudal elements of Hungary's social superstructure, etc.). While this political direction was accepted by all of the various factions of the Hungarian communist émigré movement, it soon became obvious that they had different interpretations of what it meant. Essentially, Béla Kun and his group retained the 1919 platform—purged of its most glaring errors—and would have liked to see an amended version of it revived. The Landler group, the most respected theoretician of which was Lukács, sought to draw far-reaching conclusions from the errors of 1919 and from the newest international experiences in connection with the nexus between democracy and the communist movement. With the death of Jenő Landler in the spring of 1928, Lukács's influence in the party's Foreign Committee became even stronger, especially concerning the more long-term ideological questions, and this development brought with it a strengthening of the endeavors aimed at reforms.

The 1928—29 Crisis in the Movement: Factional Struggles

All of these debates and problems were closely linked with the activities and line of the Communist International. The new policy of 1925, which had sought a way out of the ultra-radical sectarian line of the past was tied in with the internal balance of forces of the international communist movement and its influence on the Hungarian émigré communist party. The influence of Kun and his circle was on the wane at the time, and this fact, too, had a bearing on the way the communists sought a more sophisticated political platform. After 1927, however, this situation gradually changed. In 1928—29, the movement entered a phase of protracted crisis as the anti-Trotskyist struggle gave way to the struggle against 'rightist opportunism'. This turn was not yet obvious at the time of the sixth congress of the Comintern in the summer of 1928. Indeed, it was this congress that adopted the new Comintern program, which grouped the countries of the world into three categories from the point view of revolutionary strategy: immediate struggle for proletarian revolution in the developed capitalist countries; struggle for the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants in the backward countries; and in the developing countries, which were at a stage between the above two types, a combination of the two types of struggle, that is, a revolutionary strategy such that, once the struggle for the democratic dictatorship of the working class and peasantry is achieved, this democratic dictatorship would develop into the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The contradictions within the international movement were known to the Hungarian communists in exile. While signs of this deep crisis were not readily visible before, there was a definite unease in the air both during and immediately following the congress. Sharp debates flared up again between Kun and Gyula Alpári, both of whom were members of the Hungarian delegation to the congress. Their dissensions, which were rather confused and often supported by contradictory arguments, primarily con-

cerned their respective evaluations of Hungarian fascism and social democracy. Alpári held that Kun and, indeed, the entire Hungarian party followed an incorrect, unrealistic, and sectarian political line, and he gave voice to this opinion at various official Comintern forums. He did not think that the Hungarian Horthyite regime could be characterized as fascist, but rather, classified it as a disguised dictatorship. He also felt that the Hungarian social democratic party was not a fascist party, and denied that it kept wavering between liberalism and fascism. He agreed that it had betrayed the working class, but maintained that it was nevertheless an oppositional party: "It is our policy that is wrong. If we go to the workers with the line that the social democratic party is fascist, they'll laugh at us [...] Our slogans are revolutionary clichés."⁸ Alpári's views, which had contained a great deal of realism, especially on account of his rejection of the 'social-fascism' line, was officially scorned by the Comintern. It should, however, be added that, despite the minority status of Alpári's views, no ideological campaign was initiated against his opinions. This was primarily due to the fact that the sectarian turn was still in its embryonic stage in the summer of 1928. A further reason was the fact that Alpári was not working in the Hungarian '*apparat*,' he was not pushing his views as a platform to be adopted, and he had excellent connections in the movement as a whole. On the other hand, Kun, who was paying close attention to shifts in political currents, was rather cautious in elaborating his stand, although the unfolding new line only reinforced his old 'leftism', and he was supported by Lukács, Révai, and others in his debate with Alpári. Discussing the draft program of the Comintern, Kun once said to the members of the Hungarian delegation that "the categorization of nations from the point of view of the necessity of democratic dictatorship should be dropped because it can lead to all sorts of opportunism," but when Révai suggested that the Hungarian delegation should openly state its view in the program committee of the congress, "Jenő Varga opposed the motion and comrade Kun considered such a speech before the program committee superfluous".⁹

By the fall of 1928, a gradual change had set in. The more the general campaign against 'rightist opportunism' got under way, the more Kun sought to use it as a weapon against the Foreign Committee, which, according to him, was permeated with 'Landlerism' and followed an opportunist line, directing the party work within Hungary dictatorially. Kun's primary targets were Lukács and Révai, the two highly respected ideologists. These endeavors may be clearly seen in the 'trade-union debate', which became particularly sharp in the course of the year. In the fall, Kun criticized the Foreign Committee, and Révai in particular, for obstructing the implementation of the decisions of the sixth congress of the Comintern and those of the International of Red Trade Unions (Profintern) on the need to form parallel red unions. He accused them of 'opportunistically' concentrating on working within the established unions and of supporting and seeking to win over a few left-wing groups, which had broken away from the reformist trade unions around that time, with the aim of creating some sort of united front to be organized 'from above'. In turn, the Foreign Committee brought up the deviationism of Béla Szántó, a member of the Kun faction. Szántó had earlier expressed an opinion to the effect that the Hungarian working-class movement had reached new depths, one sign of the absence of a left-wing revival, being the actual drop in union membership. Kun waited for weeks before replying, and then, at the end of 1928, accused the Foreign Committee of seeking to distract attention from its own opportunism by vastly exaggerating the significance of Szántó's "partial deviations".¹⁰

The debate was only exacerbated. This period is usually referred to in Hungarian

historiography as the 'revival of factional struggles', and it is traced back to largely subjective causes. However, the fact remains that these factional struggles had their own definite and objective meaning, which was partly related to ideological and political differences, and partly rooted in the psychological significance of struggle. At the end of 1928 and in early 1929, that is, around the time that Stalin gave a major speech attacking the German rightists and appeasers, the struggle in the Hungarian émigré party was centered around the questions concerning the new campaign against 'opportunist deviationism', which involved all communist parties: Who was to lead the campaign? What was to be its starting point? What questions was the campaign to encompass? Who were to be the targets of the campaign? The significance of this struggle was only accented and the underlying passions only fueled by the fact that, beginning in the fall of 1928, the Hungarian party was preparing for a new congress in order to work out a line suited to the nation's needs on the basis of the program adopted at the Comintern's sixth congress.

Seizing the initiative, the Kun faction attacked the 'opportunism' that recognized in connection with trade-union questions and prepared for an all-out political offensive against the ideologists of the Foreign Committee, in order to put an end to the old 'Landlerist' line. Lukács and, more cautiously, Révai, along with those militants who supported them, attacked the 'opportunist danger' posed by the Szántó and Alpári line and criticized the Kun faction for its conciliatory attitude toward this 'genuine' rightist deviation. We have precise information on this from Révai's letter to Kun of February 13, 1929, on behalf of the Foreign Committee. It is both detailed and 'tactical' in its phrasing. Révai expressed regret that they still had not been able to convince Kun of the correctness of their thinking. It was not true, he pointed out, that their emphasis on the opportunist danger posed by Szántó's and Alpári's views hindered the party in carrying out the struggle against the incorrect trade-union policy that Kun considered to be the real opportunist danger. On the contrary, he said, these two men's views were closely linked to the trade-union question. Alpári, he added, 'is precisely the vacillators' ideologue concerning the question of the political prerequisites for the switch in union tactics and, in general, for the switch in attitude toward social democracy'. While conceding that Alpári had no links with the Hungarian movement, he felt that this made him all the more dangerous as the mouthpiece of international trends. "Julius's general political analysis and Róbert's analysis of the working-class movement are such that if they were valid, no new trade-union tactic could be based on them."¹¹ ('Julius' and 'Róbert' were Gyula Alpári's and Béla Szántó's respective aliases in the illegal communist movement.)

The Foreign Committee's February 9, 1929 letter and Révai's above-mentioned letter four days later informed Kun that the draft outline of their political and organizational theses proposal for the oncoming congress had been sent to him and that the political theses were drawn up by 'Blum' (Lukács's alias at the time). The theses proved a boon to Kun and greatly contributed to the fact that he came out on top in the factional struggle—which is not to say that he had it easy. Conditions in the movement at that particular time worked in his favor and against the interests of the other communist émigré ideologues.

The "Blum Theses"

Hungarian historiography has yet to analyze the "Blum Theses" thoroughly, despite the 'rehabilitation' of that draft program many years ago. The colloquium on the theses, which was held in 1956,¹² turned into an exciting political forum, raising many interesting ideas, but it failed to provide a deeper analysis of it. Lukács himself provided significant insights toward the correct interpretation of his political tract of over a quarter of a century ago. But in his opening and closing presentations at the colloquium he restricted himself to explaining some of the thoughts in the theses and to seeking to place them within the context of the development of the policies of the Hungarian party. In any case, it is clear that he did not deal with the deeper conceptual core of the theses in any essential way—perhaps because he himself no longer recalled fully the totality of the 1928 situation and because the critiques written at the end of the 1920s also failed to deal with this aspect. This gap was only partly recognized in his late (1968) autobiographical piece, "Marxista fejlődésem 1918–1930" [My Marxist development: 1918–1930] and, thus, however inadvertently, he himself had contributed to some extent to the distortion of the intentions underlying the theses.

The above-mentioned autobiographical preface does contain a few vital pointers to assist one's orientation. As far as 'the Russians' central question' was concerned, he wrote, he sided with Stalin, but found the latter's extreme anti-social-democratic stance in 1928 repugnant. (This seems to have been constructed by Lukács only in retrospect, as neither the theses nor any of his other writings of the period give any hint of this aversion.) He goes on to mention his opposition to both Trotskyism and the right-wing as represented by Brandler and Thalheimer.

In order to clarify my own political and theoretical views, I was looking for a 'genuine' leftist program, which could become a third alternative to these two poles, for example, in Germany. However, this dream of reconciling the contradictions of the transition period through such a politico-theoretical solution remained just that, a dream. I never did manage to find a solution, not even one that pleased no one but myself, and, thus, I never did appear on the international political stage, neither as a theoretician, nor as a practical politician.¹³

With his "Blum Theses", however, Lukács did appear on the stage of the Hungarian movement. According to Lukács's above-quoted evaluation of the theses, which sought to downplay their significance, the "Blum Theses" constituted a link in the chain—the closing link for a while—of endeavors, which were admittedly weak, inconsistent, but, nevertheless, ongoing since 1920, aimed at checking the dominant sectarian spirit prevailing in the party leadership. The theses, said Lukács in 1956,

made use of the opportunity created by the sixth congress (...) strategically and theoretically they wanted to lend support to those political maneuvers which the party leadership conducted with the Socialist Workers' Party of Hungary (SWPH) and with the SWPH's program—until that time there was a sharp break and a dichotomy between the party's slogan calling for a dictatorship and the SWPH's slogan demanding a republic [...] in those other questions where no such opportunity was afforded, the theses were meant to be in full harmony with the line of the Comintern and of the CPSU [...] all of the weaknesses and contradictions of the "Blum Theses" are a result of the concentration of the new line of anti-sectarianism on just one thing, which gave rise to certain internal contradictions (...) one may say that it was a rear-guard action, which was followed by what was practically the full triumph of sectarianism (...) was the only one to represent this view within the Landler faction.¹⁴

We have to accept this and there is really nothing to interfere with that acceptance,

even of the final quote. While the possibility and necessity of a transitional democratic-revolutionary phase was by no means a Hungarian or a Lukács discovery, and although in the second half of 1928, several of the émigré leaders of the party, including Révai, favored a resolution of the dichotomy in the party's policy along similar lines, basing themselves on the program accepted at the sixth congress of the Comintern, no one had posed the problem as resolutely, unequivocally, and courageously as Lukács did. We also have to accept that assertion of his according to which the theses, at least from the aspect of setting a democratic dictatorship as the goal, "constitute a theoretical summation of the praxis of the party, or, at least, of one tendency within it"¹⁵—by which Lukács meant the Landler faction.

There is, however, a more profound intellectual current underlying the theses and this is what links them to the totality of Lukács's oeuvre. In this case, too, we witness his characteristic approach of seeking to fit practical political questions into a broad theoretical framework and, at the same time, into the context of his own intellectual development. Here we are in agreement with Lukács's retrospective analysis that the conception behind the "Blum Theses" was in effect a last effort to apply the thoughts to practical policy that had occupied him during the twenties. More precisely, it was a final effort to reconcile political reality and his own praxis philosophy, a revolutionary-utopian social theory, which had sustained quite a bit of wear and tear by 1928. This defeat marked the end of an era for Lukács, and, together with changes on the world stage, led to a turning point in his life.

The opening and closing chapters of the theses¹⁶ deal with the situation in Hungary. His analysis is in many respects more to the point and more profound than other political accounts of the time. He placed great emphasis on the growth of capitalism in Hungary and on the relative expansion of industry. In many ways he provides a realistic picture of the existing and growing contradictions between the capitalist and feudal classes within the context of their collective identity of interests. And Lukács had no illusions concerning the provincial character of Hungarian foreign policy and its unrealistic assessment of the major demarcations of international power relationships. The theses emphasize the outstanding significance of the agrarian question and the profound dissatisfaction of the peasant masses, which had no political expression because they had no independent political representation. Lukács pointed to the various maneuvers supported by the ruling circles to bring about an 'agrarian front' and an anti-rural 'urban front', 'which conceal from the petit-bourgeois and working-class strata the fundamental problem, which is the ever-growing cooperation between the large estate holders and the big capitalists, despite their contradictions'. But, nevertheless, he added, 'the actual economic situation indicates an identity of interests between urban and rural workers in every concrete question.'

But this, in many ways correct, analysis of the Hungarian scene was based on the same contradictory foundation as the Central Committee's report of summer, 1928¹⁷—it needed to present the counter-revolutionary system, which then was still in the process of consolidation, as being in the throes of a growing crisis and facing disintegration; finding arguments to support this thesis came later. Lukács sought to resolve this contradiction in a more consistent manner than previous analysts, but this endeavor, rather than succeeding, made the contradiction even more glaringly obvious.

The theses gave the following as the main characteristics of the situation in Hungary:

the lower and medium strata of society abandon the parties of the consolidation and become alienated from

the counter-revolutionary and pro-consolidation ideologies; the Bethlen regime becomes isolated from the masses; the survival of the Unified Party as a framework, accompanied by the disintegration and dissolution of the national united front.¹⁸

In the face of this process, the government takes the following defensive measures: it seeks to resolve the contradictions between the two leading classes, the big capitalists and landowners;

it strengthens the machinery of state. Gömbös as secretary of state for defense [...] politics that flirt with social democracy. Steadily growing involvement of the bureaucracy in the state machinery [...] playing for time on the question of the monarchy [...] total subservience to the new Entente.¹⁹

The theses conclude with the following summary of the situation:

as general turmoil in the various social classes and the beginning of the regime's universal crisis. However, at the same time there are only pro-consolidation parties on the surface of political life as a result of the experiences of the two revolutions and subsequent counter-revolution. Given this situation, the slogan of democracy comes increasingly into the fore as the necessary incarnation of the consolidation, from the points of view of both Bethlen and the liberal opposition [...] In other words, insofar as there is going to be an attempt—partly under Anglo-French duress, as in the other Balkan states—at reorganizing the system it is most likely going to be a democratic reorganization: the total liquidation of bourgeois democracy within democratic forms. However, this does not mean the ascent to power of new classes, not even of new strata [...] It does not matter if Bethlen carries through with this democratic reconstruction, or if it is executed by a Kállay-Apponyi coalition, or if Bethlen coopts Kállay and Apponyi into the national united front, the class content of the regime is going to remain the same, regardless of the democratic window dressing. United through finance capital, the large estates and big capital will continue to rule together with the fascistized state machinery, in total subservience to the Anglo-French imperialist block, as its mercenary in the war against the Soviet Union.²⁰

This analysis of the situation necessarily implies that Lukács rejected the dualism of 'social-liberal' and 'social-fascist' paths—which Kun still retained—and brought the two alternatives under a common heading, since social democracy plays the main role in both. This analysis seems to have resolved the contradiction between the consolidation and the growing crisis insofar as it regards the consolidation, together with its liberal tendencies, as a superficial phenomenon of a new period of crisis, that is, as a manifestation of it.

Even the foregoing quotations point to the fact that, once better scrutinized, the theses are not just based on the characteristics of the Hungarian scene in general, nor on those of the less- or medium-developed countries, but are addressed to a considerably broader problem area. The most important parts of the theses deal with the world situation and the prospects facing world capitalism.²¹ They make it especially plain that the conceptual underpinnings of Lukács's theses differed significantly from other contemporary communist approaches. Lukács also took as his point of departure the line that world imperialism had entered its 'third phase', as the sixth world congress had put it, which meant a new, crisis-laden period for capitalism. As mentioned above, Lukács sought to apply this notion to the Hungarian situation as well. As the theses themselves imply, however, this crisis is not fundamentally connected to the economic difficulties of capitalism, but, rather, primarily to its political system and the problems of its superstructure, to the radical alteration of the relationship between capitalism and democracy. To be quite clear about this, we must quote some hitherto neglected passages of the theses:

If we want to introduce the slogan of democratic dictatorship as a concrete strategic step in the present era, we have to clarify what democracy means and what forms it assumes in the interest of the consolidation of the rule of the bourgeoisie in the post-war, third phase of imperialism.²²

On account of the fact that the workers of Europe had for so long struggled alongside the bourgeoisie for democracy,

they have a hard time recognizing the totally new situation that has come about with imperialism, despite the fact that we practically have a textbook case of this development in the democracy of the United States, where the bourgeoisie is the exclusive ruling class [...] and has succeeded in creating such forms of democracy as allow full opportunity for the free development, circulation and expansion of capital and at the same time perfectly retain the superficial forms of democracy, while effectively blocking any real input on the part of the working masses as far as the actual political leadership is concerned. America is the ideal of today's bourgeoisie not only in the economic, but also in the political sense. In recent years, the political evolution of the great 'Western democracies' increasingly tends in this direction, to realize this type of democracy in some form or other. As far as the working masses are concerned [...] these illusions are primarily sustained by social democratic policies.²³

Lukács went on to point out that there are two main paths to fascistization. One is that taken by Mussolini, 'who smashed the old trade unions with a counter-revolution supported by the petty bourgeoisie and middle peasantry.' This approach entailed dangers for both the bourgeoisie and the labor bureaucracy. It had cost the bourgeoisie a great deal of effort 'to transform the petty-bourgeois counter-revolution into a haute-bourgeois consolidation, and a part of the labor bureaucracy loses its position in the labor movement.' From the points of view of the haute bourgeoisie and social democracy, the 'democratic' path was the more favorable one. 'Given this situation, it becomes understandable why the whole of the international social democratic movement poses the question as follows: democracy of fascism?' It was for this reason that today 'the primary task is to expose the misleading nature of posing the question as being a choice between democracy or fascism.' It had to be shown that 'the presently beginning democratic evolution (in Hungary) is just as much a type of fascistization as in the "Western democracies" and—unlike the Italian type—is based on the cooperation between the haute bourgeoisie and the labor bureaucracy.' Besides the 'classic', Italian form of fascistization, which was being relegated to the background, the main path today was the 'democratic form of fascistization', and the 'liquidation of democracy by democratic means'. 'This is the reason why the slogan "class against class" must be posited against the slogan "democracy or fascism", because that would mobilize the working people for the struggle for democratic demands, for the democratic dictatorship.'

It is only after this that Lukács turned to a discussion of the principles underlying the need for a democratic dictatorship in Hungary. However great a significance he attributed to the remnants of feudalism and to the democratic solution of the agrarian question, his primary concern was directed at the Bethlen regime's turning away from the Italian path and seeking a transition to 'Western democratic' methods. 'With the strengthening of capitalist production, and with the parallel distancing from both the revolution and the counter-revolution, the consolidated Hungarian counter-revolution enters the era of "Western-type of development".' The theses go on to say that the HPC posits the struggle for total democracy, a republic, led by a government representing the workers and peasants, against a democratized fascism. The HPC struggled against the democratic liquidation of democracy and would put into practice the slogan of 'class against class' as a means of rallying people for the struggle for a democratic dictatorship.

It is hoped that the rather lengthy paraphrases suffice to make it clear that the statements that Lukács made concerning the "Blum Theses" later in his life considerably narrowed the real concept underlying the document. In the theses, Lukács referred to the 1928 program of the Comintern, but, in fact, employed two different interpretations

of the concept of 'democratic dictatorship', and tended either to telescope the two or to waver between them. One interpretation pertains to the underdeveloped or less developed nations and a worker-peasant democratic dictatorship, while the other involves its application to the conditions of the modern Europe. For Lukács, the latter was more important, more essential. His basic ideas were not primarily related to the situation of the underdeveloped or less developed countries and were not based on their problems; he was not primarily talking about feudal remnants, various forms of government, or the unsolved nature of the agrarian question. The essence of the theses is as follows: at the time of a still consolidated capitalism, Lukács projected a 'neo-capitalist'—manipulated bourgeois democracy, and he identified this process with fascistization. Thus, he preceded and foreshadowed the Frankfurt School's ideas, and, indeed, that sociological school's conception of fascism. At the core of Lukács's perception was his view of the political use made of the alienation, atomization, and dehumanization in bourgeois society within the conditions of a Europe entering a pre-fascist phase. In the effort to establish a 'third choice', Lukács's conception was in fact a veiled proposal aiming to give the official communist political line a more profound and serious ideological grounding. At the same time, this ideological proposal had a 'price' and was not just a simple yielding to the official line. In an oblique way and, in a sense, in exchange for the ideological grounding, Lukács called on the communist movement to give a democratic answer to the anti-democracy of capitalism. That is to say, the alternative should be posed as capitalism or democracy, to replace the social democrats' fascism-or-democracy choice, which Lukács considered incorrect.

The foregoing should suffice to indicate that Lukács was mistaken when he claimed that the internal contradictions of the theses were due to the fact that they 'concentrated on one point', on the one issue created by the sixth Comintern congress that linked them to the battle against the sectarianism then dominant among the Hungarian party leadership. The concept touched on the basic problems of the entire international communist movement, and the real background to the contradictions is to be found in the basic concept itself. Let us disregard for the moment the fact that Lukács's 1928 forecast failed to materialize and simply see that the theses, on the one hand, absolutized one of capitalism's undoubtedly existing, long-term developmental tendencies, and, on the other, viewed that trend as a directly given situation. This basis for Lukács's ideas concerning the renaissance of the communist movement gave rise to the central error of the theses: the direct identification of fascism (fascistization) with the political superstructure of modern capitalism in general and, connected with this, the radically mistaken evaluation of the nature, place, and role of social democracy. Lukács somewhat misrepresented his 1928 position in his reflections, when he sought to attribute the errors of the theses concerning the question of social democracy to a need to conform to the more or less obligatory political line of the movement at that time. The facts do not bear this out. Not only was Lukács in considerable agreement with the Comintern's assessment of this question; in fact, the underlying concept of his theses rests on his having gone beyond the Comintern position.²⁴

As they were, Lukács's theses implied a highly problematic practical political position, as they were based on profound but one-sided social philosophical ideas carried to an extreme. Given that they had never been submitted to the party membership, they had in fact never had a chance of becoming the party platform. While they contained some correct elements—the goal of a peasant-worker democratic dictatorship as a transitional phase to aim for in Hungary, or the notion of a democratic dictatorship led by

the communists—nothing could offset the negative aspects of the errors concerning the relationship between fascism and democracy, and, especially, between fascism and social democracy. When asked in 1958 if he saw any direct links between the “Blum Theses” and the later popular-front conception, József Révai replied that he definitely did not.²⁵ Undoubtedly, Révai, who had considerable personal reasons to tend to emphasize the errors of the theses, was right in this case from several points of view.

Debates Concerning the “Blum Theses”

As we know, Lukács's ideas were rejected. Not only were the theses dismissed; they also became the focal point of a campaign against ‘rightist opportunism’ among the Hungarian communist émigrés, despite the fact that his deeper intentions were only partially understood by his comrades in the movement. Most of them, including those close to Lukács as well as those who were against him, and, indeed, in a few years’ time, Lukács himself, restricted themselves to the passages pertaining to Hungary. In particular, they focused on one point that was particularly important to Lukács; namely, dropping the hitherto sacrosanct notion of the need for directly introducing the dictatorship of the proletariat, in favor of a necessary democratic phase. Aside from this criticism, the only other charge randomly brought up at various forums, the decisions of which were heavily influenced by Kun, was that, on the whole, Lukács's theses were rather ‘speculative’ in nature.

Béla Kun, who undoubtedly was thinking in international terms, grasped the deeper intentions underlying the theses perhaps better than anyone else. Convinced that the Comintern leadership would reject Lukács's proposals, he wrote a lengthy critique.²⁶ Naturally, he, too, concentrated on attacking the Hungarian-related points, seizing the opportunity to criticize the old political views of the Landler faction, which were, of course, reflected in Lukács's theses. Kun was particularly emphatic on the point that the remnants of feudalism in Hungary no longer had any independent economic significance. He opposed the theory of ‘two ruling classes’ (‘there are not two ruling classes; finance capital rules over industrial and agricultural capitalism’), and, ‘correcting’ the program that was adopted at the sixth Comintern congress, he claimed that, as far as Hungary was concerned, there was no need for any transitional phase before the introduction of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the same time, remaining true to his sectarian anti-democratism, Kun drew a more realistic picture of the Hungarian power structure and its perspectives, as well as of some other political questions than Lukács did. He wrote that, contrary to Lukács's opinion, there was no ‘democratic’ alternative to the Bethlen régime, as the liberal opposition was weak and Lukács's theses underestimated the strength and influence of the ‘petty-bourgeois-fascist’ counter-revolution. Kun felt that, essentially, the establishment of Hungarian fascism resembled the Italian scheme of things much more. Kun was realistically didactic even on the nationality question: ‘What is missing alongside the negative slogan of “Down with territorial integrity” is the positive slogan advanced by the Comintern: “Struggle for national self-determination”.’

Furthermore, Kun kept returning to the theses’ general conception of democracy, realizing that this constituted the cornerstone of Lukács's ideological-political edifice. He put the questions of the liquidation of democracy by democratic means, the democratic

form of fascism, and the democratic tasks facing the communist movement—and that not only in relation to the position of an underdeveloped country. As Kun wrote:

What the theses seem primarily to forget is that bourgeois democracy has always been only a formal democracy. Thus, the notion of the liquidation of bourgeois [formal] democracy by 'democratic means' is just an empty phrase, and the only meaning we may glean from it is that formal democracy will exist further on because otherwise we get only a confused contradiction.²⁷

Lukács, he continued, underestimated the role of the party, and, instead, put the spontaneity of the masses on a pedestal. Kun felt that it followed logically from Lukács's concept that

the communist parties would also become parties of democratic reform where social democracy fights—of course, with objectively counter-revolutionary aims—for certain democratic reforms also within the framework of bourgeois democracy. This is not just a rightist, but a reformist 'deviation'. There is no democratic form of fascism (social democracy is not fascism).²⁸

However strong its 'social-fascist' tendencies may have become—by which he meant primarily the integration of the social democratic parties into the fascist systems, while Lukács saw social fascism as an organic part of the general fascistization of bourgeois democracy—social democracy had essentially remained the party of traditional petty-bourgeois reformism. In other words, Kun felt that there was no need whatsoever for any new approaches and that the communists should continue the struggle against social democracy as before, but with greater vigor. Referring partly to the general international situation and partly to the Hungarian experience, Kun charged that instead of struggling against 'democratic illusions', Lukács was only creating more of them.

According to the theses, it is the business of the communist party to resuscitate democratic illusions that had died a natural death. As the only party, it is to achieve this by 'seriously struggling for bourgeois democracy', for democratic reforms, and remaining true to the prewar traditions of the Hungarian social democratic party, notwithstanding the fact that that party had trailed in the wake of history in a totally opportunistic manner and was not the party of the *then* already timely democratic revolution, but only the party of democratic reform. The theses want the communist party to return not only to the prewar times, but also to the opportunist errors of the social democratic party at that time!²⁹

In rethinking the basic message of the theses and Kun's critique, we must take a certain exception to Lukács's own evaluation—more or less officially accepted today—of the conflicts in the movement concerning the "Blum Theses". The debate was not simply between various sectarian and anti-sectarian trends, but also between two types of sectarianism. On the one hand, there was Kun's 'conservative leftism' bearing the ever-stronger marks of a bureaucratic sectarianism-cum-'*Realpolitik*' and, on the other, the remnants of a utopian, messianic sectarianism—also seeking the way to realism—that was represented by Lukács. This latter kind of sectarianism, by its very nature, was originally linked with the dream of a direct workers' democracy, and for a long time it was the guardian of democratic thought in the communist movement.

The "Blum Theses" was in the focus of attention of debates within the movement and of the internal conflicts of the communist émigrés in the course of the six months between the spring and fall of 1929. After a brief struggle, the Kun faction succeeded in targeting the campaign against the 'rightist danger' on Lukács's theses and on Révai's 1928 stand on the trade-union question and his conciliatory attitude toward the 'opportunism' of the "Blum Theses", which, in effect, meant an overall attack on the ideological leaders of the former Landler faction.

The most interesting and exciting part of the debate took place between Kun and Révai. For a while, and partly in Lukács's name, too, Révai resisted stubbornly. He started, however, with a serious handicap in that, being forced onto the defensive, he constantly had to fight against the charge of opportunism. In the first, brief period of the debate, which lasted approximately until March, 1929, Révai sought to maintain his earlier opinion, the views of the Landler faction, and the position that, by and large, the "Blum Theses" was not really harmful. After all, the theses recognized the instability of the Horthy regime, the 'shift to the left', they were appropriately anti-social-democrat, and required but a little revising; for instance, dropping the parts pertaining to democratic dictatorship. Révai at that time—as Kun later charged—was engaged in a 'double entry', he was assuring Kun that his main criticisms had been accepted, while at the same time assuring Lukács that the changes he was being asked to make in the theses would not take anything away from his main message, and that only the sections pertaining to the democratic dictatorship should be deleted.

Time, however, was not on Révai's side. Early in March, 1929, in a special resolution, the Central Committee of the HPC stated its support for the "Open Letter" published by the Comintern's Executive Committee against the liquidators of the German Communist party.³⁰ Bringing up the 1919 error of the Hungarian communists, the resolution stated that the German rightists were on the way to 'forming a block with social democracy'. The resolution also noted with satisfaction that the HPC had initiated a struggle 'against rightist liquidationists and appeasers'. It pointed out that, in the Hungarian party, rightism was especially dangerous because the social democratic party was turning into a 'social-fascist' party.

One important document of the Kun-Révai debate is the latter's long letter to the former at the end of March.³¹ Révai carefully remarked that 'it would not be correct to treat a thesis outline (the errors and deviations of which we must criticize among ourselves without concession) as a *platform*.' He gave a weak defense of his own previous stand, saying that, if only because they had occurred earlier, Alpári's and Szántó's views should form the starting point of the struggle against rightist deviation. He defended some positions of the old Landler group, such as the concept of the 'increasingly merging two ruling classes', which not even Kun had attacked previously. None of this could, however, disguise the fact that, on the main questions, Révai was forced to retreat. He exercised self-criticism concerning the matter of trade-union tactics. No longer concerned with the original message of Lukács's theses, he engaged in some complicated logic in order to expose the falsehood of the democratic dictatorship concept, which by then had been largely attributed to Lukács alone. 'All democratic dictatorships,' he said, 'are transitions to proletarian revolution, but not all transitions to proletarian revolution are democratic dictatorship.' The party must concentrate on the objective and not on the transition leading to the realization of that objective:

in our opinion, it is precisely this narrow concentration on the transition that carries with it the danger of opportunism [...] if this question posed in the course of the debate becomes a platform and party line, it would mean a platform for those vacillating elements and strata that would like to see bourgeois democracy adopted as the 'transition' between the present regime and the proletarian revolution. This is nothing less than the menshevik '*Etappentheorie*'.³²

These explanations do not, however, constitute the crux of the retreat. The really new development was that this was the first time that Révai articulated the notion that the

origins and the roots of the rightist deviations of the "Blum Theses" must be sought in the earlier vacillations of the party line going back to the party's first congress.

The fact that, in the wake of the clear and unequivocal slogan of the first congress (that a government of workers and peasants equals the dictatorship of the proletariat) we issued three more slogans, in which references to the democratic revolution dilute the clarity of the slogan, indicates vacillation concerning the unequivocal character of the workers' and peasants' government slogan.³³

Perhaps Révai initially wrote all this in defense of Lukács, and also as a sort of reminder to Kun, who seemingly agreed with the previous party line, but this cannot distract us from the fact that Révai made a concession in principle here, a concession that was not even expected of him; namely he rescinded all of the party's more realistic ideological-political notions that went back to 1924-25, and which were associated with the Landler group. He had thereby given ideological assistance and ammunition to the effort to relegate that group's views to the background.

The most detailed expression of the problem is to be found in another letter, written by Révai to Kun early in May, 1929.³⁴ We can detect the shadow that the ongoing preparations for the tenth plenum of the Comintern's Executive Committee cast over Révai's letter, which was sharper in tone, and reflected greater nervousness than previous ones. Even its conceptual and stylistic drabness did little to hide the drama of the moment. Révai launched into a sharp criticism of Kun; indeed, he sought to intimidate him. In the fall of 1928, Kun said that he would like to act as a 'dialectical buffer' in the debate between 'Julius' and 'Róbert'. Révai brought this up, noting that

at the sixth congress and in the subsequent debate among the rightist liquidationists, conciliators and the Comintern, which was also a debate on, among other things, the question of the evaluation of stabilization and the shift to the left, Stalin did not act as a 'dialectical buffer'.³⁵

He went on to say that, in his January letter, Kun belittled as 'hairsplitting' the debate concerning the struggle against the views of 'Julius' and 'Róbert'. 'The leftward shift of the working class, the question of the crisis of consolidation and the solidity of the stabilization in relation to the evaluation of social fascism—this he calls hairsplitting!' This is followed by a new section in the letter, bearing the title "On straightening the party's strategy", where Révai expressed Kun's innermost thoughts. Aside from agrarian reform, all democratic elements were dismissed and criticized as far as the party's post-1919 political concepts were concerned; in fact, in many respects, Révai even went beyond Kun's views.

He wrote that the new draft thesis drawn up by the Foreign Committee documented wavering in the party's strategy as far back as the founding of the SWPH in 1925. He argued against Kun, saying that 'the promotion of the republican slogan from tactics to strategy' did not occur only in practice, but also reflected the wavering of the strategic concept itself. He went on to say that, since 1925, the party's line had been deviating in favor of a democratic revolution, indeed, liberal democracy. 'Isn't it clear that we had copied Lenin mechanistically, and not just the Lenin of 1917, but of 1905, and at a time when Hungary had already experienced a proletarian revolution?!' Révai admitted that his own July 1928 slogan—'Instead of partial democracy we are fighting for total democracy, for a republic led by a government of workers and peasants'—also constituted a deviation from the correct line. He added, however, that everyone, including Kun, had made similar errors. 'The theses attributed to Blum constitute a systematic

compilation of the party's deviations to date. It, naturally, follows from this that the theses also *go beyond* the previous deviations [...] and, thus, they in no way "excuse" his own errors.' But Révai went on to point out that

it would be equally wrong to use the struggle against Blum as a cover-up of the previous errors or to concentrate merely on combating Blum's theses in the struggle to straighten the party line [...] the radical struggle against Blum's deviations lies precisely in uncovering the roots of Blum's and similar views. And these roots are to be found in the party's previous line [...] It would ill serve the party's development if, as far as strategy is concerned, the struggle against the rightist danger were to be conducted not in the spirit of self-criticism, but in that of scapegoating. The party has cause enough to engage in self-criticism on both the collective and the individual levels.³⁶

Of course, Kun rejected the very thought of 'collective self-criticism'. Instead, he badgered the other members of the Foreign Committee, both verbally and in writing, requesting them not to fall prey to Lukács and Révai, to reject the 'factionalist maneuvers' and 'unprincipled explanations' of the latter individual. In his April 5 letter, he wrote to ask them "to use my next letter in such a way as finally to brand the 'Blum Theses' as opportunist, to make it clear that Blum stands by his theses, and that the starting point of the struggle against the right can be nothing else but this".³⁷ The truth was that Lukács did not insist on his views in public. On several occasions, including in a late memoir, he said that, while retaining his inner conviction, he decided to retreat after a few weeks' resistance.

The people around Kun saw only the purest opportunism in the theses and the support of my own faction was rather lukewarm. Thus, when I heard from a reliable source that Kun was getting ready to have me purged from the party as a 'liquidationist', and knowing his influence in the International, I gave up continuing the struggle and exercised 'self-criticism'.³⁸

In my opinion, Lukács here had somewhat simplified the actual situation. It is true that his self-criticism lacked 'inner conviction', but his awareness was not as clear as he was to lead himself to believe decades later. The campaign against the "Blum Theses" had a very profound effect on Lukács and from that point on, he often had to defend himself against the charge of opportunism. This experience had reinforced the sectarian trait in his political judgment, especially in relationship to social democracy.

On May 2, 1929, Lukács submitted a statement³⁹ to the Central Committee of the party in which he retracted "without conditions" his theses and admitted to their being opportunistic in nature. The statement agreed that the second Hungarian revolution can in no way be of a lower type than the first, which is to say that it is impossible to have a democratic dictatorship follow in the wake of a dictatorship of the proletariat; that Hungary was at a higher level of capitalist development than Russia was in 1917; that the large estate owners have become agrarian-capitalists to a very great degree and the intertwining of agrarian capital and industrial capital under the domination of finance capital is at a very advanced stage; and that, in Hungary, the struggle against the remnants of feudalism could not be based on the peasantry as a whole. In the subsequent months, when the campaign against 'rightist opportunism' and the 'remnants of social democratism within the party' grew unchecked, swelling to ever greater proportions—and in fact it seems to have been a case of shadow boxing against a non-existent enemy—Lukács was forced to write further and sharper statements of self-criticism. In his letter to the Central Committee in early December, 1929,⁴⁰ he took pains to explain:

while my May statement of self-criticism concerning the theses was not thoroughgoing enough, in my present opinion, insofar as it did not criticize with sufficient consistency the theses' attitude toward the struggle for democratic reforms [...] that it did not criticize that part of the theses that states that today—today, at the time of the transformation of democracy into fascism under imperialism—democracy is 'the best battleground for the workers' and failed to see this erroneous line as a very grave opportunism, which would lead to the liquidation of the party's line aiming at socialist revolution, I nevertheless feel it necessary to emphasize that I have unequivocally disowned the theses over half a year ago.⁴¹

The letter makes it clear that no particular exception was taken to that part of Lukács's concept according to which 'democracy is becoming transformed into fascism', that is, which equated modern capitalism with fascism in the final analysis; the sore point involved the assertion that the communist movement was the vanguard in the fight for democracy.

Political Ideology and Cultural Conception

As the foregoing indicates, the "Blum Theses" is political in nature, giving rise to political debates, and does not have direct cultural aspects; none of its passages deals with culture as such. It should also be added here that the theses fail to reflect openly and consistently Lukács's politico-ideological views in all of their aspects because, at the time of their writing, he had to take into account the new situation in the movement, the rapid change in the Comintern when the struggle against so-called 'rightist opportunism' began in 1928. When the struggle revolved around the question of who was to be branded as a rightist opportunist in the Hungarian party—the Kun faction or the Lukács–Révai group, which had played the leading role in the Foreign Committee after the death of Jenő Landler—Lukács understandably sought to phrase his theses in such a way as to leave as little room as possible for the charge of any kind of opportunism. None of this, however, can take away from the fact that the theses mark a decisive post along Lukács's intellectual path and that he himself dated his becoming a 'mature' Marxist from this period. Since that time, we have knowledge of the subsequent evolution of the ideological concepts contained in the theses, that is, of Lukács of the 1930s, and also of the background to the theses, from his 1924 studies on Lenin to the writing of the theses themselves. This comprehensive perspective indicates quite clearly that the "Blum Theses" were closely related to Lukács's thoughts on culture at the time, and, in fact, they constituted the politico-ideological basis of his conception of culture. The significance of the theses is only heightened when we consider—on the basis of Lukács's writings between 1926 and 1928, some of which had not hitherto been identified as his—that from the second half of the 1920s onward, Lukács's conception of culture shows no changes comparable to the previous major turns; on the contrary, in many respects we may note a linear development. This circumstance allows us to state that Lukács's writings from around the end of the 1920s, although overwhelmingly political, ideological, or literary-political in nature, permit the perhaps daring proposition that these years may be regarded as Lukács's 'pre-realist' period.

The "Blum Theses" contained a peculiar interpretation of democratic dictatorship, one that was significantly different from the workers'–peasants' democratic dictatorship conception that was held at that time by the Yugoslav, Romanian, and other communist parties, and from the interpretation given that concept by the program that was accepted by the Comintern's sixth congress. Lukács, as noted earlier, used the term in two senses

without differentiating between them, and this is precisely what makes his use of the concept particularly significant from the point of view of his interpretation of culture.

The political concept underlying the theses rested on two pillars. One might be summed up as follows: developed capitalism had betrayed democracy and is increasingly less able to remain democratic, even though it may formally retain the institutions and rules of bourgeois democracy; bourgeois democracy with its manipulations is nothing less than a particular form of fascism. The other main idea was more closely related to Lenin's *Two Tactics*, in that it emphasized that, in the less developed countries, the democratic transformation is to a large degree a task of the future. Therefore, both the late-bourgeois decline and the situation of the underdeveloped nations demand that the communist movement embrace the cause of democracy, and become the vanguard in the fight for democracy, all the more so because the socialist revolution must be a real people's revolution everywhere, given that socialism cannot be simply 'introduced' anywhere, but must, instead, be based on the broad democratic movement of the working masses.

These political notions are accompanied by a definite conception of culture. First of all, they implicitly acknowledge the importance of culture and cultural activity. What Lukács was essentially getting at in the theses was that, in place of the social-democratic alternative of 'fascism or democracy?', communists pose the question as follows: 'capitalism (i.e., a capitalism mixed with feudalism), or real democracy (with mobility between bourgeois democratic and socialist forms of democracy, i.e., without the forms being rigidly separated)?' At a time when capitalism was still in a relative boom period—nonwithstanding the fact that there was much talk about the general crisis of capitalism—this thought on Lukács's part primarily and necessarily meant a direct critique of the superstructure of the capitalist world. Under such circumstances, Lukács's critique of culture, which was always present in his thought, could come to the fore within the framework of his social criticism. The basic political concepts of the theses were at the same time a definite critique of bourgeois culture. To his mind, it was something to be rejected, even in its 'modernist' or avant-garde trends, which at once merely reflect and prove the decline of culture, indicating that the bourgeoisie is no longer capable of creating anything of cultural value. This was not, however, to be taken as meaning that the past achievements of bourgeois culture were to be dismissed. On the contrary, the enormous cultural values originating in the centuries of great, anti-feudal struggles and revolutions had to be recognized. While abandoning its democratic heritage, the bourgeoisie also abandoned its cultural values, which, in this way, had been inherited by the proletariat. Only the proletariat could discern and accept what was valuable in the work of a Büchner, for example—whom Lukács at that time considered only partly progressive and democratic—and only the proletariat could really appreciate such great writers as Swift, Molière, or Goethe, to mention only those names which Lukács himself cited around the time when he wrote the "Blum Theses".

By analyzing the prerequisites for a democratic dictatorship, the political democratic-revolutionary concept of the theses implicitly placed culture—its national character, past, and traditions—in the foreground. In the Hungarian context, this meant that Lukács rejected in total the attitude of the communist avant-garde artists. He pointed out in one of his articles that, while socialist literature must, of course, be radically new, it must be kept in mind that the new does not issue from a void, but, rather, from the concrete past of the nation's literature. As far as Hungary was concerned, this called for the profound analysis of the nation's two great reform periods, the 1840s and the early years

of the present century, and the upswing in literary activity that characterized those periods. The new literature must organically continue this tradition, though this continuation should be conceived of in the sense of the principle 'to sublate and preserve'.⁴² The conception of the two trends in Hungarian literature, indeed, culture, was based on these notions, which Lukács expounded in 1927–28. On the one hand, there was the conformist, submissive trend, which wanted only a literary revolution; here he mentioned such names as Pál Gyulai, Ignóus, Ernő Osvát, and Mihály Babits. On the other hand, there was the trend from Sándor Petőfi to Endre Ady, which, although not socialist, nevertheless represented the living past of the new socialist culture and literature.⁴³ On the international plane, this meant a new regard for Russian literature and that of the European peripheral nations, but no longer with the emphasis on Dostoevsky, but on Tolstoy.⁴⁴

By the end of the 1920s, and in close relation to the political and strategic concepts of the "Blum Theses", it is easy to see what kinds of art Lukács did not like. He came to adopt views that had no room for any artistic activity of the *l'art-pour-l'art* variety—and, for Lukács, that meant a very broad field. He rejected the avant-garde (his criticisms of Lajos Kassák foreshadow his later stand in the expressionism debate)⁴⁵, he opposed naturalism with socialist or socially-concerned trappings (Upton Sinclair, Sándor Gergely, or János Kodolányi), but felt an affinity for the old classical and realist trends, the then recent Russian and Scandinavian literature, and for the plebeian trends in Hungarian literary revivals.

It is a great deal more difficult to say just what Lukács did have in mind as the new socialist literature. He had very little to say on this in any concrete way, for he was already emphasizing that new social circumstances are a prerequisite for a new culture and literature. He felt that there was a need for such a new society which was to be a true community and would thus be able to stimulate artists atomized by the circumstances of the bourgeois world to create appropriate forms of art. Along with others, Lukács noted that this society had yet to come about even in the Soviet Union. Still, even if this new society was yet to be established, there was a new movement, the communist movement, which both foreshadowed and incorporated in miniature the characteristics of that new community. Therefore, in principle there was nothing to prevent a new, truly socialist work of art from being created.⁴⁶ It is important to note that Lukács was talking about appropriate forms of art and not new forms; the creation of a new, socialist literature did not call for new forms of expression as such. What he had in mind was closer to a further development of the old classical and realist forms, whose new flowering would be made possible precisely by the artists' Marxist consciousness. Thus, the new art would differ from previous art in that, due to this Marxist consciousness, it would reflect social totality more realistically, more multi-dimensionally; and here Lukács meant, of course, the essential relationships that constitute totality.

This conception of culture and literature was located within the framework of the demands of a political strategy. This meant that, while Lukács avoided the narrow sectarianism of *proletkult* trends, he himself was quite illiberal. This was primarily evident in his assessment of Hungarian culture and literature at that time. (Let us recall here that Lukács was active in the émigré movement, and that his primary concern was with Hungarian problems.) Lukács's attitude can be seen, among other examples, in the one-sided interpretation of the literary revolution at the turn of the century, in exaggerating the isolation of, and narrowing down, Ady's role and poetry, in rejecting virtually all writers active in the twenties, including Gyula Krúdy, Babits, and Zsigmond Móricz,

not to mention Kassák. Only a few young writers who were close to the communist movement or who seemed promising to him were spared. The guiding principle behind Lukács's critique of literature and culture was the service of a political strategy, but this was also accompanied by—sometimes to the detriment of strategic considerations—a concern for the stands taken by writers and artists on various political or cultural issues.

Despite the shortcomings of Lukács's attitude and his strong political-mindedness, his concept was far superior to the cultural and literary policies that the party—in both its domestic and émigré wings—adopted in the wake of the major crisis in the movement in 1929 and the subsequent decline in the fortunes of the party. With the rejection of the democratic elements in the previous party line on culture—indeed, its retroactive criticism involved accusations of alleged opportunist deviations concerning democracy going back to 1925—the more sophisticated analysis of culture and literature also suffered a setback. This was reflected in the party platform drafts of the early 1930s and in all those events that followed in the wake of the primitive vulgarization of cultural and literary concepts, which was inseparably linked with the purges and power plays within the movement. Of course, this is not to say that Lukács's conception of culture and literature had a chance—in fact appreciatively—to influence the development of the new Hungarian literature even during the crisis years. Hence, the contradiction could only become more profound as the radicalization of the younger generation of writers during the crisis came up against a communist cultural line so substandard that it could only impede the influence of the revolutionary left on the nation's intellectual élite, a situation that certainly took its toll in the course of subsequent developments. In a typical case, Attila József was attacked by the émigré wing of the Hungarian communist movement precisely at a time when he was ideologically the closest to the illegal communist movement here in Hungary.

For nearly a decade after the condemnation of the "Blum Theses", Lukács did not deal with Hungarian cultural questions; instead, restricted himself to general cultural problems. But he retained the cultural concepts that were implicit in the theses and gave expression to them in veiled, but increasingly sophisticated ways.

(Translated by Sándor Bándy)

Notes

¹ György Lukács: "Marxista fejlődésem 1918—1930" [My Marxist development 1918—1930] in *Curriculum vitae* (Budapest: 1982) p. 292.

² György Lukács: "Előszó" [Preface] to *Művészet és társadalom: Válogatott esztétikai tanulmányok* [Art and Society: Selected aesthetic studies] (Budapest: 1968) p. 7.

³ See Miklós Lackó: "Ideológia, kultúra, irodalom: Adalékok Lukács György publicisztikai működéséhez az 1920-as évek második felében" [Ideology, culture, literature: Contributions to György Lukács's journalistic activity in the second half of the 1920s] in his *Szerep és mű* [Role and work] (Budapest: 1981).

⁴ György Lukács: "Ellenforradalmi erők a magyar proletárdiktatúrában" [Counterrevolutionary forces in Hungary's dictatorship of the proletariat] *Új Március* (March 1, 1928).

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Lajos Németh [György Lukács]: "Plehanov halálának 10. évfordulóján" [On the 10th anniversary of Plekhanov's death] in Aladár Tamás: *A 100%: A KMP legális folyóirata 1927—1930* [The 100%: The legal periodical of the Hungarian Party of Communists] (Budapest: 1977) p. 299 —originally in *100%* (1928) No. 10.

⁷ Georg Lukács: *Lenin. The Unity of His Thoughts* (London: 1970) pp. 48—49.

- 8 Manuscript in the Archives of the Institute of Party History (IPH), archive reference PI 500 f. 1/73.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 Manuscript in the archives of the IPH, archive reference PI 500 f. 2/221/A.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 Concerning the debate, see "Vita a 'Blum-tézisek'-ről" [Debate on the "Blum Theses"] compiled by Mrs. I. Friss and Á. Szabó, *Párttörténeti Közlemények*, II. (1956) no. 3—also in György Lukács: *Curriculum vitae* (Budapest: 1982).
- 13 György Lukács: "Marxista fejlődésem 1918–1930", in *ibid.* p. 308.
- 14 Lukács's comments at the debate held on the "Blum Theses" in June, 1956. Manuscript in Lukács Archives and Library. See also his address in *Curriculum vitae*, pp. 178–79.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 178.
- 16 For the full text of the theses see *Párttörténeti Közlemények*, XXI (1975) No. 4—based on the manuscript in the archives of the IPH, archive reference PI 677 f. 1 cs. 22 ő. e.
- 17 For the manuscript of the Central Committee's report see the archives of the IPH, archive reference PI 500 f. 1/74.
- 18 [György Lukács]: "Tézisrövezet a magyar politikai és gazdasági helyzetről a a KMP feladatairól" [Draft theses concerning the Hungarian political and economic situation and the tasks of the HPC], ed. by Á. Szabó, *Párttörténeti Közlemények*, 1975, No. 4. p. 168. (Extracts were published in English in Georg Lukács: *Political Writings. 1919–1929*, ed. by R. Livingstone (London: 1972).
- 19 *Ibid.*, pp. 169–70.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 171.
- 21 See especially the chapter on Democratic dictatorship.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 186.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 187.
- 24 In one of his last interviews, Lukács himself touched upon the most important aspect of his political stance in the following way: "I was never in contact with the social democrats; I was a rather odd Hungarian radical communist who urged democracy on the communists, but, at the same time, never accepted the social democrats' endeavors to dilute the dictatorship concept. I was between the two camps; I did not sympathize with the social democrats, but neither did I sympathize with those who wanted to introduce communism by dictatorial means". "Életrajz magnószalagon: Eörsi István és Vezér Erzsébet beszélgetései Lukács Györggyel" [Biography on tape] In György Lukács: *Megélt gondolkodás—Életrajz magnószalagon* [Celebrious Denken—Biography on tape] (Budapest: 1989) p. 279.
- 25 Ágnes Szabó's personal communication.
- 26 Manuscript in the archives of the IPH, archive reference PI 677 f. 1 cs. 22 ő. e.
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 Manuscript in the archives of the IPH, archive reference PI 500 f. 2/202.
- 31 *Ibid.*
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- 38 György Lukács: "Marxista fejlődésem 1918–1930", in *Curriculum vitae*, pp. 309–10.
- 39 "Lukács György levele a KMP KB-ja részére" [György Lukács's letter to the CC of the HCP] in *Curriculum vitae*, pp. 454–56.
- 40 György Lukács: "Nyilatkozat" [Statement] in *Curriculum vitae*.
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- 42 For the most details in this regard, see [György Lukács]: "Sarló és Kalapács évkönyv 1926" [The 1926 yearbook of *Sarló és Kalapács*] Új Március (June, 1927).
- 43 Sándor Vajda [György Lukács]: "Két kísértet kézfogása egy sír felett" [The handshake between two ghosts over a grave] *100%* (1927) No. 1.
- 44 Dezső Révai [György Lukács]: "Ibsen Henrik" [Henrik Ibsen] *100%* (1928) No. 7; Sándor Vajda [György Lukács]: "Tolsztoj Leó" [Leo Tolstoy] *100%* (1928) No. 1.
- 45 For details, see [György Lukács]: "Kassák Lajos" [Lajos Kassák] Új Március, (November, 1926).
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Lukács and the Age of Fascism (1930—1945)

by

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This paper will discuss the possibilities of philosophy in the age of fascism in general and the historical possibilities of Marxist thought that were explored (and realized) by György Lukács, in particular. It is little known, or at least not realized sufficiently, that a knowledge of Hegel is a precondition of a profound analysis of the world affairs and the truly important achievements in the philosophy of that era. The Hegelian philosophy of society and history became paradigmatic in the 1930s, especially as the source of Marx's dialectic and of the critical analysis of the bourgeois world, both in the negative and positive senses. But as Heraclitus is quoted as saying: 'Upon those who step into the same rivers different and ever different waters flow down.' Hegel and Marx were paradigmatic for the 1930s, especially as they were interpreted in *History and Class Consciousness*. Let us repeat: both in the negative and positive senses. We shall return to the consequences and must be content with adding that Lukács, whose classicism was subject to attacks, fulfilled the functions of a classic in the philosophy of the age. At least, that was one of his functions.

To what degree was Hegel valid in an age that saw a revival of interest in Kant, the aftermath of the works published by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard, not to mention Ernst Bloch who, if anyone, was instrumental in repudiating Hegel's sanctioning of the status quo¹ and invoked a 'utopia' to challenge the outdated, 'infamous', 'impious', and 'inexact' objective dialectic and the absolute spirit? Bloch made it clear in his *Geist der Utopie* (1918) that Marx could not have laid the foundations of socialism if he had meekly reconciled himself to the Arcadian state of the world.

The thinkers of the age were convinced that the gap between object and subject, between reality and reason was wider than many had hitherto believed, and that Hegel's statement, "Wer die Welt vernünftig ansieht, den sieht sie auch vernünftig an",² was more anachronistic than ever before. As the destruction caused by World War I had hardly been remedied and another war was in the making, the scholars began to doubt the capacity of rational social sciences to explore the past or offer a prognosis of the future. For them the Whole was shattered, in fact, burnt away to nothing. It became untenable to adhere to the intellectual principle of philosophical world history, to the requirement of totality. In 1931, Adorno warned anyone planning to work as a philosopher to give up the illusion of earlier philosophies, namely, that thought can grasp reality. Autonomous reason, the cornerstone of idealistic systems of thought, had collapsed, he argued.³

The philosophers of the age believed that, above all, the individual was threatened by the philosophy that regarded reason, totality, and the absolute spirit as superior in importance. They likened its cruelty toward the individual to a butchery of onrushing soldiers by machine-gun fire. Max Horkheimer asked whether history can of necessity have objective reason that is superordinated to the individual. He answered the question in the negative. In addition to revealing his attitude toward Hegel's 'metaphysics', his answer is informative of Marx's and Engels's (and Lukács's) attitudes toward Hegel:

Andererseits haben Marx und Engels die Dialektik [from Hegel] in einem materialistischen Sinn übernommen. Sie hielten dabei an der Überzeugung Hegels von der Existenz überindividueller dynamischer Strukturen und Tendenzen in der geschichtlichen Entwicklung fest, verwarfen aber den Glauben an eine in der Geschichte wirkende selbständige Macht. Es liegt nach ihnen der Geschichte nichts zugrunde, und es kommt in der Geschichte nichts zum Ausdruck, was als durchgehender Sinn, als einheitliche Macht, als bewegende Vernunft, als immanentes Telos gedeutet werden dürfte [...] Aber Marx gelangt dabei keineswegs zu einer psychologischen Geschichtstheorie. Die geschichtlich handelnden Menschen werden nach ihm nirgends bloss aus ihrem Innern, sei es aus ihrer Natur oder aus einem in ihnen selbst zu entdeckenden Seinesgrund, verstanden, sie sind vielmehr eingespannt in geschichtliche Bildungen, die ihre eigene Dynamik haben. Methodologisch ist Marx hierbei Hegel gefolgt.⁴

Horkheimer confronted the individual's value and reason per se with the 'whole', the substantial, and he considered the idea of totality to be the ideology of preestablished harmony, he degraded the 'cunning of reason' to the status of a myth, and regarded the conception of history that spoke of structures and processes operating on a macro-social scale and governed by rigid scientific laws as narrow and dogmatic metaphysics. To quote Horkheimer, history has progressed from a worse society to a better one and can later improve it, yet its course is paved with anguish and misery for the individual. It is possible, he added, to examine but not to justify these facts.⁵

Facing a deepening economic and political crisis and the rise of fascism in Germany in the early 1930s, the philosophers associated with critical theory rejected Hegel's tenets to the effect that liberty gains objective existence in the state, which is the 'community of being', and that the source of individual liberty is his obeying the law, the law that is his substance. Terrified to see a society that was alienated, shaken by crisis, and split by violent political turmoil, the representatives of critical theory compared the doctrine of the peaceful unity of objective and subjective wills to a death mask of liberal economy. They were convinced that it had to be rejected if one were to outmaneuver the 'cunning of reason'. They believed that the greatest threat to individual liberty was the acceptance of the rationalized bourgeois state, the community as it was, divided into regimented groups, and the law that was declared to be rational. They felt duty-bound to challenge the myth alleging that the general idea finds comfortable shelter in the background and sends passion in its stead to the deadly combat, and they defied Hegel's contention that, because the phenomenon is in part without validity and in part affirmative, and the special is belittled in importance by the universal, 'the individual is sacrificed'.⁶

The theorists rallying round the school of critical theory (whose in-depth analysis is prevented by the limited scope of this paper)⁷ defined the goal of philosophy and social sciences as follows: for the subject of critical thought to turn the contradictions of self-alienated society into self-conscious contradictions: the dialectical negation of the status quo.

The systematic efforts to expose the evils of capitalism and carry out sociological (antipositivistic) research on social phenomena and concomitant ideologies as well as

retain Hegel's method of negation were inevitably combined with the epistemological criticism of alienation and commodity fetishism. For readers in the period under review, the theorists who coupled philosophy with political praxis and economics with dialectics were not confined to Adorno—who made a critical description of the commodity functions of works of art in bourgeois society⁸—the Marx of *Capital*, and the Lukács of the works published in the 1920s. They included the young Marx, whose authenticated *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844 were first published in full in 1932 to a responsive public.⁹

The publication of the *Manuscripts* was an event transcending in importance the ordinary discovery of a work for several reasons. Intellectuals who were opposed to both capitalism and fascism interpreted Marx's anthropology (in which he envisaged a positive cancellation of private property and man's self-alienation in communist society; man's mastery of the human essence; the full unfolding of humanism) as a timely message of positive humanist criticism, which was in line with their political mood.

The philosophical analysis of the world historical situation and the contradictions of capitalism in *Capital* and *History and Class Consciousness* were complemented by the graphic and brief, yet systematic discussion of aspects of alienated labor in the *Manuscripts*. They offered a classical example of the method of beginning any analysis by taking the state of economy, the 'fact as it is in reality', as a point of departure, exposing the ideological tenets of economics, and finally arriving at the conceptual definition of the essence of alienation. In a critical period in which economy was depressed and philosophy and the social sciences were at pains to identify their aims, the juxtaposition of economy and philosophy in the 'title' of the *Manuscripts* did more than just define the subject of the work. It could be interpreted as a left-wing political alternative, a theoretical and methodological program, and an opportunity for a new look at Marxism.

The newly published *Manuscripts* promoted efforts to analyze the most important problems of the time in which, as it was pointed out above, Hegel's history of philosophy played a central role. The third fragmentary manuscript written by Marx in Paris attracted attention by virtue of the fact that Marx offered a critique of Hegel's dialectic and philosophy apropos of the category of alienation; that Marx depicted Hegel as a representative of 'modern economics' and, more importantly, that he described the 'motive and creative' principle of the dialectic of the negative as the paramount product of the *Phenomenology*.¹⁰

I have offered this sketchy survey of the ideological trends of the era in order to show the reader how intellectuals could find their ways to Marx, as well as to substantiate historically the revelation that can be found in a brief autobiography written by György Lukács in 1933. "Die Beziehung zu Marx ist der wirkliche Prüfstein für jeden Intellektuellen, der die Klärung seiner eigenen Weltanschauung, die gesellschaftliche Entwicklung, insbesondere die gegenwärtige Lage, seine eigene Stellung in ihr und seine Stellungnahme zu ihr ernst nimmt."¹¹

Let us once again add that the attitude toward Marx was inseparable from that toward Hegel and Lukács—which the student of the social history of intellectuals under imperialism is advised to consider. Lukács himself had to clarify his attitude toward Marx, a task in which he was aided by what he later described as an 'unexpected' favorable turn of events.

I took up a research post at the Marx—Engels Institute at Moscow in 1930. Here I had two unexpected strokes of good luck: the text of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* had just been completely

deciphered and I was able to read it [...] In the process of reading the Marx manuscripts all the idealist prejudices of *History and Class Consciousness* were swept to one side.¹²

That Lukács immediately realized the scholarly and political significance of the publication of the full text of the *Manuscripts* is borne out by yet another fact. In a review, published in Berlin, he wrote:

die Ausgabe einer Fülle von unbekannten oder teilweise in schwer zugänglichen, verschollenen Zeitschriften versteckten Arbeiten von Marx und Engels, sowie auch von den bekannten, aber teilweise wiederum zerstreuten und oft ebenfalls nicht leicht zugänglichen Schriften endlich die Möglichkeit bietet, diese wichtige Etappe der Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung wissenschaftlich zu behandeln. Dabei ergibt es sich freilich, dass der hier zutage tretende Zusammenhang zwischen ideologischen und politischen Kämpfen über den Rahmen der Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung hinausgeht, wenn er auch niemals ohne Bezugnahme auf sie wirklich verstanden werden kann. Ich verweise bloss auf die meist kläglich behandelte Auflösung der Hegelschen Philosophie [...] Sollen jedoch diese Fragen wissenschaftlich behandelt werden, so ist die erste Voraussetzung einer solchen Arbeit, Klarheit darüber zu erlangen, welches neue Material an richtig hergestellten Texten die Gesamtausgabe bietet und wie weit bis jetzt für bestimmte Texte die Gesamtausgabe die alleinige Basis für wissenschaftliche Arbeit bildet. Aus diesem Grunde ist die Auffassung irrig, dass der dritte Band der Gesamtausgabe sowie der erste Band der Landshut-Meyerschen Ausgabe in gleicher Weise ein Manuskript philosophisch-ökonomischen Inhalts zum erstenmal veröffentlichen. Vergleicht man die Texte, so kommt man sehr bald zum Ergebnis, dass nur die Gesamtausgabe Anspruch auf wissenschaftliche Zuverlässigkeit erheben kann.¹³

To speak of a collapse¹⁴ of the theoretical foundations of *History and Class Consciousness* upon reading the *Manuscripts* is apparently an overstatement, while it is certain that before his departure for Berlin in 1931, Lukács was given the chance openly to assess the 'Hegelian' interpretation of Marx as it appears in his own works of the 1920s. On the other hand, upon the fascist takeover in Germany in 1933 Lukács was compelled to clarify for himself the relationship of his work to the world historical struggles of the era.

Although the reinterpretation was self-imposed, there was much more to it than an individual's reappraisal of a single work. It was a choice between alternatives by creative philosophy in general in a world historical period that was dominated by the rise of fascism.

Some German intellectuals who were opposed to fascism and capitalism opted for the road of protest evolving a defiant philosophy, the dialectic of the negative. They revolted against the absolute spirit, the pious unity of object and subject, the superiority of totality, and the rationally arranged and alienated capitalist world. They wanted the world to be changed, rather than simply to have it 'regard them reasonably'. They strove to defend the liberty of the individual against encroachments by any community, and to protect the subject from being sacrificed for the sake of allegedly objective laws.

What road did Lukács opt for? He, just like all other thinking minds, had to start from an analysis of the world historical situation of the time and what he saw was Hitler's advance. 'I saw clearly', Lukács wrote, 'that everything—including what was personally most valuable, be it my whole life work—had to be unconditionally subordinated to the decisions that derived from that situation.' If opposition to fascism, which Lukács defined as a pivotal objective of the time, had been the only factor to shape Lukács's attitude, he might have associated himself with the critical attitude of Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse (without, of course, giving up his idiosyncrasies). The existence of a socialist country, however, exerted a formative influence on Lukács. 'I devoted my energy to promotion of vital interests of the one socialist country and so-

cialism in general. To this decision I subordinated all my others, including those on my life work.' For Lukács, opposition to fascism and advocacy of socialism were one and the same. Yet, when in 1957 Lukács retrospectively considered that unity, he pinpointed a contradiction that derived from the internal conflicts of the socialism of the time. It was impossible to surrender to the negative ideological tendencies and continue opposition at the same time.

For that reason I had to wage guerilla warfare in order to advocate my ideas. I had to secure publication of my works by including some appropriate quotations from Stalin. By following this method I could explicate my dissenting views with the required caution. I strived to speak as openly as it was allowed by the maneuvering room of the day. Naturally, there were times when it dictated silence.¹⁵

Is this the genuine clue to his contradictory identification? What Lukács described as 'guerilla warfare' is a fact that could be substantiated by excerpts from his works. Yet if we apply a historical approach, we can find that what Lukács meant by his 'guerilla warfare' was nothing more than a misleading phenomenon. It was the product of the false consciousness of his activity. It concealed the essence of his endeavors.

What do we mean by the term 'historical approach?' We refer the reader to Hegel's definition of the unity of man's inner world and his acts which, as a rule, applies to the question as to whether Lukács acted as a 'guerilla'. Hegel writes that the inner world and acts of people are often differentiated. But in the historical dimension the differentiation does not work: man is the sum total of his acts. It is a negligible aspect of the question that disguises may temporarily be used. In real fact the outer is not different from the inner.¹⁶

Assessing Lukács's actual philosophical output in the 1930s we can conclude that, on the one hand, he attempted to give unprecedentedly complete answers to the most important world historical questions of the period. A thinker of high caliber comes to grips with all the conflicts of his era, painful as that can be. On the other hand, the choice of Marxist philosophy for Lukács was decided by the following problem: is it at all possible positively to maintain the unity of reason, totality, dialectics, subject and object, individual and community, without giving up the critical attitude? For that was the very project to which Lukács committed himself. And when Lukács resorted to active silence, that was the reward, rather than the price of his choice.

The German Ideology

"O Deutschland, bleiche Mutter!
Wie sitzest du besudelt
Unter den Völkern"
(Bertolt Brecht: "Deutschland")

It was necessary to respond to the events that had taken place in Germany. If we put aside the biased and conventional approach of identifying theorists with one discipline alone, which labels Lukács as an aesthete, we can conclude that, in the 1930s, Lukács devoted himself to the critical analysis of the German ideology. Lukács's critique of the German ideology was a unique response to the world historical situation. It reflected the changing tactics, strategy, and theory of the communist movement. Yet Lukács did not confine himself to working out the critical analysis of the universal crisis and ideological processes of the imperialist period. He went beyond exposing the fascist defor-

mation of classical German philosophy and literature, as well as of the progressive bourgeois cultural legacy. The uniqueness of Lukács's output is that he was a critic of the ideological criticism of the extant state of affairs, of the events that had taken shape.

For Lukács, the relation between the German intellectuals and fascism was gravely problematic (especially in the first half of the 1930s), which adds a personal flavor to his assessment of the German ideology. This problem has antecedents. Lukács knew well and passionately rejected the enthusiastic support that the 'class of intellectuals' gave to World War I. As he put it, the simplest way of describing the attitude of the German intelligentsia is this: "general and spontaneous enthusiasm without any clear-cut and positive content".¹⁷

In the 1962 Preface to *The Theory of the Novel* Lukács revealed a fact that helps us to understand the continuity of the problem. He says that he was motivated to write that study by the outbreak of the war in 1914 and the impact made on left-wing intellectuals by the democrats' support of the war.¹⁸ Immediately before the fascist takeover in Germany, Lukács sharply criticized the ideology and political illusions of intellectuals.¹⁹ He formulated the view that the 'non-fascist' German intellectuals who hoped to convince the bourgeoisie to pursue 'genuine democracy' made in ideological surrender to fascism. He described the extensive sociological, legal, philosophical, and other literature on the crisis of the state, the party, parliamentarism, and of democracy of such a kind which served the purpose of the manipulation of the so-called 'high intelligentsia', that is, to pave the way for fascism.²⁰ Although in the 1930s both the world historical situation and his world view were radically different, he remembered the way that he had responded to World War I. Yet he found the source of the attitude of the German intelligentsia in the class status and false consciousness of bourgeois intellectuals, rather than in the antinomy between a 'left' ethics and a 'right' epistemology. As he wrote in 1933:

As a consequence of the social division of labor, the intelligentsia is a stratum of society whose mission and intellectual und material basis of existence is the creation and propagation of ideology. It reacts with extreme speed and sensitivity to every change in the material reality of society. Yet in class society [...] the intelligentsia reacts with false consciousness, and the more advanced the social division of labor and the material decay of the ruling class, the more false its consciousness.²¹

Lukács contended that the false consciousness and illusion concerning a leading role, cherished by the creators of ideology, originated in their vacillation between the proletariat and bourgeoisie and their petty-bourgeois status. They were manifested in the fact that they conceived of social changes as purely ideological changes, and always looked for ideological, rather than material and economic causes. Especially through its oppositional attitude, although mostly against its intentions, the left-wing bourgeois opposition to fascism served to perpetuate that very bourgeois rule that is incapable of maintaining its dominance with open means and must therefore resort to demagogic social slogans.

When they borrow elements of their criticism of society from the ideology of the revolutionary class they, on the one hand, become a tool of the demagoguery of the ruling class and, on the other hand, fall victim to the illusion of the petty bourgeoisie, namely, that they are above all classes of society, rather than in between the most important classes.²²

Both theoretically and politically, the way that Lukács assessed the class status and intellectual and ideological character of the intelligentsia was in sharp contrast to the

contemporary critical sociological analysis of liberal society and its elite groups as practised by Karl Mannheim. As in an earlier period, Lukács again described proletarian revolution as the direct solution to the crisis of capitalism. He was of the view that the left-wing bourgeois intelligentsia of the era of decline could overcome its pessimism and despair and avoid unintentionally serving fascism only if it decided to carry out what was a very difficult *salto vitale*. By contrast, Mannheim described the period as the era of the reconstruction of man and society. He condemned mass society as democratic in the negative sense, in that it permitted the rise of fascism. He called for the 'reconstruction' of man and said that the priority was to reconstruct man's abilities for thought and will. Mannheim described proletarianization as a sign of the crisis of the intelligentsia, which was in his words 'socially unattached' and destined to unlimited spiritual life and exercise of critical functions. Because education was available for a broad section of society, Mannheim wrote, there was a surplus of professionals in the labor market.²³

How does Lukács evaluate the critical function of the 'unattached' intelligentsia? His assessment is negative. The reasons for his negative appraisal are: (1) he believes that even the most radical and revolutionary bourgeois oppositionism is confined to the ideological criticism of the 'depths' of the social and cultural crisis and fails to examine the 'surface': exploitation in the economic sphere; (2) he contends that the intelligentsia and the petty bourgeoisie cannot draw mature and practical conclusions from their aversion for the status quo. In Lukács's view, the genuine critical function of the German intelligentsia is affirmation, while ideological criticism leads to false consciousness and false opposition.

At the same time, the critical function is a modern or, to use Mannheim's term, planned role. Its creator is the bourgeoisie of the imperialist period. It is this bourgeoisie that renders the intelligentsia unattached. "The oppositionist trends, especially in literature and the arts, are given a broader and seemingly more liberal room of maneuver than before. However, it is clear that this liberty has never been so illusory."²⁴ Manipulation and the neutralization of social criticism by integration, which reached their most sophisticated level in the United States after World War II, were exposed by Lukács as early as the 1930s.

The bourgeoisie does not corrupt the intelligentsia openly.

The ideological opposition is bribed covertly and integrated into the parasitic system while the façade of a broad room of maneuver is assured: the intelligentsia is made to believe that the *status quo* may be the subject of passionate and radical criticism without provoking material or moral retribution.²⁵

Lukács does not doubt that the most eminent members of bourgeois intelligentsia are honest and sincerely despise capitalist culture, or that an inner imperative of intellectual honesty prevents them from extremist decisions, the termination of the unattached state of radical scepticism. Yet a simultaneous break with the bourgeoisie and transcendence of the 'dogmatic' theory of the proletariat—existence unattached to any social classes—is a mere illusion of the intelligentsia. False consciousness. The Grand Hotel 'Abyss' (Abgrund) was built to cultivate and consolidate it:

Numerous intellectuals, having striven in vain to grapple with the insoluble problems of bourgeois society with a bourgeois attitude, saw that they had arrived at the end of a toilsome and distressing road only to find that they had reached an abyss. Confronted with this shocking situation, they preferred to check in to the comfortable hotel, rather than take off their elegant clothes and risk the *salto vitale* in order to reach the other side of the chasm.²⁶

Lukács, standing on the other side, watched the *danse macabre* (Totentanz) of the critical minds inside, untouched by the sight.

Yet apparently he was not standing there alone. Ernst Bloch may have thought of the same Grand Hotel when he said: 'ist nicht Mon bijou.' Bloch, too, found nothing but emptiness behind the windows that frame nature. The apartment house of the rich is the tenement of clay of a past 'culture', a mausoleum with few corpses. Above it is the bourgeois sky: total boredom. Bloch's micro-sociological description evokes the past and present of the well-to-do who would kill time in hotels; it is an account of decay. Not only of the old-style fat bourgeois, but of also the young one with an athlete's body, or of the fascist. Of the future he said:

Russland hat Sanatorien aus den Grand-Hotels gemacht; in Europa steht die gleiche Verwendung vor der Tür. Und die neuen Quartiere, welche die klassenlose Gesellschaft am Meer und Gebirge erstellt, werden breit, bequem und unaufdringlich sein, sie werden die Denkmäler der Bourgeoisie und ihrer Hotellerie im Lauf der Zeit abtragen lassen.²⁷

In 1935, however, Lukács was of the view that he and Bloch were not standing on the same side. True, after Hitler's accession to power, Bloch—along with numerous bourgeois intellectuals—reached the left side. Left-wing as he was politically, he did not renounce his earlier philosophical considerations: although he was thoroughly influenced by Marxism, he failed to bring the imperialistic manifestations of idealism to searching criticism. Yet he had gone much further than the average intellectual.

Gerade infolge seiner breiten und tiefen Bildung ist Bloch weit entfernt von einer blinden Überschätzung der Bildung und Kultur der heutigen Periode. Er unterscheidet sich sehr zu seinem Vorteil von jenen bürgerlichen Antifaschisten, die die Ideologie des Faschismus bekämpfen, zugleich jedoch die imperialistische Ideologie zu retten versuchen.²⁸

Lukács could not espouse Bloch's critical attitude because it was marked by a romantic opposition to capitalism and concentrated on criticizing the liberal stage of the development of bourgeois society. Looking for the 'legacy of the age', Bloch himself partly fell victim to the reactionary trends in philosophy that he—as an antifascist—criticized with sharp irony and wit.²⁹

Lukács faulted the ideological criticism of fascism for a lack of vigor. The critical assessment carried out by the intellectuals was ambiguous and half-hearted, for it failed to provide a concrete analysis of the material basis of imperialism, and, instead, contended itself with the comparison of the 'bad' and 'good' variants of the dominant ideologies. When, for instance, E. H. Gast reviewed the first volume of Thomas Mann's *Joseph and His Brothers* (1933), he described the myth presented by Mann as 'correct' and of 'high quality', while censuring the myth advocated by fascists as 'incorrect', and 'inferior in quality'; Mann's irrationalism was 'genuine', that of fascists, 'specious and barbarous'.³⁰

Ebenso kontrastiert der sozialdemokratische Philosoph, Herbert Marcuse die 'echte Lebensphilosophie' Diltheys und Nietzsches mit der falschen Lebensphilosophie der Faschisten [...] Diese [i.e., Gast and Marcuse] wollen den Faschismus von der 'normalen' ideologischen Entwicklung der Bourgeoisie vollständig abtrennen.³¹

It must be added, however, that when Marcuse—who was far from being a social democrat—enumerated the key ideological sources of the 'new world view' (the heroization of man, life philosophy, irrationalistic naturalism and universalism), he arrived

at the conclusion that this world view had become a vast vehicle of all those trends that have since World War I come into being in opposition to the 'liberal' theories of state and society.³² At the same time, according to him, there is an inner relationship between the liberal view of society and the apparently anti-liberal totalitarian theory of state;³³ they are in alliance in the struggle against Marxist socialism. In this period, Marcuse strove to oppose the fascistic tendency to find affinity between the classical German philosophical tradition, the Hegelian legacy, and the totalitarian 'new world view'. Lukács, however, considered the antifascist negation of counterfeit irrationalism and fraudulent life philosophy coupled with the simultaneous advocacy of their 'genuine' and 'sound' variants, to be affirmative criticism. He challenged what he regarded as negative dialectic with his dialectic of genesis: he contended that what was described as 'genuine' irrationalism was but the forerunner of the 'barbarous'.

Germany was under the rule of Hitlerite fascism. How was that possible? The author of *History and Class Consciousness* examined the responsibility of the philosophers and writers, finally coming forward with a critical analysis of the German ideology, of the German intelligentsia. The result was a militant pamphlet that searched for the genesis of the problem. *Wie ist die faschistische Philosophie in Deutschland entstanden?* is a key document of Lukács's response.³⁴ Lukács, the ideologue and communist intellectual, examined the responsibility of his former 'bourgeois idealism' as he was compelled to do by the relentless dialectic of genesis. The book sheds light on the individual features of the critic. He provided an answer to the question of why Mannheim, Bloch, Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Thomas Mann, and Musil³⁵—all those who had a keen memory of the spirit of *The Theory of the Novel* and *History and Class Consciousness*—moved to this strange Grand Hotel 'Abyss' precisely at that time. Lukács spoke of a straight road from the German ideology to fascist philosophy, and that compelled him to make a critical self-analysis, too. The age of decay is Lukács's experienced thought.

Dieses Buch ist, bald nach der Machtergreifung Hitlers, nach meiner notgedrungenen Emigration in wenigen Wochen niedergeschrieben worden. Ich kann aber zugleich—ohne grosse Übertreibung—sagen: dieses Buch entsteht seit über fünfundzwanzig Jahren. Als Schüler Simmels und Diltheys, als Freund Max Webers und Emil Lasks, als begeisterter Leser Stefan Georges und Rilkes habe ich die ganze hier geschilderte Entwicklung selbst miterlebt. Allerdings—vor, bezüglich [erweise] nach 1918—auf verschiedenen Seiten der Barrikade. Den Lesern also, die vor den Konsequenzen dieses Buches, vor der Anerkennung der Einheitlichkeit der Entwicklung des bürgerlichen Denkens der imperialistischen Periode bis zum Faschismus zurückschrecken, muss ich hier betonen, dass die Feststellung des Zusammenhanges keine rasche Konstruktion aus polemischen Rücksichten gewesen ist, sondern die Zusammenfassung und Verallgemeinerung eines miterlebten Lebensalters. Manchen Freund meiner Jugend, ehrliche und überzeugte romantische Antikapitalisten, habe ich vom Sturm des Faschismus verschlungen sehen müssen [...] weil sie nur äusserlich und nicht bis zu den Wurzeln ihres Seins und Denkens mit der imperialistischen Bourgeoisie gebrochen haben.³⁶

Put together, the works of a philosopher add up to the man himself. In Lukács's case, the outer was not separated from the inner. Lukács found the method of the truthful assessment of the world historical situation and the critical analysis of the reality and ideology of Germany and of the left-wing intelligentsia in the dialectic of genesis. Provided that the bourgeois idealistic thought of the imperialist period reached fascism via a 'straight avenue' and that Lukács—as he himself believed—had experienced the same process, then on reaching the 'end of the road', that is, facing fascism, Lukács had to disown *History and Class Consciousness*. Writing in the 1930s, he felt obliged to recant the work that he had written in the previous decade, in which he offered a radical critical analysis of society, and yet confined himself to the ideological sphere.

Seit ungefähr fünf Jahren ist *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* vergriffen; eine Neuauflage habe ich aus diesem Grunde, aus der Einsicht in das wesentlich Unrichtige des Buches nicht gestattet. Wenn ich aber heute mit einem neuen Buch philosophischen Inhalts vor den Leser trete, so halte ich mich verpflichtet, auch die Gründe, warum ich mich schon längst nicht mehr mit *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* solidarisiere, wenigstens kurz aufzuzählen. Dies umsomehr, als es nicht wenige gibt, die dieses Buch noch immer für ein marxistisches Kampfmittel gegen falsche Ideologien halten. Der Kernpunkt der Frage ist die Frage des Materialismus, die Frage, deren weltanschauliche wie praktische Bedeutung von jenen, die aus der bürgerlichen Intelligenz zum Marxismus kommen, am schwersten begriffen wird. So auch damals von mir. Wenn ich damals in falscher Polemik gegen Friedrich Engels die Möglichkeit einer dialektischen Erkenntnis der Natur bestritt und die dialektische Methode auf Erkenntnis der Gesellschaft beschränkte; wenn ich die Abbildtheorie mit dem 'Argument' bekämpfte, dass Prozesse nicht abgebildet werden können, so liegt diesen und ähnlichen Anschauungen das Nichtloskommen vom bürgerlichen Idealismus zugrunde. Wenn dies in dem subjektiven Glauben, ganz besonders radikal, radikaler als die wirklichen, materialistischen Kommunisten zu sein [...] so ändert dies nichts an der objektiven Tatsache, dass gerade in entscheidenden Fragen die schwerwiegendsten Konzessionen an die bürgerlich-idealistische Weltanschauung gemacht wurden. Die ultraradikale Illusion bei Abbiegen der wesentlichen Gehalte ins Bürgerlich-Idealistische ist aber sehr geeignet, die *aktuell-politische* Bedeutung solcher Fehler zu unterstreichen [...] Man glaubt ehrlich zu kämpfen, liefert aber gleichzeitig—ungewollt—dem Gegner geistige Waffen.³⁷

Lukács's repudiation of the work that was regarded as a critical tool of false ideologies, including the fascist ideology, was—objectively—sincere. Recantation was a 'logical' consequence of Lukács's denunciation of the ideological critique of fascism, his personally motivated judgment of the alternative of the left-wing German intelligentsia (fictitious opposition versus *salto vitale*), and of the question: how did fascist philosophy arise in Germany?

In a certain sense, the description 'ideological critique' also applies to Lukács's critical analysis of the ideological critique of bourgeois society, the newly established fascist rule and recent German philosophy. The general features of its ideological character can be understood only if one is armed with the world historical approach of Marxist philosophy, while its specificity must be interpreted as the response of an active thinker who strives for and succeeds in identifying himself with the existing working class movement, to a dilemma of his era that demanded an immediate answer. As Lukács wrote in 1933: the dilemma, fascism or bolshevism, was not a 'fabrication' of communists, but 'is is the signature of our age'.³⁸ In a later work, he wrote of the false consciousness of the first half of the 1930s (with direct reference to the approach of his unpublished work) that before the war the false dilemma, fascism or bolshevism, largely contributed to the ideological weakening of the progressive forces.³⁹

The theoretical source of the false dilemma was the view that fascism was the form of monopoly capitalism. Just as proletarian revolution was considered the sole means of putting an end to imperialism—the content that is superior to form—only a proletarian revolution was regarded as capable of waging genuine struggle against fascism.

The political source of the false dilemma was the condemnation of social democracy, the theory of social fascism, which claimed that social democracy served the bourgeoisie and paved the way for fascism. Lukács espoused the view that had hegemony in the communist movement of the time, and which held that social democracy was the main practical and theoretical supportive force of fascism: they serve monopoly capital hand in hand, they have a common essence and join forces to prevent the masses from taking the road of class struggle, of socialism and communism, that is, the only way of overcoming their misery.⁴⁰

It is not the task of this paper to trace the changes in the assessment of social democracy from the fifth congress of the Comintern (1924), when the tenet that social

democracy had become a wing of fascism⁴¹ was first formulated, down to the proclamation of the popular front policy. Yet we have to note certain facts. The participants in the debate on the "Blum Theses" after October, 1929, when Lukács was barred from managing the affairs or even taking part in the practical work of the Hungarian party, understandably paid intensive attention to the conception that was proclaimed by Béla Kun as the official line of the Comintern concerning the rising fascist tendencies within social democracy. Furthermore, the Hungarian Party of Communists (HPC) was one of the last parties to abandon the conception of social fascism and accept the line of the popular front.

As late as the summer of 1935, it was the conviction of the leaders of the HPC that only the victory of a socialist revolution can overthrow fascism [...] Signs of giving up the former sectarian line were seen only a week before the Seventh Congress of the Comintern.⁴²

Perhaps it is an even more salient fact that, in 1931, Stalin made a savage onslaught against an article by Slutski on the relations of the bolsheviks and the German social democrats before the war. Stalin enumerated the 'semi-menshevik' political errors that the left-wing German social democrats committed in the era of the Second International, and declared each of them antecedents of Trotskyism.⁴³ In view of this development, Lukács wrote that at that time (in 1932), especially since Stalin's letter to the editors of *Proletarskaya Revolutsia*, the discussions of materialist dialecticians were centred on the struggle against the legacy of the Second International.⁴⁴ These developments had a strong influence on Lukács, who, as it has been pointed out, had already condemned the attitude of social democracy during World War I and spoke out against the theoretical traditions of the Second International in the 1920s.

In the first half of the 1930s, the critical analysis of the German left-wing intelligentsia and that of the German social democracy were linked in Lukács's thought: he applied the same method and concepts to the criticism of the intellectual and the social democrat.⁴⁵ This ideological analogy constitutes the essence of Lukács's seminal study on expressionism (1933),⁴⁶ where content and structure are concerned. Consequently, it would be a misunderstanding to regard the study merely as an 'aesthetic' writing confined to the criticism of expressionism as an artistic trend, even if such a misunderstanding has long-standing historical and theoretical traditions.

The paramount ideological aspect of Lukács's critical analysis of the German intelligentsia in the age of imperialism, the expressionist movement, and the ideology of the Independent Socialist Party of Germany (Unabhängige Sozialistische Partei Deutschlands—USPD), is his demonstration of their substantial shared elements, concerning their activity as specious opposition, and the preparation of a popular basis for fascism.

The methodological connection between expressionism and the USPD ideology is already apparent [...] Its social basis is that the expressionists became the literary mouthpiece of precisely that section of the mass movement that was guided by the USPD in the direction I have described. The expressionists, moreover, were far more closely connected with the petty-bourgeois wing of this movement than with its proletarian section, as a result of their social being, which had the result that the spontaneous, unclear, but instinctive strivings in the direction of proletarian revolutionary action were weaker in their case than they were among the proletarian supporters of the USPD. On the other hand, however, the method of abstraction analysed above, which diverts from the real battlefield of the class struggle, was also a spontaneous manifestation of the expressionists's own class position; their continued use of this method in their world outlook and creative method was thus not just a political manoeuvre, treachery or a betrayal. The objective affinity of the method, which at some points amounted to actual identity, was due to the fact that both tendencies, USPD and ex-

pressionism, while remaining on the class foundation of the bourgeoisie, sought to avoid a confrontation with the underlying causes by their attacks on symptoms.⁴⁷

Lukács challenged the sham opposition of the German intelligentsia and social democracy, their advocacy of a romantic anti-capitalism that was 'aloof' from the working class movement, the illusory radicalism of idealist bourgeois philosophy, and the affirmative spirit of the ideological criticism of the status quo, and he offered the alternative of a communist and materialistic dialectic and a worldwide antifascist proletarian revolution. Lukács strove to work out a philosophy that was not reconciled to reality, a philosophy that provided a theoretical analysis and a practical criticism of the illusion that, in addition to bolshevism and fascism, there was a third choice. He wanted to transcend *History and Class Consciousness* and prepared himself for the creation of a major new work, in which the reinterpreted Marxist concepts would be adjusted to the conditions of the age of the decline of capitalism.

Lukács was eager to give a written form to the changes in his philosophical views. However, as he recalled it later, this wish did not come true: "my attempt to do so proved a failure (the manuscript has since been lost)."⁴⁸ Documents of the time show that his intention was serious, yet objective and subjective circumstances prevented him from realizing it. In a letter of autumn 1931 to M. Lifschitz, Lukács wrote that he could not find enough time for philosophical work due to 'intellectual' organizing tasks among 'eminent' German bourgeois writers. A year later he repeated the complaint: "Daily work keeps me terribly busy, still I will try to complete the book. It will not be easy, however, for everything has ramifications and I consider my work superficial. Despite my earnest efforts, what I am doing nowadays turns out to be defective."⁴⁹

It is not the task of this paper to decide whether Lukács could ultimately have completed the work that he had mentioned in the letter, or whether it is identical with the—extant—work on the genesis of fascist philosophy (perhaps contrary to the fact that, in the preface to that work, he dates the writing of the book on fascism to August, 1939), or whether the work mentioned is another manuscript discussing views of Marx, a manuscript that indeed 'got lost'. More relevant for the purpose of this essay is the fact that we now have access to a wealth of published and unpublished writings from the early 1930s, from which we can ascertain the outline of Lukács's new philosophical stand. A comprehensive analysis would require a monograph, and here we have to be content with the discussion of but some aspects of Lukács's philosophy of the time. (The scope does not allow for the discussion of the aesthetic aspects either.) These writings can be regarded as parts of a 'volume' that was never compiled, the central topic of which is the age of imperialism and the class consciousness of bourgeoisie.

So far we have touched upon the historical, ideological, and methodological circumstances of the birth of these writings. It is now time to proceed to the analysis of the theoretical aspects (some already mentioned) on the basis of which Lukács analyzed the genesis of non-classical German philosophy, regarding it as the bourgeoisie's class consciousness, as it assumes ever more fascistic features.

There would be grounds to suppose that Lukács took the fundamental categories for his analysis directly from Marx's newly read 1844 *Manuscripts*, numerous other works by Marx and Engels published for the first time in the 1930s, and from Marxist aesthetic as reconstructed by Lifschitz. This hypothesis seems to be substantiated, on the one hand, by the fact that Lukács lost no time in responding to each newly published work of Marx and Engels, and, on the other hand, by the fact that he also took part in the

'discovery' of Marxist aesthetic.⁵⁰ Still, the hypothesis must be considered with some reservation because at that time Lukács offered no explicit discussion of a new type of problems of alienation; and when he discussed the 'aesthetic' statements of Marx and Engels (even though the problems seem to be purely aesthetic in nature), he concentrated on the ideological aspects of the genesis of bourgeois class consciousness, rather than on the problems of the arts and literature. Naturally, we do not doubt the relevance of the aforementioned studies for aesthetics, and all that we wish to indicate is that Lukács's works and Lifschitz's researches (whose 'philosophical and philological merits' Lukács duly recognized) did not follow the same direction.⁵¹ For instance, justified as it is to consider Lukács's essay on the 'Sickingen debate' (and the related writings)⁵² as a special analysis of the Marxist 'theory' of tragedy, the key moments of the debate for Lukács were the historico-political limits to bourgeois revolution.

For him, the discussion of the Sickingen debate was more than a conventional *explication de texte*, as it carried a topical political message: the critical paradigm. It is characteristic of Lassalle's political attitude that, in his play, the self-criticism of 1848 is based on the *Realpolitik* of the hesitating and indecisive intellectual centre and the tragic flaw of the revolutionaries, which diverts it from the class struggle of bourgeoisie and proletariat. Lukács held that this starting point of the self-criticism of the revolution was uncritical and ideological in nature because it lacked the analysis of historical necessity and the objective economic moment. Lassalle could not go beyond the immediacy of bourgeois radical criticism: he could conceive the overthrow of the old order only as revolution in general, that is a normal bourgeois revolution. Marx and Engels argued that the most problematic aspect of the revolution was the economic, ideological, and organizational weakness of the plebeians, while Lassalle found it in the morale and psyche of an 'intellectual' intermediate stratum, which was discontented from the status quo and stood aloof from all classes. In another article, Lukács even more clearly defined the topical political implications of the difference in the two positions: in Lassalle's case, self-criticism was the critique of the vacillating and uncertain attitude of democratic bourgeoisie, especially within the intelligentsia of 1848, while for Marx and Engels, it was the critique of the political and organizational weaknesses of the party of the proletariat.⁵³

The studies on Lassalle that Lukács wrote in 1932 had topical messages: they contrasted realism that was reconciled to the internal contradictions of capitalism with revolutionary realism, based on the 'materialistic anatomy' of the real motive forces of class struggle; they proclaimed that the last-ditch struggle for a more consistent bourgeois democracy, the democratic ideals of bourgeois revolution, was obsolete. What is more, analyzing the views of the master of 'classical' social democracy (Second International)—a prime source of social democratic ideology—they pointed out that this ideology had ab ovo nothing to say to the proletarian revolution and that the romantic critique of capitalism was limited. Finally, they concluded that the ideological legacy of Lassalle (and Mehring) was reactionary. Lukács found it equally important to stress that the world views of Marx and Lassalle were incompatible (the Second International attempted to relate them, while the social democracy of the 1930s used Lassalle's theory of the state to challenge Marx's views) and that their attitudes to Hegel were diametrically opposed.

He did not, however, treat the Lassalle problematic as a topical affair in a limited sense of the term. Beginning in the 1920s, Lukács discussed the history of the ideology of German social democracy and theory of revolution as organic parts of the bourgeois

self-consciousness of the age of imperialism and the post-1848 development. He was convinced that these problems were inseparable from the strengthening or weakening of the influence of post-Hegelians and neo-Kantians within the social democratic movement, and the history of the evolution of Marxism.⁵⁴

Another text of Lukács's closely connected to the pre-popular-front spirit was written in 1933 and dealt with Franz Mehring, the historiographer of German social democracy.⁵⁵ Lukács's portrait of this controversial theorist bears witness to his own wealth of knowledge on the topic, but is itself controversial: it is little permeated with Engels's critical realism. For instance, Lukács is apparently in the wrong when he characterizes the conception of history in Mehring's *Lessing Legend* as provincial. He appears to have forgotten, for example, that Engels approved of the work, saying, 'to date, it has been the only good writing' on the emergence of the Prussian state. Mehring's road to the labor movement started from the left wing of bourgeois democracy. Lukács attributed the weaknesses of Mehring's world view to his inability to break with his bourgeois democratic past, and attachment to the radical ideals of the revolutionary period of the bourgeoisie. Eloquent proof of the one-sidedness of his critique is found in the fact that, in 1939, he was the very man to stress that Mehring's democratic past had exemplary importance for antifascist popular front policy.⁵⁶ Yet, in 1933, he stressed the conflict of opinion between Marx-Engels and Lassalle-Mehring, the history of the influence of Lassalleanism and the genesis of social democratic opportunism, rather than the positive aspects of democratic traditions. As Lukács put it:

Denn es ist eine einzigartige Paradoxie der Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, dass der bedeutendste, vielseitigste und glänzendste theoretische Führer des linken Flügels zu einem theoretischen Stammvater des ärgsten Opportunismus geworden ist. Es ist eine zu bekannte und auch in ihren Gründen zu sehr aufgedeckte Tatsache, dass die Erneuerung des Lassalleanismus im Laufe der Kriegs- und Nachkriegsentwicklung der deutschen Sozialdemokratie zu einem der wichtigsten Stützpunkte des äussersten Opportunismus geworden ist [...] Das Lebenswerk Mehrings, das in seiner Grundlinie auf eine Rettung Lassalles gegenüber den vernichtenden Kritiken von Marx und Engels auslief [...] hat im wesentlichen die Wirkung gehabt, die auch sowieso nicht ausgestorbenen Lassalleschen Traditionen in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung lebendig zu erhalten und ihnen sogar, infolge der linken Einstellung Mehrings, einen linksradikalen Anstrich zu geben.⁵⁷

To summarize: in the early 1930s, Lukács's critique of the history of the ideology of social democracy consisted in the main in censuring classical capitalism, the left-wing 'precursors' who stood on the platform of bourgeois revolution, the democratic traditions, and the Hegelian tendency. Yet in Lukács's book of 1933, which discussed the role of social fascism in the emergence of fascist philosophy, unchanged elements of this criticism can be found side by side with important shifts in stress and some new moments. He now focused his criticism on the relationship of social democracy and liberal bourgeoisie, ideological and political surrender (revisionism, gradual development into socialism), the ostensible conflict between the social democratic understanding of reason (*Vernunft*) and irrationalist life philosophy, and the spread of Kantian tendencies. Lukács contended that, by surrendering to the liberal bourgeoisie—also in the realm of philosophy—social democracy became part of the imperialist system, instead of constituting the left wing of the bourgeois democratic opposition. Ideological surrender might vary in form (neo-Kantianism: Max Adler; Machism: Friedrich Adler; vulgar positivism: Karl Kautsky), yet the aim pursued was a common one: it sought to transform Marxism into a bourgeois-liberal 'science' of the period of imperialism. These trends of philos-

ophy denied both that objective reality was knowable and that the Marxist method was a single and unified science. They broke up Marxism into discrete 'disciplines'.

Lukács argued that social democratic ideology and the fascistization of pre-war bourgeois liberal traditions were parallel processes, and that the Marxism that Bernstein and his successors had downgraded to liberal economics, sociology, and philosophy provided fascist ideologues and propagandists with effective arguments for identifying Marxism with liberalism.

He began his philosophical analysis of social fascism with the interpretation of reason:

Vor allem—damit muss angefangen und geendet werden—: für die Sozialfaschisten bedeutet *Vernunft einen ungestört funktionierenden, sich allmählich, reibungslos, widerspruchlos entwickelnden Kapitalismus*. Die 'niedrigen und schlechten Instinkte der unaufgeklärten Masse' sind also sowohl historisch zuerst, wie begrifflich in erster Reihe: die revolutionären Aktionen des Proletariats.⁵⁸

At this point light is shed on (1) the reason why Lassalle is described as a precursor, (2) the historical and logical connections between the social democratic 'rationality', and irrationalism, and (3) the penetration of neo-Kantianism into the ideology of social democracy.

Lukács recalls a contribution of Lassalle's to the Sickingen debate: Hegel's 'critical-philosophical approach to history, in which one necessity is inevitably followed by another, and which, therefore, allows no room for and overlooks the efficiency of individual decision and action, is not a suitable soil for either practical revolutionary action or the dramatic plot shown above'.⁵⁹ With this statement, Lassalle retreats from Hegel's idealistic and dialectical interpretation of freedom and necessity into the antinomy of subjective idealism (Kant, Fichte, and Schiller).

Die Theorie und Praxis Lassalles zeigt sehr deutlich, was es für die Arbeiterbewegung bedeutet, wenn der richtige materialistisch-dialektische Standpunkt für die Lösung des Verhältnisses von Notwendigkeit und Freiheit verlassen (im Falle Lassalles: nicht erreicht) wird: es wird dadurch unmöglich, die richtige Beziehung von Volk und Klasse, von Klasse und Partei, von Partei und Führung gedanklich zu fassen: der Begriff der revolutionären, umwälzenden Praxis, der Praxis der Masse, der Klasse und Partei geht verloren, die Klasse verfällt der 'ehernen Notwendigkeit' der mechanischen Vernünftigkeit und die Praxis (die isolierte und dadurch irrationalisierte 'Freiheit') fällt dem—in Gedanken von Klasse und Partei 'unabhängig' gemachten—'Führer' anheim.⁶⁰

From what has been said so far, it is in part clear why the alternative offered by critical theory was unacceptable for Lukács's Marxism, which was embedded in the movement. Lukács was convinced that the only reliable guarantee of the individual's freedom or, to be more precise, liberation, was conscious revolutionary praxis, participation in the class struggle against the imperialist bourgeoisie.

The road to the dualism of 'pure' and 'practical reason' (theory and praxis), reason and spontaneity (leader and mass) was therefore open. Kant replaced Lassalle. And it was precisely neo-Kantianism that connected social democratic ideology with the irrationalistic life philosophy. Kant and those who interpreted him in the spirit of life philosophy, the neo-Kantian trends of bourgeois liberalism (Simmel, Windelband, Rickert, and Max Weber) exerted a strong influence on social democracy both before and after the war.

For Lukács, the history of the ideology of social fascism proceeded from the subjective idealist interpretation of Hegel and led through neo-Kantianism to the fascist and irrationalist destruction of social democratic rationality.

We have already noted that, in Lukács's view, the drift toward fascism displayed by bourgeois philosophy during the imperialist period in Germany was a process that took place parallel with the one described above (and had a strong influence on it). As in the case of other phenomena, he wanted to grasp the fundamental tendencies of this important element of the genesis of bourgeois class consciousness. It would, however, be over-ambitious to attempt to reconstruct in full the picture of the history of non-classical German philosophy that Lukács provided in his unpublished book of 1933, or of its prehistory in the book that he belatedly published in 1937.⁶¹ In our description of Lukács's interpretation of the growing fascist tendencies in the German ideology, we must content ourselves with discussing some historical and theoretical problems of the 'forerunners' and their influence.

A classical starting point is Feuerbach. Lukács's study on him—this "outsized writing"⁶²—is important not because it retains in a modified form the stance adopted in the article on Moses Hess concerning the sources of Marxism (the acceptance of the doctrine of the unity of Marx and Feuerbach, Lukács wrote, would be tantamount to the 'ideological elimination of the demarcation line between bourgeois revolution and proletarian revolution'), but because in the chapter discussing the history of the influence of Feuerbach's anthropology, we can find in an almost finished form the assessment of the key philosophical characteristics of the German ideology, nearly the whole nomenclature of concepts in Lukács's criticism. In this preliminary and (partial) draft of the book on fascism, Lukács discussed the negative fate and direct and indirect influence of the 'weak aspects' of Feuerbach's philosophy from Keller and Herwegh to Wagner, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. Finally, he gave a critical analysis of distortions of Feuerbach's philosophy by adherents of irrationalism and life philosophy, and outlined the role that Feuerbachian philosophy played in the attempt to reconcile neo-Hegelianism with life philosophy.

It was at that time that the content of the key concepts to be used for the characterization of the destruction of reason took shape in Lukács's intellectual world. They were fully unfolded for the first time in the opening chapters of the book that analyzes the evolution of the philosophy of fascism, especially in the following chapters: "The Critique of the Status Quo as a New Form of Apologia", "Life-Philosophy" and the "Revival of Romanticism", "The Struggle against the Scientific Approach", and "Myth". Offering a critical analysis of bourgeois irrationalist philosophy after 1848, in close connection with the concepts of quasi-radicalism, sham opposition, indirect apologetic, right-wing anti-capitalism and neo-romanticism, Lukács for the first time raised the issue of religious atheism. The concept, *in statu nascendi*, characteristically connects the Lukácsian interpretation of the class consciousness of the proletariat and the situation of 'abyss'.

The insecurity of existence, the seemingly total exposure to the blind forces of capitalism, in which Lenin justifiably recognized the social roots of religion, are increasingly felt. Only from the standpoint of the proletariat is it possible to grasp the operation of these blind forces theoretically. Consequently, the world-view of thinkers and poets who cannot resolutely break with their class and join the proletariat, and yet refuse to make deliberate concessions to reaction, inevitably include obscure and unclear points. They reject religion in all its historical forms, while failing to reveal that the material and social causes of religion, the myth-creating effect of religion survives in them. A correct—and in part correctly substantiated—atheist content (deliberately or unconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) takes a religious form.⁶³

Friedrich Theodor Vischer is another 'classical' forerunner of bourgeois-liberal class consciousness, irrationalism, and life philosophy. (Lukács's studies on Feuerbach and Vischer are identical in structure and language.)⁶⁴ In the essay on Vischer, Lukács

examined the evolution of fascist neo-Hegelianism as well as Dilthey's contribution, concentrating, as in the pendant essay, on religious atheism and the way in which myths are made. He confronted Vischer's views with those of Marx, and asked whether modern times need myths. The liberal bourgeoisie needs them, Lukács says—the revolutionary proletariat does not. As he put it, Vischer expressed the liberal need for myth. He played a 'unique role in the renewal of the theory of myth, which has reached the highest point to date in Germany in the official philosophy of Hitlerite fascism'.⁶⁵ Lukács challenged the need for false consciousness from the standpoint of the class consciousness of the proletariat, of the party, and the revolution (and not from the viewpoint of 'established' socialism or the arts):

Und die proletarische Revolution, deren Träger und durchführende Kraft, die Arbeiterklasse und ihre Avantgarde, ihre Handlungen auf richtige Erkenntnis des ökonomischen Prozesses basiert, die die Ziele ihrer Revolution aus der Erkenntnis des ökonomischen Prozesses von vornherein richtig zu stellen imstande ist, bedarf zur Erweckung des revolutionären Enthusiasmus keines 'falschen Bewusstseins', keines Mythos.⁶⁶

Let us note in passing that Lukács used his antifascist theory, which he formulated in the idiom of a clear proletarian consciousness free of myths, in order to challenge not only liberal ideology and the tendencies that ranged from Vischer through Nietzsche to the national socialist theories of myth, but shortly thereafter, also a left-wing antifascist theorist who put the blame for the rise of nazi myth making on Marxism (meaning vulgar Marxism): Ernst Bloch. Bloch wrote: 'as the Marxist propaganda fails to transform the mythical beginnings into real beginnings, a Dionysian dream, a revolutionary initiative, the impact of national socialism sheds light on the culpable negligence of unduly popular vulgar Marxism.'⁶⁷ Lukács contended that Bloch failed to differentiate between vulgar and genuine Marxism. Bloch mistakenly believed that, in the 'obscure mystique' of ancient plebeian movements, the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie, he could discover a legacy that had not been utilized by Marxism. In fact, however, Marxism, which elevated the revolutionary traditions of the popular movements to a higher level, fully overcomes the 'old forms of their ideologies'.⁶⁸

The paper on Vischer displays the rudiments of a new interpretation of capitalism, which anticipates the transcendence of *History and Class Consciousness* and helps to explain how Lukács's own legacy and the related German critical theory now became alien to him. He abandoned the view that bourgeois society was marked solely by inhumanity and reification. True, he argued, capitalism was inherently contradictory, opposed to art, lacking culture, and destructive to myths. Yet its inner contradictions are contradictions of progress, and although capitalism is marked by degradation and destruction,

der Prozess der Zerstörung des Alten sowohl materiell wie ideologisch ein ungeheurer geschichtlicher Fortschritt ist [...] Für Marx ist eben der Kapitalismus jene Entwicklungsstufe der Menschheit, in der die materiellen Voraussetzungen für den revolutionären Übergang zum Sozialismus, zur Vernichtung der Ausbeutung geschaffen werden.⁶⁹

Lukács came to consider the contradictions of bourgeois progress (which he viewed from the standpoint of socialism) as the central problem in the philosophical evaluation of the preceding world historical period. He was in the process of abandoning the conviction that capitalist economic development could only create the possibility and necessity of the transformation of society, while the transformation itself could be only the sovereign action of the proletariat. He renounced the view that reification persists

after the socialist reorganization of the state and economy, but failed to answer—or even to pose—the question of what positive socialist content is to replace the vacant negative forms of alienation.

Nietzsche is the last major thinker of the bourgeois anti-capitalist tendency of non-classical German philosophy and a forerunner of the philosophy of imperialist barbarity. From 1934 to 1943, Lukács discussed Nietzsche's 'prophetic' philosophy and aesthetic in several articles and essays.⁷⁰ We are not going to analyze his use of the genetic method in these writings, namely, his well-known conclusion that Nietzsche was 'the most illustrious precursor' of fascism—whom the nazis now misinterpreted, now condemned, but always respected—whose works can be seen as the source of all the motifs of fascist ideology. We are interested in the fact that Lukács attacked the ideological criticism of capitalism (which was right wing, indirectly apologetic, defending the 'negative aspects') as the source of the liberal theories of culture. Nietzsche denounced both the early, vanished culture of capitalism and the utopia of its imperialist manifestation. Lukács was aware that Nietzsche was sensitive to man's degradation and deprivation by reification. Nietzsche's fight against decadence became important through his 'rich vision' of man's deformation and perversion. As Lukács puts it:

Denn mögen sein Ausgangspunkt, seine Folgerungen, seine Absicht usw. noch so falsch gewesen sein, in der vielseitigen Beobachtung dieser Symptome deckt er tatsächlich eine Reihe von wichtigen Erscheinungsformen der Ideologie des kapitalistischen Niedergangs auf.⁷¹

Lukács realized that, in philosophy, even a reactionary approach can produce a realistic, critical assesment of both reality and ideological forms. (The thought was to become important later, when Lukács wrote of the 'necessity' of false consciousness.) He offered a fuller discussion in his aesthetic works of the 1930s, when he challenged the vulgar sociological and dogmatic theories of art and analyzed the lasting values of classical realist tradition ('triumph of realism'). Yet for Lukács, a critic of the German ideology, the thought that even a reactionary approach can produce a realistic assessment of reality was not to become a philosophical and ideological basis for an alliance with left-wing bourgeois anti-capitalism. (Especially before the popular front period, and when conditions were unfavorable for the popular front line: in the late 1930s and early 1940s, respectively.) Although Lukács recognized the dialectical relationship between the reactionary world view and the critique of the existing order, he could not transcend the sectarian antinomy of 'fascism or bolshevism'. This is why he arrived at an ideological interpretation of Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's influence on left-wing thinking. Lukács was, of course, familiar with the cause of the influence (a critical attitude toward capitalist culture), yet he believed that reactionary, irrationalist philosophy could offer a right-wing alternative, the road from honest revolt to the misuse of revolution.

Der Einfluss Nietzsches hat die Etappe, in der die bürgerliche Intelligenz mit dem Sozialismus sympathisiert, verkürzt, er hat die junge Generation des begabten intellektuellen Nachwuchses ins Lager der imperialistischen Reaktion und Dekadenz geführt, und zwar gerade deshalb, weil die Struktur der Nietzscheschen Philosophie ihnen gestattete, diese reaktionäre Schwenkung mit der Illusion zu vollziehen, dass sie damit ihre Rebellion gegen die Gesellschaft, deren Kultur sie kritisierten, radikal steigern.⁷²

We have returned to the starting point of the Lukácsian problematic—in other words, the starting point of the analysis of the age of imperialism and the class consciousness of the bourgeoisie—the world historical responsibility of the German intelligentsia (and philosophy). We have attempted to outline the system in which Lukács made a critical

assessment of his age and interpreted it in the spirit of the communist movement. He defined it as the history of the decline of the post-Hegelian non-classical German philosophy and of the genesis of those trends that culminated in fascism.⁷³ Thus, active philosophy had no alternative to the condemnation of this genesis: the development of the German bourgeoisie and of social democracy, their support and reflection, all the bourgeois ideological trends of the age of imperialism (radicalism, democratism, liberalism, life philosophical and irrationalistic tendencies, neo-Hegelianism and neo-Kantianism) paved the way for fascism, helped it to come to power. In the first half of the 1930s Lukács's analysis was itself burdened by ideological elements not simply because its starting point was the false dilemma of fascism or bolshevism, or the theory of social fascism, but also because it lacked the philosophy-of-history approach to the examination of German history and, in general, of the age of imperialism.

Besides, until 1935, the philosophy of history played a negligible role in Lukács's writings (e.g., his emphasis on the notion of uneven development). At that time, Lukács stressed the political aspects of the history of fascism and ignored the economic and philosophical analysis of the economic basis (which, however, had been regarded as the criterion of materialism; more closely, the analysis of the economic processes after World War I, and the crisis of 1929—33). Lukács's analysis, which emphasized the role of classes in the understanding of ideological processes, itself lacked an in-depth evaluation of the class consciousness of the proletariat. He described the proletariat, on the one hand, as the victim of social democratic propaganda, quasi-oppositionist left-wing ideology of intellectuals, and irrationalist bourgeois philosophy (a fate that it shared with broad sections of the petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia) and, on the other, as a class free of any false myth and endowed with a mature consciousness, a class that based its revolutionary praxis and goals on an adequate, materialist, and dialectical knowledge of the motive forces of reality, that is, the economic processes. The philosophical foundations of Lukács's conception of a worldwide antifascist proletarian revolution in this sense lacked the discussion of history and the consciousness of the proletariat.

Lukács's 'one-sided' denunciation of the destruction of reason, his failure to differentiate between the subtle and barbarous rejections of reason, his allegation that irrationalist philosophy was the forerunner of fascism, and his argument that he who embraces the irrationalism of 'good intentions' should not be surprised to find himself lost in the deadly grip of the devil, are usually met with two so-called 'dialectical' arguments: man is not only a social but also a biological being, he has instincts as well as consciousness, and his consciousness has, in addition to well-lit 'rooms', dark corners. Furthermore, in the history of mankind, in social reality, there exist both a rational and a non-rational sphere. The existence of the two aspects has to be admitted, even if there might be disagreement as to their structure, proportions, and role, and it was always admitted by eminent thinkers, like Schopenhauer or Nietzsche.

Although these arguments seem to be logical, they are in fact extremely naive and display a total misunderstanding of the problem. (The fact that they have a theoretical and ideological background and ossified traditions does not make it otherwise.) It is not within the purview of this study to discuss in detail the relationship of the rational and the irrational, and yet we have to point out that the problem of *autonom ratio*, the relationship of reason and the non-rational, cannot be solved by a 'dialectical amalgamation' of the two diametrical opposites if the mediating function of man's socio-historical praxis, the social motions and movements, are not taken into consideration. The

rational sense of the facts, processes, and laws of the objective world can be described only as a possibility of the conscious practice of the subject: it is the social man who is able, in the course of his material and intellectual life, to transform this possibility into reality, that is, 'objectify' it from nature and society. If, however, the mediating role of human praxis is ignored, the consequence will be an identification and apology of reason (ideals abstracted from reality and history) and of the world as it is. As a matter of fact, the practical and intellectual reproduction of reality takes place under contradictory circumstances and class conditions, and with the mediation of movements that are waging a dramatic struggle against one another. In bourgeois societies it assumes a tragic and extremely alienated form. It is the contradictory historical practice of mankind that renders the possibility of a rational sense of the world unreasonable. Thus, the ideals are put into practice in a far from ideal way, and the drama of human history sometimes assumes false appearances. It is in this sense and with lasting value did Marx say that 'Die Vernunft hat immer existiert, aber nicht immer in der vernünftigen Form'. The identification of reason that exists in non-rational form with reality, the acceptance of reality, turned deliberately irrationalistic, as the eternal form of destiny and misfortune (even with some reservations) and the elimination of praxis as mediator, all result in the affirmation of the status quo (even if from the reverse direction), as does the tenet that the world appears in a reasonable form for the analyst who looks on it in a reasonable way.

We have returned to the discussion of this issue in order to point out that Lukács's evaluation, in spite of its errors and ideological limitations, includes an entirely valid and justified tendency. At the same time, in that era, Lukács's criticism did not (and could not) succeed in shedding light on those causes in German history—imperialist economy and the communist movement—that mediated the materialization of reason in an unreasonable form in Germany. Causes, due to which Germany under Hitler could become a bleak illustration to all those philosophies that claimed that there was no reason whatsoever in either reality or history. No, Lukács cannot be blamed for over-emphasizing reason or violating rules of epistemology, since—as can be seen from the preceding—he was fully aware that reason can be identified with both a peacefully and smoothly developing capitalism and a proletariat that acts under the iron laws of necessity. What was missing from Lukács's analysis was the movement that assured a genuine perspective for the elimination of the unreasonable form. Although the sectarian perspective promised a redeeming vista, the doctrine of social fascism and of the intensification of the class struggle coupled with a concentrated attack on the left wing of the movement and those compromising with the left wing—this grinding machine of self-elimination—decimated those forces within the movement (let alone that it identified *citoyen* with bourgeois) that could have been expected to revive a blood-stained Germany. For that reason Lukács regarded the post-1848 development of the German bourgeoisie as the mere prehistory of the bourgeois class consciousness of the age of imperialism, and as the prehistory of fascism (as a legacy that could be inherited)—not as the prehistory of antifascism, whose intellectual heritage could be used for the coming reconstruction of German society.

Lukács analyzed his age through the mediation of the communist movement. In the second half of the 1930s, the declaration and gradual implementation of the popular front policy brought about important changes in his philosophy. It is well known that Lukács, after transcending a given stage in his career, never started everything from scratch. Instead, he tended to transform and reinterpret his former ideas. Thus, the con-

tinuity between stages of his career in 1930—35 and 1935—45 is evident, but so are some changes. Although there were antecedents, none of the three major works of the second period could have been written before 1935: the second work on fascism, the monograph on Goethe, and *The Young Hegel*.⁷⁴ There is neither the space nor the necessity here for a full description of those changes, as the characteristics of Lukács's philosophy in the period of the popular front policy are better known than those marking the period discussed above. We shall confine ourselves to drawing attention to some new elements in his critique of the German ideology.

As historical necessity was one of the most controversial philosophical and political issues of the age of fascism, it is understandable that debates on the historical role of reason remained a topical issue throughout the period. Was all that happened in Germany necessary? Could reason be found behind the developments? In the course of the debate on expressionism in 1938, Lukács opposed the view that what came into being necessarily was at the same time reasonable. As he put it:

For Marxism the acknowledgment of a historical necessity neither implies a justification of what actually exists (not even during the period when it exists), nor does it express a fatalistic belief in the necessity of historical events [...] There can be no doubt that primitive accumulation, the separation of the small producers from their means of production, the creation of the proletariat, was—with all its inhumanities—a historical necessity. Nevertheless, no Marxist would dream of glorifying the English bourgeoisie of the period as the embodiment of the principle of reason in Hegel's sense. Even less would it occur to a Marxist to see thereby any fatalistic necessity in the development from capitalism to socialism.⁷⁵

Naturally, Lukács continued to believe that irrationalism was the expression of the decline of capitalism. Yet the emphasis shifted to the social function of irrationalism, the practical role that irrationalism played in the awakening of fascist brutality, the meanest human instincts, through the mediation of the national socialist movement.

Lukács was fully aware that rationalism was a tool of the ideological affirmation of the status quo. As he put it: 'Rationalism is a feeble and shameful capitulation before the objective necessities of capitalist society.' Thus, in his critique of the German ideology, the condemnation of bourgeois rationalism, the rationalist belief in unchangeable fatalistic objectivity, and the resultant despair assumed heightened importance. At the same time, he described irrationalism as a protest against those objective necessities, although characterizing it as "just as impotent, just as feeble, just as empty and thoughtless".⁷⁶

The most important change in emphasis was that, instead of examining how social democratic rationality was transformed into neo-Kantianism and, under the influence of life philosophy, into irrationalism, Lukács gave a historical analysis of the changes that occurred in the consciousness of the working class during the Weimar Republic. He was convinced that, for the people at large, the dilemma of reason or irrationality could not be a theoretical problem: 'for them it was a question of life and death.'⁷⁷ In his description of the mood of the peasant and petty-bourgeois masses who had been disappointed in the 'rationality of *Realpolitik*', Lukács vividly defined the process in which rationality, the watershed of decisions concerning the German national existence, assumed a form that was not reasonable, but highly practical in the minds of the people. As he wrote:

Daraus ergab sich für die Massen das folgende prinzipiell falsche, aber aus dem Leben, aus der politischen Praxis herausgewachsene Dilemma: entweder sich 'vernünftig' jeder nationalen Erniedrigung zu unterwerfen, oder sich irrationell-heroisch, an ein Wunder glaubend, in den Kampf zu werfen.⁷⁸

At this point Lukács missed the opportunity to surpass Bloch in describing the dilemma that—for a part of the German (and other) left-wing bourgeois intelligentsia—emerged as a practical necessity: either to submit to the ‘rationality’ of fascist rule and consider it as real despite all its inhuman horrors, or, by opting for a ‘dangerous life’, to challenge it with an irrationalist heroism.

Although even in his second work on fascism, Lukács failed to analyze the sectarian errors of the German communist movement (which Dimitrov described at the seventh congress of the Comintern), he strove to give a more differentiated and historically, economically, and politically substantiated explanation of why fascist ideology and propaganda were so effective among the ranks of the working class, especially young workers. The economic crisis generated a strong anti-capitalist mood in broad sectors of the working class, a mood that was coupled with a revolutionary impatience. At the same time, prompted by everyday experience, the workers did not believe in an inherent and necessary interconnection of reason (which they interpreted as reforms) and revolution. They were disappointed at the perspective of a rational, ‘democratic’ development (which they identified with the Weimar Republic). They, of course, had never heard of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, or Spengler. However, an ideological need for a radical change in the unbearable situation was present in their consciousness. The propaganda of Hitler’s Germany was ‘ingenious’ in that it disguised modern reactionary ideas as revolutionary ideas, and carried them from the philosophical textbooks and university lecture halls to the streets, translated them into the language of popular needs.

Die ‘Genialität’ Hitlers lag bloss darin, dass er mit einer Handbewegung des gewiegten Massendemagogen aus diesen Ideologien alles von sich schob, was bloss eine Schrulle von Ideologen der Dekadenz war [...] dass er instinktiv erkannte, worin diese die Bestrebungen breiter Massenstimmungen ausdrückten.⁷⁹

National socialism was not content to propagate a profoundly politicized and highly persuasive ‘modern’, ‘scientific’, and ‘socialist’ world view; in order to realize it, it also promised a firm political and organizational form, a movement.

One of Lukács’s unique and lasting contributions to the Marxist-antifascist literature of the era was to have shed light on the mediations, on the ideological mechanisms that nazism called into being in order to bridge the gap between German reality and German philosophy.

In the second half of the thirties, in his analysis of the world historical situation, Lukács increasingly shifted his approach from that of a historian of philosophy (historian of ideology) to that of a philosopher of history. In the process, the analysis of the lessons of German history came to the forefront of interest. This tendency first appeared during the debate on the novel in 1935,⁸⁰ then resurfaced in a more concrete wording in *The Historical Novel*, and was continued without interruption in the work on the young Hegel and on Goethe. Yet the manuscript entitled “Wie ist Deutschland zum Zentrum der reaktionären Ideologie geworden”, which was completed sometime between the end of 1941 and early 1942, also proves that Lukács’s change in approach was a cancellation and preservation at once. Lukács moved from a sketchy description of the tragic fate of the German people, the delay in bourgeois development and the weakness of democratic traditions,⁸¹ through the description of the ‘significance and decline’ of German ‘classical literature’ to the critique of the theoretical and practical system of fascist barbarity. Let us select just one example from his wide-ranging historical ideas, his critique of Prussianism. It shows eloquently that his earlier patterns of thought (e.g., the tenet of continuity based on the genetic method) were enriched with new content and,

secondly, that for him, each historical-philosophical problem was an opportunity to discuss questions of the time. Provided that the essence of Prussianism is the unconditional subordination of the interest of every citizen to the military-expansionist interest, wrote Lukács, fascist Germany is a full-fledged rebirth of olden Prussia on the most modern technological level.⁸² From the examination of the 'continuity' of Prussianism and the comparison between the structural features of autocratic power and democratic parliamentarism, Lukács drew conclusions that were meant to explain both Hitler's successes in the beginning of the war and the historical necessity of the victory of democracy. Already in peacetime, the autocratic state can force the people at large to make extraordinary sacrifices, and it can prepare for war, which is impossible for a democratic state even in the vicinity of immediate danger, above all due to its system of democratic institutions. Lukács was of the view that the strength of bourgeois democracy and especially of Soviet democracy lies in the fact that, at a time of immediate danger, when the very national existence is threatened, it can galvanize into action the broadest masses of people who are ready for any sacrifice required to defend their freedom. Thus, the social and moral superiority of democracy (a factor that is constant rather than temporary), as the war is proceeding, is ultimately bound to transform itself into a decisive strategic superiority.⁸³ It should not be forgotten that, back in 1933, Lukács thought that the difference between imperialism in Britain and the United States, on the one hand, and in Germany, on the other, was only formal. In 1942, however, he emphasized the positive possibilities of British and American democracies to mobilize their freedom-loving peoples.⁸⁴

After the popular front policy had become the official line, the false dilemma of 'fascism or bolshevism' disappeared from Lukács's critique of the German ideology, and yet the critical spirit itself persisted. This critique, although unspoken, was in some of its elements necessarily a sort of self-criticism, an attempt at eliminating earlier ideological moments. One of those moments was the interpretation of the class-defined nature of ideological phenomena. Here we are referring not just to the changed, constitutive role of the notion of the masses of people, but especially to what Lukács (again not without antecedents) discussed as the "superficial and narrowing" approach that is bent on reducing "the camps of revolutionary progress and barbaric reaction simply and mechanically to a rigid antithesis between proletariat and bourgeoisie."⁸⁵ Hence, his conclusion: no ideologist, no matter what his class origin, is hermetically and solipsistically trapped in the existence and consciousness of his own class; in reality, he is always faced with the entire society.⁸⁶ With this conclusion, Lukács rejected the widely accepted view that, in order to represent the interests of the people in a revolutionary-democratic manner it is not necessary to join the revolutionary labor movement or to demand the overthrow of capitalism. After he had tacitly withdrawn the requirement for a *salto vitale*, Lukács had to accept the positive role of the democratic (*citoyen*) bourgeois oppositionism in the struggle against the anti-democratic tendencies in imperialism. Henceforward, he no longer branded it as quasi-opposition. He criticized the weaknesses, inconsistencies, and reactionary ideas (especially the liberalism) of the democratic opposition, but did not attempt to expel it from the camp of antifascism. The aftermath (*Nachher*) of fascism moved to the center of his critique of the German ideology, and he began to advocate the realistic view that the only means of salvation for Germany was revolutionary democracy.

And what about the German left-wing intelligentsia? Lukács was of the view that the realist work by émigré writers, and the historical novels of German antifascists heralded

a radical ideological turnabout of the intelligentsia: that their democratic humanism was the pledge of the purification of discredited Germany. His critical passion did not, however, disappear—it changed its tone.

Selbstverständlich gab es nie eine Periode, in der die ganze Intelligenz ohne Widerstand sich diesen reaktionären Tendenzen unterworfen hätte. Aber die gesellschaftliche Lage des letzten Jahrhundertdrittviertels war in Westeuropa so, dass selbst die aufrichtigste und überzeugteste Opposition der Intelligenz nicht imstande war, ernste Verbindung mit den Volksmassen zu schaffen, nicht imstande war, klare demokratische Prinzipien auszuarbeiten, weder politisch noch kulturell.⁸⁷

The new tone can be found in his criticism of both liberalism, lifeless objectivity (naturalism) and empty subjectivism (expressionism).

As a critic of the German ideology, Lukács could not pronounce the entire truth of his age. But could he do that as the ideologue of a socialism that had been victorious in a single country?

Contradictions of Progress

"A devoted communist could therefore only say: 'Right or wrong, my party'."

(Georg Lukács: "Gelebtes Denken")

Lukács was not unknown when he arrived in the Soviet Union. In the early 1920s some of the reviews that he had written in Vienna were republished by a leading journal of philosophy, *Vestnik sotsialisticheskoy Akademii*. In 1923 the editors introduced him as an 'outstanding theorist of the Hungarian communist party'.⁸⁸ His fame, however, was established by other writings. That same year, the journal published a 'chapter' of Lukács's new book, *History and Class Consciousness*, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat", in three instalments.⁸⁹ It is well known that immediately after its publication, the study provoked a heated controversy and came under sharp attack. (We shall not give a detailed description of the political and theoretical aspects of the reception.) It is certain, however, that the way in which it was received cannot be separated from the concurrent publication of works by Karl Korsch in the Soviet Union, or the fact that, in the closing pages of his *Marxism and Philosophy*, Korsch sided with the author of *History and Class Consciousness*.⁹⁰ The ideological nature of the reception, which was later augmented by the reverberations of Lukács's study on Lenin, was defined, in the first place, by A. Debordin. Only Debordin was in a position to transform the philosophical debate into a political one. He managed to get his polemical attack on Lukács published as a separate brochure, as a document to be considered by delegates to the fifth congress of the Communist International.⁹¹ Among Debordin's vulgar (and, therefore, efficient) critical observations, we shall cite only those that had retained ideological topicality up to the late 1920s and early 1930s.

The most severe criticism leveled at Lukács concerned his rejection of the dialectic of nature, in general, his interpretation of dialectics, and his unfavorable criticism of Engels. Concerning the world view of *History and Class Consciousness*. Debordin wrote that, in general, Lukács "in this way or another accepts historical materialism, yet he rejects philosophical materialism".⁹² He challenged Lukács's position with numerous quotations from Engels and repeated references to Plekhanov.

What was Debordin's opinion on Lukács's relationship to Hegel? Debordin argued that by acting as an idealist and propagating the identity of subject and object, consciousness

and being, theory and practice, Lukács advocated orthodox Hegelian ideas. The way that Lukács discussed the interplay of theory and praxis reminded Deborin of Hegel's absolute spirit (the unity of the theoretical and practical spirit). As far as the issue of the scope of dialectics was concerned, however, Deborin contrasted Lukács's stand with that of Hegel. The latter, Deborin held, coincided with that of Marx and Engels.

In this issue there is no disagreement between, on the one hand, Hegel and, on the other, Marx and Engels. They all consider the world as a dialectical process of progress, both history and nature, in both of which everything is finite, comes into being, changes and then disappears, in accordance with its internal contradictions.⁹³

At the fifth congress of the Comintern, Zinoviev—speaking in line with Deborin's recommendations—condemned in no uncertain terms Lukács, Graziadei, and Korsch, whom he described as revisionist 'professors' advocating Hegelianism. Although, at that time, Bukharin and Zinoviev were considered the leading ideologues of the party, Lukács was absolutely right in stating later that the 'authoritative critic' of the time was Deborin.⁹⁴ Severe and sharp as the tone of the criticism was, the official condemnation had no consequence whatsoever. Among the causes of this rather mild reaction, suffice it to mention only one factor, but a principal one: at that time philosophical materialism was not in the center of the ideological struggle in the communist movement; the problematic of materialist dialectic was not directly connected with political alternatives. In 1935, the basic question was the bolshevization of the parties and the propagation and implementation of Leninism. The Comintern, however, defined the essence of this type of Leninism not as the sophistication of philosophy or the materialistic understanding of nature, but the teachings on imperialism, the proletarian revolution, and the Soviet state. And Trotskyism, which was denounced as a 'sort of menshevism', an especially dangerous deviation from Leninism, had in practice nothing to do with Hegelianism.⁹⁵

Ostensibly, a statement by Stalin from 1924 ran contrary to this view. Stalin said:

none other than Lenin undertook the very serious task of generalizing, in line with the materialist philosophy, the most important achievements of science from the time of Engels down to his own time, as well as of subjecting to comprehensive criticism the anti-materialistic trends among Marxists.⁹⁶

Yet at that time Stalin was not the leading theoretician of the party, and his remark was a reference to the question of the importance of theory in the proletarian movement. Considering his lecture as a whole, the remark is insignificant and confined to stressing the historical importance of *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*. In order to illustrate the marked shift in ideological emphasis in the approach to philosophical materialism, let us quote another passage from Stalin, written in 1938:

Dialectical materialism is the world outlook of the Marxist-Leninist party. It is called dialectical materialism because its approach to the *phenomena of nature*, its method of studying and apprehending them, is *dialectical*, while its interpretation of the phenomena of nature, its conception of these phenomena, its theory is *materialistic*. Historical materialism is the extension of the principles of dialectical materialism to the study of social life.⁹⁷

Under the aforementioned ideological conditions, *History and Class Consciousness* did not risk incurring ostracism. And yet, despite the positive reception of Lukács's *Lenin*, a measure of danger hung on for two reasons. (1) When Zinoviev listed Lukács among the ultra-left deviationists, he in fact chose his side in the factional strife within the Hungarian party, favoring Rudas. (2) Lukács's name and the reception of his works

were associated with those of Korsch and, consequently, with the factional rivalry in the German communist party. (It was not accidental that Thalheimer, too, cited political arguments when criticizing Lukács's work.) For that very reason, a later development, Korsch's expulsion from the German communist party in 1926, was an alarming event.

Lukács continued to publish works in Soviet philosophical journals, namely, in respected ones, such as *Arkhiv K. Marxa i F. Engelsa*,⁹⁸ edited by Riazanov. In the mid-1920s, the contemporary bolshevik reception did not compel Lukács to make a theoretical revision of his work, only to be more cautious in political matters and cherish some doubts. In a later autobiography, believed to have been written in 1941, Lukács wrote:

It was a more difficult and more time-consuming affair to overcome my philosophical (Hegelian) past. My work, entitled *History and Class Consciousness* (published in 1923 and containing a collection of my articles of 1919–22) is the summation of the philosophical errors of my initial political apprenticeship years. Consequently, the fundamental orientation of the book is idealistic. It took a long time to overcome idealism. As early as in 1926–27, under the influence of the *Dialectics of Nature* by Engels and *Empiriocriticism* by Lenin, I had serious doubts about the correctness of my views, doubts that had the practical consequence that I did not permit the republication of my book.⁹⁹

Thus, Lukács did not arrive in Moscow unknown. In 1930s, however, his name became known again, this time due not to his earlier writings, but to what his critics wrote about him. He arrived in Moscow during the climax of the debates on Debordin and Bukharin: his name was mentioned, but he was no longer in the focus of controversy. The situation was new and could have been paradoxical-comic, had it not been so tragic.

As the scope of this paper will not allow me to give a detailed account of the debate,¹⁰⁰ I shall confine myself to describing those political and ideological elements of its background that affected Lukács.

On December 27, 1929, Stalin delivered a speech at a conference of Marxist farming specialists. He criticized the economists, for he believed that theoretical work had lagged behind, had not kept pace with the practical achievements, and he claimed that the basic tenets of Marxist-Leninist political economy were falling into oblivion.¹⁰¹ Stalin's criticism exerted a stimulating effect on the correct assessment of the philosophical 'front', and this assessment was made in the middle of 1930 during the plenary sessions of the Communist Academy of Moscow. The disagreement between Debordin and his critics that soon turned into accusations, centered on the interpretation of Lenin's heritage. By that time, however, Leninism was understood solely as Lenin's philosophical output: the status and role of his dialectical materialism and epistemology in the further development of Marxism. The debate was aimed at bolshevizing Marxist philosophy. Debordin and his associates were attacked by the 'philosophical establishment', especially for allegedly underestimating the Leninist heritage. They equated Lenin with Hegel, it was claimed and were deliberately silent about Lenin's critique of Plekhanov; they failed to apply the method of dialectical materialism to the natural sciences, and separated philosophy from the political struggle by failing to crush the theoretical foundations of Trotskyism.¹⁰²

Debordin, in an attempt to defend himself, employed a historically outdated and ideologically inadequate 'quantitative' argument to prove Lenin's superiority over Plekhanov: Plekhanov was a theorist, while Lenin was a party leader and a theorist. Debordin argued that Lenin had been undervalued by none other than those who failed to realize that he was a "practical revolutionary in the first place, for whom theory is especially a tool to transform the world".¹⁰³ And this was only a part of his self-defence. His next, 'historical' counter-argument was meant to ward off the charges of Hegelianism and

being apolitical leveled at him. To emphasise one of his merits, he recalled what he had written years before about *History and Class Consciousness*.

We opposed the idealistic trends that at that time arose in some West European communist parties. I am referring, first of all, to comrade Lukács. The purpose of his widely known book was to turn Marxist thought toward Hegel's idealism. Naturally, we cannot agree with an idealistic interpretation of Hegelian dialectic, or with his criticism of Engels. That is why we considered it inevitable to concentrate our criticism on Lukács and like-minded thinkers (Korsch and others).¹⁰⁴

The official report on the state and aims of the philosophical front included similar statements.

Lukács's philosophy, which was an attempt at interpreting Marxism in a Hegelian spirit, was sharply condemned. The importance of the fulfilment of this task increased because a materialistic transformation of Hegelian dialectic was a topical goal [...] While efforts had to be made to oppose petty-bourgeois vacillation and a variety of deviations from Marxist-Leninist philosophy, a struggle had to be waged on two fronts—against mechanistic vacillations, on the one hand, and idealistic vacillations (represented by Lukács and Marxists who had associated themselves with Freudianism, etc.), on the other.¹⁰⁵

The ways of attack and defence were paradoxical, and not least due to the new and strange case—for Deborin had by then become Lukács's partner in the dock, while Lukács had become Deborin's most important witness. That was the comic outer shell of the affair. In fact, the paradox follows from the ideological situation itself, from the logic of such a debate. This immanent logic was not recognized by either the besiegers of the bastions of the 'philosophical establishment' or its defenders, and yet they acted under its dictates (for power was at stake). They gave rise to such durable mechanisms and formulas as the 'historical' (retrospectively proven) justification of errors and merits; the finding of an appropriate qualification or label ('idealistic Hegelianism') from which the victims attempted to free themselves by foisting them onto their opponents. One might claim, for instance, that it was the defendant himself who acted with utmost determination against the very vice that was the cause of the indictment (deviation of revision). In most of the cases, however, even that method was ineffective because the accuser followed the same logic: the defence backfired and turned into an indictment. The resolution passed on Deborin's line reads as follows:

This is a sophisticated revision of Marxism, which was camouflaged with extraordinary care. It was carried out behind the façade of a materialistic and Marxist phraseology and often given a Marxist-Leninist disguise. It often attacked both the open, clerical, and counterrevolutionary idealism of the type represented by Losev, and the idealist Hegelians, spearheaded by Lukács.¹⁰⁶

Thus, one who had been a key witness turned out to be a false witness with whom the defendant colluded.

All this could be considered as an episode in the history of the typical ideological debates, if the ideological conditions had not changed since the bolshevik reception of Lukács's work in 1924–25. Stalin's criticism of Bukharin and the 'great turn' that he announced in 1929 were to be found in the background of the change. The 1929 turn involved his demand in the Comintern that the struggle against social democracy should be fought on a higher level, his view that the class struggle had been intensifying, and the policy of eliminating the kulaks.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, it is understandable that one of the key figures of the debate declared that creative Marxism was represented not by Deborin but by Stalin, that the only authentic interpretation of Lenin was not Deborin's but

Stalin's. But there was a more direct consequence as well: it was the first 'professional' debate in which Stalin personally participated. He himself found the adequate adjective that connected the bolshevization of philosophy, philosophical materialism (and idealism, respectively) with political alternatives. On December 9, 1930, Stalin delivered a speech at a session of a party cell (which belonged to the Institute for Red Professors of Philosophy and the Natural Sciences—a specific institute for the training of communist teachers for college and university departments of philosophy and natural sciences). According to one eye-witness report, "he was the first to classify most profoundly, most consistently, most clearly, and most precisely the tenets of Deborin's group as idealism in the manner of mensheviks."¹⁰⁸

The fact that, as the above account says, Deborin and his group had studied Marx and Lenin 'with the eyes of' Hegel had serious administrative consequences for Deborin. By contrast, it had no practical consequence whatsoever for Lukács. Lukács did not consider the instruction to concur in the condemnation of Deborin as an external interference in his conduct. As he wrote in his autobiography of 1941:

In 1930—31 I worked as a research associate at the MELI [Marx—Engels—Lenin Institute] in Moscow, and I was preoccupied with the attempt to clarify my philosophical views once and for all. As a member of the C/bPSU [Communist (bolshevik) Party of the Soviet Union], in the party cell of the Institute, I struggled against Deborin and Riazanov in harmony with the party line.¹⁰⁹

Although he agreed with the denunciation of Deborin, he did not identify himself in every aspect with his critics, especially where long-term perspectives were concerned. For Lukács, the bolshevization of philosophy and the ideological debate over the Leninist heritage offered a general, positive message (viz. that Lenin, and not Plekhanov, was the genuine heir of Marxism). For the time being, however, that is, from 1930 to 1933, he could not clearly see the concrete vistas. The notion of 'idealism in the manner of mensheviks' gave him no orientation concerning, for instance, his attitude to Hegelian dialectic, and the relationship of Lenin and Hegel, the latter assuming an entirely new and clearer meaning after Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks* were published (1929—33). Further—and perhaps that was one of the most paradoxical aspects of the situation—although the Plekhanovian orthodoxy was subjected to a strong ideological and political criticism, the requirement that dialectical materialism had to be applied to the natural sciences, under the known conditions, foreshadowed an artificially naturalistic and dualistic doctrine and method, which—as it has been pointed out above—was propagated by Stalin as the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism. Where the essence of dialectical materialism was concerned, it coincided exactly with the Plekhanovian orthodoxy that was 'knocked out' during the struggle: Deborin's ghost reappeared in the official formulation of Leninism, and Lukács did not identify himself with this sort of Leninism in either its early or mature form. For him, Lenin was and remained the 'great dialectician', a 'materialist friend' of Hegelian dialectic, the Marx of imperialism, the proletarian revolution, and of the age of transition.¹¹⁰

It can be inferred from the above passages that Lukács's thought was present in the Soviet philosophy of the age as a critical paradigm. It will also become understandable that—in contrast to the situation in 1924—25—in 1930—31, external political and ideological forces of compulsion appeared and forced Lukács to revise *History and Class Consciousness*. As we shall see below, he gave only a *pro forma* response to this challenge. The most important external political factor was that, in 1930, Lukács was no longer a leading member of the Hungarian party. He arrived in Moscow after the debates

in which his "Blum Theses" had been given an unfavorable evaluation. In spring 1930, at the second congress of the HPC, he was not elected to the Central Committee. There was an increasing danger that he could be considered a 'rejected' person, who perhaps should be left out, and not just from the leadership. The danger was reduced by the fact that Lukács took part in the campaign against Deborin as a member of the staff of the Marx—Engels—Lenin Institute (and not in the press), and as a member of the C(b)PSU (and not the Hungarian party), and that, upon the request of Johannes R. Becher, he was soon commissioned by the German party to travel to Berlin on a political mission.

To be sure, the 'collapse of his idealistic prejudices' was not provoked solely by his reading of the above-mentioned work of Marx. Before his departure to Berlin he indeed had the opportunity to reassess his 'Hegelian' Marx interpretation of the twenties. Let us stress, however, that at that time, the awareness of such a reassessment was not translated into action (apart from some occasional attempts). The reason for this assertion is not that the above-mentioned manuscript got lost, or that Lukács's engagements and living conditions in Berlin prevented him from expounding his new philosophical stance in a monograph. As a matter of fact, the theoretical reassessment could not take place in Moscow before 1931, or in Berlin between 1931 and 1933. The awareness of its imperative could only be translated into concrete action much later, again in Moscow, when it was the action of an ideologist of 'socialism in one country'.

True, on arriving in Berlin, Lukács was urged from several directions to clarify the Hegel issue, and we know of some of his concrete attempts. His arrival in Berlin coincided with a Hegel centenary year. Official celebrations were under way, and were scheduled to be crowned by the first congress on Hegel. Lukács felt compelled to oppose the academic (in the derogative sense of the word) renaissance of Hegel. As he put it in a letter to Lifschitz:

Unfortunately, a week ago I was commissioned to write in no time a major work on the occasion of the Hegel anniversary. Our men are going to publish a collection of essays to mark the Hegel centennial. My study is supposed to be ready by early October. I am attempting to retrieve from the mess of my notes what I have written for myself on the Thermidor issue, but you can imagine how such a hasty job will look like when I have an absurdly short amount of time at my disposal, just two or three weeks, and have to work under such conditions.¹¹¹

Ultimately, the planned volume of essays could not be published, and yet we can have a fairly precise idea of what it would have looked like. As Rafael de la Vega wrote:

1932 hielt Lukács in Frankfurt am Main einen Vortrag über den Kommentar Hegels zu Stuarts Staatswirtschaftslehre. (Er hielt damals zahlreiche Vorträge im Rahmen seiner Tätigkeit als 2. Vorsitzender der Berliner Ortsgruppe des Schutzverbandes Deutscher Schriftsteller.) Dieser Vortrag ist, soweit wir wissen, niemals gedruckt worden, und wird auch in den wichtigsten Bibliographien des Lukács'schen Schaffens nicht erwähnt. Noch wichtiger vielleicht könnte ein Aufsatz sein, den Lukács 1931 unter dem Titel 'Der Thermidor: der junge und der alte Hegel' zur Veröffentlichung in einem Sammelband freigab, der jedoch niemals erscheinen sollte. Diese wahrhaft interessante bibliographische und philosophische Rarität wurde in der Presse annonciert. Es sollte 'Mitte Dezember' (1931 oder 1932) erscheinen, 'ca. 400 Seiten umfassen und ca. 6,50 M' kosten. Es wurde als 'Das erste Standard-Werk des Marxismus über Hegel' gepriesen, und der Verleger behauptete in dem Inserat: 'Dieses Buch füllt eine Lücke in der theoretischen Literatur des Marxismus'. Der vollständige Titel sollte lauten: 'Hegel und sein Erbe. Beiträge zur marxistischen Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie'. Unter Mitarbeit namhafter marxistischer Wissenschaftler.—Internationaler Arbeiterverlag GmbH Berlin.—Der Inhalt bot folgende Beiträge an: G. Lukacz (sic!): 'Der Thermidor: der junge und der alte Hegel'/J. A. Wittfogel: Die geschichtliche Entwicklung der Revolution in der Hegelschen Philosophie/Schmückle: 'Hegel und die Dialektik in der Geschichte'/Kurt Sauerland: 'Der neue Hegelianismus'/Dr. Gerber: 'Die Frage des Kriege-

bei Hegel und Clausewitz"/A. Emel: 'Das System der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie und Staatsrecht (Kritik durch Marx)'/Dr. H. Duncker: 'Die Bedeutung der klassischen deutschen Philosophie für die Entstehung des Marxismus'/Adoratskij: 'Hegel, Marx und Lenin'.¹¹²

Lukács had numerous opportunities to challenge the image of Hegel as it appeared in bourgeois philosophy. One of the most appropriate forums for his critical activity was the Marxist Workers' School (MASCH), where he delivered lectures on a variety of topics.

Art and culture were a key area for the educational activities of the Hungarian comrades. This can be said also for György Lukács who, on the occasion of the centenary of Hegel's death, analyzed some aspects of the Hegelian legacy. In polemic with neo-Hegelianism he elaborated the topic entitled 'Hegel—Marx—Lenin' at the end of 1931 and early 1932.¹¹³

And in his biography of Lukács, Andor Gábor says that, probably in early 1933, Lukács delivered a lecture on Hegel's fascist falsification, in Frankfurt. It is not known whether the lecture mentioned by Gábor is identical with that referred to by Vega. An eye-witness, Márta Krelischeim, recalls in an interview by Éva Gábor that, on January 26, 1932, in Frankfurt, Lukács delivered a lecture at a debate at the Kant Gesellschaft, under the title "Über den jungen Hegel". A major debate ensued, in which one of the contributors, Mannheim, basically shared Lukács's views. Lukács is said to have held a lecture, "Dialektischer Materialismus", before an audience composed of some of his friends and acquaintances at the Café Hauptwache on January 27, 1933.

Thus, Lukács fulfilled topical requests in Berlin (and interrupted the writing of a study on Mehring). He discussed Hegel 'in a hurry', and the critique of German ideology understandably predominated in his papers. Let us quote a statement from someone in the enemy camp, Carl Schmitt, to illustrate the direct political topicality of this critique and its role in the realization of the world historical changes: "An diesem Tage (dem 30. Januar 1933) ist demnach, so kann man sagen, Hegel gestorben."¹¹⁴ During his stay in Berlin, his choice of themes was influenced by yet another centenary, that of Goethe's death, and especially those articles on Goethe that he published in German left-wing journals were written in the spirit of antifascist struggle.¹¹⁵

On the threshold of the victory of fascism in Germany, the defence of the Hegelian-Goethean legacy, classical German philosophy, and the dialectical traditions was an urgent party-approved aim. In those writings Lukács anticipated theoretical conclusions which, on the one hand, were a continuation of his earlier intellectual progress and, on the other, foreshadowed later major studies on Hegel (and Goethe): the development of the world view of the young Hegel; the Thermidor problematic; dialectics as a method of exploring the contradictory nature of existence; the relation between the French Revolution and Hegelian dialectic. In connection with the latter topic, Lukács wrote that the revolution had become a constituent part of Hegel's dialectic, which was based on the intellectual evaluation of the French Revolution and the industrial revolution in England—even though in an idealistically distorted form.¹¹⁶

To a certain degree, Lukács's fulfilment of his party assignment reflected his conclusions from the Bukharin—Deborin debate. True, Lukács had never referred to the debate in print, but in view of the ideological situation in Germany, the left-wing thinkers had to concentrate on the defence of Hegel's philosophy of history and Hegel's dialectic as a source of Marxism. (The table of contents of the planned volume of studies on Hegel reflected the same endeavor.) And when a pro-fascist bourgeois theorist declared that

Hegel had died, it would have become impossible for Lukács to fulfil his party assignment, had he acted as a critic of Hegel's idealism. On the contrary, he stressed that it was not the materialistic approach but idealistic dialectic that had worked out the 'active aspect' of consciousness. In the age of Goethe, due to Germany's backwardness, the philosophical struggle did not take place between clearly separated camps of materialism and idealism, which made it difficult to choose between mechanical materialism and idealistic ideas, or idealistic dialectic. Here we find the source of the contradictions in Goethe's world view, his dialectical and pantheistic views, 'refined' empiricism, his acceptance of the mechanistic approach, and so on.

When Lukács returned to Moscow in 1933, he was aware of these circumstances. He had realized the changes in the world historical situation and was familiar with the conditions in the Soviet Union. On June 24, 1934, he delivered a paper at a scholarly meeting of the Philosophical Institute of the Communist Academy. Although his paper was entitled "The Significance of *Materialism and Empiricocriticism* in the Bolshevization of the Communist Parties", the real message of the paper was self-criticism, a recantation of *History and Class Consciousness*. It would be an oversimplification to describe the major public recantation as just another partisan move of Lukács's, without first examining some of its special features. At first sight, the paper is a repetition of the foreword to his 1933 work on fascism where, as we saw above, he criticized his own development against the background of what he described as the direct and necessary transformation of the bourgeois intelligentsia and philosophy into fascism, and he rejected what he had written as a critic of the German ideology. His critique of ideology and, hence, his self-criticism, were ideological in that they were based on the false dilemma of fascism or bolshevism. In the first part of his address he applied this approach and summed up all its key elements (the critique of life philosophy, subjective idealism, myth making, irrationalism, Kantian and Hegelian trends, social fascism, etc.), and he said of his book on Lenin that it anticipated the critique of the entire bourgeois philosophy of the imperialist period, its transition to the ideological preparation of fascism. Later on, however, the ideological and theoretical foundation of Lukács's self-criticism and elements of the struggle against the ascent of fascism were augmented by motives—again of an ideological character—of the ideological struggle for bolshevization. This 'synthesis' was a peculiar response to the debate of 1930—31, but its essence is not ultimately to be found in the fact that Lukács rejected History's stance on the image theory, by employing Lenin's theory of knowledge, or that he condemned, after criticizing the Second International, the ultra-left-wing, syndicalist trends of the Third International. (He condemned not only the syndicalism of Korsch and others, but also his own.) The more profound basis of his synthesis lay in the fact that he connected the dilemma of bolshevism or fascism with that of 'Russian bolshevism or Western communism.'

Occasionally man can disguise himself. Independent of the fact that this is an 'entirely partial phenomenon' and that the external cannot be separated for an extended period from the internal, it is worth examining whether, intentionally or not, man assumes a disguise that corresponds to the requirements of his age. When Lukács recanted *History and Class Consciousness* from the point of view of a critical attitude to the German ideology—objectively speaking—he applied no disguise; when he recanted from the point of view of 'Russian' bolshevism—subjectively speaking—he probably made use of disguise. The disguise itself was not, however, a reference to Stalin, Lenin's 'true'

heir, it was a masque that, when worn, immediately showed a tragi-comic grimace, true to the spirit of the age.

The model for Lukács's self-criticism was Lenin's remark on Bogdanov: a historical materialist 'above' and an idealist 'beneath'. Once again, it is worth quoting extensively from his self-criticism, which used the genetic method:

I started my career as a student of Simmel and Max Weber (I was influenced by tendencies of the German 'intellectual sciences'), and, besides, I developed toward idealism, from Kant toward Hegel. Furthermore, the philosophy of syndicalism (Sorel) exerted an important impact on me, for it consolidated in me romantic anti-capitalistic tendencies. The world war and the Russian Revolution of 1917 brought about a crisis in my whole world view, and my syndicalist tendencies were strengthened under the personal influence of Ervin Szabó, who was the most important representative of syndicalism in Hungary. Thus, when I joined the Communist Party of Hungary in 1918, my views were syndicalistic and idealistic. My experiences from the revolution in Hungary notwithstanding, I let myself be led by an ultra-left opposition to the Comintern line (1920—21). Although, after the Third World Congress, I realized my concrete errors of the time (parliamentarism, March action), my *History and Class Consciousness* of 1922 (which I had written between 1919 and 1922) was a philosophical synthesis of these tendencies. For that reason, what Lenin had described as 'idealism beneath' applied precisely to the most important mistakes of my work even though I had never come into contact with Machism. The struggle that I had waged against the theory of reflection and the Marxian-Engelsian interpretation of the dialectic of nature was a typical form of 'idealism beneath'. It is therefore self-evident that 'materialism above' could not be but 'materialism' distorted and abstracted in an idealistic way. This could be pointed out in detail concerning every concrete issue discussed in my work, ranging from problems of philosophy to the definition of class consciousness and a theory of crisis. In the course of my party work, and after I gradually became familiar with works by Lenin and Stalin, these ideological foundations of my views were weakening. Although I did not approve a new edition of my work (which had meanwhile sold out), the problems of philosophy became clear for me only during my stay in the Soviet Union between 1930 and 1931, especially by the philosophical debate of the time.¹¹⁷

When the Lukács of 1934 applied this Leninist critical remark to the Lukács of the twenties, he did not mean that he had become the same type of theoretician as Bogdanov. He was certainly not aware that, with this type of self-criticism, he had retrospectively justified what Deborin had disapprovingly said of him, namely, that he had espoused historical materialism, yet rejected philosophical materialism. Neither did he know that his self-criticism was adjusted to an age that had accepted Plekhanovian orthodoxy, and that this 'Russian' bolshevism, apart from its declared platform, had just as little in common with Leninism as Lenin's criticism of Bogdanov had with Deborin's criticism of Lukács.

At that time it was both possible and necessary for Lukács to reject *History and Class Consciousness*. and yet he could not, for the time being, transcend it. He had to disown it in view of the changes in conditions and the above-mentioned dangers that threatened him. The tone of the debate of 1930—31, Riazanov's removal from the leadership of the Institute for Red professors, and several other circumstances motivated Lukács to recant his work openly. (Let us also call attention to yet another circumstance, which today seems to be irrelevant, in fact, unrealistic, but which is highly characteristic of the time: self-criticism was a must. It had become inevitable for each and all to denounce the mistakes, to practice criticism and self-criticism, as that was seen as a method of 'overcoming' contradictions, a tool of education and self-education. Rarely could anyone ever avoid apologizing for his or her earlier and present errors in public speeches and prefaces to books.)

After 1935, Lukács was gradually becoming able to realize the real conditions of socialism being built in one country and to write an analysis of its contradictions—and those of the age of imperialism—from the perspective of the philosophy of history, as

well as to work out an ideology that actively incorporated identification and critique. The result of this internal struggle was the most profound (and most unfortunate) work of the era, an unparalleled Marxist achievement, *The Young Hegel*.

And yet, the exceptional greatness of the work is far from visible at first sight. There are several reasons for this, among them, although not first and foremost, the fact that both its publication and understanding were rather belated.

I shall discuss the exceptional importance of the work on Hegel and its position in Lukács's career only briefly.

Throughout his life, György Lukács was making preparations for the writing of the great work. From the time of the 'dream of youth' in Heidelberg, to *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* and to *The Ontology of Social Being*, he cherished the hope creating a great aesthetic and philosophical work. (That was one of the reasons why he thought that he would start writing his 'genuine life work' at the age of 70.) His ultimate aim was to create an independent and systematic Marxist-Leninist aesthetic, and an independent and systematic ontology of social being. His model was the philosophical universality of Hegel's conception and the historical-systematic nature of his synthesis, which will be an 'example to be followed by all aesthetics for a long time to come'.¹¹⁸ Lukács's attempt at reconstructing Marx's ontology also aimed at universality and historical synthesis. However, due to reasons extremely profound and entirely independent of the *hic et nunc* of his career, the great works, with only very few exceptions, have remained in torso.

The Young Hegel is a great work, which is complete.

Is its completeness due to its well-balanced and ostensibly conventional 'academic' form? Is it due to the fact that it was not just one of many variants left unfinished, and that Lukács never had to continue or augment it? These questions could be answered satisfactorily only by a more detailed analysis.

It might be useful, however, to consider in brief some circumstances of the birth of the work.

In the beginning, the writing and publication of the monograph appeared to be a smooth affair. As Lukács put it in a journal: 'At present I am writing a major monograph commissioned by the Moscow Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences: *Der junge Hegel und die Probleme der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft*.'¹¹⁹ Although the work was barred from publication (according to Lukács, it was completed in autumn, 1937), four years later, on December 29, 1942, it could be defended as a doctoral dissertation (under the same title), and on August 28, 1943, Lukács was officially given the title of doctor of philosophical sciences.¹²⁰ The fate of this book was apparently not affected by Lukács's arrest,¹²¹ and in 1942, as is indicated by a letter of I. Sats, there was hope for its possible publication in Russian.¹²²

There was even some hope of its publication until as late as 1944, when Hegel was declared to have been an ideologue of feudal reaction, opposed to the French Revolution.

The discussion of events in this order allows us to have a better understanding of one of Lukács's later remarks:

Es ist z. B. bekannt, dass während des Krieges ein Beschluss gefasst wurde, der Hegel für einen Ideologen der feudalen Reaktion gegen die Französische Revolution erklärte. Darum konnte ich natürlich mein Buch über den jungen Hegel in dieser Zeit nicht veröffentlichen. Ich dachte: Man kann zwar sicherlich den Krieg auch ohne eine derartige unwissenschaftliche Dummheit gewinnen. Wenn aber die Anti-Hitler-Propaganda einmal darauf verfallen ist, so ist es momentan wichtiger, den Krieg zu gewinnen, als über die richtige Auffassung Hegels zu streiten.¹²³

Why was the work not published before the war or between 1941 and 1944? Was it only an open criticism of Zhdanov's nonsensical characterization of Hegel as a representative of the reactionary political forces who were opposed to the French Revolution? Was its only merit that it corrected certain statements in *History and Class Consciousness* without rejecting its justifiable tendencies and that it shed light on the interconnection of the French Revolution and capitalist economics on the one hand, and Hegel's dialectic, on the other?¹²⁴

Again, answers to these questions would require a more detailed analysis.

Let us make another brief digression, which will guide us toward the inner world and covert meanings of the work. I have already touched on the intellectual influences that compelled Lukács to revise *History and Class Consciousness* and expound his new philosophical stance. Apart from the bolshevik reception and the debate of 1930–31, one of the most decisive influences was (its effect was felt later, coupled with other impacts) Marx' conception of alienation, as well as Hegel's *Phenomenology* as discussed in the 1844 *Manuscripts*; the possibility of a critical philosophy whose ideal was the 'critique of political economy'. (It is needless to remind the reader of the impact of Marx's economic and philosophical views on German critical theory.) Another intellectual influence affecting Lukács in Berlin was the strengthening of the 'classical' irrationalistic life philosophical interpretation of the young Hegel (Dilthey), which was itself in part due to the publication at that time of numerous previously unknown documents of Hegel's early activities. Under these influences, Lukács worked out the plan of a conception that transcended the mistaken view of *History and Class Consciousness*.

This search became a plan to investigate the philosophical connections between economics and dialectics. My first attempt to put this plan into practice came early in the thirties, in Moscow and Berlin with the first draft of my book on the young Hegel (which was not completed until autumn 1937).¹²⁵

There was yet another extremely strong intellectual influence that affected Lukács in Moscow in the early thirties, one that he never mentioned in connection with the genesis of his work: the influence of M. Lifschitz—not the aesthetician, but the philosopher. That explains why György Lukács dedicated *The Young Hegel* to him, 'with respect and friendship', and why the monograph discusses only and especially the young Hegel (the two question are inseparable) and, finally, in what ways the work speaks of Lukács and his age.

As in the case of other works by Lukács, the dedication is not an expression of mere courtesy. It was a gesture to the personal friend and respected thinker, the thinker who spoke with exemplary clarity of the topical meaning of Hegel's philosophy in the age of socialism. In 1931 Lifschitz recognized the topical essence of Hegel's ideas:

the revolution is over. The old regime has been destroyed and a new order and new logic have to be stated in its stead. The categories of logic are forms in which the glowing lava of revolutionary events takes final shape. Hegel's philosophy is an abstract representation of the fact that struggle is replaced by order, the destructive stage of bourgeois revolution by its creative stage.¹²⁶

Hegel was aware of the meaning of his own activity: in both theory and practice the *ancien régime* was necessarily replaced by a 'new principle'. Hegel clearly saw that he was a philosopher of the 'organic' age that followed the revolution. However, he contrasted the revolution, which in itself is the 'fury of death', with the positive, the positive system that dissolves the contradictions of revolution. "That he contrasted the revolu-

tionary-critical element with 'the positive' and subordinated the former to the latter, forms the basis of Hegel's philosophy of identity."¹²⁷

Thus, Lifschitz declared that Hegel was topical for, just as German theoretical thought after the French Revolution was also the theory of the age that came after the revolution, so the mission of the Marxist thinker of the time was precisely to be the philosopher of the aftermath of the revolution that had ended.

We, too, have the task to develop a 'new principle' in both practical life and methodology. However, the proletarian revolution does not accept any contradiction between its critical and creative stages [...] it does not proclaim the slogan of 'reconciliation', instead it continues the critical-revolutionary destruction, which is inseparable from its 'positive and creative work'.¹²⁸

In the early thirties Lifschitz thought that, in the course of the building of socialism, the 'critical' and the 'positive' elements would remain in unity throughout and that they could not become contradictory. He was of the view that, after the continuation of the 'destructive' functions of the revolution and the strengthening of its creative activities, the slogan of 'reconciliation' would, in historical terms, be discarded once and for all. Lukács apparently shared that view. More importantly, the two men had no pure philosophical considerations in mind when they turned to Hegel.

In the early thirties my relationship to Hegel was not interest in the ingenious German philosopher in a narrowly professional philosophical sense of the word 'interest' and, naturally, neither was it a search for some artificial and false historical analogy. The most important reason that Lukács and I studied Hegel at that time was our endeavor to fulfil the rigorous requirement to analyze the socialist revolution true to the Leninist tradition.¹²⁹

Hegel's philosophy undoubtedly played an important role in Lenin's analyses of world historical events. (Suffice it to mention that, during the war, Lenin intensively studied Hegel's works.) Also, the history of the French Revolution played no little role in the assessment of the options of revolution in Russia and of the activities of the parties. (Let us recall that, in 1905, Lenin put the question: 'Will our revolution be of the type of 1789 or of the type of 1849?') Or, think of Lenin's description of bolshevik Jacobins, etc.) Lukács, however, wanted to carry on the Leninist legacy not just in this direct sense, but also in a wider philosophical and critical spirit. He is unlikely to have arrived at the conclusion that he had to do so before 1936. (For that reason the first draft of the work on Hegel of 1930—33, of which we know very little, is believed to be rather different from the final text.) This is how Lifschitz remembers Lukács's endeavor:

in his work Lukács reestablished a close connection between Hegel and the revolutionary tradition, the revolutionary element. And the change that took place in the old Hegel [...] was not a return to the heart of the reaction, but a tragically double necessity. Of course, to a certain degree we understood it because we faced similar situations—and that is one reason why we cannot condemn the honourable thinkers in the West for failing to disclose this aspect of Hegel. But, at the same time, it is justified to say that our interpretation of Hegel—the way we interpreted his contradictions and place in history—was diametrically opposed to all of those forms of interpretation in which his philosophy was presented as a canto singing the elementary, ruthless movement of history as it lavishes thousands of human lives, singing, sometimes even deliberately, its reactionary movement. Naturally, in opposition to that form of motion and to Hegel as its natural reflection, as the mirror of this form of motion at the beginning of the XIXth century, we professed another, democratic way of historical development, which is also accompanied by sacrifices and by waste of force, as nothing happens without contradictions in world history, but we did it in Lenin's spirit, in a more democratic and freer spirit, which expresses the concept of concrete in a more concrete form. I might say that the contrast is the following, if we speak about purely philosophical concepts: the Hegelian abstract concreteness was the realism of the historical process conceived in the spirit of capitalist society. Our concrete concreteness was

the banner of true socialist society in the spirit of the Leninist October tradition, minus the dark forces that appeared in the thirties.¹³⁰

The encounter with tragic necessity and the dark forces, and the split of the positive-creative period into conflicts signaled new world historical phenomena whose truth could be and had to be defined by choosing active silence. We believe that what Lukács said of the meaning of the Hegelian absolute spirit is true also of Lukács's young Hegel:

From this standpoint 'absolute spirit' encompasses Hegel's efforts to organize the conquest of reality by mankind into a large, complex and uneven process in which philosophy has to set aside all preconceptions and devote itself to defining and evaluating the particular stages in accordance with their material, historical and dialectical significance.¹³¹

Henceforward we are going to consider the most important moments of the inner world of *The Young Hegel* from the—authentic—Lifschitzian point of view (even if that might incur a measure of one-sidedness) and to regard it as a great, independent, systematic, and historical attempt at examining the contradictions of the post-revolutionary period. As an attempt at historical realism—under the auspices of socialism.

In Lukács's work, historical realism shed new light on a long-accepted Leninist conception: there is no demarcation line between the bourgeois-democratic and the proletarian revolution. Topicality was lent to this idea of continuity not only by the anti-fascist popular front policy, but also by Lukács's belief in the historical and methodological continuity between Hegel and Marx. He stated that proletarian humanism integrated all those intellectual assets of mankind that reflected all the real contradictions of objective reality. Hegel was at the apex of the last great period of bourgeois ideology (1789—1848), Lukács wrote, because, in addition to summing up the intellectual achievements of the long history of mankind, his philosophy

comprehends the contradictory movement of that development, with all its unsolved and insoluble contradictions [...] Hegel's unique position in this period rests on the fact that for the first time in human history the *contradictory nature of existence itself* was consciously made the central preoccupation of philosophy.¹³²

Classical German philosophy and poetry as well as classical English economics proceeded from the contradictions of reality at that time. In their thinking and art, Hegel and Goethe gave expression to the contradiction of humanistic ideals and a miserable reality. Everything that was new and significant in their works developed 'amid the manure of contradictions' (Marx).

The realization of the contradictory nature of existence in Hegel's philosophy and Goethe's poetry (with the mediation of English economics) could be fulfilled upon the overcoming of the heroic illusions of the prerevolutionary and revolutionary period: progress has its price, the unprecedented development of the means of production of capitalism, liberty, and light are inseparable from the inhuman diabolic power of bourgeois society.

Hegel's poetic *Phenomenology of the Spirit* ends with the real development of the productive forces, as the power which leads from the phantasmagoric existence of feudalism to the world of the real development of human capabilities, to the real world of human activity [...] Goethe does nothing to mitigate the diabolical character of the capitalist form of this progress; but at the same time, he shows that here the true field of human activity presents itself for the first time (Studies on Faust).¹³³

The essence of the realism of Hegel and Goethe was that they faced up to the conflict of capitalist progress and humanism. They strove to maintain humanism without illu-

sions, which resulted in a special duality owing to the post-revolutionary character of their humanism; they thought that the contradictions could be dissolved within bourgeois society. Fichte took a different stand, advocating a utopian subjectivism. He had wished to put revolutionary democratism into radical practice in a country that had no revolutionary movement. Paradoxically, Hegel's objectivism was superior, thanks to its less democratic approach and the fact that Hegel accepted as reality the society that had emerged in the wake of the French Revolution, attempted to understand it in its real shape. That, however, was far from an apology, the lessening of, or silence concerning the contradictions. On the contrary. "Hegel's thought leads him to emphasize the contradictions, to make them as explicit as possible, even to the point of apparent insolubility."¹³⁴

I have hereby outlined the first set of general thoughts about the problems of capitalist society in *The Young Hegel*. Lukács made no secret of the fact that he discussed the problems of the contradictions of progress from the standpoint of socialism without creating vulgar analogies. It is evident that he spoke of the prehistory of socialism itself. In a dual sense: (1) in the sense of the world historical continuity of the contradictions of existence; (2) in the sense that, under socialism, the solution of contradictions within the state of affairs as they are poses philosophical, ideological, and, at the same time, serious practical problems in whose overcoming only a realistic 'elaboration' of the contradictions can serve as orientation.

Speaking of dramatic collisions, Lukács wrote elsewhere:

The contradictoriness of social development, the intensification of these contradictions to the point of tragic collision is a general fact of life. Nor does this contradictoriness of life come to an end with the social resolution of class antagonisms through the victorious Socialist revolution. It would be a thoroughly shallow and undialectical conception of life to believe that with Socialism there is only the monotonous serenity of self-satisfaction without problems, struggle or conflict.¹³⁵

"The contradictory character of progress is a general problem of class society's development,"¹³⁶ Lukács wrote. That he was thinking not only of capitalism is clear from his criticism of bureaucratic 'optimism' (bureaucracy 'does away with the process together with its contradictions and difficulties'), which he contrasted with the optimism of the tribunes of socialist revolution, which "consists in fearless contemplation of the external and internal threats, in the fearless exposure of obstacles and barriers, and the full understanding of the dialectical contradictions that lead by various routes to the final liberation of humanity".¹³⁷

Lukács acted as an ideologue of socialist society being built in one country when he analyzed the dilemma with which the German humanists and Hegel, too, grappled—the latter, especially in his Frankfurt period. The essence of the dilemma was that they simultaneously had to say 'yes' and 'no' to the world that had emerged in the wake of the French Revolution and the industrial revolution in England. Undoubtedly, Lukács considered this unity of opposition and affirmation as the only acceptable conduct. It became clear that the relationship of condemnation and affirmation was historical and concrete and could not be treated as a rigid dichotomy. The ascending bourgeois society displayed numerous phenomena and life styles, several institutions that hindered the individual's progress, hampered the unfolding of personality. Capitalism

had begun to reveal its horrifying, anti-cultural, and prosaic aspects with a clarity different from the period of heroic illusions before and during the French Revolution. The major bourgeois humanists in Germany now found themselves confronted by the complex and contradictory necessity of having both to recognize this bourgeois society, of accepting it as the only possible necessary and progressive reality, and at the same time

to expose and denounce its contradictions critically and freely, rather than to capitulate and apologize for the inhumanity they entailed [... Hegels's] aim is thoroughly to understand and to function within the civil society of his day; on the other hand, he recoils from its inhuman, lifeless and life-denying aspects, refusing to see them as vital and life-giving.¹³⁸

We have hereby arrived at the most serious problem of Lukács and his age, of socialism in one country, the 'tragedy in the realm of the ethical'. The question now to be considered is not just whether Lukács accepted that tragedy, and if so, why, but also that, motivated by a desire to understand the existence and operation of his society, how he at the same time rejected everything in it that was life denying.

Lukács started out from the Hegelian-Marxian thought that there is antagonism between the development of the human species and the individual: the price of the development of personality and of the full richness of human nature is a historical process in which the individuals are sacrificed. The tragedy is the consequence of the contradictory path of human progress in the history of class societies, a great and real tragedy; for the extremes of the elements in conflict are both valid and in the wrong.¹³⁹

For Goethe and Hegel both, the unceasing progress of the human species results from a chain of individual tragedies. The tragedies occurring in the microcosm of the individual are the disclosure of the ceaseless progress of the macrocosm of the species: this is the philosophical factor common to both *Faust* and the *Phenomenology of Mind*.¹⁴⁰

Lukács's approach to the real and great tragedy that 'individuals are sacrificed and exposed' was fundamentally different from that of German critical theory. He stressed the importance of historical concreteness.

Only the exact function in the given concrete stage of development determines whether a feeling, a thought or an action is human or diabolical. Sometimes it is not even possible to come to a decision about this on the basis of the isolated moment, but only on the basis of the direction of the process it reveals and which will become visible only later. This dialectic is the foundation of Goethe's unshakeable faith in the future of mankind. The struggle between good and evil engenders the forward direction of evolution; even evil can be a vehicle of objective progress [...]. Of course, this is by no means an original invention of Goethe [...]. But only in *Faust* and in the philosophy of Hegel as the 'rule of reason' did this view become the foundation of the new faith in dialectical progress which followed the French Revolution.¹⁴¹

In the mid-thirties Lukács offered the following assessment of the negativity in Hegel's dialectical logic (which reflected Hegel's relation to capitalist development):

das grosse Verdienst Hegels eben gewesen ist, die dialektisch weitertreibende Rolle des negativen Prinzips ('der schlechten Seite') aufgezeigt zu haben. Diesen Standpunkt konnte Hegel noch einnehmen, weil er, wie sein ökonomischer Zeitgenosse Ricardo, die kapitalistische Entwicklung noch zusammen mit all ihren fürchterlichen Konsequenzen klassenmässig bejahen konnte, ohne—wie die späteren—ein ordinärer Apologet zu sein.¹⁴²

The acceptance of the necessity of the sacrifice and the tragedy as the positive foundation of a post-revolutionary belief in dialectical progress could not in itself predict the way to exercise a critique of the 'dark forces' within the positive-creative period. At this point, especially Lukács's analysis of Hegel's attitude to tyranny, terror, and the Jacobin dictatorship should be emphasized. Below I shall shed further light on why Lukács decided to discuss the question of Thermidor in the early 1930s, while in 1936—37, he attached greater importance to the interpretation of the Jacobin dictatorship. Here I reiterate, that the individual stages of the history of the French Revolution played an

important, though changing role in Lukács's philosophical analyses of the revolution and the socialist social formation. In 1946, for instance, when he spoke of the mission of major popular movements in the democratic transformation of a not yet socialist Hungary after the fall of fascism, Lukács pointed out that the period in question was to a certain degree a 'repetition of the heroic times of the great French Revolution'.¹⁴³

Hegel realized that the forcible destruction of the old feudal institutions was righteous and that a certain measure of tyranny was necessary in order to put down attempts at the restoration of the old order. Lukács pointed out: it must be added to Hegel's apt conclusion that tyranny is inevitable only during the transitional period between two social systems. Lukács emphatically quoted Hegel's opinion concerning the tyrant who, if he were wise, would divest himself of his powers as they became superfluous. But as things are, his divinity is only the divinity of an animal: blind necessity that deserves to be abominated as sheer evil. This was the case with Robespierre. His power abandoned him because necessity had abandoned him. (In our view, what Lukács wrote of the fall of tyranny in *The Young Hegel* is closely connected with what he described in *The Historical Novel* as the second set of 'facts of life': sooner or later the people and parties 'are called to account' for their earlier deeds.)

When evaluating Lukács's ideological identification with Hegel's aforementioned thought, we have to recall that Lukács drew a parallel between the two trials, one involving Robespierre and Danton, the other, Stalin and Bukharin. In addition to this ideological parallel, Lukács agreed with Hegel in his rejection of 'absolute freedom', the Jacobin terror. On the other hand (and here lies the most topical philosophical content of the problem), Lukács considered it equally important that the "great understanding of history" enabled Hegel "to see that this dictatorship, which he abhorred so profoundly, was a necessary and inevitable turning point in world history: the establishment of the modern state".¹⁴⁴

The underlying dilemma of the history of philosophy is to be found less in the fact that the birth and the fall of tyranny have the same world historical necessity as their source, or that the recognition of terror is compatible with its condemnation; rather, in the fact that the tyranny of terror in the *Phenomenology* is the "final stage of 'externalization', the point at which the 'externalized' world can be reintegrated in the subject".¹⁴⁵

Before proceeding to a closer examination of this question, let us consider how Lukács responded, *post festum*, to the moral dilemma: in whose interest and to what purpose had the immense sacrifices been made? How did Lukács respond to and evaluate the great trials, which were abandoned by necessity?

Ihre Rechtmässigkeit habe ich von Anfang an skeptisch beurteilt — nicht viel anders als z. B. die gegen die Girondisten, die Dantonisten etc. in der grossen Französischen Revolution; d. h. ich bejahte ihre historische Notwendigkeit, ohne auf die Frage ihrer Gesetzlichkeit allzu grosses Gewicht zu legen [...] Meine Position änderte sich radikal erst, als die Parole ausgegeben wurde, den Trotzismus etc. mit allen Wurzeln auszurotten. Ich begriff von Anfang an, dass daraus nichts als ein massenhaftes Aburteilen in der Mehrzahl völlig unschuldiger Menschen folgen musste. Und wenn man mich heute fragen würde, warum ich dagegen nicht öffentlich Stellung nahm, so würde ich wiederum nicht die physische Unmöglichkeit in den Vordergrund stellen — ich lebte als politischer Emigrant in der Sowjetunion —, sondern die moralische: Die Sowjetunion stand unmittelbar vor dem Entscheidungskampf mit dem Faschismus. Ein überzeugter Kommunist konnte also nur sagen: 'right or wrong, my party'.¹⁴⁶

The confession reveals only one, though an essential layer of Lukács's silence. The political consciousness of the moral decision is one thing, and the choice of active

philosophy is another: the utterance of what was unsaid, the formulation of the ineffable. This choice was: reconciliation. Reconciliation that wanted to reintegrate the unity of subject and object, individual and species—unity that had been abandoned by necessity and, consequently, by rationality, and was, therefore, contradictory—by maintaining the critical spirit and wanting to mould it in a rational form.

On the face of it, however, only that philosophy can be progressive that radically rejects reconciliation. Lukács believed that in the case of Hegel (and Goethe), the reverse applied. Hegel's reconciliation with reality, Lukács argued, was not a reactionary compromise with the conditions of the time in Germany. Hegel's and Goethe's reconciliation, which was free of lies and apology, was aimed at nothing else than a thorough examination of the dialectical contradictions of bourgeois society. Lukács stressed this point not only in his work on Hegel, but in several other writings of the period between 1937 and 1945:

Goethe's *Faust*, Hegels *Phänomenologie* drücken, eigenartig verschieden, aber eigenartig konvergierend, eine neue, von Tragödien erfüllte, widerspruchsvolle Beziehung zwischen dem Schicksal des Individuums und dem des Menschengeschlechts aus. Wo ist hier die 'Versöhnung'? In der tiefen Überzeugung, dass die Einheit, die bewegende Kraft, die 'Vernunft' der Menschheitsentwicklung in der Wirklichkeit selbst enthalten ist [...] dass die Grösse des Denkers und des Dichters nicht darin besteht, seinen subjektiven Enthusiasmus in die Wirklichkeit hineinzudeuten, sondern im Gegenteil: diese die Wirklichkeit innewohnende Vernunft ihr abzulauschen, durchzudenken, zu gestalten.¹⁴⁷

When Lukács linked reconciliation with a dialectical belief in progress, with the 'classical' conviction that, in spite of all its tragic contradictions, human progress is unstoppable and is ultimately bound to triumph, a series of obvious questions springs to mind. Can this opinion avoid the pitfalls of the mystifications of false consciousness? Is it not itself an instance of escapism to a heroic utopia?¹⁴⁸ And, did it not project everything into some uncertain future time? Lukács was, undoubtedly, affected by utopianism when he supposed a resurrection of the epic after the organic unity of the individual and the community had been restored under socialism.¹⁴⁹

The answer—the triumph of Lukács's realism—affects both the final and most topical message of *The Young Hegel* and the preservation and cancellation of *History and Class Consciousness*, the problem of the reintegration of the lifeless and vacant forms of alienation. What Lukács meant as a summation of the young Hegel's philosophy is at the same time the creed of the ideologue of socialist society:

The description of the actual historical process [...] led only as far as the completion of the process of 'externalization.' We have seen that the Enlightenment, capitalism, and the French Revolution formed the climax of the journey towards the abolition of every sort of natural immediacy and the realization of 'externalization'. But we saw, too, that Hegel's attempt to anchor that retrospective process in social reality right from the start was defeated by his own integrity. In the Hegelian scheme the 'moral life of the spirit' should be the point at which movement enters into actual social life. The scheme remained skeletal, i.e., Hegel points to the place where 'externalized' reality was to have been reintegrated in the subject, but the place remains vacant in his account.¹⁵⁰

The period that follows proletarian revolution—socialist society—is the only formation in which the democratic movement of social life and the reintegration of alienation must start. This place, however, remained vacant in the philosophical discussion. Lukács remained silent—and that is how he pronounced the truth of his world, his age.

Silence, too is action.

(Translated by Iván Sella)

Notes

- ¹ Ernst Bloch: *Geist der Utopie* (München—Leipzig: 1918), p. 409.
- ² Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte: Die Vernunft in der Geschichte* (Berlin: 1970), p. 31.
- ³ Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno: "Die Aktualität der Philosophie", in his *Philosophische Frühschriften: Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1973), Bd. I, pp. 325, 326.
- ⁴ Max Horkheimer: "Geschichte und Psychologie", *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (1932) No. 1, pp. 130—1. For more detailed information on Horkheimer's attitude to Hegel and Marx, see a study by Alfred Schmidt, in which he discusses the history and significance of the *Zeitschrift: Die 'Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung': Geschichte und gegenwärtige Bedeutung* (München: 1970). Schmidt reminds the reader that *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács's famous work of 1923, was the first study to apply the Marxian categories of commodity fetishism and alienation to problems of the theory of knowledge. ("Lukács's influence can be seen clearly in works by Adorno, Bloch and Benjamin" p. 3.)
- ⁵ Max Horkheimer: *Anfänge der bürgerlichen Geschichtsphilosophie* (Stuttgart: 1930), p. 92.
- ⁶ Hegel: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte: Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, p. 97.
- ⁷ In this paper we discuss the views of only those pro-Marxist representatives of the critical theory who not only displayed the influence of György Lukács, but also can be proven to have in intellectual contact with him between 1931 and 1935, and whose works he had read (as shown by the composition of his home library). The fact that Lukács knew Horkheimer personally appears to be proven indirectly by a letter of his, dated July 20, 1931, and addressed to Gertrúd Jánosi in Berlin. It can be ascertained from the letter that Lukács performed translation services for the Institut für Sozialforschung. (The letter itself is deposited at the Georg Lukács Archives and Library [LAL]; the sender is the Soziologische Verlagsanstalt GmbH of Berlin.) In fact, Lukács is believed to have delivered a paper, "Die faschistische Entstellung Hegels", at the Institut für Sozialforschung, or at the University of Frankfurt; cf. Andor Gábor: "Bibliographie von Georg Lukács", *Text + Kritik* (1973) No. 39—40, p. 80 (in manuscript at LAL; the attached bibliography, which was written in Moscow but surveys Lukács's career only until the middle of the thirties, contains detailed factual references and is, therefore, believed to have been made with Lukács's assistance.
- ⁸ "In the social process music functions solely as commodity; its value is a market value. Its function is not directly to satisfy needs and, just like other commodities, it obeys the necessities of exchange." Theodor W. Adorno: "Zur gesellschaftlichen Lage der Musik", *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (1932) No. 1, p. 103.
- ⁹ See Karl Marx: *Der historische Materialismus: Die Frühschriften*, Bd. I: *Nationalökonomie und Philosophie*, hrsg. von S. Landhut—J. P. Mayer (Leipzig: 1932)—incomplete edition, and Karl Marx: *Ökonomisch—philosophische Manuskripte (1844)* as Abt. I, Bd. 3 of Karl Marx—Friedrich Engels: *Historisch—Kritische Gesamtausgabe (MEGA)* ed. by V. Adoratskij (Frankfurt—Berlin: 1932)—full text. On its reception, see Herbert Marcuse: "Neue Quellen zur Grundlegung des historischen Materialismus: Interpretation der neuveröffentlichten Manuskripte von Marx", *Die Gesellschaft* (1932) No. 8; H. de Man: "Der neuentdeckte Marx", *Der Kampf* (1932) Nos. 5 and 6; K. Schmückle: "Der junge Marx und die bürgerliche Gesellschaft", *Internationale Literatur* (Marx Sondernummer, 1933) No. 2.
- ¹⁰ Karl Marx: *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: *Collected Works* (Moscow: 1975), Vol. III, p. 331.
- ¹¹ Georg Lukács: "Mein Weg zu Marx", in his *Marxismus und Stalinismus* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: 1970), p. 7.
- ¹² Georg Lukács: "Preface", in his *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. by R. Livingstone (London: 1971), p. XXVII.
- ¹³ Georg Lukács: "Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels: Werke und Schriften von Mai 1846 bis März 1848" *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (1933) No. 2, p. 280.
- ¹⁴ See László Sziklai: "Das Problem des ästhetischen Gegenstandes bei Lukács während der frühen dreissiger Jahre", *Achter Internationaler Kongress für Ästhetik* (Darmstadt: 1976), p. 83; "Lukács vitája a proletárodalom lehetőségeiről" [Lukács's polemic on the possibilities of proletarian literature], *Kritika* (1977) No. 12, p. 13.
- ¹⁵ Georg Lukács: "Postscriptum 1957 zu Mein Weg zu Marx", in his *Marxismus und Stalinismus*.
- ¹⁶ Hegel: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte: Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, p. 66.
- ¹⁷ Georg Lukács: "A német értelmiség és a háború" [The German intelligentsia and the war], in his *Ifjúkori művek 1902—1918* [Early Works 1902—1918] (Budapest: 1977), p. 830.
- ¹⁸ Georg Lukács: *The Theory of the Novel*, trans. by A. Bostock (Cambridge, Mass.: 1971), p. 11.
- ¹⁹ Georg Lukács: "Die deutsche Intelligenz", *Zwei Welten* (1932) No. 3.
- ²⁰ G[eorg] L[ukács]: "Die deutsche Intelligenz und der Faschismus" (manuscript, at LAL).

²¹ Georg Lukács: "'Szakadék' Nagyszálló", *Világosság* (1977) No. 8—9, p. 572 (in manuscript at LAL as I: Grand Hotel 'Abgrund'; II: Totentanz der Weltanschauungen [1933]).

²² *Ibid.*, p. 573.

²³ Karl Mannheim: "Die soziologischen Ursachen der gegenwärtigen Kulturkrise", in his *Mensch und Gesellschaft im Zeitalter des Umbaus* (Leiden: 1935), p. 76. On Lukács's estimate of Mannheim's opinions, see Georg Lukács: "Das Führertum der freischwebenden Intelligenz", in his *Wie ist die faschistische Philosophie in Deutschland entstanden?*, ed. by L. Sziklai (Budapest: 1982), pp. 205—6; A társadalmi lét ontológiájáról [On the Ontology of Social Being] (Budapest: 1976), Vol. II, p. 770.

²⁴ Lukács: "'Szakadék' Nagyszálló", in *op. cit.*, p. 575.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 575.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 576. For additional information on these problems, see Kristóf Nyíri and László Sziklai: "Jegyzetek Lukács György ['Szakadék' Nagyszálló c.] tanulmányához" [Notes on György Lukács's study (entitled Grand Hotel 'Abgrund')], *Világosság* (1977) No. 8—9.

²⁷ Ernst Bloch: "Kurhotels", in his *Vom Hasard zur Katastrophe: Politische Aufsätze 1934—1939* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1972), p. 18—also in *Die neue Weltbühne* (1934) No. 37.

²⁸ Georg Lukács: "Die Erbschaft dieser Zeit", in *Ernst Bloch und Georg Lukács: Dokumente zum 100. Geburtstag*, hrsg. von M. Mesterházi—Gy. Mezei (Budapest: 1984; Archívumi füzetek 4), p. 255.

²⁹ Bloch's book, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Zürich: 1935), provoked a polemic in several issues of *Internationale Literatur*. His views were challenged by Hans Günther: "Erbschaft dieser Zeit?", *Internationale Literatur* (1936), No. 3. In his response to the criticism ("Bemerkungen zur Erbschaft dieser Zeit", *Internationale Literatur* [1936] No. 6), Bloch mentions Lukács on two occasions. On the one hand, in a reference to *History and Class Consciousness*, he says that Lukács exposed with extraordinary brilliance the abstract and class-determined character of the natural scientific precision which, Günther complained, he could not find in Bloch (p. 125); on the other hand, he condemns the fact that Günther, like Lukács, advocates a theory that accepts only the "intellectual achievements of the bourgeois revolution" as a legacy that can be used by the proletariat (p. 126). Lukács did not comment on the polemic (on which cf. also Hans Günther: "Antwort an Ernst Bloch", *Internationale Literatur* [1936] No. 8), just as Brecht did not in 1938, during the debate between Bloch and Lukács.

³⁰ For E. H. Gast's review, see *Die Sammlung* (January, 1934).

³¹ Lukács: "Die Erbschaft dieser Zeit", in *op. cit.*, p. 250. Lukács refers to a study by Marcuse, "Der Kampf gegen den Liberalismus in den totalitären Staatsauffassungen", in which Marcuse states indeed that what the antirationalist and antimaterialist historical approach to political existentialism 'has in common with Dilthey's real life philosophy is merely the name, and from Nietzsche it borrows only the trappings and emotion'. Herbert Marcuse: *Kultur und Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1965), Bd. I, pp. 18—9.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the work, see László Sziklai: "Az újabb német filozófia kritikája" [Critique of recent German philosophy], in his *Lukács és a fasizmus kora* [Lukács and the Age of Fascism] (Budapest: 1981).

³⁵ See Georg Lukács: "Totentanz der Weltanschauungen", *Literatur und Literaturgeschichte in Österreich: Helikon* (Sondernummer, 1979).

³⁶ Georg Lukács: *Wie ist die faschistische Philosophie in Deutschland entstanden?* (Budapest: 1982), pp. 57—8.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 55—6.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

³⁹ Georg Lukács: *Schriften zur Ideologie und Politik* (Neuwied: 1973), pp. 429—30.

⁴⁰ Georg Lukács: "Über das Schlagwort", *Der Rote Aufbau* (1931) No. 21, p. 859.

⁴¹ *Thesen und Resolutionen des V. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (Hamburg: 1924), p. 17.

⁴² B.M. Leibzon and K.K. Shirina: *Fordulat a Komintern politikájában* [Turnabout in the Policy of Comintern] (Budapest: 1978), p. 96.

⁴³ I.V. Stalin: "Some Questions Concerning the History of Bolshevism: Letter to the Editors of *Proletarskaya Revolutsia*", in his *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: 1947).

⁴⁴ Georg Lukács: "Kritik der Literaturtheorie Lassalles", *Der Rote Aufbau* (1932) No. 10, p. 851.

⁴⁵ See Georg Lukács: "Der Anteil des Sozialfaschismus an der Entstehung der faschistischen Philosophie", in his *Wie ist die faschistische Philosophie in Deutschland entstanden?*

⁴⁶ G. Lukács: "Velichie i padeniye expressionisma", *Literaturny Kritik* (1933) No. 2; "Grösse und Verfall des Expressionismus", *Internationale Literatur* (1934) No. 1; "Expressionism: Its Significance and Decline", in his *Essays on Realism*, trans. by D. Fernbach (London: 1980).

⁴⁷ Lukács: "Expressionism: Its Significance and Decline", in *ibid.*, p. 96.

⁴⁸ Georg Lukács: "Preface", in his *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. by R. Livingstone (London: 1971), p. XXXVI.

⁴⁹ Lukács's letters to Lifschitz, dated September 20, 1931, and November 18, 1932 (LAL).

⁵⁰ Georg Lukács: "Das Werk von Marx und Engels I: Der Briefwechsel zwischen Marx und Engels", *Illustrierte Neue Welt* (1933) No. 1; "Marx und Engels: Die deutsche Ideologie, Deutsche Zentral-Zeitung (December 15, 1933) No. 287; "Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels: Werke und Schriften von Mai 1846 bis März 1848", in *op. cit.*; "Eine klassische Darstellung des dialektischen Materialismus: Friedrich Engels: Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft: Dialektik der Natur 1873—1882", *Deutsche Zentral-Zeitung* (June 30, 1937); "Marks i Engels v polemike s Lassalem po povodu 'Zikingen'a'", *Literaturnoye Nasledstvo* (1932) No. 3—also in German as "Die Sickingendebatte zwischen Marx—Engels und Lassalle", *Internationale Literatur* (1933) No. 2.

⁵¹ For more details on Lifschitz's interpretation of Marx's aesthetic, see László Sziklai: "Mihail Lifsic harcos esztétikája" [Mikhail Lifschitz's militant aesthetic], in Mihail Lifsic: *Válogatott esztétikai írások* [Selected Writings on Aesthetics] transl. by A. Ágai, V. Nyilas et al. (Budapest: 1973).

⁵² Georg Lukács: "Marx und die Literatur", *Deutsche Zentral-Zeitung* (August 17, 1933); "Marx und Engels über dramaturgische Fragen" (manuscript, at LAL)—details of it also in French as "Marx et Engels à propos de la dramaturgie", *Le Théâtre International* (1934) No. 2—and in English as "Marx and Engels on Problems of Dramaturgy", *The International Theatre* (1934) No. 2; "Marx und Engels als Kritiker der Literatur" (manuscript, at LAL); "Die marxistische Ästhetik in Deutschland in der Periode der II. Internationale" (manuscript, at LAL).

⁵³ Georg Lukács: "Kritik der Literaturtheorie Lassalles", *Der Rote Aufbau* (1932) No. 10, p. 856.

⁵⁴ On the prehistory of the theme, see Georg Lukács: "Marx und Lassalle in ihrem Briefwechsel", *Die Rote Fahne* (April, 1922) No. 429; "Lassalle als Theoretiker der USPD", *Die Internationale* (1924) No. 19—20; "Die neue Ausgabe von Lassalles Briefen", *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* (1935) No. 11.

⁵⁵ G. Lukács: "Franz Mehring 1846—1919", in his *Legenda o Lessinge* (Moscow and Leningrad: 1934), Vol. I.

⁵⁶ Georg Lukács: "Über die demokratische Jugendentwicklung Franz Mehrings", *Internationale Literatur* (1939) No. 5.

⁵⁷ Georg Lukács: "Franz Mehring", in his *Probleme der Ästhetik* (Neuwied—Berlin: 1969), pp. 368—69.

⁵⁸ Lukács: *Wie ist die faschistische Philosophie in Deutschland entstanden?*

⁵⁹ Karl Marx—Friedrich Engels: "Lassalle an Marx und Engels, 27.5.1859", *Über Kunst und Literatur* (Berlin: 1967), Bd. I, p. 63.

⁶⁰ Lukács: *Wie ist die faschistische Philosophie in Deutschland entstanden?*

⁶¹ G. Lukács: *Literaturnye teorii XIX. veka i marksizm* (Moscow: 1937). Lukács was fully aware that the essays in the volume had much in common. The volume, as indicated in the preface, was at the printer as early as autumn, 1933, but "various circumstances prevented its printing" (p. 5).

⁶² "Everything I start here turns out to be different from what I plan. I wanted, for instance, to write a minor study for a local journal about Feuerbach's relationship to literature. But, ultimately, the outcome has been this outsized writing, which I have enclosed in this letter". Lukács's letter to Lifschitz, dated November 18, 1932 (LAL).

⁶³ G. Lukács: "L. Feyerbakh i nemetskaya literatura", in his *Literaturnye teorii XIX. veka i marksizm*, pp. 28—9.

⁶⁴ Georg Lukács: "Karl Marx und Friedrich Theodor Vischer", in his *Probleme der Ästhetik* (Neuwied—Berlin: 1969)—study was published first in 1934 in Moscow, in *Literaturnoye Nasledstvo*, Vol. XV, but it is believed to have been written earlier. This supposition is corroborated by the preface to the above-mentioned volume of 1937, which included only studies written between 1930 and 1933.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

⁶⁷ Lukács: "Die Erbschaft dieser Zeit", in *op. cit.*, p. 253.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Lukács: "Karl Marx und Friedrich Theodor Vischer", in *op. cit.*, p. 287.

⁷⁰ See his "Tretily renesans: Nietzsche kak predtecha fashistkoy estetiki", *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (January 16, 1934); "Nietzsche", in *Literaturnaya Enciklopediya* (Moscow: 1934), Vol. VIII; "Nietzsche kak predtestvennik fashistkoy estetiki", *Literaturny Kritik* (1934) No. 12; "Nietzsche als Vorläufer der faschistischen Ästhetik", *Internationale Literatur* (1935) No. 8; "Die deutsche Faschismus und Nietzsche", *Internationale Literatur* (1943) No. 12; "Gehört Nietzsche dem Faschismus?" (manuscript, at LAL).

⁷¹ Georg Lukács: "Nietzsche als Vorläufer der faschistische Ästhetik", in his *Probleme der Ästhetik*, p. 332.

⁷² Lukács: "Der deutsche Faschismus und Nietzsche", in *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁷³ I have concentrated on the discussion of Lukács as a critic of the ideological criticism of reality in Germany. Other subjects that would deserve attention include Lukács as a critic of fascist ideology, and the fascist transformation of classical German philosophy. However, we have to be content here with mentioning some relevant writings; e.g., "Alfred Rosenberg, esztetik nátsional sotsializma", *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (July 21, 1934); "Der faschisierte Goethe", *Die Linkskurve* (Goethe Sonderheft, June, 1932); "Zur Literaturtheorie der nationalen Bewegung" (manuscript, at LAL); "Fashizm i teória literatúri v Germanii", in *Protiv fashistkovo mrakobesiya i demagogii*, ed. by G. A. Deborin, et al. (Moscow: 1936); "Der deutsche Faschismus und Hegel", *Internationale Literatur* (1943) No. 8; *Borba gumanizma i varvarstva* (Tashkent: 1943)—also in Hungarian as *A humanizmus és a barbárság harca* [The Struggle between Humanism and Barbarism], trans. by I. Csibra (Budapest: 1985).

⁷⁴ *Habent sua fata libelli* ... Sometimes, their fate is not fortunate: the work entitled *Wie ist Deutschland zum Zentrum der reaktionären Ideologie geworden?* had remained in manuscript until 1982, when it was published by Akadémiai Kiadó, edited by László Sziklai. The type-written manuscript of the monograph on Goethe got lost, as Lukács recalls, "in an unfortunate turn of events during the war," cf. his "Preface", in his *Goethe and His Age*, trans. by R. Anchor [London: 1968], p. 16). *The Young Hegel* was published ten years after it had been written.

⁷⁵ Georg Lukács: "Realism in the Balance", in *Aesthetics and Politics*, trans. by A. Bostock et al., ed. by R. Taylor (London: 1980), p. 45.

⁷⁶ Georg Lukács: "Marx and the Problem of Ideological Decay", in his *Essays on Realism*, p. 130.

⁷⁷ Georg Lukács: "Der Faschismus als theoretisches und praktisches System der Barbarei", in his *Wie ist Deutschland zum Zentrum der reaktionären Ideologie geworden?*, p. 154.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁸⁰ See G. Lukács: "Roman kak burzhoaznaya epopeya", *Literaturnaya Enciklopediya* (Moscow: 1935) Vol. IX; "Der Roman", in his *Moskauer Schriften: Zur Literaturtheorie und Literaturpolitik 1934—1940* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1981); "Referat über den 'Roman'", *Literaturniy Kritik* (1935) No. 2.

⁸¹ Georg Lukács: "Über einige Eigentümlichkeiten der geschichtlichen Entwicklung Deutschlands".

⁸² Lukács: *A humanizmus és a barbárság harca*, p. 32. On the critique of Prussianism, see also his "Über Preussentum", *Internationale Literatur* (1943) No. 5.

⁸³ Lukács: *A humanizmus és a barbárság harca*, p. 62.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁸⁵ Georg Lukács: *The Historical Novel*, trans. by H. and S. Mitchell (Harmondsworth: 1969), p. 304.

⁸⁶ Lukács: "Marx and the Problem of Ideological Decay", in *op. cit.*, p. 133.

⁸⁷ Georg Lukács: "Der Kampf zwischen Liberalismus und Demokratie im Spiegel des historischen Romans der deutschen Antifaschisten", *Internationale Literatur* (1938) No. 5, p. 70.

⁸⁸ G. Lukács: "Dr Maks Adler: 'Ucheniye marksizma o gosudarstve'", *Vestnik Sotsialisticheskoy Akademii* (1923) No. 3; "Hermann Schmalenbach: Leibniz", *ibid.* No. 5; Friedrich Kuntze: "Die Philosophie Salomon Maimons", *ibid.*; G. Lukács: "Literaturnoye naslediyе Lassalya", *Vestnik Sotsialisticheskoy Akademii* (1924) No. 7.

⁸⁹ G. Lukács: "Materializatsiya i proletarskoye soznanie I: Fenomenon materializatsii" *Vestnik sotsialisticheskoy Akademii* (1923) No. 4; II: "Anatomiya burzhoaznaya myshleniya", *ibid.* No. 5; III: "Tochka zreniya proletariata", *ibid.* No. 6.

⁹⁰ K. Korsch: *Sushnost marksizma*. As Korsch writes elsewhere: "The appearance of this brochure coincided with the publication of Georg Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* (Berlin: Malik Verlag, 1923). As far as I could judge, I am pleased to express my agreement with the author's thoughts, which are based on a broad philosophical foundation, and which tend to touch upon issues that I, too, have discussed. As Lukács and I disagree over some points of content and method, I retain the right to return to a more detailed evaluation of the work later". Karl Korsch: *Marksizm i filosofiya* (Moscow: 1924) p. 89.

⁹¹ G. A. Deborin: "Georg Lukács i evo kritika marksizma", *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* (1924) No. 6—7—also in book form (Moscow: 1924)—also in German as "Lukács und seine Kritik des Marxismus", *Arbeiter Literatur* (1924) No. 9. Deborin's endeavor to 'politicize' phenomena that were otherwise free of politics could also be seen in the fact that he described Lukács as the ideologue of a 'new trend' within Marxism, as a critic of Marxism. Deborin alleged that the new camp included Karl Korsch, Béla Fogarasi, and József Révai. Fogarasi is believed to have been included in this list as, in a review about Korsch's book, he expressed agreement with Lukács. See A. [Béla] Fogarasi: "Marksizm i filosofiya", *Vestnik sotsialisticheskoy Akademii* (1923) No. 6, p. 416. Deborin was familiar with Révai's 1923 review of *History and Class Consciousness*; cf. *A magyar marxista filozófia a két világháború között* [Hungarian Marxist Philosophy between the Two World Wars], ed. by K. Nyíri (Budapest: 1979), pp. 87—96. In fact, paradoxically, the structure of his criticism follows the structure of the first half of Révai's review, rather than Lukács's work. This is due in part to the fact that Révai simplified Lukács's ideas, and turned them into theses, and in part to the fact that in Révai's

piece, not only Engels, but Plekhanov, too, is the chief representative of 'naturalistic metaphysics' in 'old' Marxism, which must have angered Deborin, a pupil of Plekhanov's.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁹⁴ György Lukács: "Előszó" [Foreword], in his *Utam Marxhoz* [My Road to Marx] (Budapest: 1971), Vol. I, p. 2.

⁹⁵ See "Tézisek a Kommunista Internacionálé pártjainak bolsevizálásáról" [Theses on the bolshevization of the parties of the Communist International], in *A Kommunista Internacionálé válogatott dokumentumai* [Selected Documents of the Communist International] transl. by R. Csonka, et al. (Budapest: 1975), pp. 204, 205, 209.

⁹⁶ J. V. Stalin: "Foundations of Leninism", in his *Problems of Leninism*, I, p. 27.

⁹⁷ J. V. Stalin: "On Dialectical and Historical Materialism, *ibid.*, p. 569.

⁹⁸ Georg Lukács: "Novaya biografiya Moses Gessa", in *Arkiv K. Marksa i F. Engelsa* (Moscow and Leningrad: 1927), Vol. 3.; "Ernst Simon, Ranke und Hegel", in *ibid.* (1930), Vol. 5.

⁹⁹ György Lukács: "Önéletrajz" [Autobiography], in his *Curriculum vitae* (Budapest: 1982), p. 465.

¹⁰⁰ For the partial description of and documents about the debate, see *Nicolai Bucharin—Abram Deborin: Kontroversen über dialektischen Materialismus* ed. by O. Negt (Frankfurt a. M.: 1969); V. N. Koloskov: *Ocherk istorii marksistkovo-leninskoy filosofii v SSSR* (Moscow: 1978), chapter II.

¹⁰¹ J. V. Stalin: "Concerning Questions of Agrarian Policy in the USSR", in his *Works* (Moscow: 1955) Vol. XII.

¹⁰² See "O raznoglasiyakh na filosofskom fronte" *Vestnik Kommunisticheskoy Akademii* (1930) No. 13.

¹⁰³ "Sodoklad G. A. Deborina" *ibid.*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁴ G. A. Deborin: "Itogi i zadachi na filosofskom fronte", *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* (1930) No. 6, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ "Ob itogakh i novykh zadachakh na filosofskom fronte" *ibid.* (1930) No. 4, p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ "Itogi filosofskoy diskussii", *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* (1930) No. 10—12, p. 17; M. Mitin: "K itogam filosofskoy diskussii", *ibid.*, 9, 43.

¹⁰⁷ J. V. Stalin: "The Right Deviation of the CPSU", and "A Year of Great Change", in his *Works*, Vol. XII.

¹⁰⁸ "Vazhneyshiy istoricheskiy dokument", *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* (1930) No. 10—12, p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ Lukács: "Önéletrajz", in *op. cit.*, p. 466.

¹¹⁰ On the role of Leninism in Lukács's aesthetic theory of the 1930s, see László Sziklai: "Lukács és a leninizmus", [Lukács and Leninism], *Kritika* (1976) No. 10.

¹¹¹ Lukács's letter to Lifschitz, dated September 20, 1931, manuscript in LAL.

¹¹² Rafael de la Vega: *Ideologie als Utopie* (Marburg: 1977), p. 85.

¹¹³ Horst Ulrich: "Vállvetve: A magyar és német kommunizmus közös imperializmus- és fasizmusellenes elméleti harcának hagyományai 1926—1933" [Side by side: Traditions of the Hungarian and German communists' joint theoretical struggle against imperialism and fascism, *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle* (1979) No. 6, p. 836.

¹¹⁴ Karl Schmitt: *Staat, Bewegung, Volk* (München: 1934) p. 32.

¹¹⁵ György Laurent [Lukács]: "Goethe világnézete" [Goethe's world view], *Valóság* (1932) No. 1; *Chem yavlyayetsya dlya nas Goethe?*, *Oktyabr* (1932) [1926—1933] No. 4; "Goethe und die Dialektik", *Der Marxist* (1932) No. 5; "Der faschisierte Goethe", *Die Linkskurve* Goethe Sonderheft, January, 1932.

¹¹⁶ Lukács: "Goethe und die Dialektik", in *op. cit.*, pp. 21, 24.

¹¹⁷ Georg Lukács: "Znacheniya Materializma i empiriokriticizma dlya bolshevizatsii kommunisticheskikh partii", *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* (1934) No. 4, p. 147. A 'sequel' to his contribution augments Lukács's ideological countenance. It is a recollection of events of 1924: "Hogy" hatott Sztálin könyve *A leninizmus alapjai* megjelenésekor a kapitalista országokban? [What was the impact of Stalin's book, *Foundations of Leninism*, in capitalist countries, when it was published?], *Új Hang* (1939) No. 12.

¹¹⁸ Georg Lukács: *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* (n. p.: 1963), Bd. I, p. 14.

¹¹⁹ Georg Lukács: "Autobiographie", *Internationale Literatur* (1938) No. 6, p. 155.

¹²⁰ See copy of protocol No. 176, dated August 28, 1943 (in Hungarian, at LAL).

¹²¹ "The NKVD [the Russian security service] arrested me on June 22, 1941, and on August 22 I was rehabilitated and set free," Lukács wrote on January 23, 1945, in his "Selbstbiographie seit 1940" (LAL). Lukács's recollection of the dates is not precise: he was under arrest from June 29 to August 26.

¹²² "I am in the position to have some rest in the course of pleasant and calm work. I am going to start translating *The Young Hegel*. In the meantime, Yurochka, with the help of Gertrúd, is writing several excellent works for the translator, first of all, a biography of Goethe, whose manuscript has been found." (Letter of Igor Sats to Georg Osipovich Lukács, dated July 28, 1942. In: "In memoriam Igor Szac", *Kritika* (1980) No. 5, p. 17.

¹²³ Georg Lukács: "Postscriptum 1957 zu *Mein Weg zu Marx*", in *op. cit.*, p. 163.

¹²⁴ See Lukács: "Előszó", in his *Utam Marxhoz*, Vol. I, p. 26.

- 125 Lukács: "Preface", in his *History and Class Consciousness*, p. XXXV.
- 126 Mihail Lifsic: "Hegel esztétikája és a dialektikus materializmus" [Hegel's aesthetic and dialectical materialism], in his *Válogatott esztétikai írások*, p. 124.
- 127 *Ibid.*, p. 127
- 128 *Ibid.*
- 129 Mihail Lifsic—Sziklai László: "Negyedik beszélgetés: 1974 december 12." [Fourth conversation: December 12, 1974] in their *Moszkvai évek Lukács Györggyel* [Moscow years with György Lukács] (Budapest: 1989) pp. 98—99.
- 130 *Ibid.*, pp. 111—12.
- 131 Georg Lukács: *The Young Hegel*, transl. by R. Livingstone (London: 1975) p. 513.
- 132 *Ibid.*, p. 399.
- 133 Georg Lukács: *Goethe and His Age*, p. 16.
- 134 Lukács: *The Young Hegel*, p. 150.
- 135 Lukács: *The Historical Novel*, p. 113.
- 136 Georg Lukács: "Marx and the Problem of Ideological Decay", in *op. cit.*, p. 118.
- 137 Georg Lukács: "Tribune or Bureaucrat?", in his *Essays on Realism*, p. 235.
- 138 Lukács: *The Young Hegel*, pp. 104—5.
- 139 *Ibid.*, p. 417.
- 140 Lukács: *Goethe and His Age*, p. 181.
- 141 *Ibid.*, p. 197.
- 142 Georg Lukács: "Karl Marx und Friedrich Theodor Vischer", in *op. cit.*, pp. 272.
- 143 Lukács: "Literatur und Demokratie", in his *Marxismus und Stalinismus*, p. 100.
- 144 Lukács: *The Young Hegel*, pp. 310—11.
- 145 *Ibid.*, p. 502.
- 146 Lukács: "Postscriptum 1957 zu: *Mein Weg zu Marx*", in *op. cit.*, pp. 163—64.
- 147 Georg Lukács: "Die Widersprüche des Fortschritts und die Literatur", in his *Moskauer Schriften: Zur Literaturtheorie und Literaturpolitik 1934—1940* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1981), pp. 82—3.
- 148 Lukács: *The Young Hegel*, p. 401
- 149 On this issue, see László Sziklai: "Szocializmus és realizmus" [Socialism and realism], *Kritika* (1979) No. 11.
- 150 Lukács: *The Young Hegel*, p. 513.

The Struggle for 'Reconciliation': György Lukács's Marxist Aesthetic in the 1930s

by

László Illés

Overcoming the Legacy of the 1920s

When in 1967, after long resistance, Lukács approved of the German-language republication of *History and Class Consciousness*, he remembered the turn of the twenties and thirties as a decisive, historical moment: "It suddenly became clear to me that if I wished to give body to these new theoretical insights I would have to start again from scratch [...] I was intoxicated with the prospect of a new start."¹ Despite the continuity that manifests itself in his oeuvre, we must concur with Lukács: at the decisive turning points of his life he never hesitated to reexamine radically, and if he thought it proper, to repudiate a period that he had surpassed. He did so in December, 1918 when he joined the Hungarian Party of Communists, abandoning the 'intellectual sciences' ('*Geisteswissenschaften*') interpretation of the age of 'absolute sinfulness' he did so in 1930 when he moved from Vienna to Moscow and, in essence, gave up his party work as a professional revolutionary, which he engaged in during the Hungarian Republic of Councils in 1919 and in emigration in Vienna in the twenties. (From 1919 to 1921 and 1928 to 1930 he was the member of the party's Central Committee and its secretariat.)

It would be difficult to understand the basic motives of his manifold and vast scholarly activities in Moscow during the nearly one and a half decades prior to 1945 without taking at least a glance at the nature of the intellectual production that he accomplished in the twenties and, for the most part, came to repudiate later. But it was precisely from this production that there evolved something new, step by step, not without contradictions, through the dialectic of continuity—discontinuity, what was to become Lukács's answer to the challenge of history in the field of political philosophy, in aesthetics, and in the theory of literature in the thirties. His answer concealed not only the repudiation of the past, but also a reposing of the old questions on an ever-deepening base of Marxist knowledge.

In the early twenties, Lukács's writings offered the specific philosophy of the great revolutionary wave, but they did so belatedly, as the transitional stabilization of capitalism had already begun. He published his essays and studies in *History and Class Consciousness* (1923).² (Some chapters also appeared in Russian in the pages of *Vestnik Socialisticheskoy Akademii* even at that time.) This work sharply contrasted Marxist revolutionary philosophy with the revisionism of the Second International, but the theory that took shape against Marxist ontology remained in essence Hegelian. Lukács sharply distinguished natural processes from social ones, and let dialectics assert itself only in the latter. At the same time—as he did not know Marx's critique of Hegel in the

Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844—he mistakenly identified objectification with reification (*Vergegenständlichkeit* and *Verdinglichung* in Hegel), and, thus, he was the first to stress the category of alienation (*Entfremdung*—in Hegel, *Enttäusserung*) that was to become a central one in the 20th century. (To this date this remains the source of the international success of his book, especially among left-wing intellectuals in the West.)

But when, following Hegel, he identified subject with object, he rejected the idea of reflection; and it became the mission of philosophy and of the working class to abolish total alienation that, as a result of this process, came into being. For several reasons, however, the working class is unable to produce clear proletarian consciousness—it is the philosopher's task to supply this. The task of the party is to represent ideally clear class consciousness. His subjectivism, which obviously went back to Kant and Fichte, went so far that the leading role of consciousness supersedes the immanence of economic laws, the effectiveness of historical materialism. In this way, *History and Class Consciousness* became a "curious mixture of theoretical subjectivism and political revolutionism,"³ and challenged the unsympathetic critique of contemporary political philosophy not solely because of its 'belatedness'. (The hostile critics of Lukács's work in fact attacked him unfairly in a number of regards, and this reception was a forerunner of serious controversies with Lukács that were to follow.) The philosopher in his aforementioned Preface of 1967 subjected his work to searching criticism and, in essence, he had been working on this self-critical, positive counter-image throughout his life. His last great (and unfinished) work, *The Ontology of Social Being*, preserves and consummates the validity of this Marxist, independent, and positive counter-image. At the same time, a group of his students (the so-called 'Budapest school') has criticized the master because of the philosophical *Realpolitik* that, with Lukács, accompanied the possibility of "taking back" alienation.⁴

There were a number of motives that prompted Lukács to detach himself from subjective voluntarism, ethical idealism, and messianic secretarianism of *History and Class Consciousness*. This 'self-reconstruction', the endeavor to overcome the Hegelian and Fichtean heritage, a process not without contradictions, lasted for about a decade (in essence, to the middle of the thirties). Lenin's well-known critique of the question of parliamentarism, an ever-deepening study of Leninism, the criticism voiced at the fifth Comintern congress, his involvement in party work, his membership in the Landler faction (which represented anti-bureaucratic, realistic views in the Hungarian communist party in exile), the objective consideration of the power relations between classes in Hungary, the theoretical consequences of 'building socialism in one country' (i.e., in the Soviet Union), the shaping of the power relations in international class struggle, the threatening expansion of fascism—all these led him nearer to the understanding of the dialectic of historical processes. An outstanding element of this contemplation was his essay on Moses Hess, where he labeled Hegel's idea of 'reconciliation' reactionary, but, at the same time, was able to notice that, against the 'abstract utopianism' of the young Hegelians, the 'true socialists' who wanted to surpass Hegel from the left, here it was Hegel's realism that manifested itself. (As he quotes from Hegel's preface to his *Philosophy of Right*: "The task of philosophy is to comprehend what is."⁵

The elaboration of the "Blum Theses" (before January, 1929) marked an important phase in Lukács's path 'from utopia to realism' as a leading communist party functionary and theoretician, which served to prepare the second congress of the Hungarian Party of Communists in 1930.⁶ As is well known, there was a decided turn to the left in the

international communist movement following the sixth Comintern congress in 1928, and this policy was seemingly supported by the great depression of 1929 and the resultant social tensions. The new situation gave rise to the hope of a 'new breakthrough' among a number of thinkers. In a letter written on February 28, 1929 to Béla Kun, the leader of the Hungarian Party of Communists, D. Z. Maniulsky, secretary of the Comintern, recognized only the attainment of a second Hungarian Republic of Councils as a sound political objective, on the basis of the fact that "in Hungary in 1919 there had already been a dictatorship of the proletariat."⁷ In the ensuing debate, Lukács was compelled to recant his proposal in a statement on May 2, 1929.

The theses themselves were not free from some sectarian traits: they upheld the false slogan of 'social fascism' and characterized bourgeois democracies collectively as the precursors of fascism. Therefore, only parts of the theses can be regarded as theoretical initiatives of the subsequent popular-front policy. But Lukács's view of the 'democratic dictatorship' of workers and peasants, which went back to Lenin's argumentation of 1905, gained particular importance because, in the long run, it could have served as the method of developing a more realistic policy as an alternative to the demand of the immediate dictatorship of the proletariat.

By withdrawing the theses, Lukács acknowledged his political defeat, and he soon withdrew from the leadership of the Hungarian Party of Communists as well. He went to Moscow, where he worked as a research fellow of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute. While studying Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, he realized why the conception of *History and Class Consciousness* was basically mistaken; namely, because he had identified reification with alienation. That shock had a liberating effect on him. Furthermore, it was here that he had the opportunity to study Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks*, and began his lifelong friendship with M. Lifschitz.

Lukács's activity as a literary critic emerged concurrently with his withdrawal from political activism. The reviews that he published in German in *Moskauer Rundschau* and dealt with the works of Soviet (or classic Russian) writers make up an important chapter of his activity.⁸ These pieces were addressed to German workers and the technical intelligentsia working in the Soviet Union, but the periodical circulated in Germany, too. The tone of these writings and the angle of approach were strongly affected by the literary ideology of the Association of Russian Proletarian Writers (RAPP), in both its positive and negative traits. The artistic scale of values was non-essential for Lukács, for the salient aim was to inform readers about life in the Soviet Union, and to stress above all else the aspect of class origin (as e.g., in the pieces on Sholokhov, Dostoevsky, or Tolstoy),⁹ recalling his earlier sectarianism. All this led to uneven results. At the same time, however, there were some instances, corresponding to the shifts in his political philosophy, which pointed toward the subsequent theory of realism (e.g., the claim for totality and for the faithful portrayal of reality).

We have to pay attention to the vast literary critical and theoretical activity that Lukács exerted in the Hungarian-language press in the second half of the twenties: in *Új Március* (published in Vienna from 1926 to 1930), *100%* (published in Budapest from 1927 to 1930), and in *Sarló és Kalapács* (published in Moscow from 1929 to 1937). A noted expert dealing with this period rightly states that

Lukács traced back his later ideological conception, which he developed in the thirties, to the second half of the twenties [...] and not without reason. From this it also follows, however, that the roots of his conception of literature had stronger ties to conditions in Hungary than is frequently supposed.¹⁰

Even here—in his sketches and articles on the development of Hungarian history and literature—there appeared an imposing conception of culture, at several points anticipating his historico-philosophical theory that evolved in the thirties. In viewing modern Hungarian society, he went back to the revolutionary events of 1848, when the opportunity for Hungarian bourgeois development presented itself, but inevitably failed because the revolution did not turn into popular insurrection. In his view, the Compromise of 1867 with Austria (*Ausgleich*) was a bargain between the nobility and the bourgeoisie, and in the intellectual life it led, naturally, to artistic decay, to a series of expediences. This conception made it impossible for him to discern—in comparison with the positive heritage, that is, the tradition represented by Sándor Petőfi and Endre Ady—values in such eminent democratic and humanist writers of the twentieth century as Gyula Krúdy, Zsigmond Móricz, and Mihály Babits. This illiberal judgement of the literary tradition was best expressed in an article in which he criticized from the left the sectarian and dogmatic ‘draft platform’ that was worked out by the Hungarian proletarian writers in Moscow after the second conference of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers (IURW) held in Kharkov in 1930, and stated: “There is *not* a single classic writer in Hungarian literature after 1867 from whom a proletarian writer could learn.”¹¹ The rigid rejection of Lajos Kassák, the ‘father’ of Hungarian avant-garde, may be interpreted as the anticipation of his decades-long debate with modern artistic experiments. At the same time, his reference to anti-feudal, bourgeois revolutions and struggles for freedom that created lasting cultural values, and his thoughts concerning classic and realist forms and the role of great genres (novel), indicate the commencement of a positive counter-image, a constructive aesthetic conception. But he took his examples from the past because he did not expect similar achievements from the contemporary, decadent bourgeoisie; the latter, he found, was disintegrating.

At the request of the IURW, and commissioned by the party, Lukács moved to Berlin in the summer of 1931, in order to promote the activities of the Association of German Proletarian Revolutionary Writers (Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller—BPRS). While in Moscow, he had finished the essay on “Die Sickingendebatte zwischen Marx-Engels und Lasalle”;¹² it is this essay that is generally regarded—as it was by Lukács himself—to be the true beginning of his career as an aesthetician. The rich literature on the events of the Berlin ‘interlude’ from summer, 1931 to March, 1933—quite understandably—concentrates on the debates in the pages of *Die Linkskurve* and tends to disregard the articles that appeared in the Hungarian-language Soviet press, which—as we have argued above—can be regarded as direct and important antecedents.¹³ The Sickingen essay is the first work of a higher caliber that he wrote in the Soviet Union. It is the first product of Lukács’s attempts—in collaboration with M. Lifschitz—at reconstructing the aesthetic of Marx and Engels. (It is precisely this reconstruction and the elaboration of an aesthetic that were the essence of Lukács’s activities in the Soviet Union during the 1930s.)

In analyzing Lasalle’s drama, Marx and Engels criticized the formalistic and reactionary approach of post-Hegelian literature and aesthetic to the problem of revolution. According to Lukács, Lasalle’s prominent role in this respect (besides those of, e.g., Friedrich Theodor Vischer and Friedrich Hebbel) can be attributed to the fact that he was the only dramatist to side with the new in the struggle between old and new. It is precisely his prominent role that makes him appropriate to examine what kind of heroes he chose and how he was related to the post-Hegelian social processes. Hence, in the

early thirties, Lukács could arrive at amazing warning, worthy of the attention of proletarian revolutionary literature, too: it was Lasalle's intention that led him

in den konkreten gefassten Menschen und gesellschaftlichen Verhältnissen blosse Träger, Repräsentanten, Sprachrohre der 'weltgeschichtlichen Idee' zu sehen und zu gestalten [...] schlägt durch Lasalles Idealismus in eine abstrakte Antinomie um, weil er 'die Idee der Revolution' in die konkreten Menschen und Beziehungen hineinträgt, statt die wirklich konkrete dialektische Beziehung aus ihnen herauszuentwickeln, weil er ihre Konkretheit zugleich setzt und aufhebt.¹⁴

This was exactly the focal point of the debates in the pages of *Die Linkskurve* in 1931 and 1932. It was especially noticeable in the period following the dissolution of proletarian literary organizations on April 23, 1932. Lukács's publications at this time were the combative products of a contradictory critical and self-critical struggle against Fichtean ethic. It is out of the question that Lukács observed the revolutionary and antifascist fights of the German proletariat 'from outside' because he was very active in the BPRS. And the next 'reconstructing' essay that he wrote and published in Moscow (together with the essay on Mehring) after his return, quoted Engels's critique of *Stadtmädchen* by Margaret Harkness in full conformity: "Das revolutionäre Aufflammen der Arbeiterklasse gegen die Unterjocher, ihre Versuche, konvulsivisch, halb bewusst oder bewusst ihre Menschenrechte zu erkämpfen, gehören der Geschichte an und können ihren Platz auf dem Gebiet des Realismus beanspruchen."¹⁵

The concept of realism that Lukács borrowed from Engels gained its final form only in the second half of the 1930s. Before that time Lukács called it, pejoratively, 'reconciliatory realism' ('*versöhnlicher Realismus*'), condemning it together with 'subjectivist idealization' ('*subjektivistische Idealisierung*'). He thought that only a 'revolutionary realism' was able to eliminate the anti-artistic character of capitalism, pointing out the internal contradictions of capitalist development with unrelenting frankness, and telling the truth bravely and even cynically, or in a revolutionary and critical manner.¹⁶ It was only this idea of 'revolutionary realism' that he could reconcile with the concept of totality salvaged from the period of *History and Class Consciousness*, and which played a part in certain articles he published in *Moskauer Rundschau*. This may explain his aversion to employing the methods of reportage in epic works, making use of the montage technique that isolates heroes and events and causes fragmentation—and, above all, to *Tendenzliteratur*, which he considered a Fichtean heritage, as practised by the Second International. Instead, he raised the concept of partisanship (*Parteilichkeit*). This category, which stood at the center of debates even later, bore, naturally, little resemblance to the method of supporting directly and heroically the everyday struggles of the contemporary movement as it was interpreted by proletarian revolutionary writers. Rather, it relied on the recognition that he expressed in his first essay on Lasalle. There Lukács wrote:

Wird, wie bei Marx und Engels, der konkrete Geschichtsprozess selbst als das originäre Dialektische verstanden, der in unseren Gedanken nur zum Bewusstsein gelangt, so können ihm selbst die entscheidenden Tendenzen des gesellschaftlichen Geschehens abgelautet und so zum Gegenstand der Wissenschaft gemacht werden. Die Wissenschaft, die so erreicht wird, kann als Wissenschaft die Praxis leiten: Eine Realpolitik im weltgeschichtlichen Sinne ist dadurch methodisch möglich geworden.¹⁷

The phrase 'world historical sense' gained special importance for Lukács during the expansion of fascism. He recognized very early—in fact, earlier than many people—that the road of the international working-class movement toward socialism is a rough one

and extends into the distant future. *Realpolitik* called for the collaboration of Marxists and the progressive bourgeoisie even at that time; Lukács himself gravitated toward such a policy of alliance, although before 1935 he had not been fully free from sectarian velivities.

Taking this as a basis, one can understand Lukács's aversion to the aesthetic functionality and tendentiousness of 'material aesthetic' ('*Materialästhetik*') that he considered to be Fichtean, and this position of his can by no means be ascribed to a contemplative or deterministic attitude or spontaneity. This orientation came to the fore in Germany, too, when, following the Kharkov conference, the BPRS tried to find new directions in the field of theory. Let it suffice to refer here to the lines written by Johannes R. Becher, in which he paraphrased the famous statement by Marx: "Wir als Dichter haben keine Ideale zu verwirklichen, sondern nur die Elemente der neuen Gesellschaft in unserem Werk in Freiheit zu setzen, die sich bereits im Schoss der zusammenbrechenden Bourgeoisieordnung entwickelt hatten."¹⁸ A month later, Lukács's essay "Tendenz oder Parteilichkeit?" appeared in *Die Linkskurve*. In the newly launched *Literaturny Kritik* P. Yudin reminded the reader—most certainly not indepently of Lukács's essay in *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo* in 1932—of Marx's problem of '*shakespearisieren oder schillerisieren*' (minutely analyzed in the Sickingen essay), indicated that after the vanishing of the RAPP period a new aesthetic measure was needed.¹⁹

History then intervened to postpone the debate between Lukács and the German proletarian writers. Soon after the nazis came to power, Lukács had to leave Berlin, and he returned to Moscow. The debates and the construction of a new theory, which had just begun, were to continue under new circumstances; the beginnings were to assume ever more concrete forms and wider dimensions.

The Conditions of Constructing an Aesthetic Theory: The Fight Against Fascism

In his Sickingen essay, Lukács considered tragedy and comedy, as dramatic genres, to be the poetic expressions of certain stages of development of the class struggle. We have to bear this in mind in order to appreciate the fact that we are facing not an 'expert philosopher', but an aesthetician who has a political attitude of mind to the core, whose each and every later work is permeated with active social commitment to the communist party that he joined in the autumn of 1918, even if he temporarily belonged to the ranks of the German or Soviet party. Therefore, it is imperative to outline the framework of the ideological struggle in which Lukács continued his activities in Moscow, aimed at overcoming fascist ideology and defending the European humanistic, artistic heritage. Without this awareness, we would not be able to understand the motives behind his philosophical and aesthetic achievements.

As László Sziklai, a well-known expert on Lukács's oeuvre, says: "Antifaschismus ist der rote Faden aller Schriften von Lukács aus den 30er und frühen 40er Jahren, er ist, unmittelbar oder mittelbar, in praktisch sämtlichen Arbeiten präsent, in den philosophischen ebenso wie in den ästhetischen."²⁰ This statement of his is absolutely valid. Lukács left Berlin in March, 1933, and arrived in Moscow via Prague. Aside from a brief interruption (in 1939—42), he was throughout his stay in Moscow a research fellow at the Institute of Literature and Arts of the Moscow Communist Academy, which after 1934 functioned as a department of the Institute of Philosophy of the Soviet Academy

of Sciences. Lukács immediately posed the following question in several fundamental works: how could it happen that the country of philosophers, poets, and musicians had become the land of the most barbaric form of government in the world? Was it an anomaly which had nothing to do with ordinary bourgeois development, or a necessary and logical end product of a specific social-historical development?

In his first great work to offer an ideological critique of fascism, *Wie ist die faschistische Philosophie in Deutschland entstanden?*, written in August, 1933, but published only recently, Lukács, disregarding mannered nuances, answered in clear-cut terms that fascism was the "organisch gewachsene, notwendig entstandene Frucht der ideologischen Entwicklung der deutschen Bourgeoisie im imperialistischen Zeitalter".²¹ And if we discern changes (sometimes essential changes) in his judgments in this decade concerning literary and artistic details, there is 'no development' in the basic question, there remains his firm conviction:

Wenn also Deutschland durch die Theorie und Praxis des Hitlerfaschismus zum Musterland, zum Weltzentrum und Weltvorbild der reaktionären Barbarei geworden ist, so ist dies kein historischer Zufall, kein blosses 'Unglück', dass das deutsche Volk sozusagen von aussen überfallen hat, sondern das Emporwachsen einer wichtigen Tendenz der politischen und ideologischen Entwicklung Deutschlands zur grauenvollen Wirklichkeit.²²

He needed to elaborate this thesis historically and establish it theoretically because it was obvious that the German intellectuals could create the conditions of unyielding self-criticism and achieve ideological and artistic recovery only by overcoming the unfavourable historical 'remnants'. In searching for the causes of the crisis, Lukács went rather back into the German past, back to the failure of the Peasant Wars, when the opportunity to eliminate national division, to create a unified bourgeois national state by shattering the foundations of feudalism, became blocked. The Revolution of 1848 also failed, national unity was created from the top down, Germany became 'Prussianized',²³ and, in the political and ideological sphere, due to the lack of democracy, the most reactionary tendencies, such as servility and aggressiveness, became prevalent; hence, there arose the '*deutsche Misere*' (Marx).

The first book on fascism gives a detailed description of the 'end product', the components of fascist ideology, which are: eclecticism, reactionary cultural criticism, agnosticism, 'life philosophy' ('*Lebensphilosophie*'), neo-romanticism, 'social fascism', the theory of 'rationality' (i.e., the apology of capitalism), unscientific thinking, irrationalism, myth creation, the glorification of instinctual life, and the most barbaric motif of all: racism.

In his cultural criticism, Lukács laid great stress on the critique of German irrational philosophy, first and foremost, that of Nietzsche. The continuity of the analysis of fascism in 1933 and 1942 can be observed up to the time of *The Destruction of Reason*, which he finished in 1952. (The first chapter of the work of 1942 was taken up unchanged into the later, comprehensive work.) It is in this work that Lukács defined the essence of irrationalism with a final conciseness and retrospective effect: "This styling of the declared insolubility as an answer, along with the claim that this evasion and side-stepping of the answer, this flight from it, contains a positive solution and 'true' achievement of reality is irrationalism's decisive hallmark."²⁴ He offered a survey of irrationalism in its essence from Schelling via Schopenhauer (the most influential philosophical representative of the pessimism of a bourgeoisie that shrank back in fear from the 'fourth estate') to Nietzsche, whom he regarded as the appropriate ideological per-

sonification of monopoly capitalism having become imperialism. Already in one of his early writings of this period,²⁵ Lukács severely criticized Nietzsche's attempt at interpreting the Greek and Renaissance world in terms that give rise to elitist ideas and in which Lukács saw the intellectual predecessors of modern barbarism. He exposed the right-wing character of Nietzsche's ingenious and trenchant critique of uncultured modern capitalism, and the deep-seated hostility to democracy at the heart of his theory of decadence. Although Lukács's Nietzsche interpretation and critique of irrationalism have remained at the center of heated debates up to this date,²⁶ we can state that he never made peace with this highly reactionary trend in the history of bourgeois philosophy. Neither his Nietzsche essay of 1943²⁷ (in which he criticised the repeal of the Hegelian idea of historical progress and the transfer of Darwin's 'struggle for life' into 'life philosophy'), nor *The Destruction of Reason* shows any sign of such a compromise.

The critique of irrationalism stood at the center of Lukács's interest—following up irrationalism throughout the history of German ideology—because, in his opinion, it was precisely this system of ideas that disarmed man and rendered him defenceless against a monopoly capitalism that appeared as a mysterious 'insurmountable fate' and 'nemesis'. Still—in spite of the fact that Lukács temporarily gave up politics—his chief concern was how he could promote the cause of proletarian revolution and break with all the reactionary ideologies that kept the masses down or neutralized them in the class struggle.

Whence this utmost rigorousness and inflexibility in Lukács's view of history? A view that—according to both contemporary and later critics—considered the ideological decay of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to be a too uniform and all-embracing process, and which, hence, gave many of the values which moulded the sincere and touching insight in the social and human convulsions of the age into artistic form to the enemies of reason.²⁸

Lukács was an independent thinker, and, at the same time, a member of the communist party, and a professed follower of the Comintern's policy. In touching on the problem of the "Blum Theses", we have seen that, at two essential points, namely, in judging contemporary democratic aspirations and social democracy, his views were identical with those of the Comintern, which was then engaged in organizing the forces of the proletariat in anticipation of the final reckoning with capitalism. Like the Comintern, Lukács paid less attention to the alliance with the middle classes than was necessary, found that democracy displayed a tendency to develop into fascism, and classified social democratic parties as the principal pillars of fascism (theory of social fascism).²⁹ This theory ran like a leading thread through Lukács's first book on fascism.

Its effect on literary theory manifests itself in such important works as "Expressionism: Its Significance and Decline"³⁰, which conceived of the masses as staggering toward fascism, and his "Grand Hotel Abyss". The latter work can be considered an almost classically concise summing up of his views on the role of intellectuals at that decisive moment.³¹ Its historical deduction fits into the dimensions of the philosophy of history: Lukács assigned the prime burden of responsibility to the intellectuals who had created ideology. He pointed out the barrenness of mock-oppositional behavior and even regarded it as an apology. Following Lukács's line of thought, István Király has observed:

It was those intellectuals that had taken up residence here who were neither able to deny the oncoming decay nor able to accept the necessary *salto vitale*, the leaping over the abyss, the arrival at the idea of

revolution [...] the Grand Hotel Abyss consciousness transformed every real, embarrassing question into aesthetic quality, inwardness, mood.³²

Lukács showed no consideration for bourgeois intellectuals. He regarded Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* as mere sophism created with excellent artistic means, and Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* as a novel of parasitic world view. There did not occur any positive word of judgment with him concerning bourgeois literature; he took up the position of forcing others to make decisions—it seems that he did not know yet transitional ideological formations. That was the pressure of the choice between 'fascism or bolshevism'. The stakes were extraordinary. This is why Lukács accepted even the charge of historical injustice when he overemphasized, exaggerated Schopenhauer's, Nietzsche's, Max Weber's, or Stefan George's share in preparing the 'corruptive myth' (*volksverpestener Mythos*). He considered these men to be highly educated, cultivated intellectuals, and yet was forced to conclude:

Im geschichtlichen Leben entscheidet nicht die Absicht, sondern das objektive Ergebnis der geleisteten Tat. Und diese Tat war allmähliche Destruktion der humanistischen Weltanschauung in Deutschland. Eine Destruktion, die auf allen Gebieten[...] vor sich ging, und alle gefühlsmässigen Dämme dem Einbruch der Barbarei gegenüber untergrub.³³

What gave Lukács the right to pass such a severe judgment? It was not only his theoretical knowledge, but also his severe self-criticism. He reckoned with the ideological weaknesses of *History and Class Consciousness*, he disclaimed a work that he thought to be a product full of mistakes rooted in bourgeois idealism, thereby confusing everybody who, for different reasons, wanted to 'rehabilitate' the young Lukács against the mature thinker. "Man glaubt ehrlich zu kämpfen, liefert aber gleichzeitig—ungehört—dem Gegner geistige Waffen," he wrote of himself.³⁴ He testified that he had been working on a book for a quarter of a century. 'I have experienced the development portrayed here,' he said, and the shocking sight of how a number of his youthful companions fell in the 'brown storm' made him cry out almost despairingly: "Rottet die Ideologie der monopol-kapitalistischen Periode restlos, mit Stumpf und Stiel in Euch aus, wenn Ihr den Faschismus bekämpfen und nicht von ihm verschlungen werden wollt."³⁵

This ideological position, the position of 'either—or', characterized Lukács in essence up to the middle of the thirties. His political conception underwent a substantial change following the seventh Comintern congress in 1935, which proclaimed the strategy of the popular front; it was gradually restructured and attained a new level of synthesis during the war, as fascist atrocities gradually became known. The changes in his aesthetic views followed this process in a dialectical parallelism that, from the demand for a 'great proletarian work of art' (Lukács was one of the authors of the draft program of the BPRS that demanded this in 1932!), through the elaboration of the theory of realism, culminated in postulating the 'triumph of realism'. As noted earlier, the treatises that formed the basis of his aesthetic of realism (e.g., his essays on Moses Hess, or on the Sickingen debate) meant a certain 'handicap', with positive sign, against avant-garde political activism, and this basis was greatly strengthened by his philosophical and aesthetic studies during the thirties.

For the moment we have to state that the important and voluminous products of the thirties were invariably permeated with the pathos of fighting the ideological destruction caused by fascism, and this fact had far-reaching methodological consequences, too.

Beginning in April, 1941, Lukács was again a member of the Hungarian Party of Communists. In October, 1941, he was evacuated first to Kazan then to Tashkent, due to war measures, and it was only in July, 1942 that he returned to Moscow. Even in the unfavourable circumstances of evacuation, he gave utmost attention to reckon with the ideas of fascism. This quest gave birth to *Wie ist Deutschland zum Zentrum der reaktionären Ideologie geworden?* For a considerable period of time, it remained in manuscript, but marks a direct transition to *The Destruction of Reason*, several chapters of which he finished during the war, and to the study *Borba gumanizma i varvarstva* that appeared in Tashkent in 1943.³⁶

As regards the ideas of later 'antifascist books' the critical analysis of irrationalism remained, for the most part, unaltered, but we can observe substantial changes in the author's attitude. The changes appeared most conspicuously in two spheres: for one thing, in the theoretical correspondence with representatives of contemporary literature, that is, in the search for allies, and for another, in the search for a positive counter-image against the destruction caused by irrationalism and fascism (whose development he traced back to the past century), which entailed the presentation of the excellent achievements of classical German philosophy and literature. Lukács aimed at the analytic justification of the fact that the German people possessed the traditions of humanistic culture that had once placed it at the head of European civilization; further, he supposed that all this raised the hope that, after the defeat of German fascism, it would be possible to eliminate the *deutsche Misere* in every aspect.

By the beginning of the 1940s, the once rigid demand, the slogan of 'either fascism or bolshevism', had disappeared, it was replaced by more flexible and more realistic ideas. In Lukács's hypothesis, the opposite of fascism was not the establishment of socialism, but the possibility of a 'specific democracy'—based on the experiences of the Spanish and Chinese national and democratic revolutions—which, as he supposed, might have a wide sphere of motion even in the age of monopoly capitalism.³⁷ That is the idea of 'revolutionary democracy' that, in essence, became the basis of Lukács's literary theoretical and aesthetic activities in the middle of the thirties. Of course, the loss of emphasis on the demand of *salto vitale* did not mean that he became uncritical of the liberalism of the democratic and antifascist oppositional intellectuals. In such phenomena as the permanent readiness to compromise and 'progress ponderingly' he saw detachment from revolution, the fear of the radically democratic transformation of society. At the same time, he stated with satisfaction that the positive heroes of the antifascist historical novel represented the severe self-criticism of the best German writers.³⁸ He left no doubt that he thought of a 'world historical turn' that would be of paramount importance for the whole of European culture.³⁹ (According to Lukács, the program of 'revolutionary democracy' had a strategic character; in the course of later events, this conception obviously led to several conflicts.)

The search for a cultural tradition became a cardinal element of the conception of 'revolutionary democracy'. "It is not enough only to criticize or expose fascist ideology: we have to confront every manifestation of barbarism with positive, humanistic values," wrote Lukács in the preface to his 1943 Tashkent book.⁴⁰ The second antifascist book referred more expressly to the meaning of the theoretical program: "Um aber den geistigen und moralischen Fall der deutschen Nation, die Tiefe ihrer Erniedrigung und inneren Verzerrung entsprechend darstellen zu können, muss auch das Bild der einstigen Grösse, wenn auch kurz, gezeigt werden."⁴¹ It was within the framework of this program that Lukács accomplished the study of the humanism of German classicism, the achieve-

ments of Hegel and Goethe, and analyzed the works of the 'great realists', which he set as a standard. He regarded German classicism as the specific reflection of the French Revolution; in the realistic trend of the nineteenth century he pointed out its commitment to the life of the people, as an indispensable element of 'revolutionary democracy' (which element, however, he so much found wanting in the activities of twentieth century writers and intellectuals). He insisted stubbornly on the 'historical defence of the idea of human progress',⁴² on the legacy of the French and English Enlightenment, but, at the same time, he was fully aware of the contradictory nature of progress.

The 1942 antifascist book acknowledged with satisfaction the resoluteness and accomplishments of the left antifascist intellectuals in their attempt to maintain and continue this heritage. It made a full apology to Thomas Mann,⁴³ and outlined the picture of a, so to speak, 'anti-Grand-Hotel-Abyss':

Natürlich gibt es in der führenden deutschen Intelligenz Strömungen, die in dieser Richtung wirksam sind. Ihr sicherster Barometer ist die Entwicklung der antifaschistischen Literatur. Die stets wachsende Entschiedenheit in den kritischen Einsichten, die man in der künstlerischen Produktion Thomas und Heinrich Manns, Arnold Zweigs, J. R. Bechers beobachten kann, zeigen in diese Richtung. Die antifaschistische Literatur hat einen grossen Weg zur Klarheit zurückgelegt.⁴⁴

He found Thomas Mann's 'recovery' especially symptomatic, for, in his opinion, that example anticipated the necessary recovery of the German people from the false Prussian dilemma.⁴⁵ The tradition maintained by contemporary allies, too, the idea of the humanism of German classicism, constituted that widest sphere where Marxists, leftists, Catholics, and democrats could find a common denominator in their struggle against fascism. Lukács underscored this point in his debate with Ernst Bloch in 1943.⁴⁶ The manner in which he traversed the ground from the dilemma of 'either—or' to the cultural program of the popular-front coalition indicated his attempts at solving the intricate dialectic in which sharp controversy and reconciliation with contradictory contemporary reality were mixed. For György Lukács, it was the history of philosophy and that of aesthetics that provided the immediate starting point.

Preliminary Studies for a Marxist Aesthetic System 'to Be Concretized'

The character of the efforts at the aesthetic reconstruction in the early 1930s is aptly summed up by László Sziklai: "In this period the limitations of Lukács's aesthetic criticism arose theoretically from the fact that the *aesthetic mediation* of his philosophical positions, categories (totality, right class consciousness, materialist dialectic) was not, for the most part, elaborated."⁴⁷ And, further, that between 1934 and 1936, "Lukács highlighted in a considerable number of studies the concrete meaning of those aesthetic concepts which, between 1930 and 1933, in his criticism of the Soviet and German proletarian art, he had usually applied only as a general philosophical categories."⁴⁸ The stages of working out his own aesthetic conception were represented by those essays that he wrote utilizing and systematizing the aesthetic views of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. He included four of these essays in the first of his books to appear in Russian in the Soviet Union, *Literaturnie teorii XIX. veka i marksizm* (1937).

The editor of his book was M. Lifschitz a faithful friend of Lukács and his ideological companion in the struggles of the thirties. Lifschitz was a theorist, an aesthete, rather than a systematizing mind, yet his personal significance in Lukács's work was, in several

respects, that of an initiator. By the time Lukács arrived again in Moscow, Lifschitz had finished his article on Marxist aesthetic for the sixth volume of *Literaturnaya Enciklopediya*, and it was he who called Lukács's attention to Marx's notes on Friedrich Theodor Vischer's aesthetic. Already in the early thirties, Lifschitz published several articles on Hegel, in which he analyzed the philosopher's historical dialectic. Lifschitz assumed a leading role in the fight against vulgar art sociology, a fight in which Lukács also played an important part. Both men, together with their views on the uneven development of art and the 'triumph of realism', fell victim to the fight against *rappist* views that rose from the dead at the turn of the thirties and forties.

As a result of his continued 'consultation' with Hegel, Lifschitz also summed up his studies in a dissertation; to be sure, rather belatedly to come forward with a philosopher who had become *persona non grata*. By collecting the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin on questions of aesthetics, by publishing the classics of European philosophy and literature and the writings of Russian revolutionary democrats, and by his own works he displayed remarkable abilities. It was rightly stated in the journal of Soviet philosophers:

Lifschitz was the first in the Soviet Union to study the aesthetic views of Marx, Engels, and Lenin profoundly and exhaustively, and he proved that their views constitute a system built on the overall materialistic interpretation of the dialectic of the historical process, and constitute an inseparable part of the theory that concerns the revolutionary transformation of the world.⁴⁹

At the same time, Lifschitz was a leading theorist of the circle around *Literaturny Kritik* (from June, 1933 to December, 1940); and it was this journal that became the true workshop for Lukács's activities in Moscow. Lukács met a group of philosophers, aestheticians, and critics who thought together, and with whom he was able to work toward elaborating an up-to-date Marxist aesthetic and to overcome the different tendencies that hindered it. This journal was founded after the decline of the RAPP period, amidst the preparations for the first congress of Soviet writers, and most of the contributors belonged to Lunacharsky's circle. Both P. Yudin, the director of the Institute of Philosophy, and M. Rosenthal, a theorist of literature, were Lunacharsky's students; E. Usevich worked in the Institute of Literature, Arts, and Languages of the Moscow Communist Academy and was Lunacharsky's deputy director; and for a number of years, I. Satz worked there as a "literary secretary".⁵⁰ Lukács recalled how he joined the circle around the journal:

a campaign had been launched against the RAPP on Stalin's initiative which undoubtedly had its positive sides [...] I also took part in this campaign. To a certain extent the movement was split into two parts. The purely Stalinist wing was content with the isolation of Averbakh [...] The other wing founded the periodical *Literaturny Kritik* with the aim of bringing about a democratic revolution in Russian literature. I was involved in this during the last phase of my stay in Russia.⁵¹

Beginning with the end of 1934, the journal published the first authentic Russian translation of Hegel's aesthetic, while a number of essays analyzed the achievements of classical German aesthetic, and the critical and theoretical accomplishments of the French realists and Russian revolutionary democrats. In fighting the vulgar sociology of art, its authors discussed Engels's appreciation of Balzac and Lenin's articles on Tolstoy. After publishing the pioneering works of Lifschitz and Franz Schiller, the journal brought out Lukács's essay on Engels's literary theoretical and critical activity.⁵² This essay was one of the first foundations for reconstructing Marxist aesthetic. The

journal and the circle around it aimed at delimiting clearly and minutely the characteristics of art from the method of vulgar art sociology which postulated a direct relatedness between class determinateness, ideology, and work of art. Lukács himself aimed to prove "how the basic aesthetic problems of artistic representation organically emerged from the real reflection of the problems of social existence".⁵³ The introduction of the concept of populism, as an aesthetic category against "class determinateness", is generally regarded as one of the chief merits of the journal.⁵⁴ G. Belaya highlights the struggle that *Literaturny Kritik* waged against the simplified and embellished portrayal of reality, against pseudo-optimism, and in the interest of writers (e.g. A. Platonov) who were oppressed by official criticism in the middle and the second half of the thirties.⁵⁵ The debate concerning the interrelation of method and world view, as well as the analysis of the question of the uneven development of art flared up already in the first years, and became current again in the last years of the journal.⁵⁶ "It was this gigantic, unflagging work that created the indispensable basis for Soviet research and source edition in the field of the history of aesthetics," as László Sziklai has pointed out.⁵⁷ Lukács's studies to a great extent helped to define the profile of this outstanding intellectual workshop, but Lukács himself was transformed by organically integrating himself into the mainstream of Soviet aesthetic thinking: as an independent thinker, he experienced the problems of a socialist society that became consolidated—but remained full of contradictions—after the proletarian revolution, and he translated these relations into the language of aesthetic categories.⁵⁸

All this was achieved through a succession of heated debates and sharp conflicts of opinions. As regards the history of aesthetics, four such prominent points have been recorded: the debates concerning naturalism and vulgar art sociology, the question of the novel as a genre, the questions of realism and avant-garde, and, finally, the questions of the 'triumph of realism'. These debates, of course, were not conducted in a vacuum. Rather, they were organically interrelated with contemporary Soviet literary and artistic life and aimed at intervening in it directly or indirectly. Lifschitz's recollection duly elucidates the direct motives of the 'materialist friends of Hegelian dialectic'. As he put it, fifty years after Marx's death the fighting aesthetes "haben [...] den idyllischen Glauben an den natürlichen Verlauf der Dinge, an den Automatismus der Entwicklung, und die mystische Führung der menschlichen Geschichte 'von oben herab' (Kant) besiegt"; their aim was "zu verhindern [...] dass unsere Revolution zu einem Katzenjammer herabsinkt, wie es mehrmals den Revolutionen der Vergangenheit erging".⁵⁹

The circle of *Literaturny Kritik*—which later was called a 'trend' ('*techenie*'—'*Strömung*')—and Lukács himself aspired to perform their duties on the theoretical front, which were bestowed upon them by their individual talents and circumstances with communist commitment. To speak as if this 'trend' stood in opposition to some 'official line', as if the administration of the writers' association had represented a position against which Lukács, Lifschitz, and their comrades were forced into opposition is to risk distorting the actual historical situation. Up to the middle of the thirties, their aims were in accordance with the general line of cultural policy; their difficulties arose mainly in the second half of the decade when—paradoxically—the positive possibilities of the popular-front policy encountered worsening, unfavourable social and political developments.

Looking back on this period, Lukács summed up the essence of his activities as follows:

man musste beweisen, dass die formell zerstreuten, gelegentlichen Bemerkungen von Marx und Engels über Literatur und Kunst ein streng zusammenhängendes, konkretisierbares und zu konkretisierendes System bilden. Mit dieser Bestrebung hängen meine aus dieser Zeit stammenden Versuche zusammen, den dialektischen Zusammenhang der fortschrittlichen und reaktionären Tendenzen der deutschen idealistischen Ästhetik aufzuzeigen (Schiller); das Zurückprallen und Reaktionärwerden der ästhetischen Entwicklung im Zusammenhang mit der Revolution von 1848 klar zu machen (Vischer); die ideologische Krise, die Verdunkelung der Lehren des Marxismus im Zeitalter der II. Internationale im Zusammenhang mit der Tätigkeit eines Revolutionärs und bedeutenden Schriftstellers vom Range Mehrings aufzuweisen; und endlich: den Vorläufer der dunkelsten Reaktion, des Faschismus, Nietzsche, auch auf dem Gebiete der Ästhetik zu entlarven.⁶⁰

In the course of their discussions, Lukács and Lifschitz declared that the theorists of the Second International (including Plekhanov and Mehring) had not recognized deeply enough that Marxism as a world view was unified; thus, the task remained unchanged: to construct a systematic aesthetic, on the basis of dialectical materialism. Lukács, it must be stressed, was not thinking of a scholastically closed system of aesthetic theses.⁶¹ What his later critics, who disapproved of his efforts at normativity, did not sufficiently realize was that his views, in spite of a strong epistemological basis (theory of reflection), ultimately and in an ever-increasing manner, assumed the marks of social ontology.⁶² At any rate, already at that time it became clear to Lukács that the collected and thematically arranged comments of the classics of Marxism did not provide a systematic aesthetic; he even doubted whether a monographic study of these comments could achieve scholarly validity.⁶³ He himself considered it most productive to confront the comments of the classics of Marxism with concrete and extensive material and in this way to arrive at conclusions of presumably general validity. His voluminous studies in world literature, his writings dealing with the theory of the novel, his literary theoretical and aesthetic outlines all served this purpose. And this vast, long-range activity moved within the scope of optimism on a historical scale. As he put it in the aforementioned postscript: "The recognition of the independence, the theoretical originality of Marxist aesthetic, was my first step toward understanding and accomplishing the new ideological turning point."⁶⁴

Nevertheless, the studies that Lukács wrote in the early thirties show him on the way toward his mature theory, that is, *en route*. In 1936 he wrote a preface to his *Literaturnie teorii XIX. veka i marksizm*, in which he remarked: "The articles of the present book were written between 1930 and 1933, and in the autumn of 1933 they were ready for publication. Several circumstances kept me from publishing them [...] many things became obsolete."⁶⁵ One cannot regard this notice as merely a formal display of modesty, of the sort that was typical of Lukács even later; at this time he was sincere in his judgment.

In the foregoing we have surveyed—even if sketchily—Lukács's articles on history and the history of ideas prompted by his antifascism.⁶⁶ The ideological motives of the writings included in *Literaturnie teorii* are closely connected with the great cultural critical essay that analyzed the genesis of fascist ideology and was written in the same period. They share a common comprehensive view of history, a common wealth of arguments—and they also share a compelling scheme that looks for and demonstrates the gradual decay of bourgeois thought throughout the historical process, beginning with the materialistic and realistic beginnings (Feuerbach), proceeding through apology, the deviation toward irrationalism and myth, and unavoidably falling into the ideology of fascism. (At the time of the publication of *Literaturnie teorii*, an essential shift of emphasis in judging bourgeois progress was in the making; most certainly, this recognition was the reason why his first book on the origins of fascist ideology was not then pub-

lished.) Lukács regarded Friedrich Theodor Vischer as a key figure (precisely because he was the most important representative of post-Hegelian aesthetic) who represented that part of the German bourgeoisie which wanted to integrate liberal traditions into fascism organically. In the Feuerbach article, he holds that the writers who remained faithful to the bourgeoisie are more and more becoming the blind tools of fascist propaganda. For them—one may think—the mercy of *salto vitale* is not granted. (The conception of these studies, in terms of the history of ideas, points toward *The Destruction of Reason*.) There is a consistent ideological rigor that delimits the aesthetic in progress, in which there is no place for the moralization of the 'true socialists', liberal aestheticism, decadence, the abstract avant-garde, or irrationalists. Yet there arise even some losses in the meantime. Perhaps this is the reason why an aesthete of a later period somewhat painfully remarks: "Concurrently with the heroic polemic with irrationalism, there are present in embryonic form, or conceived in pain, some elements of the late chief work, the great aesthetic."⁶⁷

This coercive course reached its turning point in 1848, when the bourgeoisie had to ascertain with fear that the proletariat, the auxiliary force of its revolutions, appeared with sovereign claims of its own on the stage of history.

It was this element that Lukács brought into the foreground in establishing a Marxist theory of literature when he analyzed Engels's literary theoretical activities:

Aber der entscheidende Punkt in ihrer [i.e., Marx's and Engels's] damaligen Literaturkritik ist die Feststellung der grossen Wendung, die die Revolution von 1848 in der Entwicklung der bürgerlichen Ideologie hervorgerufen hat. An Guizot und Carlyle zeigen sie, wie die Ideologen der Bourgeoisie sich zu feigen und jämmerlichen Apologeten entwickelt haben. Die grosse Periode der Fortschrittlichkeit der Bourgeoisie ist endgültig vorbei.⁶⁸

But the question is whether the literator ideologues of the rising working-class movement could assume the place of bourgeois aesthetes. The aesthetic representatives of the Second International were also sharply criticized by Lukács, who thought that discarding this troublesome heritage was the explicit prerequisite for working out a genuine Marxist aesthetic. It is precisely this thought that occupies the center of his essay on Mehring in *Literaturnie teorii*.⁶⁹ The belief in automatism that was kept alive by vulgar art sociology, that is, the direct correspondence between class basis and ideology, the postulation of the parallel development of economy and art: all this was the heritage of the Second International, the time when social democracy abandoned the revolutionary heritage of Hegelian dialectic and moved back to Kant, sank into opportunism, and failed to employ the mobilizing Marxist tenet of 'uneven development'. Lukács found the chief source in Lassalle:

Die Gesamtkonzeption Lassalles, die bedingungslose Unterordnung der Kunst unter den 'objektiven Geist', naturgemäss zur 'Tendenzkunst' drängte [...] Der ganze idealistische Grundcharakter seiner Philosophie, die den Staat von der 'bürgerlichen Gesellschaft' [...] loslöste und über sie erhob, die der Wissenschaft eine selbständige Rolle oberhalb der Klassenkämpfe zuwies, musste sich hier in einer unhistorischen undialektischen Verselbständigung des 'ästhetischen' Prinzips äussern.⁷⁰

Mehring—in Lukács's opinion—took over this Lassallean heritage, in a similar manner when, as a theorist and historian of the working-class movement, he wanted to act as a mediator between Marx and Lassalle.⁷¹ That was the reason why Mehring supposed: the bourgeoisie as a class is not capable of creating great art any more, whereas the rising working class is not capable of it yet.⁷² Lukács drew a direct line from this thesis

through Thalheimer to Trotsky, and came to the conclusion: Mehring's heritage should not be taken over by the proletariat ("nicht angetreten werden darf") because it was nothing else but Lassalle's heritage.⁷³ The paradox of this severe judgement—which was pronounced formally in the interest of the proletariat's art 'of its own'—lies in the fact that the passages concerning Mehring were written in 1932, that is, in the same year when, in the pages of *Die Linkskurve*, Lukács was engaged in a bitter struggle against the artistic practice of contemporary German proletarian revolutionary literature. Lukács already conceived of such a 'great proletarian work of art', but at this stage recognized only the negative features that ought to be stripped away both theoretically and practically, and was unable to delineate an aesthetic that could outline the positive qualities of 'proletarian art'.

Lukács continued his fight against the cultural and critical heritage of the Second International in the spheres of both German and Soviet literature and art. The essay on Mehring that he included in *Literaturnie teorii* was originally written as an accompanying study to a Soviet edition, while the Lassalle essay was originally written for the series of *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo* that published the exchange of letters between Marx, Engels, and Lassalle on the Sickingen drama. This correspondence was followed by Lukács's essay, but omitting the (aforementioned) critical passages concerning Mehring. These were mentioned only in the editorial preface, but appeared again, rather sharply, in the pages of *Der Rote Aufbau*.⁷⁴ In German scholarly literature it was Hans Koch who subjected Lukács's critique of Mehring to minute analysis; besides correcting some details, Koch proved that Mehring did not at all come to a stop on the horizon of the Second International, and moved to the forefront of the revolutionary forces as one of the founders of the German communist party through his proletarian revolutionary devotion, and not through *salto vitale*. As a theorist, Mehring took part in the practical class struggle, not as a Lassallean, but as a Marxist internationalist who was far from any Trotskyite velleities.⁷⁵ Later, in 1939, Lukács himself recognized Mehring's outstanding merits in the democratic movements and the importance of his example for the contemporary antifascist, popular-front policy.⁷⁶

The unnecessarily harsh tone of the critique of Mehring had far-reaching importance for repudiating the whole view of art of the Second International. In the field of political philosophy, Lukács faithfully followed the line of the Comintern.⁷⁷ Although he was undoubtedly correct in criticizing *Tendenzliteratur* and the shallow vulgar mechanical views (thus, clearing the way for the theory of realism), but in constructing this theory, he fell into contradiction when, against Mehring, he positively postulated proletarian revolutionary literature, but, at the same time, questioned the validity and values of this kind of literature. The bourgeois ideology of art that led to fascism and the views of the Second International that resulted in abstract theses represented two extremes, and in between he had to find the terrain where a valid, up-to-date Marxist view of literature could be created. It is evident that the basis could only be a post-revolutionary socialist society whose real inner laws had to be taken into consideration for constructing a system, the more so—in Lukács's view—as bourgeois decadence and the belief in the conflict-free, straight line of development, *mutatis mutandis*, invariably meant a source of danger.

Lukács laid the historico-philosophical foundations of the theory of realism in his Hegel study. *The Young Hegel* is generally regarded as an unparalleled work in the history of philosophy of this period. It is also of unquestionable value in Lukács's oeuvre, a valid basis for his subsequent work. Lukács had already dealt exhaustively

with Hegel from the turn of the twenties and thirties. He formulated this work parallel to his great literary historical and theoretical studies, and it received its final form in the autumn of 1938.⁷⁸ According to some critics, it is precisely the history of philosophy that qualifies as the most important aspect of Lukács's oeuvre.⁷⁹ In this work, Lukács traces back even the most refined philosophical notions to material and economic bases, thus proving that Hegel received the decisive impetus for constructing his system from his studies of classical British political economy. Lukács's analysis was centered around Hegel's concept of alienation (with particular regard to Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*), contradictoriness in the sphere of society and ideology as the essence and moving force of reality, dialectics that permeates the fullness of existence, and the category of 'reconciliation' that he first rejected, and then accepted. As Lukács writes: "Hegel's unique position in this period rests on the fact that for the first time in human history the *contradictory nature of existence itself* was consciously made the central preoccupation of philosophy."⁸⁰

Lukács, furthermore, thinks that the importance of Hegel's definition of human fate 'lies precisely in these embryonic formulations of the dialectical method'.⁸¹ 'Ethicism', a subjective utopianism that does not, or does not want to recognize the dialectical contradictoriness of existence, that is, necessity—as exemplified by Hölderlin, Fichte, and Forster—is unsuitable for understanding and transforming reality and can only lead to tragedy. As Lukács explains in his "Ludvig Feerbakh i nemetskaya literatura", this is why Herwegh's devotion to the idea of revolution, the sentimental moralization of the 'true socialists' became, for all practical purposes, unfruitful.⁸² "Wenn Hegel in seiner Philosophie, Goethe in seiner Dichtung die Widersprüchlichkeit des Seins aufdeckten, so war dies [...] vor allem durch Überwindung der heroischen *Illusionen* der vorrevolutionären Zeit möglich."⁸³

Mutatis mutandis—everything has a validity that leads to the present. Already in 1924, in his essay on Lenin, Lukács recognized the borderline between Lenin's *Realpolitik* and utopianism; he pointed out that the struggle to establish the preconditions of socialism was going on day by day. He shed a more direct light on the economic and superstructural components of this contradictory process in a remarkable essay in 1926:

Und für den proletarischen Revolutionär, für den Marxisten ziemt es nicht, die wirklich vorhandenen Möglichkeiten utopisch zu übersteigen [...] [Es] lebt das Proletariat, nicht nur, wie dies Marx in der Kritik des Gothaer Programmes unvergleichlich gezeigt hat, auch in der ersten niedrigeren Phase des Kommunismus in einer Welt, deren Grundstruktur (Herrschen des Wertgesetzes, Arbeitsstellung, gleiches und abstraktes Recht, usw.) trotz aller Umwälzungen doch Strukturformen des Kapitalismus beibehält.⁸⁴

From this one can arrive at the conclusion that "the old capitalistic forms of structure cannot be terminated by a single act [...] a whole historical period is needed to eliminate them."⁸⁵ Already in 1919, Lukács prefigured the raising of "convulsions and sufferings" accompanying the impending demolition of coercive proletarian structures—which replaced bourgeois structures—in the age of "transition from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom".⁸⁶

After studying the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, Lukács was able to distinguish objectification from alienation, and also to exercise retrospective self-criticism concerning his *History and Class Consciousness*. The actually existing alienation is invariably at the center of Lukács's interpretation of Hegel.

Hegel points to the place where 'externalized' reality was to have been reintegrated in the subject, but the place remains vacant in his account. We shall see that this failure has profound social causes, over and above

the historical position of Germany [...] and that only a concrete conception of a condition of society which would offer a real solution to the contradictions of capitalism can also hope to discover a way to resolve the problem of 'externalization'.⁸⁷

As a Marxist philosopher, Lukács was, of course, convinced that this social condition can only be socialism, but he refrained from believing that this condition had already arrived, only two decades after the world-historical turn. Hegel prudently guarded against resolving alienation that appeared in the form of 'reconciliation'. Lukács goes far to accept this: "Here, however, the 'reconciliation' is *wholly utopian* in character. It is typical of Hegel's integrity that he prefers to leave vacant in thought a place that was vacant in reality, rather than to fill it with figments of the imagination."⁸⁸ In this respect Lukács undoubtedly followed Hegel concerning his own age.

Alienation and its possible termination in socialist society are the key to Lukács's philosophy of history, aesthetic thought, and theory of realism. Marxist philosophy has contradicted this view up to the present. Some philosophers in the German Democratic Republic claim that Lukács's act of raising the concept of alienation to the rank of a central category was ungrounded, and, at the same time, blurred the differences between Hegelian and Marxist dialectics. Accordingly, "Marx bewies, dass die Entfremdung sowohl in ökonomischer als auch in politischer Hinsicht praktisch-revolutionär überwunden werden kann"; in their view, Lukács did not start out from mature Marxism, but, rather, from Hegelianism: "teilte er auch Hegels Grundkonzeption derzufolge die Entfremdung nicht wirklich praktisch, sondern nur im Geiste überwunden werden kann."⁸⁹

In fact, Marx brilliantly pointed out the perspective from which alienation could be overcome. The young Hegel also believed that "die Entwicklung des ganzen Menschengeschlechts eine vernünftige, d. h. zu Freiheit und Fortschritt führende ist".⁹⁰ Under the pressure of circumstances, however, he had to compromise, and amidst the contradictions of bourgeois society he was not able to see the true perspectives of this dissolution. Marx found the class that was qualified for this historical role in the proletariat, but he did not, and could not, indicate the 'schedule' of its realization. The active participants in the ideological struggles of the thirties—presumably—saw their own age more realistically than their rhetorical postulations may suggest to observers of a later era.

The representatives of Soviet philosophy and aesthetic have acknowledged how well-founded Lukács's conception was. T. J. Oizerman appreciates positively that "it was in his monograph study that the problem of alienation for the first time became the subject of systematic Marxist-Leninist analysis".⁹¹ Oizerman states that Lukács also "theoretically worked out the historical experiences of the revolutionary transformation in the Soviet Union"⁹² when he revealed the main tendencies of development in modern European philosophy. And it is also clear for him that the new, better future has to take shape through the unfolding of the inner contradictions that accompany its positive contents.⁹³ That is, the aim and justification of Lukács's interpretation of Hegel is 'the awakening to consciousness of the reality of socialism that is being built in one country, the historico-philosophical analysis of its contradictions and, at the same time, those of the age of imperialism'.⁹⁴ Mihail Lifschitz confirmed in an interview that both he and Lukács had aimed at 'analyzing the socialist revolution in the spirit of the Leninist tradition' through their studies on Hegel.⁹⁵ As Lifschitz said:

in his work Lukács reestablished a close connection between Hegel and the revolutionary tradition, the revolutionary element. And the change that took place in the old Hegel [...] was not a return to the heart of reaction, but a tragically double necessity. Of course, to a certain degree we understood it because we faced

similar situations [...] Naturally [...] we professed another, democratic way of historical development, which is also accompanied by sacrifices and by waste of forces, as nothing happens without contradictions in world history, but we did it in Lenin's spirit, in a more democratic and freer spirit, which expresses the concept of concrete in a more concrete form. I might say that the contrast is the following, if we speak about purely philosophical concepts: the Hegelian abstract concreteness was the realism of the historical process conceived in the spirit of capitalist society. Our concrete concreteness was the banner of true socialist society in the spirit of the Leninist October tradition, minus the dark forces that appeared in the thirties.⁹⁶

The basic requirement for overcoming the alienation that also exists in socialist society was the recognition and declaration of the fact that contradictoriness—in which the dialectic of negativity is in operation and which 'cannot be abolished once and for all'—belongs to the essence of every reality, including socialist reality. As Lukács writes:

Hegel's philosophical genius [...] enable[s] him to go further than the mere statement of a contradiction in his own personal experience [...] to recognize not just the contradictoriness of bourgeois society [...] but beyond that to see in such contradictoriness the dialectical nature of all life, of all being and thought.⁹⁷

It was not a simple task to bring home this very important—and, we might say, epoch-making—tenet under the conditions of the given period, and it is understandable that it met with strenuous opposition. The so-called 'progressives' relied on an old tradition when they conceived of a 'gradual, straight line of progress' in history. Almost simultaneously with *The Young Hegel* there appeared Stalin's work *On Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, which—in a similar fashion to Hegel's absolute spirit—announced the idea that history would finally achieve a synthesis, as well as the final termination of contradictions.⁹⁸ The contradictions within an actually existing socialist society, the complicated inner problems of the international working-class movement, the rise of fascism, the gradual emergence of the popular-front policy, and a new, positive relationship with the allies—all these factors contributed to the displacement of the messianic utopianism of the twenties from Lukács's thought. In the meantime, the young Lukács had become the mature Lukács. The break that appeared in the old Hegel, *mutatis mutandis*, appeared also in Lukács. It was in *The Young Hegel* and with the aid of that work that Lukács turned the negative values into positive ones: with the attitude of reconciliation which afforded an identification with problems and, at the same time, a critical stance, Lukács was able to achieve dialectics in his view of life and, in turn, in his view of literature, realism, which was built on this ontology.

It was not in an unbroken process that Lukács attained this 'reconciliation'. He wrote a lengthy essay on satire,⁹⁹ in which he condemned Hegel morally, saying that the latter 'openly and cynically' professed a reconciliation that was suggested to him by the liberal bourgeoisie, which later failed to recognize satire as a form of art. Lukács points out that satire is not a genre, but a creative method, which is used by one class against another, or expresses the self-criticism of some class. He recommends this self-criticism to the proletariat and to proletarian revolutionary writers, reminding them of Lenin's condemnation of the early bureaucracy of the Soviet state. Later this open critical activism dissolved in the vast literary historical and theoretical material, but moved into the foreground again at the end of the thirties, during the heated debates over the 'triumph of realism'. By overemphasizing the justification of 'reconciliation', Lukács undoubtedly anticipated these debates. In his opinion, in order to understand the dialectical contradictoriness of reality in depth, one has to discard 'revolutionary illusions'. Hegel's "very abandonment of the revolutionary ideals of his youth enabled him [...] to achieve

[...] a profound and true insight into the necessity of the historical process and the methodology of history".¹⁰⁰ On the wide terrain of 'reconciliation', an extreme point was Lukács's theoretical relationship to Stalin's political line,¹⁰¹ which arouses the most passionate aversions even today. Although T. J. Oyzerman appreciates the fact that Lukács interprets 'reconciliation' in a positive sense, he, at the same time, states:

Such a 'reconciliation' does not exclude at all a critical attitude concerning the social *status quo*; on the contrary, it preconditions the latter [...]. In the light of this characterization [...] the interpretation of Hegel's principle of 'reconciliation' that was given in Lukács's work seems to be especially understandable and worthy of further elaboration.¹⁰²

László Sziklai describes this possibility, namely, the dialectical permeation of 'reconciliation' by a critical element, by means of a paraphrase of a witty comment that Lukács borrowed from Thomas Mann (and applied to Marx), saying that Lukács, too, was ready to read not only Hegel, but also Hölderlin.¹⁰³ But the question seems to be a little more complicated. The critical attitude that is expressed by the reference to Hölderlin undoubtedly exists (and this is precisely the ground for the theory of realism); but the position of criticism is not Hölderlin's revolutionary illusion—instead, a materialist analysis that rests on an economic basis. Its permanence is indicated by the 'Fichtean' aversion of a group of Lukács's students (the Budapest School) toward the pertinent findings that the old Lukács elucidated in *The Ontology of Social Being*. As the authors' criticism runs:

the whole second part of the Marx chapter is expressly built on [the thesis] that the economic sphere is the *essence* of the process of reproduction (it is, at the same time, the terrain of necessity), but everything else belongs to the *phenomenal* sphere (and, accordingly, constitutes the terrain of contingency). Consequently, capitalism and socialism differ only in the phenomenal sphere.¹⁰⁴

This economic and philosophical position (which is, undoubtedly, Hegelian in character)—although together with Hölderlin's utopianism—more or less latently influenced Lukács's view of history, as well as the conception of *The Historical Novel*, and the theory of realism.

The Fate of the Historical Novel and the Anticipated Rebirth of the Epic

The spirit of 'Hölderlin's utopia' and its ontological recantation (or, as we might say with Lukács: the tension between 'left ethics' and 'right epistemology') ran parallel with the evolution of Lukács's theory of the novel for several decades. In the middle of the thirties it was an actual assignment that turned Lukács's attention to the theory of the novel again: G. Pospelov (a student of Pereverzev) and he were asked to write an entry on the novel for *Literaturnaya Enciklopedia*.¹⁰⁵

It is known that his first, historico-philosophical, encounter with the problem fell during the years of the age of 'absolute sinfulness'. For years Lukács's intention had been to write a book on Dostoevsky,¹⁰⁶ the first part of which was *The Theory of the Novel*¹⁰⁷—a book that, according to a later comment of the author, was characterized by naive utopianism, by the hope that the disintegration of capitalism would automatically be followed by a natural life atop the ruins, worthy of man.¹⁰⁸ The pathos of the

entry on the novel, which he wrote for the encyclopedia, did not, however, 'stem from the romantic anti-capitalism that nostalgically longed for the organic character of antiquity, as in *The Theory of the Novel*. In the meantime, Lukács became aware of the fact that in the present age "the key to the epic form adequate to socialism lies in the contradictions of socialist society, in the changing relationship of the individual and the community".¹⁰⁹

The thirties may well have served the maturing of this recognition because in this period Lukács was actively participating in the establishment of the socialist social order. We can accept the—perhaps overgeneralizing—view that the feverish enthusiasm of the twenties favored lyrical expression, while the thirties, the period of revolutionary 'work-days' were characterized by the epic as an artistic form. Thus, it was not by chance that there now appeared theorists who presumed to work out the theory of novel as a genre. The three most notable experiments were linked with the names of M. Bakhtin, György Lukács, and G. Pospelov, and, as Árpád Kovács has written, this heritage proved to be of decisive importance for the whole later development of Marxist literary and genre theory.¹¹⁰

Lukács's encyclopedic entry on the novel had already raised a number of basic questions, which he analyzed more deeply and explained in greater detail in the various chapters of *The Historical Novel* a few years later. It was he who, against the vulgar materialistic views that posited 'direct correspondences' and against positivistic narrow-mindedness, searched for the real correspondences of the moving economic and social structures in the sphere of artistic forms, relying on the bases of dialectical and historical materialism, and always keeping in mind the Marxian thesis of uneven development. Lukács's method has won high esteem in recent Soviet literary scholarship, even in comparison with other experiments in genre theory. As V. D. Oskotsky writes:

Lukács's studies, which represented outstanding achievements in Soviet literary theoretical and critical thinking at the end of the thirties were pre-eminent in the respect that Lukács employed the method of comparative historical and comparative typological analysis together with theoretical generalization in studying the fate and course of the historical novel in the wide context of world literature between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries.¹¹¹

Lukács proceeded from Hegel's theory of the novel and Marx's comments on the epic of classical antiquity; he described the modern novel as the epic of the bourgeois age. It was the classical unity of individual and society that could create epic poetry, it was that period which produced a hero who represented the cause of the community.

The contradictory nature of the bourgeois age, its achievements, which serve human progress and yet bring about an accompanying degradation of man, dissolve the beauty of poesy and bring forth epic prose.¹¹² There appears again the historical construction that he formulated in the early thirties: the flowering of the classic historical and social novel inspired by revolutionary democratism, then, concurrently with the decline of progressive bourgeois ideology, bring forth apology, the decay of the novel, and the disarrangement of its organic composition. At the same time, the fate of the novel remained to be solved in socialism, which promised to restore the harmony of the individual and society on a higher level.

Based on his entry on the novel, Lukács wrote theses and read a paper at the literature section of the Institute of Philosophy of the communist academy on December 20, 1934; the debate continued on December 28 and on January 3, 1935, and ended with Lukács's concluding remarks.¹¹³ The literature on Lukács and his theory of the novel has touched

only slightly on this important event,¹¹⁴ which, pointing beyond the horizons of genre theory, occupied an important place in the debates concerning Marxist aesthetic, and represented a vital stage in formulating Lukács's theory of the novel. As Michael Wegner aptly observes: "Insgesamt gesehen stellen Lukács' Thesen zum Roman die damals am weitesten entwickelte dialektische und historisch-materialistische Position zur Geschichte und Theorie des Romans dar".¹¹⁵ The debate on the novel that followed Lukács's lecture was not an isolated event in Soviet literary scholarship. The debate that followed I. Friedland's lecture (*Oktyabr*, 1934) and the disputes concerning Franz Schiller's handbook of world literature (1935) touched on such questions (i.e., the scholarly constructed historical novel that viewed events through the eyes of an outstanding historical personality; the predominance of realistic portrayal, or that of revolutionary, conscious intentions, etc.) which may have provided Lukács with an impetus—though mainly of contrary nature—to his theoretical argumentation, especially to *The Historical Novel*, which he finished by 1937.

The debate at the turn of the years 1934 and 1935 was, in essence, one of the first clashes between the circle around *Literaturny Kritik* and the vulgar sociologists who gathered around Pereverzev. Pereverzev reproached Lukács with treating bourgeois society too homogeneously, and criticized his neglect of the role of the plebeian, proletarian element as one that might cause difficulties in outlining the perspectives. Some critics pointed out the neglect of the ages, periods, and types in the development of the epic, as well as the strong normativity of his views of literature, which appeared in the fact that, for Lukács, the degrading character of the bourgeois epoch seemed to be almost absolute. Grib, who defended this thesis, referred directly to Marx, who spoke of the self-deceit and illusions of the champions of bourgeois society (cf. his *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*). U. Foht stressed the positive growth and deepening of bourgeois consciousness,¹¹⁶ and Lifschitz, who supported Lukács, noted:

The bourgeois novel does not only reflect bourgeois degradation, but, at the same time, represents an important step forward in the artistic development of humanity. The fact that the bourgeois novel conquered the prosaic nature of life is both its negative characteristic and colossal achievement.¹¹⁷

By refusing 'reconciliation' with the prosaic nature of ugly reality in Hegel, Lifschitz qualified himself as the follower of 'Hölderlin's inspiration', thus supporting Lukács's severe critique of bourgeois consciousness.

Lukács followed Marx in attributing the flowering of the epic to a given historical and social stage, and it was as a consequence of his philosophy of history that he was able to ascertain the stages of its decline and transformation. He treated the novel, the epic of the bourgeois age, in the same way. Thus, it became possible for him to raise the question of the possible rebirth of the epic under the conditions of socialism, as he did in the encyclopedic entry and during the debate as well. The participants of the debate argued heatedly over this issue. For whatever person, it was undoubtedly Lukács's messianism that flared up again. To his mind, the collective heroism of the workers represented the appearance of a stylistic element capable of recalling the essence of the ancient epic. We may agree with Michael Wegner concerning the nature and motives of this opinion:

Die Annahme Lukács' über die Perspektiven des Romans im Sozialismus—seine Annäherung an das Epos, die Wiedergeburt des Epos in der sozialistischen Erzählliteratur—hat sich nicht bestätigt. Seine Prognose hat sich als ein Irrtum, als eine erwünschte Vorwegnahme der Zukunft, als eine Vision erwiesen. Die Gründe

hierfür liegen [...] in einer falschen Einschätzung der realen Entwicklungsperspektiven der sozialistischen Gesellschaft und des sich umgestaltenden Verhältnisses zwischen dem Individuum und der Gemeinschaft.¹¹⁸

At any rate, Lukács warned against mistaking the reality of development for the perspectives of development, and pointed to the danger of substituting rectilinear utopianism for the objective dialectic of the economy.

Here it is worth noting that against Lukács's expectations that the epic might revive under the conditions of socialism, there evolved another theory of novel, namely, Bakhtin's, which tacitly questioned Lukács's conception, and maintained that the epic was a completely closed formation, and, accordingly, that the novel was not a product of disintegration, but an unfinished genre in constant search of itself. Bakhtin pointed out—in conformity with Thomas Mann—that the novel should not be regarded as the product of the disintegration of the epic, but, the other way round, the epic should be conceived of as the primitive archetype of the novel.¹¹⁹ It seems that Bakhtin's theory, which profited from the lessons of the debate on the novel in 1934–35, offered a remarkable alternative to the realistic, critical investigation of objective reality, especially by virtue of the fact that Bakhtin withdrew the novel from the sole competency of the bourgeois epoch.

In his closing remarks, Lukács tactfully said that Pereverzev's critique was not meant for him, but for the Marxist view of history. The phraseology of the *proletkult* reminded him of the efforts to eliminate dialectics. At the same time, he declared, in harmony with the views of the other participants: it was justifiable to claim that the novel should be compared not only with ancient epic, but with the drama and short story as well. *The Historical Novel*, which appeared serially in *Literaturny Kritik* between 1937 and 1939, fulfilled this expectation through the comparative analysis of drama as a genre.¹²⁰

The essays appeared in book form only a decade later.¹²¹ The reasons for this belated publication were presumably similar to those that caused *The Young Hegel* to remain in manuscript, but the results of the debate on 'world view and method' in 1939–40, which followed the consistent use of the theory of the 'triumph of realism' in *K istorii realizma* (Moscow, 1939), most certainly did not help to speed the publication of the work. (Lukács's aim to publish this work is supported by the fact that, in September, 1937, he wrote a preface to it, in which he explained that, because of language barriers, he refrained from discussing the Soviet historical novel.) Recalling the objections raised in the debate in 1934, Lukács stated in advance that he did not presume to write an overall historical survey of development, but, rather, an experimental work ('essay'), as a preliminary for a later Marxist aesthetic. He thought that it was impossible to work out a Marxist genre theory without striving to "apply the reflection theory of materialistic dialectic to the problem of differentiating between genres".¹²² Criticism already revealed some scepticism concerning the result of the historico-philosophical approach to genre theory in the earlier experiment.¹²³ But, to be sure, when writing *The Theory of the Novel* and *The Historical Novel*, Lukács did not want to create a specific, scholarly work. He had a more important object in view. The encyclopedic entry on the novel postulated proletarian epic in 1934, but by 1937–39, other claims appeared on the horizon. László Sziklai probably comes nearest the truth in searching for an answer to the question why Lukács did not follow the genre analysis of the theory of the novel. The answer can be found in the ideological, cultural, and artistic consequences that stemmed from the political program of the popular front. Lukács 'outlined exactly the

history of the *historical novel*, whose true heroes were the masses that formed history'.¹²⁴

At the same time, the work was not a narrative, historical and literary excursus, but, rather, a theoretical interpretation, a generalization of a wide range of facts. As Lukács wrote:

My aims were of a theoretical nature. What I had in mind was a theoretical examination of the interaction between the historical spirit and the great genres of literature which portray the totality of history.¹²⁵

His work is divided into four great parts. The first part discusses the classic form of the historical novel; the second part, which confronts the claims of the debate in 1934—35, treats the identical and dissimilar features of genre and substance between the historical novel and historical drama; the third one analyzes the crisis of the historical novel and bourgeois realism; and the concluding part surveys the historical novel of democratic humanism, or, more exactly, the German antifascist novel.

Lukács finds the origin of the historical novel in the fundamental change of world view that was brought about by the French Revolution and the ensuing wars, which made history the experience of the masses, and revealed that social being does not represent a simple duel between reason and irrationalism, but, rather, that the essence of historical occurrences is the inner struggle between social antagonisms: accordingly, revolutions are not the results of 'mistakes', but occur of necessity. And precisely because man is the product of his own historical activity, it becomes the task of the epic to sensuously present the historical and social types. The hero cannot be a central figure of the action—it is not the heroes that explain their own age, but the people: "For the being of the age can only appear as a broad and many-sided picture if the everyday life of the people, the joys and sorrows, crises and confusions of average human beings are portrayed."¹²⁶ What matters in the historical novel is not the narration of great historical events, but the 'poetic awakening' of the people who figure in those events.

The question, however, arises: what is the difference between the historical novel and the social novel? To be sure, the historical novel in its classical sense was historical only in that it narrated events preceding present realities, but as it described a process leading from the past to the present through the life of the people, it became a 'strong artistic weapon of defending human progress'. Therefore, the belletristic examination of the present and past may, in essence, disregard the difference between them, as the identity of their subject transcends ages.

The ultimate principles are in either case the same. And they flow from a similar aim: the portrayal of a total context of social life [...] The classical historical novel arose out of the social novel and, having enriched and raised it to a higher level, passed back into it. The higher the level of both historical and social novel in the classical period, the less there are really decisive differences of style between them.¹²⁷

Epic, together with historical drama, moves to the center of poetic valuation because both aim at totality, the drama at intensive, the epic at extensive totality.¹²⁸ Epic totality does not, of course, manifest itself in the detailed description of the objective world because this is the method of the historical novel, of the decline and decadence of the epic, the attribute of naturalism. Even the faithful description of historical facts and events cannot in itself secure the presence of realism in the historical novel. The totality of object and history turns into authentic representation only in the event that it is artistic creativity and not scholarly exactness that brings about a sensuous world of phenomena

which, at the same time, offers information on the essence of the man of the age and the motion of society. Creativity is, of course, the irradiation of artistic talent, of the artist's honesty, and it comes to light against the subjective views and intents of the writer. It is this process, the 'triumph of realism', that results in enduring works, while forcing subjective intentions into the view of reality—into the work—by contrast falsifies the creative act. As can be seen in *The Historical Novel*, Lukács works out the basic concepts of his system parallel to his great aesthetic studies, and applies them to the material of world literature.

Lukács met the 'requirements' of exact genre theory, to be sure, with the comparative analysis of the historical novel and drama. He pointed out the differences in the composition of action, thus, for example, the role of retarding and retrogressive action. At the same time, however, he proved that both genres portrayed the totality of the life process, but while epic is the 'totality of objects', drama is the 'totality of movement': "the central theme of drama is the collision of social forces at their most extreme and acute point [...] It is certainly no accident that the great periods of tragedy coincide with the great, world-historical changes in human society."¹²⁹

Human history oscillates between the two poles of desire for freedom and the admission of necessity, and this dialectic, in spite of their overlap, is reflected in the relationship of epic and drama. "In the dramatic collision individual initiative occupies the foreground [...] In great epic, however, the element of necessity is present and prevalent throughout."¹³⁰

We can regard as the temporary decline of Hölderlin's ethos when tragedy is accorded the highest pedestal within the dramatic genre, and Lukács goes on to record: "In both great forms, then, social-historical necessity must triumph over the will and passions of individuals."¹³¹

This consideration, this 'reconciliation', as I have pointed out, is always temporary, always transient in Lukács; it is never direct, but filters through the intricate dialectic of mediateness. The image that he presents as the opposite of his theory of realism—akin to the third great part of *The Historical Novel*—grows into the sharp criticism of the post-1848 period, into the consistent rejection of the ideological, literary representation of compromising liberalism that betrays revolutionary democracy. It was during the revolution in Paris in June, 1848 that the proletariat clashed with the bourgeoisie.

This world-historical event brought with it sweeping changes in all aspects of life. Hegelian philosophy had been on the decline since the Revolution of 1830, its reflective character was incompatible with the appearance of the fourth estate on the stage of history, the historical consciousness in Balzac's conception of the present weakens, "the decline of the realistic social novel sets in."¹³² That was the age of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, the age of irrationalism. The liberal idea of the straight line of development gained ground even within the spheres of social democratic influence. The naturalism of the plebeian opposition tended toward mysticism, it was unable to offer a social or artistic program because it could not portray the true motive forces of history in mobile action. At the same time, it abandoned the attempt to see society in its totality, in the unity of contradictions,¹³³ and this brought about the impoverishment of literature; and this harmful legacy was taken over by the proletarian literatures of the present age. Lukács is right to refer to the vulgar sociological 'theory' that emerged in the debate in 1934, which said that socialist society had nothing to do with the earlier problematics and literary output of class societies. These 'theorists' broke of the present age from the living forces of popular life, from the best traditions, in this way contributing to the

crisis of realism, which was brought about by the bourgeois historical novel that escaped into formalism and various modernist vogues. It is the relationship between the bourgeois and socialist varieties of discontinuity that explains Lukács's keen aversion to the avant-garde.

Lukács took up the fight against artistic decline by referring to the values of the historical past and by emphasizing the realist tendencies of the present. The stakes—as he clearly saw—pointed beyond the purely professional field; they were, we may say, of world-historical importance. As Lukács writes in the programmatic fourth part:

What interests us here is the revolt against and the resistance to the decline of literature. The epoch of imperialism is not only the period of the decay of capitalism, it is also that of the greatest transformation in human history—the proletarian revolution, the decisive struggle between capitalism and socialism.¹³⁴

In this part, Lukács discusses the new period that seemed to be opening up in German literature in the spirit of hope. Contrary to his sectarian critical manifestations of the early thirties, Lukács, now, writing in the atmosphere of the popular front, is generous, seeking a clarification of the outlook in the German antifascist historical novel, searching for the broad historical outline of present events, for a means to reveal the roads that led to the present. As regards the writers of the popular front, it is not the Marxist world view that Lukács calls for; he raises another ideal, the resumption of the best tradition of bourgeois literature, that is, revolutionary democracy. It is not an imported, but a genuine German tradition, and, in Lukács's mind, this is the prerequisite for saving the German people. As he sees it, as a result of the success of the popular front in France, the revolutionary struggle of the Spanish people, and the influence of victorious socialism in the Soviet Union, "the spirit of *revolutionary democracy* has been rekindled among a number of important writers."¹³⁵

Revolutionary democracy as the political and ideological basis of realist great epic applies not only to Western Europe, for Lukács has no doubt that he finds its role and significance to be of great importance even in the Soviet Union. This is one of the most important conclusions of *The Historical Novel*. As Lukács puts it:

The burning urgency today of all the problems of socialism underlines the enormous practical political significance of this revival of revolutionary democracy. For the urgency of socialism means that its problems spring from the living experiences of the working masses, and its task is to fulfil the requirements of the transitional period, which correspond to the immediate wishes and experience of the working masses. The unity of revolutionary democracy with all sections of the working people, its sensitivity towards their present stage of growth, both subjectively and objectively, is one of the most important factors in the present-day period of transition. This must be all the more strongly emphasized, given the pseudo-radical passion in many circles of Social Democracy for Utopian 'planned economies' and given, too, the use of the slogan of the immediate realization of socialism by anarchist muddleheads and Trotskyist nuisances in order to break up the popular front and thereby hinder the actual revolutionary struggle against Fascism which will reach its peak in socialism only as an ultimate end. The Communist Parties of Europe were bolshevized by incorporating the living traditions of revolutionary democracy.¹³⁶

Later he explains that

the Bolsheviks really 'sublated' the traditions of revolutionary democracy in their theory and practice (in the sense, too, of preserving and raising it to a higher level), while left opposition movements in the West either abandoned these traditions or allowed them to degenerate into vulgar democracy.¹³⁷

It may seem obvious that the 'sublated and preserved' idea of revolutionary democracy in socialism is, *mutatis mutandis*, the ideological continuation of the con-

ception of the "Blum Theses". This explains the invariably sharp denunciation of bourgeois ideology on the one hand, and the inclusion of the ideological legacy of the bourgeois revolutionary period into socialism restricted by 'reformism' and 'vulgar democracy' on the other, precisely in the interest of a picture of socialism that cultivates democratic traditions, offers greater prospects, and is of a higher order. We must stress this feature of Lukács's ideology in the thirties because it is the representatives of a reduced and narrow-minded concept of socialism who, at one time, characterized him as the father of modern revisionism. Lukács states expressly in *The Historical Novel* that "a coming-to-grips with the problem of modern socialism is [...] an important touchstone for the genuineness and sincerity of revolutionary democracy in our day," and after the revolutionary movements of the workers in the 19th century, "nobody could any longer be a consistent revolutionary democrat, unless he took a positive attitude to the question of the emancipation of the proletariat."¹³⁸

The firm belief in the historical superiority of socialism inspired the view of the rebirth of the epic in Lukács, which he conceived of on the basis of an undisturbed harmony between the individual and the community. This belief was not a naive illusion. As Lukács states:

even in socialist reality capitalist prose is still a factor to be reckoned with, although it has suffered defeat and is condemned to ultimate extinction. What Marx said of legal institutions applies in wide measure to literary forms. They cannot stand higher than the society which brought them forth.¹³⁹

Lukács was aware of the fact that, in a given society, certain social contradictions and their reflection in dramatic and epic forms can continue unresolved even after a revolution or, indeed, emerge strengthened and heightened as a result of the revolution. Against liberal progressives, who conceive of history as a straight line of development, Lukács put forward a fundamental truth that became the basis of the theory of realism:

The contradictoriness of social development, the intensification of these contradictions to the point of tragic collision is a *general* fact of life. Nor does this contradictoriness of life come to an end with the social resolution of class antagonisms through the victorious Socialist revolution. It would be a thoroughly shallow and undialectical conception of life to believe that with socialism there is only the monotonous serenity of self-satisfaction without problems, struggle, or conflict.¹⁴⁰

If we consider that in *The Historical Novel* the lonely hero, the genius, figures only as a minor character and that Lukács demands the realistic representation of popular life, it can be seen that Lukács's ideology-critical approach to genre theory does not contradict, but, in the last analysis, is in accordance with the critical ontological analyses in Bakhtin's conception of objective structures. Lukács's theory of the epic, which has its origins in the philosophy of history, proves convincingly—in spite of its Hegelian reminiscences and its somewhat one-sided formal orientation—the actuality of the historical novel and its possible role under the intricate conditions of the thirties.¹⁴¹

Its sporadic ideological utopianism notwithstanding, *The Historical Novel* in essence, 'came up' with the level of *The Young Hegel* (which was finished almost at the same time as the former), that is, the ingenious recognition that social being is in general contradictory in character was equally presented in both works. In his book on the novel, his historico-philosophical conception was complemented with a set of literary-historical facts, in order to authentically lay the foundations of the central concept of his aesthetic: realism.

Looking back from a later period, Lukács describes the circumstances that helped to establish his essays concerning the theory of realism in the following words:

Soon after Hitler came to power I moved to the Soviet Union where I was on the staff of *Literaturny Kritik* until it ceased publication (1940). All my ideological and theoretical essays on the essence of realism appeared here without exception. For today's reader it may seem peculiar that it was possible to publish such essays regularly in the considerably developed stage of the Stalinist period [...] We managed to win Gorky and some other noted writers, whom the *RAPP* pushed into the background. The literary sectarian [...] part of the old leadership of *RAPP* (Fadeev, Ermilov, and others) attained leading positions in the new association [...] In spite of this fact, the contradictory situation—at least for a time—allowed room for criticism which, in fact, raised the claim for socialist realism, for great socialist art, and strived at grasping theoretically and validating its artistic principles and criteria.¹⁴²

This recollection does not specify the interrelations of working out the aesthetic systems of realism and socialist realism. A few years later, in his polemic with Peter Wieden, Lukács explicitly emphasized the aesthetic of realism.¹⁴³ But, undoubtedly, he tailored this theory of realism to the demands of literature and art that evolved within the framework of socialist society.

We can not, however, avoid the question of why, in his later reflections, Lukács thinks it important to emphasize the latently oppositional character of the essays of the 1930s against the prevailing ideological and literary trends of his environment. The most conspicuous signs of 'reconciliation', the citations from Stalin were—as he says—indispensable means of a guerilla war, means required in order to expound his scholarly views in every possible way and to the greatest extent.¹⁴⁴ And just before his death he repeatedly emphasized: "Extension of the field of activity: the conflict extended almost imperceptibly, by no means yet a direct and conscious turn against the Stalinist system, although the narrow bureaucratic inflexibility of that system emerged more and more clearly (see 'Tribune or Bureaucrat?')." ¹⁴⁵ It is not a belated self-justification that Lukács feels obliged to relate in the face of undeserved accusations.¹⁴⁶ His reflections clarify a real ideological position which, by common agreement, socialist-oriented scholarly analysis has tactfully left in the shadows, and professional philosophical and aesthetic inquiry, with some exceptions, has kept at a distance. And yet, without sounding one of the essential motives for his establishing the aesthetic of realism, we can scarcely understand his critical activities in the Soviet Union in the 1930s.

The ideological and literary conditions of the country that offered a home to the exiled scholar claimed positive cooperation and Lukács wanted to comply with it completely. The critical motives of his theory, however, invariably indulged in observing the process of the disintegration of bourgeois culture. As he wrote in 1934: "Behind the collapse of artistic form in bourgeois decadence, behind the aesthetic theories glorifying the subjectivist disintegration and petrification of forms, there is to be found the same rot of bourgeois decadence as in other ideological areas."¹⁴⁷ As Brecht noted, Lukács was almost magically attracted by the problem of ideological decay.¹⁴⁸ Paradoxically, while adopting the Marxian thesis of the uneven development of the economy and culture, he regarded the relationship between the capitalist system turning into monopoly capitalism and its anti-artistic culture as an overall process, which he expressed by means of the

correlation 'apology—anti-realism'. In recognizing this relationship, Lukács leaned, to a great extent, on what Marx developed in this respect in *The German Ideology*.

It cannot be but the shock caused by the spread of German fascism to which we can lead back that conclusive judgment of Lukács's which, in the early thirties, lacked any distinctions, qualifying a long row of German writers, from Gerhart Hauptmann through Rilke to Thomas Mann, as representatives of the 'ideology of parasitic capitalists of prewar, imperialist Germany'.¹⁴⁹ To what a great extent the shock of fascism actuated the severe aesthetic construct of realism—anti-realism is indicated by the fact that, in an omnibus work, which analyzes the ideology of fascism extensively, he writes: "In the course of the general offensive of reactionary tendencies in the age of imperialism, realism disappears into the past of bourgeois literature. This trend of development is the necessary consequence of the decay of bourgeois culture in every aspect."¹⁵⁰

Hence, it is not by chance that Lukács worked out the category of realism just in the course of thoroughly analyzing the German philosophical and literary developments, and that this category was bound to become the central one in his aesthetic view. His criticism is aimed chiefly at the irrationalist life philosophy because, as he says, "the literature and literary theory of these trends raised claims against realism [...] these waged war against the view according to which the task of literature is the faithful representation of reality".¹⁵¹ The 'faithful representation of reality' is a seemingly in-offensive definition, which complied with the aims of a theoretical program—shaped by citations from Marx and Engels—although its opponents occurred immediately, even within the same camp. Subsequently, Lukács further developed his theory (which is beyond the scope of the present essay), mainly toward defining particularity (*Besonderheit*) and the specificity of the aesthetic (*Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*).¹⁵² His basic categories have ever since been subjects of renewed discussions among both right- and left-oriented intellectuals.

Neither the aim nor the scope of the present essay allows us to analyze in depth the extensive literature on this topic, which would easily fill several libraries. That said, it is, nevertheless, necessary to point out one thing in advance: it is reasonable to respect the internal consistency of the Lukácsian definitions and his aesthetic conception because even at the present time, after such great mental efforts, there does not exist a theory of realism which would be acceptable in every respect. Marxist polemic touches, first of all, on the epistemological aspects of Lukács's aesthetic of realism, insofar as it wants to extend the rights of artistry, the rights that derive from the creativity of the human self. The danger accompanying this, however justified, claim lies in the fact that the intentional activity of the subject may easily turn into subjectivism, thus, instead of the objective picture of reality stubbornly claimed by Lukács, there would come into being products of the manipulated mind—as it frequently occurs in the form of eclectic kitsch. It seems more reasonable to criticize the interpretation of literary heritage, which, undoubtedly, tends toward normativity, as Lukács rigidly rejects the form language of a great part of modern, twentieth-century art. For all that, we have to admit the lack of a systematic interpretation of avant-garde art on the basis of materialist aesthetic even today, and there is as yet no historico-philosophical proof that the Lukácsian interpretation of the avant-garde, which is centered around the postulation of an unstable and disintegrated world view, would be fully unjustified.¹⁵³

This is why Thomas Metscher is right when speaking of the "denunciation of the norms of Lukácsian models that we can observe in many places".¹⁵⁴ But let us now confine our observations to mentioning the doubts that refer to the essence of the theory:

the existence of reality in artistic reflection. Hans Koch means to replace this with a "definite social condition".¹⁵⁵ His opinion that, transcending the answer given to the basic question of philosophy, we cannot get far with the proposition "art reflects reality", is taken over without comment and approvingly in a chiefly important DDR contribution to the study of literary life: *Gesellschaft—Literatur—Lesen*.¹⁵⁶ When we consider, however, that the relation between art and reality is challenged in a wide sphere of aesthetics, it becomes apparent how significant it may be to defend this seemingly banal evidence.

According to Viktor Zmegac, for example, the concept of realism reflecting reality that we have inherited from the nineteenth century is not valid in any sense any more, and he adds that the question also arises: how should we interpret, after all, this ambiguous term?¹⁵⁷ It is even more surprising that, when looking for the sources of Lukács's concept of realism, he rejects the heritage of the Enlightenment:

Folgt man den grossen Entwicklungslinien weiter, so kann nicht verborgen bleiben, dass die Poetik des Realismus (zuma in ihrer dogmatischen Gestalt) das Erbe der Aufklärung verwaltet: unnachgiebig darauf bedacht, im Spielraum der Kunst das absolute Vorrecht der Wirklichkeitserfahrung zu wahren.¹⁵⁸

No doubt: abandoning the experience of reality is diametrically opposed to the views of Lukács, who worked out his aesthetic in confrontation with his age and society—thereby, nothing confirms the accusations that he broke away from practice.

From questioning the rationality of the Enlightenment, it is but a short step to the 'dematerialization' of reality. As Roland Barthes writes: "By any means, what is reality? We know it only as effects (in the material world), functions (in the social world), or as fantasies (in the cultural world), in short, reality is always a conclusion."¹⁵⁹

All these trains of thought, which shift the materialist essence of reality—reality that constitutes the basis of realism—toward the sphere of consciousness or perception, generally take Lukács's position to be conservative. At the same time, it seems obvious that any detachment from the philosophical-epistemological conception not only represents a gain for artistry, but, at the same time, also loosens the connection with social reality, with the questions of being of the species-specific man (*Gattungswesen Mensch*), as the object of art, which is a serious loss.

It is a generally accepted statement that the theory of realism was formulated in a historically unfavorable period, in the thirties; in a dogmatic period, the cultural policy of which narrowed down and one-sidedly distorted the domain of traditions, and suppressed creative thought and artistic experimentation.¹⁶⁰ We cannot deny that the 'spirit of the age' touched even Lukács in some respect, but his activity and works cannot be judged authentically from this aspect, as their essence is precisely creativity: the mobilization of the immense cultural heritage against the decline of bourgeois culture, and in the interest of eliminating alienation in socialism; and his humanistic intention of illuminating the conflicting realities of the 'post-revolutionary' Soviet age, this great historical experiment. His reality-centered outlook constitutes the historical foundation and importance of his theory of realism.¹⁶¹ The validity of his realism has not faded away with the passing of decades. The pejorative qualification 'aesthetic utopianism' has survived the practice and horizon of the day and, surprisingly, it seems to find its correspondence with the reality of our times. The validity of historical and socio-theoretical factors that he recognized at the end of the decade at issue extends to the present, and gives new legitimation to his artistic method of mercilessly confronting reality, to realism.

There was, undoubtedly, some indecision in Lukács's aesthetic when developing his ideas, in the sense that, at times, he interpreted realism as a style, as an external formal system, too—but we may quote more than one example to prove that he acknowledged even the fantastic as a legitimate means of presenting realism. The essence of his theory of realism, however, manifests itself not in external form, but in the artistic representation of the basic laws of objective reality. Even in his notable essay on satire, he demanded that the writer should 'dig deeply' to the real moving forces of the reality he wants to represent.¹⁶² As he writes in his answer to Peter Wieden:

Denn alle die grossen Schriftsteller haben in ihren Werken die wesentlichen Züge der Wirklichkeit wahrheitsgetreu wiedergegeben; ihre Werke waren dichterische Widerspiegelungen der objektiven Realität des menschlichen Lebens, so wie es tatsächlich ist; freilich nicht so, wie es beim ersten flüchtigen Eindruck erscheint.¹⁶³

It is generally held in the current Soviet special literature, too that the role of reality in the creative artistic process was the main methodological principle in the aesthetic of the thirties, and that this principle found its most comprehensive expression in Lukács's studies.¹⁶⁴

In this view, realism—resting on classical German aesthetic—perceived reality in its totality and evolution, conceived of a closed system, the hierarchy of figures, the linearity of action, and, instead of the description of 'ready-made results', the narration of processes. The portrayal of human fates was supposed to be realized only in action, the typical was to appear at the particular intersection of the individual and the general, and appearance and essence were to imbue one another.

The goal for all great art is to provide a picture of reality in which the contradiction between appearance and reality, the particular and the general, the immediate and the conceptual, etc., is so resolved that the two converge into a spontaneous integrity in the direct impression of the work of art and provide a sense of inseparable integrity. The universal appears as a quality of the individual and the particular, reality becomes manifest and can be experienced within appearance, the general principle is exposed as the specific impelling cause for the individual case being specially depicted.¹⁶⁵

Thus, the concrete fates of concrete men display the important turning points and deep conflicts of the evolution of the human species, in a manner that these happenings can be experienced by the recipient, producing in him violent emotions and a cathartic effect. That is the basis of the historical endurance of truly great art, Lukács explains retrospectively, in the preface to a late collection of his essays.¹⁶⁶

In Lukács's view, this conception of realism—only briefly outlined here—was opposed to anti-realism as an outlook that he considered to be in fact anti-artistic, aiming at blurring the laws of reality.

According to Lukács, the struggle between realism and anti-realism has run through the whole history of art. As he says, "this is the basic contradiction that determines every concrete problem (genre, style, etc.)."¹⁶⁷ That is why he conceived of realism—epistemologically and not stylistically—as an 'eternal' category which, as his critics have pointed out, has become a parallel theory to the philosophical concepts of materialism—idealism.¹⁶⁸ After the so-called 'expressionism debate', Lukács, in his letter answering to the doubts of Anna Seghers raised in connection with the 'eternity' of realism, explained the reasons for the existence of realism as an eternal and at the same time concrete, present category:

Correct criticism must show time and again, by means of artistic, historical, social analysis what is *objectively* possible today as far as realism goes, and this it can do only if it has a standard—realism in general. Otherwise we will [...] *canonize* the weaknesses, errors, and defects of our time, the decadent tendencies that are still alive in it, as 'contemporary realism'.¹⁶⁹

Lukács's views of eternal realism and anti-realism later became the focal points of heated criticism, but it seems that even to this date, the essence of his theory of realism has not been refuted. In the second half of the fifties, Soviet literary scholarship began to revise the rigid, dogmatic practice of realism (of course, besides Lukács, there were other representatives of realism, too). In this reexamination, the realism—anti-realism correlation was qualified as vulgar sociological and was rejected, first of all and mainly because this theory was unable to explain the congenial achievements of works that on its basis could be qualified as non-realistic during the several thousand years' long history of art. But literary scholarship has not arrived at a consensus even to date as to whether the appearance of realism should be attached to the antiquity, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, or just to the nineteenth century. One of the most notable critics of the correlation realism—anti-realism, the Soviet N. Konrad, attributing an important role to other trends in the development of art, does not question that realism has always been present as one of the realistic trends in the history of world literature.¹⁷⁰ Hans Koch, in his aesthetic, analyzes Engels's statement in the *Anti-Dühring* that idealist thinkers distort faithful reflection by adjusting the image of an object to an idea, and notes: "Dieses methodologische Verfahren liegt [...] den verschiedenen nichtrealistischen Methoden der künstlerischen Widerspielung zugrunde."¹⁷¹ Considering all the motives that Dieter Schlenstedt acknowledges to be the characteristics of the important trends of bourgeois art, namely, disbelief in the cognoscibility of objective reality, contempt for intellect and reason, the praise of immediacy as the final form of uncovering reality, allusion to spontaneity, and the conceptual extinction of the relations of social development, we can justify the statement of one of the most outstanding students of Lukács on this question:

Realism and anti-realism as two poles were the constituting elements in Lukács's aesthetic at least from the early 1930s; and to whatever extent this explicitly normative bipolarity was refined, and to whatever extent the theoretical characterization of the intermediate sphere became sophisticated (especially in the wake of the ontological breakthrough), Lukács had never been willing to give up the conception of the ideological parting of the roads.¹⁷³

2

Naturalism and formalism, as the two extremes of anti-realistic trends, especially endangered the artistic realization of the typical, a basic category of Lukács's aesthetic. Lukács, like other scholars, started out from Engels's definitions (e.g., 'typical characters under typical circumstances') in his letters to Margaret Harkness and Minna Kautsky, which were published in the early thirties, and developed them further. The phenomenon that lies in between the abstract 'general' and the chance-like, particular 'individual' in fact anticipated the category of particularity, which, as the decisive specificity of the aesthetic, was to be elaborated later on. In Lukács's view, the validity of the abstract general must appear in the sensuously concrete phenomenon, while the former is realizable in a realistic work only by the presentation of the irreproducible individual. This

means a dynamically oscillating dialectical process and by no means a static state, in which contradictions become dead and rigid schemes.¹⁷⁴

When Lukács threw the contentually rich category of realism into the scale in the thirties, he was fighting for the liveliness of literature, for the open acceptance of contradictions in the interest of the perspectives of a socialist future. We say little if we accept Gudrun Klatt's hidden allusion to the effect that this article of Lukács's "cannot be separated from the new and difficult phase of Soviet debates on realism and formalism".¹⁷⁵ The struggle of Lukács and Lifschitz, and that of the circle around *Literaturny Kritik* as a whole, against vulgar sociology, naturalism, and formalism (or, to use Lukács's terms, against 'dead objectivism' and 'lifeless subjectivism') represented the mainstream of Soviet theoretical thinking in close touch with the realities of social life. Lukács did not conceal the fact that his views concerning decadence and the apologetic attitude—*mutatis mutandis*—applied to many phenomena of contemporary socialist society and its art as well. In the most prominent contribution to the debate on naturalism and formalism, he writes:

Wir sehen, dass unsere Sowjetliteratur noch nicht überall die ihre Entwicklung hemmenden Reste der Überlieferungen der niedergehenden Bourgeoisie überwunden hat. Ja, sie hat sogar den Weg zur wirklichen Überwindung dieser Reste nicht überall entschieden genug beschritten [...] Wir können also mit recht die Frage aufwerfen, ob jene Kritik, die wir an der Methode des blossen Beobachtens und der herrschenden Beschreibung der bürgerlichen Literatur nach 1848 geübt haben, auch für einen Teil der Sowjetliteratur gilt? Leider müssen wir diese Frage bejahen [...] Sie gestalten nicht in erster Linie Menschenschicksale [...] Die Menschen bilden zumeist nur Zuhörer, Illustrationsmaterial für die sachlichen Zusammenhänge [...] ein Teil der Literatur jedoch mit einer Zähigkeit, die einer besseren Sache würdig wäre, an der zur Methode erhobenen Oberflächlichkeit der Dekadenz der bürgerlichen Literatur festhält.¹⁷⁶

In "Tribune or Bureaucrat?" which can be regarded as a direct key to the theory of revolutionary democracy, Lukács leads back the literary phenomena of formalism and naturalism to bureaucracy, which had interwoven social life:

Bureaucracy also exists in socialist society. Lenin already began the struggle against it in 1918, and anyone who would say that this battle is completely at an end with the rout of the enemy would fail to see the full complexity of the real situation. It is sufficient to recall the criticism of bureaucracy that Stalin and Kaganovitch made at the seventeenth congress of the CPSU/B.¹⁷⁷

Lukács also points out that the remnants of the ideological decline of capitalism could keep spreading because of their kindred social roots. All this can explain the impulse and ardor of his writings at that time: "As long as we cannot say that bureaucracy has vanished from the social reality without trace, then we are still obliged to investigate very carefully its ideological influences in all areas, including those of literature and art, and to combat these unreservedly."¹⁷⁸

The struggle to overcome naturalism, formalism, and the vulgar-sociological view of art in Soviet literary theory evolved along a wide front.¹⁷⁹ Following the resolution of April 23, 1932, this meant the elimination of the theoretical legacy of RAPP and the Second International's theory of art; Lukács, with his essay on Mehring, joined this aspiration. (As far as Lukács personally is concerned, an important precondition for his joining this critical front was his sharp self-criticism on *History and Class Consciousness*, at the Institute of Philosophy, on June 24, 1934.) As we know from his recollections, these were the years when he pinned his hopes on the perspectives formulated theoretically by Stalin, and he thought that his own, shaping conception, the elaboration

of an up-to-date Marxist-Leninist theory of aesthetics, would coincide with a higher level of philosophical and political thinking. But the events of the second half of the thirties, as we are about to show below, contradicted these hopes.

It was not an easy task to overcome vulgar sociology, as Plekhanov's theses (especially in their oversimplified, 'further-developed' form by V. M. Fritche and V. P. Pereverzev) posited a direct correspondence between social classes and their ideologies (as well as artistic styles).¹⁸⁰ It seemed to be logical that the proletariat, after coming to power, should create art in its own image, which would become dominant in both its ideology and style: this idea was the chief concern of RAPP, the 'theorists' of proletarian literature. The theory of direct correspondence began to erode only slowly. Public opinion became acquainted with Engels's opinion of Balzac and Lenin's essay on Tolstoy. In the Lifschitz—Nusinov debate, Lifschitz, referring to intricate class relations, ventured to undermine the belief of the existence of 'pure class art', 'class style'. Due to the (more or less) latent socio-theoretical recognitions of this 'post-revolutionary' era, the term 'proletarian' class character was replaced by the category of 'people' in political terminology. Marx's thesis on the uneven correspondence between economy and culture (which played a crucial role in Lukács's arguments as well) questioned the mechanistically parallel evolution of politics and the arts.¹⁸¹ The increasing appreciation of the classical cultural heritage had a positive effect, too. The attempt to grasp the specificities of art theoretically received a fruitful impulse through the publication of Engels's letters to Paul Ernst, which appeared in the first volume of *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo* in 1932. In one of his letters, Engels makes it clear that the economic basis determines the products of the mind only 'eventually', that "die materialistische Methode in ihr Gegenteil umschlägt, wenn sie nicht als Leitfaden beim historischen Studium behandelt wird, sondern als fertige Schablone, wonach man sich die historischen Tatsachen zurechtschneidet."¹⁸²

This reference by Engels also explains the paradoxical situation that Lukács, although an uncompromising antagonist of vulgar sociology, was not free from such views. For example, he supposed that Vischer's aesthetic reflected the state of the class struggles in Germany in the age of the aesthetician; in his Mehring essay, he derives the political fates of Mehring and Lassalle from the authors' class origins; in his 1935 essay on Schiller, he finds the sources of the problems of classical German philosophy and literature in contemporary class struggles. These approaches of Lukács's have been evaluated in highly different ways in the special literature.¹⁸³ In fact, I think, Lukács, even in his search for the minute motives of the specificities of art, never abandoned the Marxist basis of his outlook; while he never failed to consider the intention of 'eventually', he applied the infinitely rich possibilities of 'mediateness' (*Vermittlung*) in the field in between (mediateness in this sense appeared with Engels, who mentioned it—although as a debt never discharged—in his letter to Mehring upon the publication of *The Lessing Legend*).¹⁸⁴

In Lukács's aesthetic, immediacy belonged to those elements which were to be overcome by all means. The incoherent, superficial view of the contingencies and facts of being, a picture gained by immediate perceptions, encumbered naturalism and stood in the way of the organically building composition of the work of art. At the same time, this view of being could easily turn into its opposite, into hypertrophic subjectivism, formalism; its particular example was expressionism, or, in general, the avant-garde. In Lukács's view, a true artist has first to dig down to 'regularities', and, then, through a reverse process, he has to cover the abstractly acknowledged relations—the essence—

with the shell of the sensuous phenomenon. This is the point where Lukács very early, even during his work in Berlin, came up against reportage novel as a genre, as well as against Brecht's didactic drama (*Lehrstück*). Later, in Moscow, in his article on Gustav von Wangenheim, he categorized these works as 'mere mouthpieces of the *Zeitgeist*', and spoke of the 'dry narrowness of orthodox didactic drama'. In this respect, he objected to neglecting the stages of artistic creative process, which he thought compulsory, and he appreciated Wangenheim precisely for his development in the right direction.¹⁸⁵ Ernst Bloch, who was one of the chief opponents of Lukács in the expressionism debate—in the question of immediacy, in rejecting "simple realism", shared Lukács's views.¹⁸⁶ It is at this point, however, that Anna Seghers, as a creative artist, expressed her dissenting opinion, in her renown exchange of letters with Lukács. As she stressed, the artist of a given period experiences reality immediately, precisely in its shocks, through shock effects. Therefore, the method offered by Lukács might not be suitable for the artistic representation of the strains of a 'transitional period' because such periods called for immediate reaction, for various methodological and formal experiments, rather than the creation of harmonious works.¹⁸⁷ At that time, Lukács stuck rigidly to his conception, but in his later works, especially in his book on particularity, he was inclined to accept Anna Seghers's argumentation. As Kurt Batt has demonstrated, Lukács's relevant statements are almost verbatim borrowings from Seghers's first letter.¹⁸⁸

In the middle of the thirties, we can see no sign of this compliance in Lukács. In his studies on contemporary literature, he interprets the cult of the naturalistic portrayal of facts, the spread of the method of description, the intimation of facts as a "general estrangement from the great problems of society [...] the increasing decline and disintegration of the preconditions of the world view of realism."¹⁸⁹ In his opinion, description leads to the loss of narration and formation, which are the true methods of the epic. The writer, if he only describes, sees the surface of the event, of the phenomenon, and, although he lives in the present, does not know the process of the taking shape of facts. His view has neither horizon nor perspective; he is no longer an active participant; rather, a mere observer. In spite of his pursuit of formal novelty, the 'revolution of form', he has surrendered to bureaucratic reality. And that was precisely Lukács's main concern at that time: the loss of totality, the descent into particularity, which also means the fall of the ideal of human integrity. In his opinion, the predominance of naturalism and formalism in the literature of his time and society lessened and distorted the 'greatest revolutionary process of transformation' in the mind.¹⁹⁰ 'Part of our books is populated by shadows of lifeless schemes instead of people,' he writes and names the writers who, in his opinion, are not equal to the culture of realism of which Gorky may be considered an example.¹⁹¹ It seems that Bertolt Brecht, who later became Lukács's opponent, shared Lukács's impressions in this concern. As he writes of the program of Soviet writers: "Man sieht, dass die russischen Genossen gezwungen sind, ihre Schlachten immer nach mindestens zwei Seiten hin zu schlagen. Sie haben den dünnen, abstrakten Doktrinarismus zu bekämpfen, und sie müssen sich wenden gegen den mechanischen unverbindlichen Naturalismus."¹⁹² We can see a surprising accord and even identity with the train of thought, arguments, and terminology of Lukács's essays in an article published originally in *Literaturny Kritik* and later in *Internationale Literatur*, which analyzes the close relation between naturalism, formalism, and bureaucracy, and comments on writings that appeared in *Pravda*.¹⁹³ This substantiates that before 1936 and even at the time of the expressionism debate, the 'trend', evolving around *Literaturny Kritik* had not yet come into conflict, in working out the theoretical system of realism and in

criticizing the negative features of contemporary Soviet literature, with the cultural political leadership. Lukács's important work of the same period on the historical novel expresses the hope of seeing vital, social and human questions together, in their totality, even if, under the influence of events happening in the external world, the aesthetician's wording already displays resignation and anxiety: "When realism declines the spirit becomes abstract and evaporates, and the problems of the present, its people and its destinies, are conceived metaphysically."¹⁹⁴

3

The concept of totality is one of the central, although (for several reasons) much-debated, categories of Lukács's cultural critical and aesthetic theory. For him, the totality of reality is the theoretical basis of the organic closedness of the work of art, and reflection—which he took over from epistemology into aesthetics—can function only in this medium. Almost all interpreters of the concept of totality lead back this term to Hegel.¹⁹⁵ This conclusion is undoubtedly correct, but it is not sufficient. Lukács may well amplify this reference to the source: "It is undoubtedly one of the great achievements of *History and Class Consciousness* to have reinstated the category of totality in the central position it had occupied throughout Marx's works."¹⁹⁶ Lukács, in fact, starts out from Marx's famous thesis that the relations of production in every society form a whole (cf. his *The Poverty of Philosophy*). Consequently, if it is 'social being that determines consciousness' the forms of consciousness must reflect the total social being. In arguing against Ernst Bloch's concept of totality, Hans Günther, on the basis of Lenin's notes on Hegel, arrives at a position similar to that of Lukács's.¹⁹⁷

The theory of totality offers protection against the fragmentation of artistic image, in practice, against montage-like composition in the sphere of aesthetics—and against alienation, the fragmentation of human personality, the destruction of human integrity in the socio-philosophical context.¹⁹⁸ This is, of course, 'only' ideological aid. Considering the conditions and time of the establishment of this theory, that is, the cult of personality and its social, political, scientific, and cultural implications, we have to modify to a certain degree the conception that Lukács's 'demand passes by reality in the name of an aesthetic ideal'.¹⁹⁹ We should modify another conception as well, which holds that Lukács, relying on the "objective determinateness" of Hegelian aesthetic, appeared with the "idealistic and utopian demand of an equalizing, harmonious totality", or "prolonged the aesthetic of the harmonious equalization of oppositions and their orientation toward an idealistic and utopian middle course, developed by Hegel".²⁰⁰ It seems as if this reference pointed in the right direction, yet it does not make us feel the difference that exists with Lukács between the 'middle course' and the program of 'revolutionary democracy'. The student of a later age is inclined to accept the view that "Seine Totalitäts-Forderung war *humanistisch* ausgerichtet, unter diesem Blickpunkt durchforschte er die Geschichte des Humanismus und erschloss [...] Kulturerbe für die Gegenwart."²⁰¹ We have to recall that the 'present' for Lukács meant the present of his age, and we can hardly question whether his age and society were in need of this humanism. In this period, Lukács was not only an aesthetician of a class that wanted to solve 'irreconcilable contradictions' by means of struggle (however, it is an open question whether at that very period of time that was the true task of the proletariat), but also an aesthetician of a society that, in a 'post-revolutionary age', two decades after the revolution, had many

other, concrete tasks. At any rate, it cannot be justified that contradictions did not work in that society, or that they appeared in Lukács's aesthetic not concretely, but in abstract and utopian perspectives. Lukács's aesthetic essentially had always been in close touch with reality; let us only content ourselves with observing that almost without exception, his fundamental studies of that time contain direct references to contemporary literature in the concluding chapters. It is precisely this relation to practice that distinguishes Lukács's theory from Ernst Bloch's utopian views.²⁰²

At the same time, it must be admitted that, in Lukács's cultural-critical conception of totality, there exists certain 'abstract normativity'. It was Max Raphael who pointed out its sources in Hegel and Marx, stating that Marx's arguments for explaining the unparalleled harmonious art of the Greeks, as set down in his *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy* (*Grundrisse*), are too general and did not grow out of the essence of historical materialism.²⁰³ Lukács was aware of the fact, and he did not fail to observe in connection with Hegel, that the basis of the harmony of Greek art was antique democracy, the social and political structure of which rested on slavery. But he avoided the solution of the serious problem that lies at this point and eluded further analysis, saying that this fact had more or less remained hidden for the artists.²⁰⁴

On a theoretical level, this means that here again there appears the contradiction of Lukács's work, that is, the intricate dialectic of the reconciliation (*Versöhnung*) with and the rejection (*Ablehnung*) of society having in intricate structural composition. M. Lifschitz, his comrade in the aesthetic and cultural-political struggles, clearly states that the demand for proletarian ideology voiced by contemporary political philosophy may appear only in the form of a whole (*Ganzheit*), in which classes mutually intertwine and determine each other:

Das richtige Klassenbewusstsein entsteht erst auf Grund der Beobachtung aller Klassen der Gesellschaft in allen Erscheinungen des geistigen, sittlichen und politischen Lebens dieser Klassen. Die proletarische Ideologie entsteht gerade in dieser Sphäre der Wechselbeziehungen der verschiedenen Klassen der Gesellschaft, sie ist das gesetzmässige Ergebnis der ganzen historischen Praxis der Menschheit, die Summe der Entwicklung der Philosophie, der politischen Ökonomie, des Sozialismus.²⁰⁵

This means that it is not the monopoly of 'pure' proletarian ideology that asserts itself, but that of the 'whole'.

It seems that Lukács found the real basis of totality and harmonious art in the structure of antique democracy, and shared Lifschitz's views concerning the 'social whole'. But from this position he had to reject fragmentation, montage, and the 'left' activism of the avant-garde, as "an art that mediates direct impulses in the interest of tasks given for a class, an art that wants to make irreconcilable contradictions recognizable in a critical spirit."²⁰⁶

But the dialectic of reconciliation and rejection could not tolerate the call into question or negation of teleological and harmonious totality from other aspects, on the part of other trends; namely, by modern agnosticism, relativism, and pseudo-objectivism, in which Hans Günther has found, against Bloch, the philosophical origin of the vogue and artistic method of montage.²⁰⁷ But it was precisely at this point that there could arise justified disbelief in the validity of the concept of 'closed totality' in the capitalist world. According to Bloch, Lukács infers closed, coherent reality everywhere, but maybe this Lukácsian totality, that is, the coherence of totality appearing in its infinite mediatedness, is not so objective; it may be there are ruptures also in true reality.²⁰⁸ And, in his polemic with Hans Günther, he expresses the opinion that montage is also suit-

able to express revolutionary content, and that the belief in uninterrupted coherence is—idealism.²⁰⁹ Brecht, as is known, protested against condemning Dos Passos's montage technique because he found the techniques elaborated by late bourgeois authors perfectly suitable methods for socialist writers as well, and he spoke bitterly and ironically of the 'illusion of portraying the whole life in its wholly unfolded breadth'.²¹⁰ In analyzing Eisenstein's famous article on montage, Werner Mittenzwei points out that "the contrasting of two selected parts, which provokes thoughts and feelings, may trigger an unusually strong activation in the spectator, reader, or viewer."²¹¹ And the existence of reality in its fragmentation, in its pulling apart, in its lack of totality was evident not only for socialist writers, but also for bourgeois thinkers, such as Max Horkheimer, or Karl Jaspers.²¹² While the latter acknowledged this fact with the gesture of resigned humanism, socialist writers not only perceived totality in its disintegration, but they consciously aspired to disrupt reality—more precisely, capitalist reality—by means of positing a goal that seemed to be socially realistic. This is why we can understand Brecht's reproach that Lukács is inclined to transfer everything from reality into consciousness.²¹³

Contemporary special literature, for example, the work of Günther K. Lehmann, questions the methodological propriety of Lukács's references to Marx, emphasizing that neither Marx, nor Engels, nor Lenin conceived of the total whole (*Totalitäts-Ganzheit*) as absolute and closed, but, rather, in its 'transient and contradictory' character.²¹⁴ Wolfgang Heise points out that there is a contradiction between the theory of reflection and the theory of totality, in the fact that closed totality, taken in the Lukácsian sense, implies the totality of the reflected mirror image (*Abbild*), whose closedness conflicts with the dialectical, contradictory process of its establishment and reception in relation to social reality.²¹⁵

The key to Lukács's conception as well as to its contradictory interpretations probably lies in the position of the aesthetician and those of his opponents and interpreters. Lukács worked out his conception of totality and the humanistic, teleological view of harmony—which is inseparable from the former—relying on classical philosophy, the great realistic literature of the nineteenth century, and on Marx, while he decisively repudiated capitalist reality, and, first of all, aimed at the humanization of his own socialist society. It is in his materialist outlook that keeps in view the objectivity of social processes that we can discover a shade of difference from another type of interpretation, which gives greater legitimacy to the concept of partisanship as compared with objectivity, and assigns a wider scope to the subjective factor that posits the future optimistically.

The theory of totality, however, has not only historico-philosophical and cultural-critical aspects, but an immediately aesthetic one as well. It is self-evident that a work of art, even a novel of enormous scope or extension, cannot embrace the totality of being. If, however, it wants to meet the requirements of theory, it has to mediate the contents of the whole reality and the essence of its relations in a condensed form; from quantity it has to change into quality, that is, it has to represent totality intensively and not extensively. As Lukács writes, in this sense, the briefest song is as much an intensive totality as the mightiest epic.²¹⁶ In this way, reality has to appear in its intensive totality, and artistic realism has developed as the reflection of this totality.

For Lukács, the dialectical materialist foundation of the reflection theory was a precondition for reconstructing Marxist-Leninist aesthetic. As is well known, Hegel did not know the presence of reflection in art, and in Marx and Lenin, the concept of reflection appears in the sphere of epistemology. Belinsky still saw the specificity of art in image creation. It is in Chernishevsky's work that Lukács later discovered: the independence of art alongside scientific cognition can be justified only by epistemological reasoning that rests on the materialist reflection theory.²¹⁷ But the operation of this principle of reflection had not yet been recognized even in *History and Class Consciousness*. For Lukács, the decisive impulse was given by the publication of Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks* between 1929 and 1931 (in Russian). Lukács was in need of this recognition because, against the view of art of the Second International and against the earlier practice of the working-class movement, he had to prove that aesthetic reflection stands on an equal footing with scientific reflection, stating that even the former could reveal objective truth.²¹⁸ In the thirties, Lukács was not the only theoretician to deal with the epistemological bases of Lenin's reflection theory; the most important work of this kind was written by the Bulgarian aesthetician Todor Pavlov.²¹⁹

Along with Lenin, Lukács started out from Marx in laying the foundations of his theory. Marx writes that every science would be superfluous if the form of presentation and essence of things coincided.²²⁰ According to Lukács, Marx here speaks of the 'being-like foundations' ('*seinsmäßige Grundlage*') of scientific reflection, and, since in his conception of realism, the 'existential basis' ('*Seinsbasis*') is identical in both science and art, he regards the presence of reflection as proven in art, too.²²¹

Ever since the thirties, Lukács devoted considerable energy to explaining the difference between scientific and artistic reflection and to expound the specificities of the latter. He was obliged to do this partly because the critics of his theory of realism questioned its propriety chiefly from two aspects: first, whether the two types of reflection have an identical object; secondly, whether the operation of reflection is the same in both cases. According to their interpretation, in Lukács's aesthetic system, it is the epistemological aspect that predominates, while artistic specificities and the role of the creative subject become obscure.²²²

As far as these questions are concerned, there is no common understanding in the sphere of Marxist aesthetic. As N. K. Gej puts it: the modern theory of realism has to rest on the materialist theory of reflection.²²³ This old view is valid even today. As K. M. Dolgov states: "Lukács has placed the investigation and explanation of Marxist-Leninist aesthetic on the most important basis, namely, on Lenin's theory of reflection, and he has connected it with all the brilliant and life-shaping traditions of realism, from Aristotle to Marx."²²⁴

Both in scientific and in artistic cognition, Lukács insisted on penetrating to the essence; this essence is fixed by science in a disanthropomorphic way in concepts, while art covers it again with the sensuous phenomenon, that is, art acts in an anthropomorphic way, as reflection always takes place in relation to man.²²⁵ Lukács always stressed that the focus of art is man, for which reason he rejected the mechanical interpretation of the principle of reflection, and stuck to its dialectical interpretation, which incorporates the motive of creativity, too.²²⁶

A number of contemporary aestheticians challenge the Lukácsian position, that is, question whether reflection really includes creativity. It seems that the dividing line lies

between Lukács's 'conservative' interpretation of objectivity and the views that (over)emphasize the role of man's creative subjectivity. The Lukácsian faith in the self-movement of reality, as Helga Gallas puts it, expresses the passive role of the author (creator), who is no more than a medium. What is more, Adorno supposed that Lukács wanted to exclude subjective intentions from realism, and charged that he, instead, sticks desperately to the ideal of vulgar materialism.²²⁷ Others hold that these positions reveal an activist dissatisfaction with the reflection theory, and state that the whole polemic is about the role of the subjective factor in social development.²²⁸ Against the Soviet standpoint mentioned above, it is remarkable that, both among West German writers of the new left and in the literary scholarship of the GDR, the opinion that the exclusively epistemological view of art has become problematic has gained strength during the past few years.²²⁹ It is beyond the scope of our concerns to explain this phenomenon here, but it is a fact that the detachment from the 'epistemological' interpretation of art, the views representing the priority of creative, subjective factors, have become widely popular.

As regards this detachment, in some cases we can see a certain inconsistency with those who recognized it. Erwin Pracht thinks that the two (i.e., epistemological and creative) approaches mutually complement each other.²³⁰ Kurt Batt, however, treats the 'epistemological' and 'aesthetic' views as two distinct fields, and states his fear openly, namely, that literature will be subordinated to a homogenized ideology, the essence of which will be defined by a prevailing philosophy.²³¹ This separation in the supposed defence of art, however, has remained an isolated attempt, while others, by emphasizing the role of the 'subjective factor', insist on the functional change of art in social being, that is, on the activity of forming consciousness more operatively. These views generally question the close coincidence of appearance and essence, emphasizing the process caused by the controversial changes of essence and, together with it, of appearance; in all this, the subject of reflection is accorded a prominent role.²³²

In short, all this concerns the operation of the category of partisanship (if nowadays this concept is not mentioned even discretely), whose relation to reality Lukács tried to clarify as early as in his article of 1932, "Tendency or Partisanship?"²³³ Lukács saw the source of 'tendency' in the predominance of subjective factors. As he writes: "Tendency is a demand, an 'ought', an ideal which the writer counterposes to reality [...] a (subjectively devised) commandment which reality is requested to fulfil."²³⁴ As against this, partisanship is not a tendency forced into the work from outside, but—we could say—the elementary law of motion of objective reality:

partisanship champions precisely the position that makes possible knowledge and portrayal of the overall processes as a synthetically grasped totality of its true driving forces, as the constant and heightened reproduction of the dialectical contradictions that underlie it.²³⁵

Here, we must stress the point is cognition and portrayal on the writer's part, and not the writer's intervention. But in this same early essay, he cites in detail and approvingly Lenin's work concerning the historical materialist standpoint, which expressly demands that one directly and openly side with a definite social group in evaluating (historical) events.²³⁶ It is in the same sense that Lukács declares in "Art and Objective Truth": "The objectivity of the external world is no inert, rigid objectivity fatalistically determining human activity; because of its very independence of consciousness it stands in the most intimate indissoluble interaction with practice."²³⁷

On the basis of what has been said thus far, it would be difficult to question—although there are some theoreticians who have questioned—the materialistic standpoint of Lukács, the aesthetician, in the struggles of social being. In the sphere of the arts, however, he was not really concerned with ‘ought’ (*Sollen*), but, rather, with the question, what is the nature of objective reality? It is precisely the unrelenting sincerity in revealing reality which implied the critical moment with him that Brecht also considered to be equally important in the practice of realism. In Lukács’s opinion, the strict respect for objectivity evokes a more intensive artistic effect than any tendency subjectively ‘attached’ to it.

5

In Lukács’s theory, the doctrine of the objectivity of artistic forms was built on the laws of historical materialism. It is to his credit that, in essence, he was the first Marxist aesthetician to deal with this—even to date not quite clarified—question. He was quite obviously not satisfied with the mechanical and functionalist experiments of the twenties. And he rejected the bourgeois aesthetics that discussed specifically the questions of form because of their idealist motives.²³⁸ He made clear, first of all, that form should not be conceived of merely as artistic technique which is chosen by the writer according to his liking:

Thus, the content of the work of art must be transformed into a form through which it can achieve its full artistic effectiveness. Form is nothing but the highest abstraction, the highest mode of condensation of content, of the extreme intensification of motivations, of constituting the proper proportion among the individual motivations and the hierarchy of importance among the individual contradictions of the life mirrored in the work of art.²³⁹

And what is this content that is materialized in form? It is the “lasting relations of human life”.²⁴⁰ Lukács binds forms to the historical and social necessities of life, and their specificities are determined by to what extent they are capable of expressing the essential features of the given social and historical phase.²⁴¹

Lukács measured the development of literature in its historical dimensions. As he wrote in his early youth: “I am concerned [...] with the axiology and philosophy of history of the works, and not with the works themselves.”²⁴² And it is the same philosophy of history that was at work in his outlook some twenty years later:

Die richtige Theorie des Realismus findet dagegen, wie wir angedeutet haben, den Masstab für Form und Inhalt in der Wirklichkeit selbst. Von Homer bis Gorki war die grosse Literatur stets ein Kampf um die intensive tiefe und reiche Wiedergabe der wichtigsten Bestimmungen des menschlichen Lebens; eine Eroberung des Lebens für die Menschen mit den Mitteln der Poesie. Vom Homer bis Gorki war die grosse Dichtung realistisch.²⁴³

It is the historical experience translated into the language of aesthetics that was at work in Lukács’s theory; he looked for how truth “independent of the artist’s consciousness” asserts itself in the creative artistic process.²⁴⁴ For Lukács, the demand for ‘independent truth’ does not exclude the presence of the poetic individual, or creative subjectivity, but it has to be in harmony with “objective social currents”.²⁴⁵ Lukács was deeply convinced that it is the forward-looking tendency, the law of the will of human emancipation that manifest itself in the ‘social currents’—that is what he meant by

'objective truth'. He acted in Engels's spirit when, as regards the writer's work, he expressly rejected the introduction of any tendency into life material, and when he demanded the unfolding of the historical tendency, that is, of the 'objectivity of partisanship' from life material.

Die Tendenz, die von Engels hier bejaht wird, ist also identisch mit jenem 'Element der Partei', das nach Lenin den Materialismus in sich schliesst. Sie ist die dem dargestellten Stoff innewohnende grosse gesellschaftliche Entwicklungstendenz in innigster Verbindung mit der gesellschaftlichen Praxis, mit der geschichtlichen, kämpferischen Stellungnahme des Autors zu diesen grossen, gesellschaftlich-geschichtlichen Kämpfen. Sie ist also niemals etwas bloss Subjektives, kein 'Bekenntnis' des Verfassers, keine von ihm entworfene utopische Lösung der gesellschaftlichen Konflikte. Sie holt nur den tiefsten Gehalt, die eigenste objektive Wahrheit des gestalteten Lebensstoffes heraus und soll niemals eine von diesem Lebensstoff mehr oder weniger unabhängige subjektive Zutat sein.²⁴⁶

This is, in fact, a rationalist program: it is the heritage of the Enlightenment, the spirit of reason that we see at work in it.²⁴⁷ We must agree with the analyst of this position, Günther Lehmann, when he finds the core of Lukács's theory of realism in the working of this rationalism—but it is surprising when he qualifies this principle of realism pejoratively as messianism, and surmises that Lukács forced the concept of reality into rational and logical forms and conceived of the future as 'open reality', as well as when he declares that, at the fourth congress of the German writers, Lukács outlined only a 'modest perspective'.²⁴⁸ Presumably Lukács had good reason to see this future as open. And he was far from overvaluing the 'factors of determination',²⁴⁹ or 'forcing objectivity'.²⁵⁰ These latter definitions are direct heirs to that extra-scientific denunciation which had condemned Lukács's principle of objectivity (which he defended to the last) as the 'enemy of partisanship', and had qualified objectivism as the manifestation of 'revisionism'.²⁵¹

A moderate resonance of this 'left radicalism' in the West does not already speak of revisionism, but holds that the objectivist concept of realism leads to a contemplative concept of partisanship, which eventually absolves the writer from his responsibilities toward his work.²⁵² Such facile utterances are diametrically opposed to reality; there was nothing more alien to Lukács than the acceptance of the writer's irresponsibility. To put it very simply, we can say that, as a materialist, he acknowledged the existence of objectivity, he recognized the long-term historical tendencies in it, and as a public figure, he even took part in unfolding this tendency; but as an aesthete, he could not join hands with the idealists who, voluntaristically, demanded such an artistic picture of this reality which existed only in dreams (however noble).

It seems that even in the spheres of literary scholarship that approach Lukács in more evenhanded fashion and show more understanding toward his intentions, there exist some aversions. These subsist on the not quite well-founded illusions concerning the function of art and the methodology of artistic appropriation, and derive from the reminiscences of overheated expectations.²⁵³

At the time when Lukács was first developing his theory, he had good reason to cling to objectivity; his subsequent faith in the objectivity of forms was to be the cause of his unrelenting repugnance against the avant-garde. In his opinion, the outstanding works of realism (i.e., great realism) were the literary and artistic reflections of the historical struggle for bourgeois revolutionary democracy, and, led by the theorem of the objectivity of forms, he was inclined to consider formal perfection to be valid during the period when the ideas of revolutionary democracy, as opposed to declining bourgeois culture, were waiting for realization and were seeking their adequate forms of expres-

sion. As against his critics, we cannot say that it was his antipathy toward the proletarian revolutionary movement that led him to reject disrupted forms. The reason for this lies somewhere deeper: he had to admit that certain elements of capitalism (bureaucracy, false ideologies, etc.) had survived, and, considering the conditions of socialism, he related the disruption of forms precisely to these elements:

Jeder, der unsere Analyse der subjektivistischen Tendenzen in der Ästhetik der niedergehenden Bourgeoisie aufmerksam gelesen hat, wird gesehen haben, dass diese Tendenzen keineswegs an der Grenze der Sowjetunion halt machen. Ihr Eindringen in unsere Ideologie kann auch nicht bloss die Folge der kapitalistischen Einkreisung sein, sondern muss zugleich Wurzeln in den objektiven und subjektiven Faktoren unserer eigenen Entwicklung [...] haben.²⁵⁴

He could refer to standard authority on this point: to Stalin's speech at the seventeenth party conference, which proclaimed an unrelenting fight against bourgeois remnants in human consciousness. In the wake of the analysis given by Stalin, he drew the conclusion (which he quoted again in "Marx and the Problem of Ideological Decay" in 1938) that could be valid even today for those who deny the validity of the principle of objectivity:

Der Kampf um die Frage der *Objektivität* der Kunst ist ein Teil dieses Kampfes gegen die ideologische Einkreisung des Aufbaus des Sozialismus durch den verfaulenden Monopolkapitalismus. Diese Einkreisung ist auf spezifisch ideologischen Gebieten von einer besonderen Gefährlichkeit.²⁵⁵

The objectivity of art derives from the objectivity of the social basis. That is what Lukács recognized as objective, and it is the illusionary detachment from it that he called 'subjectivism'—even if the subjectively revolutionary artists are sincere enemies of capitalism and the 'remnants of capitalism', which exist even in the 'immanent development' of socialism. In his opinion, one can fight against all this only by relying on the bases of reality, with the aid of reflection, and not of make-beliefs.

This 'immanent development' took place under specific conditions at home and abroad. The fifth Comintern congress in 1924 observed the end of the revolutionary wave, the stabilization of capitalism. Stalin's program followed logically from this: the building up socialism in one country. That is why Lukács always opposed Trotsky's theory of 'permanent revolution'. And it was that strategic turn that put an end to Lukács's proletarian messianism; it is at this point that he began to draw the political and then the aesthetic lessons of the past period, and this theoretical work was to last almost for one and a half decades. These lessons by no means pointed toward revisionism, but, as against an anachronistic utopia (e.g., in the case of Bloch), they induced him to a sound consideration of reality. Werner Mittenzwei is quite right in stating:

Damit wandte sich Lukács gegen oberflächliches Neuerertum, gegen modische Trends, aber auch gegen ein Wunschdenken, das zu Beginn der dreissiger Jahre unter revolutionären Künstler häufig anzutreffen war. Auf diese Weise brachte Lukács in die überhitzten Debatten um die künftigen Beziehungen von Kunst und Wirklichkeit einen nüchternen Zug hinein.²⁵⁶

6

The 'speculative moment' that was an element of subjectivity abandoning reality, that is, objectivity, was the tool of voluntarism that declared war on reality. Its consequences were, especially in the thirties, at the time of Zhdanov's cultural policy, the illustration

of theses, the falsification of reality, schematism, and 'painting in glowing colors', in art as well in literature. The 'trend' represented by Lukács, Lifschitz, and Usevich took up the fight against this front, and, due to administrative measures, lost it at the end of the thirties.²⁵⁷ Rita Schober rightly rejects the distortion of socialist realism 'in the stream of dogmatism', which reduced this artistic program to 'prescribed creative methods'.²⁵⁸ Kurt Batt, by contrast, entirely misunderstands the intellectual situation of the late thirties when he suggests that, in the case of Lukács, too, it was the reduction of the subjective factor that, in the atmosphere of the cult of personality, hindered him in recognizing the true nature of material and intellectual processes.²⁵⁹ It is, however, quite the contrary: the rigid attachment to objectivity displayed by Lukács and his circle was the last line of defence against the ever more massive attacks of subjective voluntarism; we might say that these attacks were the reason why they reduced the 'contradictory social process to theoretically lean, more or less static laws'.²⁶⁰ And that was the state on whose level the theoretical image of socialism became bogged down for decades. As general secretary Gorbachev observed:

The causes of this situation go far back in the past, they derive from the concrete historical situation when, because of the well-known circumstances, lively discussion and creative thought disappeared from theory and the social sciences; valuations and judgments based on the principle of authority had become unquestionable truths, which could be only commented on.²⁶¹

The superabundant working of the subjective factor has been credited to idealism even by Ernst Bloch,²⁶² and Lukács, according to a recent opinion, delimits himself sharply from subjectivism and stands on the basis of the objectivity of essence.²⁶³ At the same time, the author acknowledges that, in Lukács, the epistemological picture theory was directed not only against the avant-garde, but against the spreading of tendentious schematism as well, whose representatives believed that, by possessing a correct world view, they were able to produce literature, too.²⁶⁴

When we are studying Lukács's theoretical activity under such contemporary conditions, some recent conceptions, to the effect that his work was characterized by 'contemplativeness', he reduced the literary figure to a medium, rejected partisanship, or underestimated artistic subjectivity in the creative process, seem to be irresponsible. Lukács always did acknowledge and approve of the dialectical role of the creative subject, but in the sense that this creative subjectivity should always be directed toward reproducing the essence of reality.²⁶⁵ Writing on Johannes R. Becher's *Abschied* in 1941, he waxed enthusiastic over the hero's individual traits, psychological and moral characteristics. He did not, of course, see its embodiment in the comments of the 'subjective factor', but in 'fascinating immediacy'.²⁶⁶ He found the chief merit of the creative work of the subject in the fact that the writer raised the social process to self-consciousness, making it accessible sensuously, in terms of experiences. At the same time, he pointed out the harmful and dangerous consequences of subjectivism:

Die Gefahr, die durch den falschen Subjektivismus, durch dieses ungehemmte Sichausleben der Innerlichkeit des Schriftstellers entsteht, hat zur Folge, dass er vor einer Welt des freien Experimentierens steht, in die er sich beliebig und ungehemmt mischen kann [...] Und wir wissen, dass das Wesen der Apologetik gerade in diesem Zurechtrücken der Wirklichkeit besteht. Je weniger der Schriftsteller seine Gestalten und seine Handlung willkürlich zu beherrschen vermag, desto grösser sind die Aussichten für den Sieg des Realismus.²⁶⁷

This cardinal trait of Lukács's theory of realism, namely, the proportions and the dialectic of the subject—object relation, has been disputed for half a century, in close

connection with the question concerning the creativity of the reflection theory. This proves that Lukács grasped basic questions in the thirties, that he struggled with real problems, questions of aesthetics and cultural policy that have remained topical.²⁶⁸

7

One of these questions involves his attitude toward the so-called 'avant-garde' art, which, according to him, was excessively formalist, that is, 'hypertrophically subjectivist'. It is beyond the scope of the present essay to define the concept of avant-garde, or even to refer to the voluminous literature on this subject. For Lukács, this phenomenon generally belongs to the concept of anti-realism, and it embraces all the artistic trends, methods, and styles that replaced the realism of the past century, and, in his view, actively participated in destroying realism. This question, however, became more complicated, since the new phenomena—naturalism, expressionism, 'new objectivity' ('*neue Sachlichkeit*'), and surrealism—appeared among writers with a socialist outlook. Lukács was not able to take proper notice of this fact. As he writes in a fundamental essay against the avant-garde:

Whatever may be the intention behind the representatives of these tendencies, objectively they only keep the bourgeoisie in its struggle against genuine realism. This objective social function is shared by the entire literature of the decadent epoch, from naturalism through to surrealism.²⁶⁹

In terms of the philosophy of history, it is, undoubtedly, the vision of total decline that lies at the heart of this conception, and even if he time and again acknowledged the accomplishments of an aesthetic realism expressed in non-realistic forms,²⁷⁰ these moments seem to be signs of inconsistency within the life work, rather than changes in his views. The ideas that he elucidated in 1955–56 only strengthen the impression that he had stuck to this original vision—we can say—to the last:

Die Angst, die wir [...] als zentrales Welterleben geschildert haben, in welcher alle gestalterischen Fragen der 'Geworfenheit' zutage treten, hat ihre auslösend-emotionelle Quelle im Erlebnis einer zerfallenden Welt und wird zum künstlerischen Ausdruck, indem sie den Zerfall der Welt des Menschen evoziert.²⁷¹

There is a paradox in the fact that Lukács, while outlining this vision to characterize the paradigmatic value of Kafka's world picture, also accepts, in practice, the reality of that very world picture. He says that the 'sky of humanity and humanism' above the European spirit has 'long been overcast'; there are only a few writers, such as Gorky, Romain Rolland, Thomas Mann, and Heinrich Mann, who 'swim against the current', and the road to realism is a 'dangerous, narrow path with tragic abysses on both sides'. Elsewhere he mentions that the proletariat is also present, with its aspirations, as a counterforce in this historical process, but he almost or completely disregards its literature, as well as the literature that emerged from the soil of actually existing socialism.²⁷²

According to a student of Lukács's, the generally valid explanation of it is that

Lukács was deeply aware of the social coercions at work to deconstruct the self. This is why his view of culture became radically conservative. He believed that the modern work of art makes a case for a deconstruction of the self or, at least, that it does not make a case against it. This is why the reception of modern art cannot be cathartic and cannot even be the point of departure for the construction of personality.²⁷³

As compared with the ontological explanation of the avant-garde, the postulation of a direct correspondence between disintegrating reality and disrupted forms had serious consequences. In this regard, Lukács was not alone, nor was his the initiative. The rejection of the avant-garde had already appeared in the proletarian literature of the twenties,²⁷⁴ and later it became the characteristic feature of Zhdanov's cultural policy. We know of the harsh critical remarks of Zhdanov, Karl Radek, and Gorky at the writers' congress in 1934. Even later, Gorky spoke of Marcel Proust, Joyce, Dos Passos, and 'some Hemingways'.²⁷⁵ Among the critical reflections on the avant-garde, the aspects of formal questions prevailed even in *Internationale Literatur*, which stood the nearest to the party direction of German emigrants.²⁷⁶ Brecht rarely published in émigré periodicals and received only reserved appreciation—if any.²⁷⁷

It is at this point that Lukács—in his aversion to modern literary means of expression—came relatively the nearest to his latent enemy, the dogmatic cultural-political practice. He raised his voice as if he had been intimating danger:

Diese Technik wird der junge Sowjetschriftsteller entweder überhaupt nicht anwenden können, oder er wird mit ihr Elemente jener Ideologie, die sie hervorgebracht hat, ebenfalls übernehmen. Das gesellschaftliche Sein ist es, welches bedingt, dass er auch bei uns nicht vor dieser Gefahr gefreit ist; es besteht die Möglichkeit für den Schriftsteller, zu einem vom Leben der Gesellschaft losgelösten Literaten zu entarten.²⁷⁸

His essay of 1940, "Tribune or Bureaucrat?", warns against the unvarying danger of 'ideological encirclement' by capitalist society. The ideological qualification of stylistic means took Lukács dangerously close to the normativity of literary techniques.²⁷⁹ In his essay of 1934, he most categorically protests against the effort that makes artistic forms relative, that is, seeks to deprive artistic form of its objective character.²⁸⁰

His indecision concerning the close correlation between realism that claims 'social essence' (i.e., the objectivity of truth content) and stylistic realism presenting accomplishment (i.e., the objectivity of artistic technique) is obvious.²⁸¹ Yet it seems that José Antonio Portuondo is right in stating that in Lukács the Hegelian method—dialectics—has always prevailed over the theory of a metaphysical system.²⁸² And it is not only his late chief work, *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, in which Lukács states that the basic characteristic of representative art is realism, and that various styles can become differentiated only within the sphere of realism,²⁸³ which provides the indirect intimation of the fact that stylistic means do not define directly the manifestation of the aesthetic meaning of realism. This possibility, however, appears in the context of positing a close correlation between essence and style as early as 1934. Here Lukács explains:

dass die grossen Schriftsteller der vergangenen Epochen, wie Shakespeare und Cervantes, wie Balzac und Tolstoi, ihre Epochen künstlerisch adäquat, lebendig und vollständig widerspiegelt haben. Die Frage des Erbes besteht darin, unseren Schriftstellern eine lebendige Anschauung der *Grundprobleme* dieser adäquaten Gestaltung einer Epoche zu geben. Denn *dies* ist von den grossen Schriftstellern der vergangenen Epochen zu lernen, und nicht irgendwelche technisch-formalen Äusserlichkeiten. Niemand kann und niemand soll heute so schreiben, wie Shakespeare oder Balzac geschrieben haben. Es kommt darauf an, hinter das Geheimnis ihrer grundlegenden schöpferischen Methode zu kommen. Und dieses Geheimnis ist eben die Objektivität, die bewegte und lebendige Widerspiegelung der Epoche in dem bewegten Zusammenhang ihrer wesentlichsten Züge, die Einheit von Inhalt und Form, die Objektivität der Form als konzentriertester Widerspiegelung der allgemeinsten Zusammenhänge der objektiven Wirklichkeit.²⁸⁴

The motives of this analysis and those of his contemporary essay on satire—which, unfortunately, he did not develop any further—indicate the possibility of viewing the means of technique and form more sensitively. But the heat and direct social relevance

of the debates conducted with Lukács's intensive participation, involving naturalism, formalism, and expressionism, pushed Lukács toward rigidity, rather than flexibility, although even Hegel could have provided him with a stimulus in this latter direction. For, according to Hegel's aesthetic, the loss and distortion of the natural figure is imperfect art, which in technical and other aspects can be quite perfect within its definite sphere.²⁸⁵

Even if Lukács did not demand that modern literature display the composition and style of nineteenth-century literature, he nevertheless had to wish for a stylistic ideal in its concrete realization. This ideal was represented, besides Balzac and Tolstoy, by the prose of Thomas Mann—but, in fact, as Lukács saw it, and not as it appears in Thomas Mann's self-evaluation. Mann regarded his own writing as more modern and less traditional than Lukács did.²⁸⁶

The idea of composition and style that Lukács rejected appeared now in sharper outlines. (We have spoken of this in more detail above.) It seems, however, that the model of 'content and adequate form'—viewed in the context of the philosophy of history—as an interrelation has appeared more intricately in twentieth-century reality. The changes of the scientific world picture, technological development, the new mass media (radio, record, sound film, and, especially, montage in the film, electronic music, etc.), the accelerated rhythm of city life, the changes in the habit of 'producing' and 'consuming' art, the technological reproducibility of the arts, and so on—all these have made the forms in which literature manifests itself more varied and more intricate.²⁸⁷ All these cannot be regarded directly as the adequate forms of a disintegrating world. As far as the new artistic outlook of the modern world is concerned, Miklós Almási, one of Lukács's students, aptly remarks:

In the second half of the 20th century, the 'Socratic' (i.e., the more conscious, more intellectual) artistic position has become a progressive artistic practice, which is not the invention of degenerated artists, but has been imposed on art by the complexity of modern life and by the torment of reaching for ever more hidden interrelations.²⁸⁸

Thomas Metscher qualifies the 'enormous energy of artistic production' in a similar way, which came to the surface in Picasso, Shostakovich, *Doktor Faustus*, the *Ästhetik des Widerstands*, and in the best works of Faulkner, García Marquez, and Aitmatov.²⁸⁹

8

The Lukácsian conception of the avant-garde affected the left-wing intellectuals most painfully in the expressionism debate.²⁹⁰ The debate took place in the context of the ideological struggles for the establishment of a Marxist theory of literature. The attempt at elaborating the 'theory' of proletarian literature, as we know, did not, and could not succeed. The draft program of the BPRS, the endeavors of RAPP, and the efforts of the Kharkov conference to this effect all failed—whereas the participants did not realize: why? In the thirties, the clarifying exchanges of ideas could take place only in the country of existing socialism. Even at the writers' congress in 1934 and afterward the polemics against mechanical materialist views, vulgar sociology, formalism, naturalism, and against decadence took place in a most intricate fashion, in conjunction with the attempts to utilize the results of formalist schools, to codify socialist realism as a method, and to legitimize socialist romanticism. It is within this ideological and aesthetic sphere

that Lukács tried to vindicate his own theory of realism. As we have seen, his ingenious recognition—the artistic reflection of the objectivity of the social and historical human essence—did not harmonize with the rigid interpretation of the objectivity of forms, which, in fact, was closely connected with the characteristics of interpreting essence. On the one hand, Lukács clearly saw the real character of ‘post-revolutionary’ society—its intricate and contradictory components—and demanded the recognition of its objectivity, that is, in a certain sense, he ‘reconciled’ himself to it. On the other hand, however, he could not reconcile himself to the contradictoriness of forms when gaining adequate expression, and, hence, he anticipated the adequate forms of a society that was already free from contradictions, a picture of society that he utopistically projected into the future. As if the youthful dilemma of ‘right epistemology—left ethics’ had kept on working in his aesthetic system. In this as has been emphasized several times, it was partly the shock effect of fascism, which he perceived as the result of a long process of decline, and partly the ‘remnants of capitalism’ within existing socialism that, for a time, he thought to be ideologically too strong to overcome, that played a crucial role.

As is known, the debate on expressionism, which began by positing interrelationships between the decadence of the expressionist generation of writers and the ideologies leading to fascism (i.e., with Alfred Kurella’s article) became, in essence, a debate on realism, primarily due to Lukács’s enter into the debate.²⁹¹ The debate, taken in the strict sense, raged for a year in the pages of *Das Wort*, then it was picked up by *Die Neue Weltbühne*. It appeared in the exchange of letters between Lukács and Anna Seghers, and Ernst Bloch returned to it even at the time of World War II. Even the writings and notes of Bertolt Brecht were essential—we could say: fundamental—contributions to the debate, which, however, became publicly known only almost thirty years later.²⁹²

The expressionism debate ended without satisfactory results; this was especially emphasized by Anna Seghers. In the past two decades the debate was a favorite topic of German studies—in fact, it was transformed into a Brecht—Lukács debate, although the two central participants, a few biting remarks notwithstanding, did not directly enter into polemic with each other.²⁹³ By contrast, the exchange of opinions between Lukács, Ernst Bloch, and Anna Seghers was all the more intense. And we must agree with those who regard Brecht’s then unpublished writings as an actual part of the aesthetic thinking of the given period, since in the conceptions of Brecht and Lukács two fundamental ways of approach—possible at that time—manifested themselves.

As far as Lukács’s and Brecht’s participation is concerned, the evaluation given by Miklós Mesterházi is somewhat obscure. According to him, the question is whether “Marxism or an irrationalist and messianistic view predominates in interpreting the given historical situation.”²⁹⁴ As far as Brecht and Lukács are concerned, Werner Mittenzwei is more correct, and he does not hesitate to state: Brecht and Lukács started out from two entirely different political conceptions of handling reality.²⁹⁵ It is this difference that influenced and determined their aesthetic conceptions, too. At any rate, Mittenzwei, who supports Brecht’s position, warns us against choosing between the two systems of views by an ‘either-or’ logic.²⁹⁶ At the same time, we cannot accept the views that aim at ‘reconciling’ the two definitely demarcated positions. There are more objective views, which hold that it is greatness and not narrow-mindedness that manifests itself in the inflexibility of the two disputants;²⁹⁷ or, it is two, non-alternative, mutually complementing, in both cases possible and sensible Marxist conceptions of art that assert themselves, thus, Brecht and Lukács.²⁹⁸ And as far as Bloch is concerned, Günther K.

Lehmann is right to say that, in the present state of research, it is impossible to pass final judgment on the two, entirely opposite conceptions.²⁹⁹ Of course, all this does not mean that Bloch and Brecht took identical platforms, but as opponents of Lukács, together with Anna Seghers, they represented a certain alternative within Marxist aesthetic thinking.

The difference between Lukács and Brecht appeared ultimately not in their interpretation of the essence of realism, that is, in their claim to unfold reality, but, rather, in their expectations concerning the forms of the realization of realism. But, as we know, Lukács connected formal phenomena with the motifs of content, and from the disintegration of closed forms he concluded, rather firmly and directly, even in the case of leftist writers, to bourgeois decadence, to the fatalistic acknowledgment of the existing order, or to some 'abstract, revolutionary utilitarianism'. This undoubtedly formal, superficial conclusion affected Dos Passos, Brecht, and Ernst Bloch, as well as several other leftist avant-garde artists and theoreticians.³⁰⁰

Brecht, however, as we know, did not regard realism as a question of form. He aimed at disclosing and changing reality from a class viewpoint. In his 'activist way', he wanted to redirect art toward life, as much as Anna Seghers, who argued in a similar manner in her letters to Lukács. Brecht did not appreciate empathy, and he did not believe in cathartic purification—instead, he wanted to awaken the readers' consciousness; and, instead of contemplation, he encouraged action. He found the most varied and changing forms suitable to represent changing reality. According to one of his notable statements: 'new problems emerge and they demand new solutions; reality is changing, and in order to be able to represent it, the manner of representation has to change as well.'³⁰¹ This statement of Brecht's could, in essence, have come from Lukács himself because it is precisely this dependence that is expressed by the objectivity of forms; he could approve of even that intention of Brecht's according to which the writer 'has to dig down to the roots of social effects'. But he was not prepared to employ just any means in order to realize this goal. He could by no means accept the formal relativism posited by modern aesthetic, in which correct tenets are mixed eclectically with the presence of the subjective factor.³⁰²

Against this flexible and motile aesthetic of creation, Lukács might have raised the objection of subjective arbitrariness, of its discarding the objectivity of forms. (We can experience the consequences of the 'free handling' of formal questions precisely in the overall eclecticism of modern socialist art.)

But, in the case of Brecht and Lukács, what is meant by the (in Werner Mittenzwei's words) 'entirely different political conceptions', which influenced and defined the views of the two opponents? This is not to say that, in the case of Lukács, it means a politically and aesthetically conservative system of thought, and, in the case of Brecht, political, ideological, and aesthetic progressivism. There is such a theory which questions the functional change of art in modern class struggles; concretizes the scope of the agitative, artistic 'intervention' that prompts to action, as bound to time and events; and finds social changes inseparable from the 'cathartic' transformation of the individual. It holds that "agitative" art is situated on the "margin" of the artistic form of consciousness.³⁰³ Brecht, the exile, was somewhat sceptical of an overall popular-front program, and cast his hopes into the liberating class struggles of the proletariat, putting his art and theoretical activity into the service of this picture of the future. For him, to revolutionize Germany was a task at hand. Lukács, however, in the second decade after a socialist revolution, organized his aesthetic in order to objectively unfold that social reality which

he found to be rather contradictory. By putting forward examples and models, and appealing to the method of 'great realists', he aimed at the accomplishment of 'revolutionary democracy'. He thought that, after the defeat of fascism, the same social perspective was to be realized both in Germany, his spiritual country, and in Hungary, his native country, but in the very revolutionary sense that he had expressed for the first time in the "Blum Theses". Looking back on the events of the past fifty years, we can hardly doubt that the intentions of Brecht and Lukács each had a certain legitimacy, in that they corrected each other, and their aspirations and expectations have been justified by history in its intricate dialectic.

At the time in question, at the time of the expressionism debate, the 'cunning of history' led to the paradox that the expectations of the aesthetician, who demanded the representation of the objectivity of essence in perceptible forms, were confronted with the immense totality of the objectivity of reality; the expectations seemed to give way to 'modern' methods and means of portrayal. Thus, left-wing avant-garde, in its polemic with the aesthetic of realism found to be rigid, became the advocate of artistic freedom and of the efficiency of experimentation. But one can sense the anxiety in the polemic at every moment: there exists a third, a 'silent' partner, for which neither 'revolutionary democracy' nor 'revolutionary artistic experimentation' is convenient. Anna Seghers finds the element of revolt missing in Goethe's example, she disapproves of 'reconciliation' in the interest of the work, and rejects raising method into measure.³⁰⁴ Brecht rejects 'retarding formulas and old rules' with open irony, and he fears that 'cutting down' expressionism will lead to a diminution of creative freedom.³⁰⁵ Ernst Bloch recognizes the same danger in the predominance of neo-classicism.³⁰⁶ Even the emigrant, antifascist writers in Moscow conceived of the attack against expressionism as a threat to the freedom of experimentation.³⁰⁷ As Anna Seghers writes in her second letter to Lukács, "My fear is that this leads to a restriction precisely where you have yourself succeeded in gaining space, but in a different aspect: in the fullness and diversity of our literature."³⁰⁸ All that Lukács conceives of (and rejects) as experiment with form becomes a 'heated experiment with a new content' for Seghers, and, instead of disintegration, she perceives the accomplishment of 'stock taking'.

The coercive (i.e., shifted back from the future to the present) positing of the objectivity of forms included the selection of traditions, too. In this respect, Lukács's main opponent was Bloch. The philosopher's book of 1935, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, was a collection of essays and notes written during the previous years. The author polemicized against Lukács, directly or indirectly, since the latter's famous essay on expressionism in 1934, just as Lukács polemicized against Bloch's theories of 'heritage' and montage in the expressionism debate. As we have mentioned, Lukács regarded montage as the technical expression of disintegrated, alienated being, of destructing totality, while for Bloch it was an element of producing contrasting effects in building up a new world. Lukács offered the creative method of 'great realism' as an example for modern writers, while Bloch found direct contact with bourgeois art possible: "Denn nicht nur im revolutionären Aufstieg oder in der tüchtigen Blüte einer Klasse, auch in ihrem Niedergang und den mannigfaltigen Inhalten, die gerade die Zersetzung freimacht, kann ein dialektisch brauchbares 'Erbe' enthalten sein."³⁰⁹ Bloch, who tried to explain the spread of fascism among the peasantry and petite bourgeoisie with the theory of 'non-synchronicity' ('*Ungleichzeitigkeit*'), wanted to reclaim concepts that had been professed by the revolutionary, spontaneous popular movements of the Middle Ages, concepts in the meantime stolen and falsified by fascism (the coming of the millennium, the chiliastic tenet

of redemption, the idea of the leader, etc.).³¹⁰ Lukács—together with Hans Günther—rejected this ‘functional change’ and called not for myths, but for renewed attention to the heritage of the classical tradition.³¹¹

Lukács himself was convinced that his theory of realism fully agreed with the political aims of the popular front, and his aesthetic ideal corresponded perfectly to the demand that literature should be generally understandable, enjoyable in style, and should take its subject matter from popular life. He rejected the epic theater, the montage technique, and expressionism partly because he supposed that their formal language could not be understood by a contemporary, popular audience. (As we know, Brecht represented a diametrically opposite view.) According to Anna Seghers, however, it was not ‘decadence’, but fascism that represented the main danger in the given period. Her ideal was a strong and manifold, antifascist art, in which everybody could take part who was qualified for it as an antifascist and as a writer.³¹² Several discussants pointed out the ‘heritable’ elements of expressionism during the debate.³¹³ Ernst Bloch warned against the ‘black and white technique’ of neo-classicism, which identified every oppositionist, non-communist writer with the ruling classes.³¹⁴

The German communist party already aimed at establishing a broad popular-front policy at that time. As Wilhelm Pieck said in his closing remarks at the Brussels congress in 1935:

Zur Schaffung der antifaschistischen Volksfront werden wir eine besondere Volksfrontliteratur schaffen müssen, die zu den breitesten Massen in ihrer Sprache spricht [...] Wir müssen dabei berücksichtigen, dass an der Volksfrontbewegung Menschen und Gruppen verschiedener Interessen, verschiedener Weltanschauungen, verschiedener Vorstellungen und Vorurteile teilnehmen werden. Für diese Literatur können wir deshalb auch nicht jene Agitation gebrauchen, die nur von der Arbeiterklasse verstanden wird.³¹⁵

As a matter of fact, Lukács represented a wider view of history than Brecht, who gave ‘priority to proletarian action’.³¹⁶ In the given period, however, by opposing the bourgeois literary avant-garde and the ‘formalism’ of socialist literature, Lukács himself contributed to establishing a certain ‘sectarian narrowness’ (which became full-blown during the darkest years of the Stalinist period). As he posed the question: “Man könnte vielleicht fragen, muss dieser Kampf gegen die ideologischen Überreste des Kapitalismus unbedingt ein Kampf gegen die Ideologie der Dekadenz sein?” And he answered:

Wer daran zweifelt, soll sich an die wiederholten Mahnungen Stalins über die Gefahr der kapitalistischen Umkreisung erinnern. Diese existiert auch ideologisch. Auch die Literatur des Sozialismus entwickelt sich nicht im luftleeren Raum, sondern diese Umkreisung ist ebenfalls ein Faktor — ein gefährlicher Faktor — in der Entwicklung eines jeden Schriftstellers.³¹⁷

Later, Lukács somewhat toned down these extreme views.³¹⁸ Indeed, they became almost ‘paralyzed’ as a result of his voluminous activity in literary history, directed toward unfolding the heritage of German classicism, the traditions of the Russian, French, and English realist literatures, as well as by his theory of the ‘triumph of realism’, which defended the writer’s talent against the crude effects of ideologies, of the ‘subjective factor’ on the creative work—and, as the historico-philosophical basis and framework for all this, he elaborated the political philosophy of ‘revolutionary democracy’ to be realized under the conditions of socialism.

Lukács’s severe verdict seemed at the time to be justified by the spread of fascism in Europe, by its coming to power in Germany, which he was not willing to interpret merely as an accidental derailment of the bourgeois system—as done by the liberal

bourgeois theoreticians—instead, preferred to regard as a direct consequence of historical and economic development. This context makes understandable his extreme aversion toward the phenomena of ‘disintegration’ in content and form when they appeared in the literature of his own age and own society. The doctrine of the objectivity of forms, which he developed, put him in a difficult position, so to say, onto a coercive path; the advantage of viewing reality as a whole in terms of the philosophy of history became the disadvantage of details having become obscure. There is hardly any question that the ‘disintegration’ of realism gathered speed following the proletarian revolution of the Paris Commune and its brutal suppression in 1871. The offensive of imperialism and the gigantic class struggles of the age of proletarian revolutions shook the former faith in harmonious development to its very roots; and if we accept Lukács’s tenet of the objective artistic reflection of social processes, we arrive at the ‘eventually’ valid explanation of the origin of the avant-garde outlook and forms of expression, and of their variably invariable existence in both spheres of world view. The demand of realizing ‘revolutionary democracy’ invariably remained a compelling and relevant view, in that the tension between class structures was awaiting resolution on a world-historical scale. The historical and social convulsions of a century, its consecutive revolutions (in which the proletariat played an ever greater role) have propelled mankind toward finding a solution. The progressive forces, however, amidst their inner problematics, their occasional grave contradictions and defeats, were unable to create the anticipated ‘harmony’, and, hence, the intact, closed forms in art. Lukács’s struggle for them remained a labor of Sisyphus. As far as artistic forms are concerned, the objectivity of the world that is homogeneous in its contradictions could not be divided into the decadence of a declining part and the ‘realist forms’ of a progressive trend. And it especially could not be divided into the objectivity of a past period and its objective forms. Lukács acknowledged the changes in the content of a period (even if he was sceptical as regards quick and decisive changes in the structure of society), but, as he rejected full reconciliation with those changes, he was not able to acknowledge the legitimacy of the open forms of a non-closed objectivity.

He could not reconcile himself with Brecht’s insight: “Gibt es also keinen Ausweg? Es gibt einen. Die neue heraufkommende Klasse zeigt ihn. Es ist kein Rückweg. Es wird nicht angeknüpft an das gute Alte, sondern an das schlechte Neue. Es handelt sich nicht um den Abbau der Technik, sondern um ihren Ausbau.”³¹⁹ As Dieter Schlenstedt aptly remarks: in Lukács, political activism was replaced by aesthetic utopia.³²⁰ This utopia, however, was not a visionary formation, as it grew out of the bases of the future, the reality of the past, and of the heritage of ‘great realism’.

(Translated by József Kovács)

Notes

¹ Georg Lukács: “Preface to the New Edition (1967)”, in his *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. R. Livingstone (London: 1971), p. xxxvi.

² There is a voluminous literature on the subject. Of the most recent works, see e.g., Alfred Schmidt: *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein heute* (Amsterdam: 1971); Jörg Kammler: *Politische Theorie von Georg Lukács: Struktur und historischer Praxisbezug bis 1929* (Darmstadt—Neuwied: 1972); Marija A. Hevesi: *Iz istorii kritiki filozofskih dogm II. Internacionala* (Moscow: 1977); A *Történelem és osztálytudat a húszas évek*

vitáiban I—IV [History and Class Consciousness in the debates of the twenties I—IV], ed by T. Krausz and M. Mesterházy (Budapest: 1981); Tamás Krausz and Miklós Mesterházy: *Mű és történelem: Viták Lukács György műveiről a húszas években* [Work and History: Debates on György Lukács's Works in the twenties] (Budapest: 1985).

³ Ervin Rozsnyai: "A politikai és filozófiai nézetek ellentmondása a *Történelem és osztálytudat*-ban" [The contradiction between political and philosophical views in History and Class Consciousness], *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle* (1982) No. 4, p. 504.

⁴ Ferenc Fehér, Ágnes Heller, György Márkus, and Mihály Vajda: "Notes on Lukács' Ontology", *Telos* (Fall, 1976) No. 29, pp. 160—61.

⁵ Georg Lukács: "Moses Hess and the Problems of Idealist Dialectics", in his *Political Writings 1919—1929*, trans. by M. McColgan (London: 1972), p. 189.

⁶ See Lukács's "Preface to the New Edition (1967)", in op. cit., and Miklós Lackó: "A 'Blum-tézisek' és Lukács György felfogása a kultúráról és az irodalomról" [The Blum theses and György Lukács's conception of culture and literature], in *Az időt mi hoztuk magunkkal* [We Brought Time with Us], ed. by L. Illés (Budapest: 1985).

⁷ Károly Urbán: *Lukács György és a magyar munkásmozgalom* [György Lukács and the Hungarian Working Class Movement] (Budapest: 1985), p. 67. (The letter is at the Archiv des Instituts für Parteigeschichte beim ZK der USAP, archive reference 500 f. 221.)

⁸ This activity is approached from different positions in Alexander Stephan: "'Georg Lukács' erste Beiträge zur marxistischen Literaturtheorie", in *Brecht Jahrbuch 1975*, hrsg. von J. Fuegi, R. Grimm, J. Hermand (Frankfurt a. M.: 1975); Lothar Baier: "Vom Erhabenen der proletarischen Revolution", in *Der Streit mit Georg Lukács*, hrsg. von H.-J. Schmitt (Frankfurt a. M.: 1978); László Sziklai: "Lukács György a Moszkvai Szemle-ben" [György Lukács in *Moskauer Rundschau*], *Irodalomtörténet* (1985) No. 2. (In my opinion, the objective account of the writings in *Moskauer Rundschau* is given by László Sziklai.)

⁹ The class viewpoint as replacing the aesthetic viewpoint appeared early in Lukács. See his "Marxismus und Literaturgeschichte", *Die Rote Fahne* (October 13, 1922) No. 455. These thoughts were, in a sense, corrected and developed further in his "L'art pour l'art und proletarische Dichtung", *Die Tat* (Jena) (June, 1926) No. 3.

¹⁰ Miklós Lackó: *Politik — Kultur — Literatur: Beitrag zur publizistischen Tätigkeit von Georg Lukács in der zweiten Hälfte der zwanziger Jahre* (Budapest: 1980; *Studia Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 171); László Illés: "A 100% című folyóirat kulturális irányvonaláról" [The cultural line of the journal 100%], in *Műveltség — művészet — munkásmozgalom* [Education — Art — Working Class Movement], ed. by H. Vass and L. Sipos (Budapest: 1982).

¹¹ György Lukács: "A régebbi magyar irodalomhoz való viszonyunk" [Our relation to the earlier Hungarian literature], *Sarló és Kalapács* (1931) No. 9, p. 57.

¹² First publication in Russian as "Marks i Engels v polemike s Lassalle po povodu 'Sickingena'", *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo* (1932) No. 3 — also in German as "Die Sickingendebatte zwischen Marx—Engels und Lassalle", *Internationale Literatur* (1933) No. 2.

¹³ For this period, see Helga Gallas: *Marxistische Literaturtheorie: Kontroversen im Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller* (Neuwied—Berlin: 1971); *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, hrsg. von W. Mittenzwei (Leipzig: 1975). In it, see especially Werner Mittenzwei: "Gesichtspunkte: Zur Entwicklung der literaturtheoretischen Position Georg Lukács'", and Ingeborg Münz-Koenen: "Auf dem Wege zu einer marxistischen Literaturtheorie: Die Debatte proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller mit Georg Lukács"; further, see Werner Mittenzwei: "Brecht und die Schicksale der Materialästhetik", in *Künstlerische Avantgarde*, übers. von M. August, W. Klein, B. Zietlow, hrsg. von K. Barck, D. Schlenstedt, W. Thierse (Berlin: 1979); Manfred Nössig: "Das Ringen um proletarisch-revolutionärer Kunstkonzeptionen 1929—1933", in *Literaturdebatten in der Weimarer Republik: Zur Entwicklung des marxistischen Denkens 1918—1933*, hrsg. von M. Nössig, J. Rosenberg, B. Schröder (Berlin—Weimar: 1980); Manfred Naumann: "Das Dilemma der 'Rezeptionsästhetik'", in his *Blickpunkt Leser* (Leipzig: 1984); István Szerdahelyi: "Lukács György útja Az esztétikum sajátosságához" [György Lukács's Way to *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*], in Illés (ed.): *Az időt mi hoztuk magunkkal*.

¹⁴ Georg Lukács: "Die Sickingendebatte zwischen Marx—Engels und Lassalle", in his *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels als Literaturhistoriker* (Berlin: 1952), p. 14.

¹⁵ Lukács: *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels als Literaturhistoriker*, p. 86—first published in Russian as "Friedrich Engels kak teoretik literatury i literaturny kritik"—also in German as "Friedrich Engels als Literaturtheoretiker und Literaturkritiker", *Internationale Literatur* (1936) No. 2.

¹⁶ Lukács: "Die Sickingendebatte zwischen Marx—Engels und Lassalle", in op. cit., p. 46.

¹⁷ Georg Lukács: "Die neue Ausgabe von Lassalles Briefen", *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* (1925), pp. 401—23.

- ¹⁸ Johannes R. Becher: "Kühnheit und Begeisterung", *Die Linkskurve* (1932) No. 5, pp. 1–11; quoted by Nössig, in his "Das Ringen um proletarisch-revolutionärer Kunstkonzeptionen 1929–1933", in *op. cit.*, p. 641.
- ¹⁹ Pavel Yudin: "Lenin i literaturnaya kritika", *Literaturny Kritik* (1933) No. 1, p. 23.
- ²⁰ László Sziklai: "Zu dieser Ausgabe", in Georg Lukács: *Wie ist Deutschland zum Zentrum der reaktionären Ideologie geworden?* (Budapest: 1982), p. 7.
- ²¹ Georg Lukács: *Wie ist die faschistische Philosophie in Deutschland entstanden?* (Budapest: 1982), p. 42.
- ²² Lukács: *Wie ist Deutschland zum Zentrum der reaktionären Ideologie geworden?*, p. 35.
- ²³ Georg Lukács: "Über Preussentum", *Internationale Literatur* (1943) No. 5—also published in France as "Volk und Vaterland", *Schriften zur deutschen Erneuerung* (Paris) (1944) No. 2—also in Georg Lukács: *Über die Vernunft in der Kultur: Ausgewählte Schriften 1909–1969* (Leipzig: 1985).
- ²⁴ Georg Lukács: *The Destruction of Reason*, trans. by P. Palmer (London: 1980), p. 104.
- ²⁵ Georg Lukács: "Nietzsche kak predsestvennik fashistkoi estetiki", *Literaturny Kritik* (1934) No. 12, pp. 27–53; "Nietzsche als Vorläufer der faschistischen Ästhetik", *Internationale Literatur* (1935) No. 8, pp. 76–92.
- ²⁶ Adorno's sharp refusal is well known: Theodor W. Adorno: "Erpresste Versöhnung", in *Lehrstück Lukács*, hrsg. von J. Matzner (Frankfurt a. M.: 1974), p. 179. For myth as the authentic poetic explanation of the world in literature and for Thomas Mann's myth creation, see György Poszler: "Tudományos publicisztika és publicisztikus tudomány" [Scholarly publicism and publicistic scholarship], *Nagyvilág* (1984) No. 9. According to János Kelemen, it is not justified to extend irrationalism to the whole history of bourgeois philosophy: "Az ész trónfosztása védelmében" [In defense of *The Destruction of Reason*], *Világosság* (1986) No. 3. The excesses in Lukács's critique of Nietzsche are criticized by Eike Middell: "Totalität und Dekadenz: Zur Auseinandersetzung von Georg Lukács mit Friedrich Nietzsche", *Weimarer Beiträge* (1985) No. 4. For the justification of Lukács's critique of irrationalism, see László Sziklai: "A nem tiszta ész kritikusa" [The critic of impure reason], in *Az élő Lukács*, ed. by L. Sziklai (Budapest: 1986), and Hans-Heinz Holz: "Lukács György és az irracionálisizmus problémája" [György Lukács and the problem of irrationalism], in *ibid.*
- ²⁷ Georg Lukács: "Der deutsche Faschismus und Nietzsche", *Internationale Literatur* (1943) No. 12—also in his *Schicksalswende* (Berlin: 1948).
- ²⁸ As regards this question, one of the main polemicists against Lukács was Ernst Bloch. See Poszler: "Tudományos publicisztika és publicisztikus tudomány", in *op. cit.*
- ²⁹ One of the main proponents of the theory of 'social fascism' was Stalin, who already in his article of 1924, "On the International Situation", characterized fascism and social democracy as twins. This view gained strength in the wake of Stalin's famous-infamous letter of 1931, "Über einige Fragen der Geschichte des Bolschewismus: Brief an die Redaktion der Zeitschrift *Proletarskaja Rewoljucija*", in his *Fragen des Lenismus* (Moskau: 1947). Lukács reacts to the problem in "Über das Schlagwort: Liberalismus und Marxismus", *Der Rote Aufbau* (1931) No. 21, and even later, delimiting himself from Stalin's position (cf. his "Postscriptum 1957 zu *Mein Weg zu Marx*", in his *Schriften zur Ideologie und Politik* [Neuwied—Berlin: 1967]), and maintaining his aversion (cf. his "Vorwort", in his *Von Nietzsche zu Hitler oder Der Irrationalismus und die Deutsche Politik* [Frankfurt a. M.: 1966]).
- ³⁰ Georg Lukács: "Expressionism: Its Significance and Decline", in his *Essays on Realism*, trans. by D. Fernbach (London: 1980)—first published in Russian as "Veliche i padenie ekspressionizma, *Literaturny Kritik* (1933) No. 2—then in German as "Grösse und Verfall des Expressionismus", *Internationale Literatur* (1934) No. 1.
- ³¹ Manuscript in the Lukács Archives and Library (LAL), archive reference II/76. 35 S.—the full text appeared in Hungarian in *A magyar marxista filozófia a két világháború között* [Hungarian Marxist Philosophy between the Two World Wars], ed. by K. Nyíri (Budapest: 1979)—the second part of the essay treating of Musil is also in German as "Totentanz der Weltanschauungen", *Helikon* (Sondernummer, 1979). For the full text of "Grand Hotel 'Abgrund'", see *Revolutionäres Denken: Georg Lukács*, hrsg. von F. Benseler (Darmstadt—Neuwied: 1984).
- ³² István Király: *Kosztolányi* (Budapest: 1986), p. 33.
- ³³ Lukács: *Wie ist Deutschland zum Zentrum der reaktionären Ideologie geworden?*, pp. 189–90.
- ³⁴ Lukács: *Wie ist die faschistische Philosophie in Deutschland entstanden?*, p. 56.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58. "Im Jahre 1934 distanzierte sich Georg Lukács auf einer wissenschaftlichen Tagung des Instituts für Philosophie der Kommunistischen Akademie in Moskau von den in *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* vertreten Thesen", we can read in *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* (1985) No. 4, p. 295. Lukács's paper, "Die Bedeutung von Materialismus und Empirio-kriticismus für die Bolschewisierung der kommunistischen Parteien", was read on June 24, 1934, and first published in Russian in *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* (1934) No. 4.
- ³⁶ Original manuscript at LAL, archive reference 3, d.I.15.
- ³⁷ Lukács: *Wie ist Deutschland zum Zentrum der reaktionären Ideologie geworden?*, pp. 196–97; "Der

Kampf zwischen Liberalismus und Demokratie im Spiegel des historischen Romans der deutschen Antifaschisten", *Internationale Literatur* (1938) No. 5—also in his *Essays über Realismus* (Berlin: 1948).

³⁸ Lukács: "Der Kampf zwischen Liberalismus und Demokratie im Spiegel des historischen Romans der deutschen Antifaschisten", in his *Essays über Realismus*, p. 92.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁴⁰ Lukács: *Borba gumanizma i varvarstva*, p. 1.

⁴¹ Lukács: *Wie ist Deutschland zum Zentrum der reaktionären Ideologie geworden?*, p. 23.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁴⁵ See Lukács: *Über die Vernunft in der Kultur*.

⁴⁶ Lukács's then unpublished article "Kritik von rechts oder von links? Antwort an Ernst Bloch" is an answer to Bloch's "Der Nazi kocht im eigenen Saft", which appeared in *Freies Deutschland* (Mexico) (April, 1942) No. 6. Lukács's manuscript is in the Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED. Zentrales Parteiarchiv, W. Pieck Nachlass, archive reference NL 109/79; cf. also Ernst Bloch und Georg Lukács: *Dokumente zum 100. Geburtstag*, ed. by M. Mesterházi and Gy. Mezei (Budapest: 1984).

⁴⁷ László Sziklai: *Lukács és a fasizmus kora* [Lukács and the Age of Fascism] (Budapest: 1984; Doktori disszertáció tézisei), p. 18.

⁴⁸ László Sziklai: *Proletárforradalom után* [After the Proletarian Revolution] (Budapest: 1986), p. 260.

⁴⁹ "Mikhail Aleksandrovitch Lifschitz 1905—1983", *Voproszi Filosofii* (1983) No. 12, pp. 160—61.

⁵⁰ E. G. Miroshnichenko: "Zhurnal Literaturny Kritik v hudozhestvennom protsesse 30-h godov", *Filologicheskie nauki* (1979) No. 1, p. 78.

⁵¹ Georg Lukács: "Record of a Life", in his *Record of a Life*, trans. by R. Livingstone (London: 1983), pp. 96—7. On Lukács's relation to Lifschitz, see *ibid.*, pp. 86—88.

⁵² Georg Lukács: "Friedrich Engels als Literaturtheoretiker und Literaturkritiker", *Internationale Literatur* (1936) No. 2.

⁵³ György Lukács: *Művészet és társadalom* [Art and Society] (Budapest: 1968), p. 11.

⁵⁴ G. A. Belaya: "Literaturny Kritik", in *Ocherki istorii russkoy i sovetskoy zhurnalistiki*, ed. by G. Dement'ev (Moscow: 1968) Vol. II, p. 238; further, see *Kratkaya Literaturnaya Entsiklopediya*, ed. by A.A. Surkov (Moscow: 1967), Vol. IV, pp. 319—20.

⁵⁵ Belaya: "Literaturny Kritik", in *op. cit.*, p. 247.

⁵⁶ Marx's theorem of the uneven development of art and society, which later was to play a great role also in Lukács, appeared early. See Lunacharsky's preface to F. P. Shiller: *Marks i Engels ob iskusstve* (Moscow: 1932).

⁵⁷ László Sziklai: *Történelmi lecke haladóknak* [A lesson in history for advanced students] (Budapest: 1977), p. 278.

⁵⁸ For a more detailed account, see Sziklai: *Proletárforradalom után*, pp. 258—60.

⁵⁹ Mihail Lifschitz: *Karl Marx und die Ästhetik* (Dresden: 1967), p. 173.

⁶⁰ Georg Lukács: *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Ästhetik* (Berlin: 1954), p. 5.

⁶¹ Lukács's aversion toward the specialization of scholarly disciplines is discussed by József Szili: "Irodalomelméleti kérdések Az esztétikum sajátosságá-ban" [Questions of literary theory in *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*], *Kritika* (1985) No. 9.

⁶² See Joachim Sailer: "Georg Lukács und die Frage nach der Spezifik des Ästhetischen", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* (1985) No. 4.

⁶³ For a more detailed account, see Dénes Zoltai: *Egy írástudó visszatér: Lukács György 1945 utáni munkásságáról* [An Intellectual Returns: On György Lukács's Activity after 1945] (Budapest: 1986), pp. 168 ff.

⁶⁴ Lukács: *Művészet és társadalom*, p. 9.

⁶⁵ Lukács: *Literaturne teorii XIX. veka i marksizm*, p. 5.

⁶⁶ We have in mind first of all *Wie ist die faschistische Philosophie in Deutschland entstanden?*

⁶⁷ György Poszler: *Az évszázad csapdái* [The Traps of the Century] (Budapest: 1968), p. 109.

⁶⁸ Lukács: *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels als Literaturhistoriker*, p. 83.

⁶⁹ "Franz Mehring"—also in Georg Lukács: *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Ästhetik* (Berlin: 1954). "Stalin's criticism of Plekhanov gave me the idea of making a similar critique of Mehring." Lukács: "Record of a Life", in *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁷⁰ Georg Lukács: "Kritik der Literaturtheorie Lassalles", *Der rote Aufbau* (1932) No. 19, p. 903.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² "Ästhetische Streifzüge", *Die Neue Zeit* (1898) No. 99, pp. 281—88—also in Franz Mehring: *Aufsätze zur deutschen Literatur von Hebbel bis Schweichel: Gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin: 1961) Bd. XI, pp. 225—26.

⁷³ "...die immer klarer zutage tretende Verwandtschaft der letzten Konsequenzen seiner Literaturtheorie mit

denen des Trotzkismus in der Einschätzung der Möglichkeit einer proletarisch-revolutionären Literatur vor der Machtergreifung." Lukács: "Kritik der Literaturtheorie Lassalles", in *op. cit.*, p. 904.

⁷⁴ The editorial foreword bore the fairly long title "Marks i Engels o trgedii Lassalya Franz von Sickingen: Perepiska Marksa i Engelsa s Lassallem [which was, however, the title of Lukács's article]: Predislovi re-daktsii *Literaturnogo Nasledstva*: Statya Georga Lukácsa", *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo* Vol. 3 (1932), which was followed by Lukács's study and the respective documents, in the same issue. Lukács's study was also published in German as "Kritik der Literaturtheorie Lassalles", *Der Rote Aufbau* (1932) No. 18, but according to an editorial note attached to it, 'here this article is published with a few deletions and changes' (i.e., relative to the Russian version).

⁷⁵ Hans Koch: *Franz Mehrings Beitrag zur marxistischen Literaturtheorie* (Berlin: 1959), especially the chapter "Mehrings Platz in der Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung".

⁷⁶ Georg Lukács: *The Historical Novel*, trans. by H. and S. Mitchell (Harmondsworth: 1969).

⁷⁷ "Stalin himself intervened [...] when, around 1928, he described the Social Democrats as the 'twin brothers' of the Fascists." Lukács: "Preface to the New Edition (1967)", in *op. cit.*, p. xxviii. This statement leaves us in dark as to whether at that time Lukács in essence accepted this line. Hans Koch also contradicts himself when he seeks to justify Lukács's action against "rechtsopportunistische, trotzkistische Konterbande" (Koch: *Franz Mehrings Beitrag zur marxistischen Literaturtheorie*, p. 16), but does not accept the literary theoretical conclusions that Lukács drew from this fact. I think that the dilemma can be solved by facing the facts head on, the line of 'social fascism' was basically mistaken, it caused immense damage to the international working class movement both politically and ideologically. Its acceptance by Lukács made it more difficult for him to find a way out.

⁷⁸ *The Young Hegel* was accepted as his doctoral dissertation on December 29, 1942, after his return from the evacuation in Tashkent, and on August 28, 1943 he was officially awarded for it a doctorate in philosophy by the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Though, according to Lukács, it was finished in the autumn of 1937, due to Hegel's reputation at that time ('Prussian aristocratic reaction against the French Revolution and French materialism', in P. Bondarenko's words; cf. his "O primenenii dialektiki v poznanii prirody", *Bolshevik* [1947] No. 7—8), as well as to other reasons ("The immediate outbreak of war delayed its appearance for many years." Georg Lukács: "Preface to the new edition [1954]", in his *The Young Hegel*, trans. by R. Livingstone [London 1975], p. xix), the work could not be published; it first appeared in Switzerland in 1948.

⁷⁹ T. I. Ozyerman: "Lukács György mint Hegel filozófiájának kutatója" [György Lukács as a researcher of Hegel's philosophy], in Sziklai (ed.): *Az élő Lukács*.

⁸⁰ Lukács: *The Young Hegel*, p. 399.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁸² Lukács: *Literaturne teorii XIX. veka i marksizm*, pp. 9—69.

⁸³ László Sziklai: *Georg Lukács und seine Zeit 1930—1945*, übers. von Á. Meller (Wien—Köln—Graz: 1986), p. 104.

⁸⁴ Georg Lukács: "L'art pour l'art und proletarische Dichtung", *Die Tat* (Jena) (June, 1926), No. 3, p. 222.

⁸⁵ Krausz and Mesterházi: *Mű és történelem: Viták Lukács György műveiről a húszas években*, pp. 182—83.

⁸⁶ Georg Lukács: "The Role of Morality in Communist Production", in his *Political Writings 1919—1929*, p. 52.

⁸⁷ Lukács: *The Young Hegel*, p. 513.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 505.

⁸⁹ S. Heppener and V. Wrona: "Georg Lukács", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* (1985) No. 4, p. 298.

⁹⁰ Lukács: *Wie ist Deutschland zum Zentrum der reaktionären Ideologie geworden?*, p. 94.

⁹¹ See especially Part IV, Chapter 4 of *The Young Hegel*, "'Entäusserung' ('externalization') as the central philosophical concept of *The Phenomenology of Mind*"; and Ozyerman: "Lukács György, mint Hegel filozófiájának kutatója", in *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁹² See Sziklai (ed.): *Az élő Lukács*, p. 25. On the relation of Lukács's analyses of the history of philosophy to the problems of socialist society, see Sziklai: *Georg Lukács und seine Zeit 1930—1945*, esp. p. 149. As Sziklai writes elsewhere: "Lukács leaves no doubt concerning the fact that he approaches the contradictions of progress from the point of view of socialism without recurring to shallow analogies." Sziklai: *Lukács és a fasizmus kora* (Doktori disszertáció tézisei), p. 11.

⁹³ See Sziklai (ed.): *Az élő Lukács*, p. 31.

⁹⁴ Sziklai: *Georg Lukács und seine Zeit 1930—1945*, p. 98.

⁹⁵ Mihail Lifsic—László Sziklai: "Negyedik beszélgetés: 1974. december 12." [Fourth conversation: December 12, 1974] in their *Moszkvai évek Lukács Györggyel* [Moscow years with György Lukács] (Budapest: 1989) p. 99.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 111—12.

⁹⁷ Lukács: *The Young Hegel*, p. 105.

⁹⁸ Stalin: *Fragen des Leninismus*, p. 674.

⁹⁹ Georg Lukács: "Zur Frage der Satire", *Internationale Literatur* (1932), No. 4—5.

¹⁰⁰ Lukács: *The Young Hegel*, p. 72.

¹⁰¹ According to one of Lukács's students and author of a monographic study: "Trotzdem stand Lukács auf dem theoretischen Standpunkt, in diesen Prozessen geschehe etwas, das grundsätzlich mit dem Vergleichbar sei, was sich im Prozess gegen Danton während des jakobinischen Terrors ereignet hatte [...] Die politische Wahrheit erwies sich für Lukács aus wichtiger als die faktische Wahrheit des Prozesses." István Hermann: *Georg Lukács*, übers. von E. Kiss (Budapest—Graz—Wien: 1986), p. 138. Lukács himself said concerning his relation to the trials: "ich bejahte ihre historische Notwendigkeit [...] Ein überzeugter Kommunist konnte also nur sagen: 'right or wrong, my party' [...] Da aber für diese Periode meiner Wirksamkeit welthistorisch der Kampf um die Existenz des einzigen sozialistischen Staates und darum um die Existenz des Sozialismus im Mittelpunkt stand, habe ich selbstverständlich alle meine Stellungnahmen, auch zum eigenen Lebenswerk, der hier fälligen Entscheidung untergeordnet. Das bedeutete jedoch niemals eine Kapitulation vor allen jenen ideologischen Tendenzen, die im Laufe dieses Kampfes entstanden, propagiert wurden und wieder verschwunden sind." Lukács: "Postscriptum 1957 zu *Mein Weg zu Marx*", in his *Schriften zur Ideologie und Politik* (Neuwied — Berlin: 1967), pp. 647—48; cf. also his "Sozialismus als Phase radikaler, kritischer Reformen", in his *Marxismus und Stalinismus* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: 1970).

¹⁰² Sziklai: (ed.): *Az élő Lukács*, p. 38.

¹⁰³ Sziklai: *Georg Lukács und seine Zeit 1930—1945*, p. 162.

¹⁰⁴ See Fehér et al.: "Notes on Lukács' Ontology", in *op. cit.*, p. 161.

¹⁰⁵ "Roman kak burzhoaznaya epopeya", in *Literaturnaya enciklopediya* (Moscow: 1935), Vol. IX; cf. also Georg Lukács: "Der Roman", in his *Moskauer Schriften: Zur Literaturtheorie und Literaturpolitik 1934—1940* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1981).

¹⁰⁶ See Lukács's letter to Paul Ernst in May, 1915, in his *Dostojewski* (Budapest: 1958), p. 7.

¹⁰⁷ See Lukács: "Die Theorie des Romans", *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* (1916).

¹⁰⁸ See Lukács's "Vorwort" to his *Die Theorie des Romans* (Neuwied: 1963).

¹⁰⁹ László Sziklai: "Lukács György moszkvai írásai" [The Moscow writings of György Lukács], *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle* (1975) No. 1—2, p. 7—also in his *Történelmi lecke haladóknak* [A Lesson of History for Advanced Students] (Budapest: 1977).

¹¹⁰ Árpád Kovács: "A regényelmélet módszertanához: Bahtyin, Lukács, Pospelov" [On the methodology of the theory of the novel: Bakhtin, Lukács, Pospelov], *Filológiai Közlöny* (1977) No. 2—3.

¹¹¹ V. D. Oskotsky: *Roman i istoriya* (Moscow: 1980), p. 23.

¹¹² A contemporary critic of *The Theory of the Novel* rightly recognized the motives of the discrepancies between the epic and the novel: "Die Kunstform jener seligen Zeiten ist das Epos [...] Erst wenn der Sinn sich aus der Welt verflüchtigt, zwischen Seele und Gebilde, Innen und Aussen der Abgrund sich öffnet, ist die geschichtliche Stunde für den grossen Roman gekommen." Siegfried Kracauer: "Theorie des Romans", *Die Weltbühne* (September 1, 1921) No. 35, pp. 229—30.

¹¹³ "Problemy teorii romana: Doklad G. Lukacsa v sektsii literaturi Instituta Filosofii Kommunisticheskoy Akademii", *Literaturny Kritik* (1935), No. 2; "Preniya po dokladu", *Literaturny Kritik* (1935) No. 2; "Zaključitelnoe slovo tovarisha Lukacsa", *Ibid.*,—also in German as "Referat über den 'Roman'", in his *Moskauer Schriften: Zur Literaturtheorie und Literaturpolitik 1934—1940* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1981).

¹¹⁴ See especially Sziklai: "Lukács György moszkvai írásai", in *op. cit.*; Michael Wegner: "Change in the Novel: The Concepts of Georg Lukács and Mikhail Bakhtin", in *Change in Language and Literature: Proceedings of the 16th Congress of FILLM*, ed. by M. Gulyás, J. Kovács, and M. Szabolcsi (Budapest: 1986); Endre Iglói and László Jagusztin: "Az 1935-ös regényvita néhány tipológiai tanulsága: Lukács György regényfelfogásának vitája a Szovjetunióban" [Some typological lessons of the 1935 debate on the novel: The debate on György Lukács's conception of the novel in the Soviet Union], in *Lukács György irodalomelmélete; Zoltán Hajnáy: "Lukács György regényelmélete és az orosz regény"* [György Lukács's theory of the novel and the Russian novel], in Nemes (ed.): *Lukács György irodalomelmélete*.

¹¹⁵ Wegner: "Change in the Novel: The Concepts of Georg Lukács and Mikhail Bakhtin", in *op. cit.*

¹¹⁶ *Literaturny Kritik* (1935) No. 2, p. 225.

¹¹⁷ *Literaturny Kritik* (1935) No. 3, p. 250.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Michail M. Bahtin: "Epos und Roman", in his *Untersuchungen zur Poetik und Theorie des Romans* (Berlin—Weimar: 1986).

¹²⁰ The following parts of the work were published in the journal: "Klassicheskaya forma istoricheskogo romana" (1932) No. 2; "Istoricheskyy roman i istoricheskaya drama" (1937) Nos 9 and 12; "Istoricheskyy roman

i krízis burzhuaznogo realizma" (1938) Nos 3 and 7; "Sovremenny burzhuazno-demokratichesky gumanizm i istorichesky roman" (1939) Nos 8 and 12.

¹²¹ The first Hungarian publication of *The Historical Novel* was in 1947. "The publication of *The Historical Novel*, for example, was not feasible in Russia, even though I did submit it to a publisher." Lukács: "Record of a Life", in *op. cit.*, pp. 105—6.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹²³ György Poszler: *A műfajelmélet filozófiája — a filozófia műfajelmélete: A költői műfajok Hegel és a fiatal Lukács esztétikájában* [The Philosophy of the Theory of Genres—the Theory of Genres of Philosophy: Poetic Genres in the Aesthetics of Hegel and the Young Lukács] (Budapest: 1982; Doktori disszertáció tézisei), p. 13; further, see Szili: "Irodalomelméleti kérdések Az esztétikum sajátosságában", *op. cit.* According to Poszler, both Hegel and Lukács failed to create this general concept, which can be attributed unequivocally to the fact that in Hegel the closed, and in Lukács the almost closed philosophical system suppressed the facts of literary history and genre history. See his "Történetfilozófia és költői műfajelmélet Lukács György életművében" [The philosophy of history and the theory of poetic genres in the oeuvre of György Lukács], in Sziklai (ed.): *Az élő Lukács*, p. 205.

¹²⁴ Sziklai: *Georg Lukács und seine Zeit 1930—1945*.

¹²⁵ Lukács: *The Historical Novel*, pp. 9—10.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

¹²⁸ For a more detailed account, see György Poszler: "A realizmuselmélet keletkezése" [The rise of the theory of realism], *Jelenkor* (1986) No. 6, p. 533.

¹²⁹ Lukács: *The Historical Novel*, pp. 110—11.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹³³ As G. Belaya writes: "Der von Georg Lukács 1935 ausgesprochene Gedanke von der Gesellschaft als Einheit kam gerade zur rechten Zeit." Galina Belaya: "Entdeckungen in der sowjetischen Literaturtheorie der dreissiger Jahre", *Kunst und Literatur* (1985) No. 5, pp. 594—95.

¹³⁴ Lukács: *The Historical Novel*, p. 304.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 138—39.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 421.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁴¹ On the present interest of the historical novel, see Haná Hrzalová: "Actualité du roman historique", *AICL Revue* (April, 1986) No. 27.

¹⁴² Georg Lukács: "Preface to the Volume *Art and Society*", *New Hungarian Quarterly* (Autumn, 1972) No. 13.

¹⁴³ See Peter Wienden: "Einige Bemerkungen über die Zeitschrift *Internationale Literatur*", *Deutsche Zeitung* (January 22, 1939) No. 18, p. 4. For Lukács's response to it, see his "Grenzen des Realismus?", *Deutsche Zeitung* (February 27, 1939) No. 47, p. 3. Lukács writes, *inter alia*: "Es geht also — wieder und nicht erst jetzt — einfach um den Realismus und nicht um den sozialistischen Realismus."

¹⁴⁴ See Lukács: "Postscriptum 1957 zu *Mein Weg zu Marx*", in *op. cit.*, p. 648.

¹⁴⁵ See Georg Lukács: "Gelebtes Denken", in his *Record of a Life*, p. 165.

¹⁴⁶ See, e.g., Klaus Völker: "Brecht und Lukács", *Kursbuch* (1966) No. 7; Peter Jurak: "Revolutionäre Intellektuelle — Verräterische Intellektuelle", *Neues Forum* (1970) No. 204.

¹⁴⁷ Georg Lukács: "Art and Objective Truth", in his *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*, trans. by A. Kahn (New York: 1971), p. 58—first published in Russian as "K probleme obektivnoy hudozhestvennoy formi", *Literaturny Kritik* (1935) No. 9. The relation between apologetic tendencies and anti-realism is discussed in Lukács's "Zur Ästhetik Schillers", in his *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Ästhetik* (Berlin: 1954).

¹⁴⁸ "Dieser Lukács wird von dem Problem der ideologischen Verfälle magisch angezogen", in Bertolt Brecht: *Arbeitsjournal* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1973), Bd. I, pp. 9—10.

¹⁴⁹ Lukács: "Realizm v sovremennoy nemetskoy literature", *Literaturny Kritik* (1934) No. 6.

¹⁵⁰ Georg Lukács: "Fashizm i teorija literaturi v Germanii", in *Protiv fashistkogo mrakobesia i demagogii*, ed. by A. Deborin, *et al.* (Moscow: 1936), pp. 295—96.

¹⁵¹ Lukács: "Realizm v sovremennoy nemetskoy literature", in *op. cit.*, p. 36. Gudrun Klatt binds the appearance of the concept of realism to this article. See her *Vom Umgang mit der Moderne: Ästhetische Konzepte der dreissiger Jahre: Lifschitz, Lukács, Lunatscharski, Bloch, Benjamin* (Berlin: 1984), p. 71. Actually, the concept—although unexplained—had been present for a long time in Lukács's thinking; he discussed it to-

gether with totality in his book on the modern drama (1911). He dealt with realism in his essay on "Karl Marx und Friedrich Theodor Vischer", and previously some essential categories of this theory (such as reflection, the typical, intensive totality, objectivity, or partisanship) appeared in his articles in *Die Linkskurve*. See Szerdahelyi: "Lukács György útja Az esztétikum sajátosságához", in *op. cit.* The term 'realism' became the exclusive slogan of the RAPP in 1927, and it is well known that at that time Lukács's views were in agreement at several points with those of the proletarian literature movement. See Mihály Varga: "A szocialista realizmus fogalom kialakulásának kérdéséhez" [To the question of the origin of the concept of socialist realism], in *Meghallói a törvényeknek* [Listeners to Laws], ed. by L. Illés and M. Szabolcsi (Budapest: 1973).

¹⁵² "So wird für Lukács die Besonderheit oder Eigenart zur tragenden Idee seiner Realismus-Theorie," writes Günther K. Lehmann in his "Georg Lukács oder die parteiliche Vernunft", *Sonntag* (April, 14, 1985), p. 9. Lukács's essays on the category of the particular first appeared in *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* between 1953 and 1956. That Lukács's theory of realism was not completely free of 'style typological hoops', and the 'tendency of vulgarizing epistemology' is pointed out by József Szili, in his *A művészi visszatükrözés szerkezete* [The Structure of Artistic Reflection] (Budapest: 1981).

¹⁵³ See the more recent literature on the question: Manfred Naumann, et al.: *Gesellschaft, Literatur, Lesen* (Berlin—Weimar: 1973); Peter Bürger: *Theorie der Avantgarde* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1974); "Theorie der Avantgarde": *Antworten auf Peter Bürgers Bestimmungen von Kunst und bürgerliche Gesellschaft*, hrsg. von M. Lüdke (Frankfurt A. M.: 1976); Dieter Kliche, et al.: *Literarische Widerspiegelung* (Berlin—Weimar: 1981); Manfred Naumann: "Abbild — Sinnbild — Wertung: Rita Schober zum 65. Geburtstag", *Weimarer Beiträge* (1983) No. 11; Rita Schober: "Wirklichkeitseffekt oder Realismus?", *Weimarer Beiträge* (1986) No. 10; Thomas Metscher: "Über die notwendige Pluralität künstlerischer Formen", *Weimarer Beiträge* (1986) No. 10.

¹⁵⁴ Metscher: "Über die notwendige Pluralität künstlerischer Formen", *Ibid.*, p. 1628.

¹⁵⁵ Hans Koch: *Marxismus und Ästhetik* (Berlin: 1962), p. 171.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 40—1.

¹⁵⁷ Viktor Zmegac: *Kunst und Wirklichkeit* (Bad Homburg—Berlin—Zürich: 1969), pp. 11—2.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁵⁹ Roland Barthes: *Essais critiques* (Paris: 1964), pp. 163—4, quoted by Schober: "Wirklichkeitseffekt oder Realismus?", in *op. cit.*, p. 1600. Roland Barthes's theory, of course, does not annihilate the existence of reality independently of the mind, and neither does Claude Duchet, who, following Hegel, states that realist texts do not mediate reality, but only the image of reality; cf. Schober: *Ibid.*, p. 1599. Similarly, it is only a 'transposition' of the question when Rita Schober states that "Kunst und Literatur bauen keine Dingwelt, sondern eine Wertwelt", in her *Abbild—Sinnbild—Wertung*, p. 26. It is obvious that we cannot imagine any reality of value (*Wertwelt*) without the reality of things (*Dingwelt*), i. e., all these views that at best approach axiology from the epistemological conception of reality cannot annihilate the material existence of reality.

¹⁶⁰ From the extensive literature on the question, we may refer to Tamás Ungvári's *Avantgarde vagy realizmus?* [Avant-garde or Realism?] (Budapest: 1979); David Pike: *Deutsche Schriftsteller im sowjetischen Exil 1933—1945* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1981); Hans Günther: *Die Verstaatlichung der Literatur* (Stuttgart: 1984); Belaja: "Entdeckungen in der sowjetischen Literaturtheorie der dreissiger Jahre", *op. cit.*; Sziklai: *Georg Lukács und seine Zeit 1930—1945*.

¹⁶¹ This merit of Lukács's is appreciated by Dieter Schlenstedt: "Veto gegen die Trollwelt: Georg Lukács zur Kunstfeindlichkeit des Kapitalismus", *Weimarer Beiträge* (1986) No. 2. At the same time, it is an unjust 'denunciation' of Lukács when Adorno writes: "dass heisst nichts anderes, als dass die Prozeduren des sozialistischen Realismus und der von Lukács als deren Komplement erkannten sozialistischen Romantik ideologische Verklärung eines schlechten Bestehenden ist." Adorno: "Erpresste Versöhnung", in his *Noten zur Literatur* Bd. 2. p. 184.

¹⁶² Georg Lukács: "Zur Frage der Satire", in his *Über die Vernunft in der Kultur: Ausgewählte Schriften 1909—1969* (Leipzig: 1985), pp. 377—406.

¹⁶³ Lukács: "Grenzen des Realismus?", *op. cit.*, p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ Belaja: "Entdeckungen in der sowjetischen Literaturtheorie der dreissiger Jahre", in *op. cit.*, p. 598.

¹⁶⁵ Lukács: "Art and Objective Truth", in *op. cit.*, pp. 34—5.

¹⁶⁶ György Lukács: *Adalékok az esztétika történetéhez* [Contributions to the History of Aesthetics] (Budapest: 1972), Vol. I, pp. 15—6.

¹⁶⁷ György Lukács: *A realizmus problémái* [Problems of Realism] (Budapest: 1948), pp. 9—10.

¹⁶⁸ See, e. g., Friedrich Tomberg: "Die Kritik der spätbürgerlichen Philosophie unter dem Blickwinkel der Brecht-Lukács-Debatte", *Weimarer Beiträge* (1986) No. 2.

¹⁶⁹ Georg Lukács: "A Correspondence with Anna Seghers", in his *Essays on Realism*, trans. by D. Fernbach (London: 1980), p. 183.

¹⁷⁰ N. Konrad: "Das Problem des Realismus und die Literaturen des Ostens", in *Probleme des Realismus in der Weltliteratur*, hrsg. von E. Dieckmann (Berlin: 1962), p. 289; further, see N. Gej: "Zur Definition des Realismus", and A. Sis: "Gegen die Konzeption 'Realismus-Antirealismus'", in *ibid.*

- ¹⁷¹ Hans Koch: *Marxismus und Ästhetik* (Berlin: 1961), p. 556.
- ¹⁷² Schlenstedt: "Veto gegen die Trollwelt: Georg Lukács zur Kunstfeindlichkeit des Kapitalismus", *op. cit.*, p. 277.
- ¹⁷³ Dénes Zoltai: "A kritikai realizmus jelentősége ma" [The importance of critical realism today], *Kritika* (1986) No. 6, p. 7.
- ¹⁷⁴ This is why an ironic and superficial view is incorrect in holding that Lukács in effect attributed something 'not-yet-existing' ('*Noch-Nicht-Seiendes*') to the concept of the typical. Lukács's intentions were just the opposite. See Peter Demetz: "Zwischen Klassik und Bolschewismus: Georg Lukács als Theoretiker der Dichtung", *Merkur* (1958) No. 6.
- ¹⁷⁵ Klatt: *Vom Umgang mit der Moderne: Ästhetische Konzepte der dreissiger Jahre: Lifschitz, Lukács, Lunatscharski, Bloch, Benjamin*, p. 85.
- ¹⁷⁶ Georg Lukács: "Erzählen oder Beschreiben?", *Internationale Literatur* (1936) No. 11, pp. 100—18—also in English as "Narrate or Describe?", in his *Writer and Critic and Other Essays* (this passage is omitted from the English translation).
- ¹⁷⁷ Georg Lukács: "Tribune or Bureaucrat?", in his *Essays on Realism*, p. 228—also in German as "Volks-tribun oder Bürokrat?", *Internationale Literatur* (1940) No. 1.
- ¹⁷⁸ Lukács: "Tribune or Bureaucrat?", in *op. cit.*, p. 228.
- ¹⁷⁹ On the debates concerning formalism, naturalism, and vulgar sociology, see *Geschichte der russischen Sowjetliteratur*, hrsg. von H. Jünger (Berlin: 1973), Bd. I; Ilja Ehrenburg: *Menschen, Jahren, Leben* (Berlin: 1978), Bd. II; László Sziklai: "Melyik örökségről mondunk le?" [Which heritage do we renounce?], *Világosság* (1973) No. 10; Klatt: *Vom Umgang mit der Moderne: Ästhetische Konzepte der dreissiger Jahre: Lifschitz, Lukács, Lunatscharski, Bloch, Benjamin*, especially pp. 232—34.
- ¹⁸⁰ At the session of the Institute of Philosophy of the Communist Academy on November 20, 1934, E. Usievich read a paper on vulgar sociological views. In the ensuing debate, the most contradictory views came into sharp conflict with one another. Among others, Foht, Ermilov, Nusinov, I. Sats, Hoffenschäfer, Franz Schiller, Grib, M. Lifschitz, and V. P. Pereverzev took part in the discussion. On the antecedents of the vulgar sociological school, see Lajos Nyirő: "Kutatási irányok a 20-as évek szovjet irodalomtudományában" [Trends of research in the Soviet literary scholarship of the 1920s], *Helikon* (1978) No. 1—2.
- ¹⁸¹ M. Lifschitz: "K voprosi ob esteticheskikh vzglyadah Marksa", quoted by Sziklai: *Történelmi lecke haladóknak*, p. 418.
- ¹⁸² Engels's letter to Paul Ernst, dated June 6, 1890, in Marx—Engels: *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Moskau: 1950) vol. II. pp. 458—66.
- ¹⁸³ G. Belaya discovers the trace of a vulgar sociological scheme in Lukács's book, *K istorii realizma* (1937), namely, in the antithesis of 'great realism—decadence'. See G. Belaya: "Literaturny Kritik", in *op. cit.*, p. 240. T. Motileva, on the contrary, points out that Lukács aimed at unfolding "objective social truths" in these analyses, and not at "unveiling" on the basis of class origin. See her "S distantsii desatiletii", in Lukács: *Borba humanizma i varvarstva*, p. 223.
- ¹⁸⁴ Quoted by Lukács in "Franz Mehring", in his *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Ästhetik*.
- ¹⁸⁵ Georg Lukács: "Wangenheim", *Literaturny Kritik* (1935) No. 11; "Gustav von Wangenheim", *Alternative* (1972) No. 84—5.
- ¹⁸⁶ See Ernst Bloch's speech at the writers' congress in Paris in 1935, in *Paris 1935: Erster Internationaler Schriftstellerkongress zur Verteidigung der Kultur*, hrsg. von W. Klein (Berlin: 1962), p. 324.
- ¹⁸⁷ See Lukács: "A Correspondence with Anna Seghers", in *op. cit.*
- ¹⁸⁸ Kurt Batt: "Erlebnis des Umbruchs und harmonische Gestalt", in *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, hrsg. von W. Mittenzwei (Leipzig: 1975). At the same time, we have to note: Kurt Batt overemphasizes the consequences that he has drawn from this fact. Lukács's subsequent greater understanding of spontaneous immediacy is hardly tantamount to a pulling away from the Hegelian 'rule of absolute idea' and putting 'subjective properties and their contingent particularities' on a pedestal. For the Hegelian interpretation, see Hegel's *Ästhetik* (Berlin: 1955), p. 297.
- ¹⁸⁹ Lukács: "Art and Objective Truth", in *op. cit.*, p. 33.
- ¹⁹⁰ Lukács: "Erzählen oder Beschreiben?", in his *Kunst und objektive Wahrheit*, p. 163. (This passage is omitted from the English translation as "Narrate or Describe?")
- ¹⁹¹ "Die intellektuelle Physiognomie der künstlerischen Gestalten", in Lukács: *Kunst und objektive Wahrheit*, p. 204. (This passage is omitted from the English translation as "The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization", in his *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*.)
- ¹⁹² Bertolt Brecht: "Über das Programm der Sowjetschriftsteller", in his *Schriften zur Literatur und Kunst: Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1967), Bd. 19, p. 446.
- ¹⁹³ "Gegen Formalismus und Naturalismus: Zu den Prawda-Artikeln über Kunstfragen", *Internationale Literatur* (1936) No. 6.
- ¹⁹⁴ Lukács: *The Historical Novel*, p. 415.

- ¹⁹⁵ See, e.g., Dietrich Steinbach: *Die historisch-kritische Sozialtheorie der Literatur* (Stuttgart: 1973), p. 25; Silvie Rücker: *Totalität bei Georg Lukács und in den nachfolgenden Diskussionen* (Münster: 1973); Dieter Schlenstedt: "Veto gegen die Trollwelt: Georg Lukács zur Kunstfeindlichkeit des Kapitalismus", *Weimarer Beiträge* (1986) No. 2.
- ¹⁹⁶ Georg Lukács: "Preface to the New Edition (1967)", in *op. cit.*, p. xx.
- ¹⁹⁷ Hans Günther: "Erbschaft dieser Zeit?", *Internationale Literatur* (1936) No. 3—also in his *Des Herren eigener Geist* (Berlin—Weimar: 1981).
- ¹⁹⁸ See Lukács's essays from this period: "The intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization" (1936), and "The Ideal of the Harmonious Man in Bourgeois Aesthetics" (1938), in his *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*.
- ¹⁹⁹ Naumann (ed.): *Gesellschaft—Literatur—Lesen*, p. 413. In later critical literature the pejorative term 'aesthetic ideal' appears as 'aesthetic utopia'. See Kliche, *et al.*: *Literarische Widerspiegelung*, p. 71, and Klatt: *Vom Umgang mit der Moderne*, p. 46. In my opinion, the events of the past fifty years have put the real values of the aesthetic of 'class struggle' and 'utopia' into balance.
- ²⁰⁰ Naumann (ed.): *Gesellschaft—Literatur—Lesen*, pp. 425, 480.
- ²⁰¹ Günther K. Lehmann: "Stramin und totale Form: Der Kunstphilosoph Georg Lukács und sein Verhältnis zu Ernst Blochs Ästhetik der Hoffnung", *Weimarer Beiträge* (1985) No. 4, p. 553.
- ²⁰² Hans Heinz Holz: *Logos suprematicos: Ernst Blochs Philosophie der unfertigen Welt* (Neuwied: 1975). This question is treated in detail by Miklós Mesterházi: "Ernst Bloch, az expresszionizmus filozófusa" [Ernst Bloch, the philosopher of expressionism], *Világosság* (1977) No. 6.
- ²⁰³ Max Raphael: *Arbeiter, Kunst und Künstler* (Dresden: 1978), p. 355.
- ²⁰⁴ Lukács: "The Ideal of the Harmonious Man in Bourgeois Aesthetics", in *op. cit.*
- ²⁰⁵ Mikhail Lifschitz: "Der Leninismus und die Kunstkritik", *Internationale Literatur* (1936) No. 12, p. 103.
- ²⁰⁶ Naumann (ed.): *Gesellschaft — Literatur — Lesen*, p. 483.
- ²⁰⁷ Günther: "Erbschaft dieser Zeit?", in *op. cit.*, p. 97. The destructive effect of capitalism on human integrity, on the totality of man is excellently described by Dieter Schlenstedt: "Veto gegen die Trollwelt: Georg Lukács zur Kunstfeindlichkeit des Kapitalismus", in *op. cit.*, p. 279.
- ²⁰⁸ Ernst Bloch: "Diskussionen über Expressionismus", *Das Wort* (1938) No. 6, p. 108.
- ²⁰⁹ Ernst Bloch: "Bemerkungen zur 'Erbschaft dieser Zeit'", *Internationale Literatur* (1936) No. 6, p. 133.
- ²¹⁰ Mittenzwei: "Der Streit zwischen nichtaristotelischer und aristotelischer Kunstauffassung: Die Brecht—Lukács Debatte", in Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, p. 176; cf. also Brecht: *Arbeitsjournal*, Bd. I, p. 26.
- ²¹¹ Werner Mittenzwei: "Brecht und die Schicksale der Materialästhetik", in Barck, Schlenstedt, Thierse (eds): *Künstlerische Avantgarde* (Berlin: 1979), p. 160.
- ²¹² Max Horkheimer writes in his essay on "Montaigne und die Funktion der Skepsis": "In einer zerspaltenen und abstossenden Gesellschaft ist auch das Ich zerspalten und abstossend", in his *Kritische Theorie* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1968), Bd. II, p. 258. Further, see "Európa két filozófája: Marxizmus és egzisztencializmus" [Two philosophies of Europe: Marxism and existentialism], *Kritika* (1986) No. 12.
- ²¹³ See Brecht's *Arbeitsjournal*.
- ²¹⁴ Günther K. Lehmann: "Stramin und totale Form", *Weimarer Beiträge* (1985) No. 4, p. 548.
- ²¹⁵ Wolfgang Heise: "Gondolatok Lukács György esztétikájáról" [Thoughts on György Lukács's aesthetic], in Sziklai (ed.): *Az élő Lukács*, p. 104.
- ²¹⁶ Lukács: "Art and Objective Truth", in *op. cit.*, p. 38. On the role of intensive totality in Lukács's aesthetic, see Manfred Naumann: "Das Dilemma der Rezeptionsästhetik", in his *Blickpunkt Leser* pp. 181—82, and Sebastian Kleinschmidt's "Vorwort", in Lukács: *Über die Vernunft in der Kultur: Ausgewählte Schriften 1909—1969*, p. 21.
- ²¹⁷ Georg Lukács: *Über die Besonderheit als Kategorie der Ästhetik* (Neuwied: 1967), p. 295.
- ²¹⁸ See Szili: *A művészi visszatükrözés szerkezete*, p. 95.
- ²¹⁹ Todor Pavlov: *Die Widerspiegelungstheorie* (Berlin: 1973).
- ²²⁰ See, e.g., Karl Marx: *Capital* (Moscow: 1977), Vol. III, pp. 337, 342—43, 348—49.
- ²²¹ Lukács: *Über die Besonderheit als Kategorie der Ästhetik*, p. 284.
- ²²² The question is dealt with from various angles by Hans Meyer: "Georg Lukács' Grösse und Grenze", *Die Zeit* (July 17, 1964), p. 14; Manfred Naumann: "Einführung in die theoretischen und methodischen Hauptprobleme", in Naumann, *et al.*: *Gesellschaft—Literatur—Lesen*, esp. pp. 42—3; Vladimir Karbusicky: *Widerspiegelungstheorie und Strukturalismus* (München: 1973); Günther K. Lehmann: *Phantasie und künstlerische Arbeit* (Berlin: 1976); Klaus Städtke: "Realistische Literatur", in Kliche, *et al.*: *Literarische Widerspiegelung*; Wolfgang Thierse—Dieter Kliche: "Zur DDR Literaturwissenschaft", *Weimarer Beiträge* (1985) No. 2.
- ²²³ N. K. Gej: "Zur Definition des Realismus", in *Probleme des Realismus in Weltliteratur* hrsg. von E. Dieckmann, p. 412.

²²⁴ K. M. Dolgov: "Estetika György Lukácsa", in *Svoeobrazie esteticheskogo* (Moscow: 1985), Vol. I, p. 330.

²²⁵ See Koch: *Marxismus und Ästhetik*, p. 221. In analyzing the reflection theories of Lukács and Caudwell, József Szili states that, in Lukács, "science is the consciousness of humanity, and art is the self-consciousness of humanity". Szili: *A művészi visszatükrözés szerkezete*, p. 116.

²²⁶ See Lukács: "Preface to the New Edition (1967)", in *op. cit.*, p. xxxv; Éva Ancsel: "Lukács György a művészet társadalmi és morális küldetéséről" [György Lukács on the social and moral mission of art], in Sziklai (ed.): *Az élő Lukács*: Boguslav Jasinski: "Harc az esztétikai visszatükrözés elméletéért" [Fight for the theory of aesthetic reflection], in *ibid.*

²²⁷ Adorno: "Erpresste Versöhnung", in *op. cit.*, pp. 155, 168; further, see Gallas: *Marxistische Literaturtheorie: Kontroversen im Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller*, p. 150.

²²⁸ Christian Fritsch—Peter Rütten: "Anmerkungen zur Brecht—Lukács Debatte", in Joachim Goth, et al.: *Rhetorik—Ästhetik—Ideologie* (Stuttgart: 1973) p. 150.

²²⁹ Joachim Sailer: "Georg Lukács und die Frage nach der Spezifik des Ästhetischen", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* (1985) No. 4, p. 310.

²³⁰ Erwin Pracht: "Sozialistischer Realismus und leninistische Abbildtheorie", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* (1971) No. 6, p. 770.

²³¹ Kurt Batt: "Erlebnis des Umbruchs und harmonische Gestalt", in *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, hrsg. von W. Mittenzwei, p. 223.

²³² See M. Naumann: "Einführung in die theoretischen und methodischen Hauptprobleme", in Naumann, et al. *Gesellschaft—Literatur—Lesen*, pp. 40—44; Werner Mittenzwei: "Der Streit zwischen nichtaristotelischer und aristotelischer Kunstauffassung", in *op. cit.*, pp. 187—89; Werner Mittenzwei: "Lukács's Ästhetik der revolutionären Demokratie", in Lukács: *Kunst und objektive Wahrheit*, pp. 9—10; Robert Weimann: "Realität und Realismus", *Sinn und Form* (1984) No. 5, p. 949.

²³³ Georg Lukács: "'Tendency' or 'Partisanship'?", in his *Essays on realism*, p. 33.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ The reference to Lenin is omitted from the English translation. See V. I. Lenin: *Über den historischen Materialismus* (Wien—Berlin: 1931), Bd. VI, p. 74. Dieter Kliche disregards this passage when referring to the same, but shortened quotation in Lukács's "Art and Objective Truth" that appeared two years later, and condemns Lukács for the error of objectivism against materialist partisanship. See his "Objektivität der Form und naturwüchsiger Realismus: Realistische Abbildung bei Lukács, Becher, Brecht", in Kliche, et al.: *Literarische Widerspiegelung*, pp. 473—75.

²³⁷ Lukács: "Art and Objective Truth", in *op. cit.*, p. 29. The question is treated in detail by Dimitar Denkov: "D. Lukács", *Novo Vreme* (Sofia) (1985) No. 5.

²³⁸ He paid great attention to the theory of genres, even if his activity was not primarily directed to working out this field, as, e.g., was the case with the 'historical novel'. See Lukács's "The Writer and the Critic", in his *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*. At the same time, as György Poszler critically remarks, for Lukács "art has no history of its own and this [...] in essence, questions the justification of a special history of art—for example, the history of genres and forms." Poszler: "A realizmuselmélet keletkezése", in *op. cit.*, p. 529.

²³⁹ Lukács: "Art and Objective Truth", in *op. cit.*, pp. 50—1.

²⁴⁰ Lukács: "The Writer and the Critic", in *ibid.*, p. 189.

²⁴¹ Georg Lukács: "Vorwort zu Hegels Ästhetik", in Hegel: *Ästhetik*, hrsg. von F. Bassenge (Frankfurt a. M.: n. d.), p. 600. See also his "Narrate or Describe?", in *op. cit.*

²⁴² György Lukács: "Kiknek nem kell és miért a Balázs Béla költészete?" [Who do not want Béla Balázs's poetry and why?], in György Lukács: *Ifjúkori művek* [Early Works] (Budapest: 1977), p. 708.

²⁴³ Lukács: "Grenzen des Realismus?", *op. cit.*

²⁴⁴ Lukács: "Art and Objective Truth", in *op. cit.*, p. 51.

²⁴⁵ Lukács: "The Writer and the Critic", in *ibid.*, p. 189.

²⁴⁶ Lukács: "Friedrich Engels als Literaturtheorie und Literaturkritiker", *Internationale Literatur* (1936), No. 2, p. 80.

²⁴⁷ Manfred Buhr: "Vernunft und Realismus verfochten", *Neues Deutschland* (April 13—14, 1985).

²⁴⁸ Günther K. Lehmann: "Georg Lukács oder die parteiliche Vernunft", *Sonntag* (April 14, 1985).

²⁴⁹ Reinhard Weisbach: "Expressionismus oder Realismus?", in his *Wir und der Expressionismus* (Berlin: 1972), p. 125.

²⁵⁰ Klaus Jarmatz: *Exil in der UdSSR* (Leipzig: 1979), pp. 180—83.

²⁵¹ J. Elsberg: "Problem des Realismus und Aufgaben der Literaturwissenschaft", in *Probleme des Realismus in der Weltliteratur*, hrsg. von E. Dieckmann p. 558.

²⁵² Hans Thies Lehmann's opinion is expressed by Dietmar-Ingo Michels: "Lukács in der sozialistischen Kritik", in Lukács: *Moskauer Schriften: Zur Literaturtheorie und Literaturpolitik 1934—1940*, p. 151.

²⁵³ Dieter Kliche thinks that Lukács' eliminates the subjective, "active" aspect from the historicity of forms, which derives from the productive social, class, and communicative relations of art'. Dieter Kliche: "Objektivität der Form und 'naturwüchsiger Realismus'", in Kliche, et al.: *Literarische Widerspiegelung*, p. 472. Werner Mittenzwei displays the greatest understanding of Lukács's position. He is, of course, dissatisfied because Lukács could not accept the view of the adherents of 'material aesthetic' (Brecht, Eisler, Benjamin) concerning the 'revolution of matter' and the 'functional change' of art, but he is willing to state that Lukács 'unrelentingly exposed the utopianism of great plans, making sensible the measure of "withdrawal"'. Werner Mittenzwei: "Lukács's Ästhetik der revolutionären Demokratie", in Lukács: *Kunst und objektive Wahrheit*, p. 11.

²⁵⁴ Georg Lukács: *Kunst und objektive Wahrheit*, in *op. cit.* p. 105.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 102—3.

²⁵⁶ Werner Mittenzwei: "Gesichtspunkte: Zur Entwicklung der literaturtheoretischen Position Georg Lukács", in Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, p. 74.

²⁵⁷ A notable act of protest against 'varnishing' is E. Usevich's critique, "K sporam o politicheskoy poezii", *Literaturny Kritik* (1937) No. 5.

²⁵⁸ Rita Schober: *Abbild—Sinnbild—Wertung* (Berlin: 1982), p. 102.

²⁵⁹ Kurt Batt: "Erlebnis des Umbruchs und harmonische Gestalt", in Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, pp. 235—36.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

²⁶¹ M. S. Gorbachev: "O perestrojke i kadrovoy politike partii", *Pravda* (January 28, 1987).

²⁶² Ernst Bloch: "Diskussionen über Expressionismus", *Das Wort* (1936) No. 6, p. 108.

²⁶³ Dieter Schlenstedt: "Problemfeld Widerspiegelung", in Kliche, et al.: *Literarische Widerspiegelung*, p. 75.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²⁶⁵ Lukács: *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels als Literaturhistoriker*, p. 154.

²⁶⁶ Georg Lukács: "Johannes R. Bechers Abschied", in his *Schicksalwende* (Berlin: 1948), p. 320.

²⁶⁷ Lukács: *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels als Literaturhistoriker*, pp. 153—54.

²⁶⁸ We can see an especially intensive activity in the GDR in the interest of the modern interpretation of realism, in the course of which the study of the role of 'subjective factors' has come prominently into the foreground. The initiative, characteristically, stemmed from the cultural policy of the so-called 'Bitterfeld way' at the end of the 1950s. See Horst Redeker: "Das subjektive Element oder Bitterfeld und der Praxischarakter der Kunst", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* (1961) No. 5, and his *Abbildung und Aktion* (Halle: 1966). Redeker eluded the remarks concerning his theory by saying that he interpreted the 'subjective element not in its individual sense, but in its class character'. Erhard John claimed that Redeker's earlier articles undermined the objective bases of socialist realist art. See Erhard John: "Die künstlerische Methode", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* (1960) No. 3, p. 313. According to Peter Uwe Hohendahl: "In der Hervorhebung des subjektiven Elements sieht John die Gefahr einer abstrakten Isolierung des Gestaltungsprozesses, einer Loslösung von der materiellen Basis der Abbildung. Letztlich, so argumentiert John, läuft das von Besenbruch und Redeker verfolgte Konzept auf einen subjektiven Idealismus hinaus. Nach der Gefahr des objektiven Idealismus von Lukács taucht nun das Problem des subjektiven Idealismus auf." Peter Uwe Hohendahl: "Ästhetik und Sozialismus: Zur neueren Literaturtheorie der DDR", in *Literatur und Literaturtheorie in der DDR*, hrsg. von P. U. Hohendahl, P. Henninghouse (Frankfurt a. M.: 1976), p. 143. In contemporary literary scholarship—as Rita Schober states—the volume entitled *Gesellschaft—Literatur—Lesen*, which was written by a collective headed by Manfred Naumann, meant a breakthrough as regards the fact that 'the one-sided view oriented toward the aesthetic of production and portrayal has given place to the theory of communication in the theory of realism as well.' Rita Schober: "Wirklichkeitseffekt oder Realismus?", *Weimarer Beiträge* (1986) No. 10, p. 1606. Rita Schober ties up the growth of the artistic role of the subjective element with the 'ideal driving forces' that are also active in social development (*Ibid.*, p. 1610), debating unequivocally—although latently—with Lukács. Certainly, there arise some doubts at this point, considering that we see the 'ideal driving forces' tied up with the 'subjective factor' working in the work of art, that is, in the head of the author. Does not there exist the danger, against which Lukács stubbornly warned: bringing an 'ought' into the work of art from above, the emergence of apologetics, the loss of social reality, of the essence of objectivity? Robert Weimann is more reserved in judging the role of the subjective factor. For him, the further development of the realist concept of art does not mean sacrificing the theory of reflection, but only its integration into a wider functional context. See Hohendahl and Henninghouse (eds): *Literatur und Literaturtheorie in der DDR*, p. 163. The release of the realist potentialities of the avant-garde is referred to by Robert Weimann as the 'Copernican turn of the theory of realism'. See *Realismus in der Renaissance*, hrsg. von R. Weimann (Berlin: 1977), p. 5.

²⁶⁹ Georg Lukács: "Marx and the Problem of Ideological Decay", in his *Essays on Realism*, p. 166. It must

be noted that the three concluding paragraphs, treating of the motives and conditions of the fight against avant-garde phenomena in the Soviet Union, are omitted from later editions.

²⁷⁰ It is especially the satirical fantastic quality that Lukács found to be a proper means of expressing 'social-human essence'. But he sharply distinguished the representation of this 'essence' from the 'projection' of 'harassing dreams'. See, e.g., the distinction drawn between the fantastic quality of E. T. A. Hoffmann and that of Karl Kraus, in Lukács's "Grenzen des Realismus?", *op. cit.*

²⁷¹ Georg Lukács: "Die weltanschaulichen Grundlagen des Avantgardismus", in his *Wider den missverständlichen Realismus* (Hamburg: 1958), p. 41.

²⁷² See Georg Lukács: "Realism in the Balance", in *Aesthetics and Politics*, trans. by A. Bostock, et al., ed. by E. Taylor (London: 1986).

²⁷³ Ágnes Heller: "Lukács and the Holy Family", *Telos* (Winter, 1984–85) No. 62, p. 150.

²⁷⁴ As early as in 1929 Alfred Kurella threw light on the question of how 'revolutionary' artists were driven back and 'naturalists' came into the foreground, continuing the tradition of the genre painters of the past century. See Alfred Kurella: "Neue Wege der Kunstpolitik: Die Krise der bildenden Künste in der UdSSR", *Moskauer Rundschau* (May 11, 1929) No. 1, p. 8. The legitimate presence of realistic and fantastic portrayal in proletarian literature was defended mainly by Lunacharsky—as long as he was able to do it. See his article, "Vystavka revoliutsionnogo isskustva zapada", *Pravda* (June 5, 1926) No. 128—also in his *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: 1964), Vol. II.

²⁷⁵ Maxim Gorkij: "Über Formalismus", *Internationale Literatur* (1936) No. 6, p. 116.

²⁷⁶ See Klaus Jarmatz: "Der Beitrag zur Realismuskritik", in his *Exil in der UdSSR*, p. 176.

²⁷⁷ On the negative attitude of *Internationale Literatur*, quoting Bernhard Reich, a more detailed account is given by Y. Oklyanovsky: *Povest o malenkom soldate* (Moscow: 1978), p. 45.

²⁷⁸ Georg Lukács: "Kunst und objektive Wahrheit", in *op. cit.*, p. 109.

²⁷⁹ See his Mehring essay, or the only recently published essay, "Wozu brauchen wir das klassische Erbe", in Mesterházi and Mezei (eds): *Ernst Bloch und Georg Lukács: Dokumente zum 100. Geburtstag*.

²⁸⁰ Lukács: "Kunst und objektive Wahrheit", in *op. cit.*, p. 99.

²⁸¹ Helga Gallas does not consider it impossible that there may exist mutual dependence between the economic basis and the 'ideological forms of superstructure', but she regrets Lukács's effort to prove it as unsuccessful. See Helga Gallas: "Zur Brecht—Lukács Kontroverse", *Alternative* (1972) No. 84–85.

²⁸² José Antonio Portuondo: "Lukács y el realismo", in his *Ensayos de estética y de teoría literaria* (La Habana: 1986).

²⁸³ This is explained by Lukács in another place: cf. *Gespräche mit Georg Lukács*, hrsg. von T. Pinkus (Reinbek: 1967), pp. 30–1. This question is discussed by Sebastian Kleinschmidt, too, in his "Vorwort" to Georg Lukács: *Über die Vernunft in der Kultur: Ausgewählte Schriften 1909–1969* (Leipzig: 1985), p. 22, as well as by István Szerdahelyi: "Lukács György útja Az esztétikum sajátosságához", in *op. cit.*, p. 520.

²⁸⁴ Mesterházi and Mezei (eds): *Ernst Bloch und Georg Lukács: Dokumente zum 100. Geburtstag*, p. 108.

²⁸⁵ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: *Vorlesungen über Ästhetik* (Stuttgart: 1927), Bd. I, p. 113. Quoted by Hanns Eisler: *Musik und Politik: Schriften 1924–1948* (Leipzig: 1973), pp. 315, 398. For Hegel in modern art, "jede Form wie jeder Stoff [steht] zu Dienst und zu Gebot". Hegel: *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik: Theorie-Werkausgabe* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1970), Bd. XIV, p. 236.

²⁸⁶ See Hans Rudolf Vietgen: "Georg Lukács und Thomas Mann", *Neue Rundschau* (1977) No. 4; André Gisselbrecht: "Une étrange histoire d'amour: Lukács et Thomas Mann", *Europe* (April, 1979).

²⁸⁷ These questions are touched by Burghardt Lindner: "Brecht—Benjamin—Adorno", in *Bertolt Brecht I: Sonderband aus der Reihe Text + Kritik*, hrsg. von H. L. Arnold (München: 1972); Albert Bez: "Gestaltung—oder—Montage? Hans Eislers Divergenzen mit Lukács", in *Der Streit mit Georg Lukács*, hrsg. von H.-J. Schmitt (Frankfurt a. M.: 1978).

²⁸⁸ Miklós Almási: "A Janus-arcú filozófus: Nietzsche: A tragédia születése" [The Janus-faced philosopher: Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy], *Nagyvilág* (1987) No. 6; Dieter Schlenstedt: "Problemfeld Widerspiegelung", in Kliche, et al.: *Literarische Widerspiegelung*, p. 17.

²⁸⁹ Thomas Metscher: "Über die notwendige Pluralität künstlerischer Formen", *Weimarer Beiträge* (1986) No. 10, pp. 1637–38.

²⁹⁰ A considerable part of the documents of the debate appeared in *Die Expressionismusbefragung*, hrsg. von H.-J. Schmitt (Frankfurt a. M.: 1973). From the extensive literature on the debate, see, e.g., Paolo Chiarini: "Brecht e l'espressionismo", *Nuova Corrente* (1960) No. 20; László Illés: "Vecchie polemiche sull'avanguardia: La lotta di Brecht", *Il filo rosso* (Milan) (1963) No. 5, (1963) No. 6; Werner Mittenzwei: "Die Brecht—Lukács Debatte", *Sinn und Form* (1967) No. 1; Gallas: *Marxistische Literaturtheorie: Kontroversen im Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller*; Johann-Friedrich Anders—Elizabeth Klobusicky: "Vorschlag zur Interpretation der Brecht—Lukács Kontroverse, zugleich eine Kritik an Gallas, Mittenzwei und Völker", *Alternative* (1972) No. 84–85; Werner Mittenzwei: "The Brecht—Lukács Debate", in *Preserve and Create*, ed. by G. C. LeRoy and U. Beitz (New York: 1973); Sziklai: "Melyik örökségre mondunk le?", in *op. cit.*; Kurt Batt:

"Erlebnis des Umbruchs und harmonische Gestalt: Der Dialog zwischen Anna Seghers und Georg Lukács", in Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*; Werner Mittenzwei: "Der Streit zwischen nichtaristotelischer und aristotelischer Kunstauffassung: Die Brecht—Lukács Debatte", in *ibid.*; Ungvári: *Avantgarde vagy realizmus?*; Josef Dürr: *Die Expressionismusdebatte: Untersuchungen zum Werk von Georg Lukács* (München: 1982); Werner Mittenzwei: "Der Streit", in his *Das Leben des Bertolt Brecht oder der Umgang mit den Weltträtseln* (Berlin: 1986), Bd. I.

²⁹¹ Lukács took part in the debate with several of his—in part published, and in part unpublished—writings. His most important work on the subject is "Realism in the Balance", in *Aesthetics and Politics*, trans. by R. Livingstone, ed. by R. Taylor (London: 1980).

²⁹² See Brecht: *Schriften zur Literatur und Kunst* 2.

²⁹³ According to Werner Hecht's statement: "Natürlich griffen die Kritiker es [i.e., Brecht's articles] als Sensation auf, aber Lukács selbst hat nicht darauf reagiert. Ja, es war eigentlich nie eine Debatte, erst später hat man sie gross aufgebläht und zu einer Grundsatzdebatte gemacht, was falsch ist [...] Sie scheint mir in Europa abgeschlossen zu sein." "Konferenz über Georg Lukács und die deutsche Literatur", *Budapester Rundschau* (June 3, 1985) No. 22, p. 9.

²⁹⁴ Mesterházi: "Ernst Bloch, az expresszionizmus filozófusa", *op. cit.*, p. 350.

²⁹⁵ Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, p. 163.

²⁹⁶ There are some who are willing to make such a decision, e.g., Reinhard Weisbach: "Expressionismus oder Realismus?", in *op. cit.*, and Dieter Schiller: "Sozialistisches Menschenbild und Realismus: Zu den Ergebnissen der Realismus-Debatte der Zeitschrift *Das Wort*", in his "...von Grund auf anders" (Berlin: 1974).

²⁹⁷ Cesare Cases: "Einleitung", in Matzner (ed.): *Lehrstück Lukács*, p. 27.

²⁹⁸ Anders and Klobusicky: "Vorschlag zur Interpretation der Brecht—Lukács—Kontroverse, zugleich eine Kritik an Gallas, Mittenzwei und Völker", in *op. cit.*

²⁹⁹ Lehmann: *Stramin und totale Form*, p. 546.

³⁰⁰ The following essays by Lukács deserve special attention: "Wozu brauchen wir das klassische Erbe?", "Realism in the Balance", "Marx and the Problem of Ideological Decay".

³⁰¹ Bertolt Brecht: "Volkstümlichkeit und Realismus", in his *Über Realismus* (Leipzig: 1968), p. 124.

³⁰² See Dietrich Mühlberg—Erwin Pracht: "Die moderne Epoche und die Theorie des sozialistischen Realismus", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* (Sonderheft, 1967), p. 161.

³⁰³ István Szerdahelyi: "Lukács György útja Az esztétikum sajátosságához", in *op. cit.*, p. 522.

³⁰⁴ Lukács: "A Correspondence with Anna Seghers", in *op. cit.*, p. 186.

³⁰⁵ Bertolt Brecht: "Über den formalistischen Charakter der Realismustheorie", in his *Über Realismus*, pp. 101—2.

³⁰⁶ We can hardly agree with Reinhard Weisbach, who calls into question the 'supposed invasion' of neoclassicism in his analysis of Ernst Bloch's "Der Expressionismus jetzt erblickt". See his "Expressionismus oder Realismus?", in his *Wir und der Expressionismus* (Berlin: 1972), p. 146.

³⁰⁷ See "Schöpferische Diskussion bei den antifaschistischen Schriftstellern in Moskau: Scharfe Stellungnahme gegen den Expressionismus", *Deutsche Zentral-Zeitung* (Moscow) (June 17, 1938) No. 137—also in *Zur Tradition der deutschen sozialistischen Literatur: Eine Auswahl von Dokumenten 1926—1935*, hrsg. von A. Klein, T. Rietzschel (Berlin—Weimar: 1979), Bd. IV.

³⁰⁸ Lukács: "A Correspondence with Anna Seghers", in *op. cit.*, p. 188.

³⁰⁹ Ernst Bloch: *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1962), pp. 16—7.

³¹⁰ See Ernst Bloch: "Zur Originalgeschichte des Dritten Reiches", *Das Wort* (1937) No. 12—also in his *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*; a more detailed account is given by Klatt: *Vom Umgang mit der Moderne: Ästhetische Konzepte der dreissiger Jahre: Lifschitz, Lukács, Lunatscharski, Bloch, Benjamin*, pp. 144—50.

³¹¹ See Georg Lukács: "Die Erbschaft dieser Zeit", in Mesterházi and Mezei (eds): *Ernst Bloch und Georg Lukács: Dokumente zum 100. Geburtstag*. For information on the Günther—Bloch debate, see Hans Günther: "Erbschaft dieser Zeit?", *Internationale Literatur* (1936) No. 3; Ernst Bloch: "Bemerkungen zur Erbschaft dieser Zeit", *Internationale Literatur* (1936) No. 6; Hans Günther: "Antwort an Ernst Bloch", *Internationale Literatur* (1936) No. 8—also in his *Des Herren eigner Geist* (Berlin: 1981), without Bloch's answer.

³¹² See Lukács: *Essays über Realismus*, p. 202.

³¹³ A later appraisal justifies this view. As Hans Kaufmann writes: 'In expressionism there appear important initiatives for the renewal of German literature, which are "sublated and preserved", but they cannot be regarded as if they had not happened.' Hans Kaufmann: *Krisen und Wandlungen der deutschen Literatur von Wedekind bis Feuchtwanger* (Berlin: 1966). Kurt Hager also expresses a positive assessment in *Tradition und Fortschritt: Rede zur Gründung der 'Nationalen Forschungs- und Gedenkstätten der DDR für deutsche Kunst und Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts'* (Berlin: 1985), pp. 11—2, and, similarly, T. L. Motileva: *Anna Seghers* (Moscow: 1984), pp. 130—40.

³¹⁴ Ernst Bloch: "Diskussionen über Expressionismus", *Das Wort* (1938) No. 6, p. 107.

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Wilhelm Pieck: *Der neue Weg zum gemeinsamen Kampf für den Sturz der Hitlerdiktatur: Referat und Schlusswort auf der Brüsseler Parteikonferenz der KPD (1935)* (Berlin: 1954), p. 137.

³¹⁶ "Das Dilemma der Rezeptionsästhetik", in M. Naumann: *Blickpunkt Leser*, pp. 180—81.

³¹⁷ Lukács: "Marx und das Problem der ideologischen Verfalls", *Internationale Literatur* (1938) No. 7, pp. 140—43.

³¹⁸ "...some of his judgments—that later he himself counter-checked—were one-sided in the heated debates of the 1930s and especially underestimated the importance of the avant-garde and certain trends of modern bourgeois literature." "Íranyelvek Lukács György születésének 100. évfordulójára: Az MSZMP KB mellett működő Művelődéspolitikai Munkaközösség állásfoglalása" [Directives to the 100th anniversary of György Lukács's birth: The standpoint of the Workshop for Cultural Policy that belongs to the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party], *Társadalmi Szemle* (1983) Nos 8—9, p. 58.

³¹⁹ Bertolt Brecht: "Die Essays von Georg Lukács", in his *Über Realismus*, p. 95.

³²⁰ Schlenstedt: "Problemfeld Widerspiegelung", in *op. cit.*, p. 71.

From 'Great Realism' to Realism

by

István Szerdahelyi

I. How did Realism Become 'Great'?

1. The Problem of 'Great Realism'

Among the terms that György Lukács used in his aesthetic, the most controversial one has been 'great realism'.

According to a commonly held view, the essence of Lukács's conception of realism did not change between the 1930s and his death: "Eventful as Lukács's external life was, his works show unbroken development from the early 1930s. He did not renounce any tenet, neither did he come up with remarkable new one."¹ Yet sponsors of this view are divided into two groups. The members of the first group contend that, for Lukács, the term 'great realism' never functioned as a category, and that the adjective is unimportant. This view is expressed, for example, in monographs by Helga Gallas and István Hermann,² which confine themselves to discussion of realism and do not mention the term 'great realism'. In a similar manner, Miklós Lackó states that "in the early 1930s, Lukács plunged into Berlin literary polemics almost in full and complete possession of his conception of realism in art."³ Hermann declared that

Lukács never used the concept 'greatrealism' in that form. He did write of great realist writers, but the word *great* operated as an adjective. Once I asked him what he meant by greatrealism. He said he did not know, for, if such a concept existed, there should be little, middle, and intermediate realism as well.⁴

To be sure, the term 'greatrealism' is written this way, that is, in one word, only by some of his pupils and—recently—translators, while Lukács himself always wrote it in two words. Yet the controversial issue is not the term as it appears in written form, but the concept. And Lukács's above statement cannot be considered as the final word in the debate, as it is widely known that, although he did not use such terms as 'little, middle, and intermediate realism', he did use such terms as 'pedestrian', 'superficial', and 'limited' realism.

The members of the other group contend that, for Lukács, the concept that really matters is not realism in general, but 'great realism'. Fritz J. Raddatz, for example, in his short monograph, characterizes as important the fact that, after 1933 in the Soviet Union, Lukács worked out the concept of 'great realism', yet he does not state that Lukács transcended it. Instead, he points out that, in 1964, in an interview in which Lukács commented on the Prague literary polemics, "Lukács sticks to his earlier views stating that *great literature is realistic*".⁵ The evolution of the theory of 'great realism' is registered in the same manner in Johanna Rosenberg's chronology.⁶

According to the view held by a smaller number of theorists, Lukács's concept of

realism changed with time, and the meaning of 'great realism' in Lukács's earlier writings is different from the later used 'realism' without an adjective. This camp is also divided on the issue of determining the date of the reinterpretation of the concept of realism. Tibor Hanák argues that the doctrine, conceived originally in 1933, was modified in the sixties in *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*.⁷ Nevertheless, as I pointed out in another work, the change took place much earlier, namely, in the late forties.⁸

Already in the early stage of my work on this paper, I was convinced by the careful reading of Lukács's works that conclusions made so far—including my own earlier attempts—lacked sound foundation owing to inadequacies of research. The main purpose of the present paper is to elucidate the changes in the use of the term 'realism' and the diverse changes of conception expressed in them in the various stages of Lukács's intellectual development.⁹

2. The Way that the Young Lukács Used 'Realism'

It will be recalled that, apart from other meanings of the term, 'realism', in the aesthetic sense, was originally used in the typology of styles.¹⁰ In fact, this is still the only meaning that bourgeois literary scholarship accepts.¹¹ As far as its genesis is concerned, it was used to identify a literary and artistic trend of the nineteenth century which strove to depict phenomena of everyday life truly, realistically, in a way similar to immediate experiences, and without concealing the ugly aspects of reality. Yet, as soon as the name of the movement was generally accepted, its meaning was broadened to become a concept of typology, as all similar trends of style became associated with it. Realism as the name of a movement was not invented by writers themselves. Neither Stendhal nor Balzac claimed to be realists, and even Courbet declared in 1855 that the "label of realist" had been imposed on him and that no one claimed to have fully understood the meaning of this term.¹² Edmond de Goncourt, in his preface to *Les Frères Zemganno* (1879), did not object to being called a 'realist', yet he described 'realism' as a "foolish word", a "fighting word".¹³ In fact, however, the works that he wrote in cooperation with his brother can be regarded as naturalistic. Originally, 'realism' and 'naturalism' were terms identical in meaning, and it took some time before naturalism (and verism) came to connote that sort of realism in which the author 'exaggerates', overemphasizes the details of description (or, sometimes, finds pleasure in dwelling on 'loathsome' details).

The young Lukács adhered to this connotation of the term. Like other theorists, he interpreted realism as a 'naturalistic predilection', the 'sensuous' portrayal of 'everyday events of life', as a style.¹⁴ Writers whom he later referred to as 'great realists' were as yet of less importance to him; Balzac's name rarely appears in his writings, and he preferred Paul Ernst to Thomas Mann. In fact, in 1913, he referred to the latter as a representative of naturalism, a trend which, according to Lukács, was in ruin and had turned obsolete, owing to its "one-sided oppositional and negative character and inner emptiness".¹⁵ The theory of artistic reflection was alien to him. In his *Heidelberger Ästhetik*, he displays rigid formalism by declaring that 'a work of art can be defined as a complex of forms', and concludes that 'the work of art and reality lose any relation whatsoever—from the point of view of the original aesthetic positing—and the one can be thought of by means of the elimination of the other'.¹⁶

The notion of 'typical'¹⁷ and (intensive) 'totality',¹⁸ two of the key terms of his later

conception of reality, do, however, appear in his first major work, and especially the latter concept features repeatedly in his early writings,¹⁹ perhaps under Rickert's influence.²⁰ Yet let me point out that coincidences of this type must not in any way be used as an argument for the assumption that there is no clear demarcation line between Lukács's non-Marxist and Marxist conceptions.²¹

3. In Exile in Vienna

Until most recently it was widely maintained in the secondary literature on Lukács that, between 1918 and 1930, he broke away from what had hitherto been the main line of his activity, and abandoned the study of aesthetic and literary problems.

New research proves that this assumption is a mere myth, which has its cause in Lukács's desire to let his papers on artistic and literary problems written during his exile in Vienna pass into oblivion because he regarded them either non-Marxist attempts or attempts that misinterpret Marxism.

To this category belong his writings on art dating from the period when *History and Class Consciousness* emerged. They have nothing in common with Marxism, however broadly we interpret the term. (True, the concept of totality, problematic as it was,²² yet to which he attributed pivotal importance, later assumed decisive importance in his Marxist theory of art.) In his review article, "The Old Culture and the New Culture", he rephrased the history-of-ideas typology of *The Theory of the Novel* in a language comprising many Marxian terms.²³ His other acclaimed study, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat", is even further away from any conception of realism because it rejects even the philosophical foundation of the former, namely, the theory of reflection,²⁴ and espouses Schiller's theory of play-instinct (*Spieltrieb*).²⁵ (Besides, he does so outside his aesthetic system of arguments, and his conclusion is, therefore, not adequately elaborated.)

As a matter of fact, in the 1920s, during his stay in Vienna, Lukács published numerous essays and articles that he did not include in his later omnibus volume and are, therefore, little known. Among the omitted pieces were some on literary history,²⁶ in particular, on Hungarian literature, which were originally published in *Új Március* and *100%*.²⁷ It is very probable that, when these texts are located and carefully read, the appraisal of the development of Lukács's artistic and literary conceptions will be radically changed. For instance, in an article of 1922, in which he borrowed the slogans of *proletcult* and the attitude of the 'school of vulgar sociology', he wrote as follows: "In the eyes of the proletariat, which is a class in the ascending stage of development (similar to the rising and revolutionary bourgeois class of the 18th century), art is a genuinely class art, a didactic art, the propagandist of its aim in the class struggle."²⁸ In an article of 1926, giving credit to Trotsky, he took another direction and criticized avant-garde tendencies of *proletcult* literature, describing a work by Y. Libedinsky as the high point of Soviet literature.²⁹ Gábor Révai, who translated the article into Hungarian, is of the view that Lukács's reference to Trotsky is without significance, an act of courtesy. Yet the problem is more complicated. Libedinsky was a leading member of the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP), the most prominent group within the All-Union Association of Proletarian Writers (VAPP), which was operative as early as 1926³⁰ (even though it was officially inaugurated only in 1928), and the chief ideologue of RAPP, L. Averbakh, was said to be a Trotskyist. Lukács certainly knew this,

since in the year when his article was published, RAPP claimed a leading role both in Soviet literary life and international communist literary life. RAPP was the architect of the International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature (MBRL), formed in 1926, and its secretary-general was Béla Illés.³¹ For that very reason, the prominence of Libedinsky and the mention of Trotsky in Lukács's article is apparently not accidental. Neither was it by mere accident that, in one of his Hungarian-language articles, Lukács criticized Gorky.³² It will be recalled that the relation of Gorky and RAPP was rather strained.³³

4. Lukács's First Moscow Period

In 1930 Lukács was expelled from Austria and moved to Moscow, where he became an associate of the Marx—Engels Institute. In view of statements that he made on several occasions,³⁴ it is widely held that this year, when Lukács studied unpublished works of Marx and Engels and became acquainted with M. Lifschitz, was a turning point in his ideological development, and that, in the spirit of that radically new working conception, he returned to the study of aesthetics. (Let us mention at this point that, most recently, some researchers, having realized that this picture is in contradiction with the facts, have taken the stand that Lukács's aesthetic of the thirties is an organic continuation of the conception of *History and Class Consciousness*.³⁵ The scope of this paper does not allow us to discuss this problem, yet we challenge that interpretation.)

Lukács's writings from this era bear witness of quite another state of affairs. There is no proof that he was already familiar with Engels's theory of realism at that time; it is most probable that he had no knowledge of the then unpublished Harkness and Minna Kautsky letters.³⁶ (It is another popular fallacy that it was only at that time that research started on the aesthetic legacy of Marx and Engels.³⁷ It is true, however, that research entered a more intensive phase.) Lukács discussed a partial problem of the Lassalle correspondence, which he had already mentioned in the mid-twenties,³⁸ letters in which Marx, Engels, and Lassalle entered into a polemical debate on the latter's Sickingen drama.³⁹ Furthermore, Lukács published numerous writings in German-language periodicals of Moscow, first of all in the *Moskauer Rundschau*, where he published casual reviews on Soviet fiction and poetry.

'Realism' does not play a central role in these texts; its only emphatic use can be found in one place in the essay on Lassalle. There, Lukács argues that 'Vischer's moderate realism' was an empty aesthetic category, namely, 'reconciliation with the most deplorable aspects of the reality of capitalism in Germany'. He continues: 'neither "conciliatory" realism, nor subjectivistic idealization can exonerate' capitalism's hostility to art. "The sole attitude that is adequate is revolutionary realism, which is [...] the poesy of the sound revolutionary exploration of the foundations of progress."⁴⁰ In other words: realism is in itself a neutral concept for artistic value, and only its adjectival combinations can give us guidance concerning values.

It is evident that the 'realism' in question was the realist style. It is all the more understandable as, at that time, the concept of realism of Marxist theorists of art did not in any way differ from that of bourgeois theorists. There was no difference in either content or evaluation. Lukács was aware that Mehring, the most respected Marxist critic, considered realism and true-to-life portrayal in general as a dull imitation of nature.⁴¹ In the beginning, in fact, realism was in no way in favor in the Soviet Union. As noted by Lunacharsky in 1926:

among the artists, the realists were indifferent to the revolution in the immediate post-revolutionary period, in fact, some of them were hostile to its achievement. [...] Yet the revolution was given an enthusiastic reception by the 'leftist' artists, those belonging to the post-impressionist experiments.⁴²

Only by the mid-twenties was demand for realism stressed. The term still connoted a style. 'Heroic realism', proclaimed in 1922 by the Association of the Artists of Revolutionary Russia (AHRR), meant the registration of everyday life with the precision of reportage. In his platform of 'monumental realism' of 1926, A. Tolstoy demanded that 'art should have the smell of flesh and should be more substantial than everyday life'. In the 1928 platform of the peasant writers, it was spelled out that realism meant the 'search for the simplicity of artistic style and the clarity of language', a literature that is 'genuinely created for the people at large, the workers and peasants',⁴³ and so on.

The change was due to political causes. In his above-mentioned article, Lunacharsky describes the turn in clear terms:

Light was subsequently shed on two issues. First, the broad public that came of age during the revolution expected art to possess a characteristic, convincing, and clear-cut social content, while 'leftist' artists were essentially formalists. Being preoccupied with colorful and playful stylization, they lost touch with the language of real things and became unintelligible for the public. Secondly, realist artists started to develop a positive attitude toward the revolution. The change of orientation was becoming increasingly intense year by year, and ultimately resulted in the establishment of a massive group, which, no doubt, has scored some success.⁴⁴

It is remarkable that Lunacharsky adds: 'The struggle is still going on ...' If he had had the authority to modify the turn of events, the struggle would not have been decided with the elimination of any of the trends. As late as 1931, he took a stand in favor of 'two main trends of proletarian literature', where 'realistic technique' was but one of the two. He stuck to the stance that "it is clear that the proletariat needs another technique as well, stylization, whose constituents are caricature, hyperbole, and deformation."⁴⁵

As I have already hinted, at that time, RAPP strove to detain the rank of officially representing the party literature in the spirit (i.e., under the aegis) of the *proletcult* movement, which played a contradictory yet not entirely negative role in the history of Soviet literature.⁴⁶ The leaders of RAPP were Averbakh, Fadeyev, and Libedinsky who, at the first all-union congress of RAPP in 1928, elaborated the platform of the organization. They espoused the slogans "toward realism", and "let us learn from the classics",⁴⁷ yet had some reservations. Fadeyev declared that proletarian art must not confine itself to following "naive realism", that is, the pattern of "the great realists of the past", as it has to portray "the birth of the new in the old", a task that old realism was incapable of realizing.⁴⁸ For that reason, the principal method that the leaders of RAPP prescribed for proletarian art was not realism, but dialectical materialism,⁴⁹ and the task that they most often pretermed was the attainment of a 'vividness' of portrayal, by which they meant a stress on the description of the characters' internal features.

The chief opponents to RAPP's official line were the avant-garde documentary literature represented by LEF and New (*Novy*) LEF and a 'leftist' opposition within RAPP (which, in 1930, rallied behind the short-lived *Litfront*). The representatives of the latter disowned a realistic style and laid stress on psychologism and literary reportage. They had much in common with LEF.⁵⁰ However, embracing Averbakh's slogan of "either an ally or an enemy", the journals associated with VAPP and RAPP made repeated onslaughts against "fellow-traveling" writers, as, for instance, Ehrenburg.⁵¹

The articles that Lukács wrote in 1930–31 clearly have much in common with the line of RAPP. In two of his articles published in *Moskauer Rundschau*, he attacked Ilya Ehrenburg. In fact, in the second he charged that Ehrenburg was a writer of sentimental kitsch, whose world view was servile.⁵² Lukács wrote a disapproving review of the second volume of Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don*, stating that 'vividness' was missing from its portrayal.⁵³ In a review of A. Karavayeva's novel, *Die Fabrik im Walde*, Lukács echoed the tenet on the need of the description of the 'new that is born in the old'.⁵⁴ In his article, "Neuer Inhalt und alte Form", he called for the observance of the stylistic conventions of realism because, as he put it, standards in bourgeois literature had sunk since Tolstoy, and this literature was becoming nothing more than an empty playing with forms. He attempted to support his argument by using a then well known tenet of 'vulgar sociology'.⁵⁵ It is an old axiom of aesthetics that the style is the man—yet man is the product of his class status.⁵⁶ The tenet, the style is the class, belongs to N. Yefimov, an advocate of 'vulgar sociology'.⁵⁷

No one should be surprised at the conclusion that, in the beginning, Lukács's Marxist aesthetic conception was shaped in the spirit of 'rappist' doctrines. It is almost self-evident that Lukács, who had just settled in Moscow, where he was almost unknown, oriented himself to the trend that was respected the most and accepted as the official line of the time. Besides, not all of RAPP's conceptions were mistaken; and among its mistaken theories its anti-avant-gardism coincided with Lukács's personal opinion to such a degree that he stuck to it even after the fall of RAPP. That the sectarian views of Averbakh were far from alien to him is illustrated best not by his reviews in *Moskauer Rundschau*, but by his article on the draft platform (1931) of the Hungarian proletarian writers living in Moscow.⁵⁸ Lukács offered a left-wing criticism of that ultra-leftist draft platform which we have bad memories of. Lukács starts out from the assertion that, in Hungary, the whole bourgeois literature after the Compromise of 1867 was apologetic: it was the literature of the 'Prussian course' of the bourgeoisie. "[Mór] Jókai's humor serves the aim of glossing over the repugnant aspects of the peculiar development of capitalism in Hungary."⁵⁹ The life work of Kálmán Mikszáth carried on this 'glossing over'; Bródy is a mere apologist, while Lajos Kassák is a social fascist, and Dezső Szabó an expressionist fascist. In conclusion, Lukács calls on the framers of the platform to declare that: "There is no classic writer in the Hungarian literature after '67 whom proletarian writers could learn from."⁶⁰

Yet even that period produced some results that are worthy of Lukács the thinker. In his review on Johannes R. Becher—for the first time in his Marxist period—he points out the role of totality in an aesthetic context,⁶¹ and that argument is genuinely Lukácsian. It can be concluded that his writings reflect a strong influence, rather than the uncritical adoption, of 'rappism'.

5. The Berlin Mission

In the summer of 1931, Lukács went to Berlin to consolidate the official line of RAPP, and worked there until March, 1933. In 1928, the aforementioned International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature organized a German writers' association, the *Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller* (BPRS—Association of Proletarian Revolutionary Writers), which issued a monthly journal, *Die Linkskurve*, between August, 1929, and December, 1932. There were two opposing groups within the BPRS and *Die Linkskurve*.

The one (led by J. R. Becher and including Andor Gábor) stood for RAPP's official line, while the other, 'leftist' wing associated itself with the views of LEF. In summer, 1931, the 'leftist' wing gained the upper hand in the BPRS and the editorial board of *Die Linkskurve*. Against that background, Lukács arrived in Berlin as the emissary of the Moscow center (which after 1930 went under the title of International Union of Revolutionary Writers). As Lukács was sent from Moscow, he was considered the only authority in questions of theory.⁶² He attacked the views of the 'left wing' in sharply polemical articles.⁶³

His arguments continued to adhere to *rappist* doctrines. He called for "the application of dialectics",⁶⁴ instead of the method used by the "great realist writers of the revolutionary era of the bourgeoisie", which he—in the manner of Fadeyev—described as "naïve".⁶⁵ At the same time, he justified their usage of "psychological" portrayal, which, he stated, emerged from a "not-yet-apologetical soil",⁶⁶ unlike the reportage novel, which is an anti-dialectical form, and unlike all new forms in general, which "in reality [...] cut off from the great stream of revolutionary development and tradition, feed on the ideological products of the bourgeoisie's decay" that appeared in the wake of the "subjectivistic transformation of realism".⁶⁷ Lukács described Averbakh, the leader of RAPP, as an outstanding critic,⁶⁸ and lashed out at his opponents, Ehrenburg, whose outlook he described as "skeptically corroded, intellectualist, and anti-revolutionary", and the "leftist" Tretyakov.⁶⁹ Accordingly, Lukács's assessments are fundamentally erroneous. The reportage novel and documentary literature are genres in their own right today, as they were in 1931; but his fellow debaters were even more mistaken.⁷⁰

More important yet for the purpose of this paper is the fact that these polemical articles contain thoughts anticipating the conception of realism of later years. At that time, Lukács certainly knew—and quoted—Engels's observations on realism and the "triumph of realism", although he attempted to use them to justify his erroneous views.⁷¹ Still he defined the requirements of "typical" and "intensive totality" (true, written as they were in the heat of the polemic against documentary literature, his definitions were not without weaknesses),⁷² and, finally, he offered an ingenious analysis of the category of partisanship (*Parteilichkeit*) in art.⁷³

These facts once again prove that Lukács's views of the time were not confined to advocacy of the 'rappist' line, for he transcended it on points of considerable importance. Furthermore, there is no evidence that he had direct ties with RAPP apart from those mediated by the International Union of Revolutionary Writers and BPRS.

6. Realism as a Style: Non-Realist Great Art

In the same period, Lukács wrote an essay that had nothing to do with the fruitless controversy over documentary literature and the factional strife within the BPRS, and which was, therefore, free of the 'rappist' weaknesses: "Zur Frage der Satire"⁷⁵ was an article of unique importance for the evolution of his conception of realism. Its main points are summed up as follows: it is a characteristic feature of every literature that it presents the key phenomena of the reality that it wishes to portray in a sensuous form of phenomena in such a way that, by evoking the whole complex of the interplay of causes and consequences, the work of art reflects the picture of social totality.⁷⁶

Further analysis shows that the peculiarity of satirical representation, which relies on the fantastic, is that "accidence, possibility and necessity, appearance and essence, are

linked in satire in a way that is *different* from reality".⁷⁷ However, diversion from the real appearance—essence connections does not mean the termination of the 'effect of reality', the criterion of truth. Instead, it means that satire,

as it excludes the realistic mediations, creates a world picture whose evidence depends, formally, on the sensuous strength of the evoked conflict, and, in content, on the *correctness* of the connection of categories, in other words, on whether the accident represented, the social situation portrayed in a satirical way, is indeed truthful and correct in terms of its content in its representation. What satire creates is an impression of reality, the impression of a mirror-image of reality; yet what provokes this impression is, in its structure, qualitatively different from the reality that it reflects. The qualitative difference exists even if the satirist adheres to the empirical reality both in the details and the make-up of its work. [...] In satire, no combination of elements of reality, even if they be represented realistically, corresponds to the structure of reality: their linkage is beyond both what is possible in ordinary life (which is attained by almost all great realist writers), and the *typical*. [...] It is this departure from reality, which is, however, a correct reproduction of the *essence* of reality, this uninterrupted shuttle between real and unreal, that gives rise to the impression of the grotesque and fantastic. Obviously, it does so *only* in the case if this 'unreality' does not express less than the substance of reality. In the opposite case, the fantastic degenerates into an empty and worthless juggling with elements of reality, hurled one upon the other arbitrarily and without design.⁷⁸

In sum: the method of the 'great realists' is just one of the possible types of 'great literature'. The 'great realist writers' retain the appearance-essence relationships of immediate reality, and their representation is typical, in the sense of adherence to the average,⁷⁹ and realistic. Other, non-realistic, modes of expression, like that of the grotesque and fantastic satire, can be of equal value.

7. Realism as Method Rather than Style

I have good reason to suppose that it would have been very beneficial for the development of Lukács's aesthetic—and Marxist aesthetic in general—if Lukács had carried on that approach to full elaboration. Yet historical conditions would not have allowed him to do that.

While he stayed in Berlin, decisive changes took place in the Soviet Union. In its resolution of April 23, 1932, "On the Reorganization of Literary and Artistic Organizations", the party disbanded all proletarian literary and arts organizations, in order to replace them with uniform artistic associations. Most important among the developments was the dissolution of RAPP itself; in fact, the official explanation claimed that the resolution had been necessitated chiefly by RAPP's sectarian intolerance.⁸⁰ In the BPRS, which—through the mediation of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers—was dependent on RAPP, the latter news created general uncertainty. Lukács remained the only representative of the old line in *Die Linkskurve*, until the journal ceased publication in the absence of material support (it had been sponsored by the above-mentioned international union).⁸¹

For over half a year Lukács stood for a line in the BPRS that had been transcended and, in a similar manner, his conception of realism spelled out in connection with satire became outdated. The dissolution of RAPP was not identical with a full break with 'rappist' doctrines. On the contrary, attachment to the realistic style of the 19th century was elevated to official status, while mounting pressure was put on LEF, the Litfront, and Meyerhold's school, that is, opponents of RAPP.⁸² In but a few years, "a legion of primitive writings", written in the spirit of a realistic style, "was published in peri-

odicals that had for long rejected works by *avant-gardists* because they fell victim to the cult of personality or were banished to Siberia.”⁸³

Lukács states that Stalin’s sole aim in the measures against RAPP was to force the Trotskyist Averbakh out of literary life (his fate after 1932 is unknown). True, he followed I. M. Gronsky’s proposal and gave the new communist art the name “socialist realist” instead of “dialectical materialist”, championed by RAPP.⁸⁴ As far as style is concerned, his move strengthened, rather than weakened, the justification of the ‘rappist’ conception of tradition. Fadeyev, who had once acted as an official exponent of the platform of RAPP, was now busy declaring that the cornerstone of the “ever more steady and triumphant” progress of Soviet literature was the “new revolutionary artistic method, that of socialist realism”, “the vanguard style of the era”.⁸⁵

The rivalry between the ‘realist’ and ‘stylizing’ lines, ‘the two fundamental lines of proletarian literature’, was, then, settled, even though Lunacharsky—in his above-mentioned statement—had said only a year before that it could not be decided. ‘Socialist realism’ proved to be the stronger of the two, in which stress was laid not on ‘socialist’—as the stylizing-deformative trend was also socialist—but on ‘realism’, the realist style.

Because—as Lukács put it at that time—that was “Stalin’s slogan”,⁸⁶ there could be no open opposition; yet it was possible to reinterpret it in such a way as to assure the persistence of modern values of art. That is believed to have been what Lunacharsky had in mind when, in 1933, he wrote—breaking with his own earlier terminology—that ‘our realism is extremely dynamic, and allows scope for elements that are beyond the formal boundaries of realism if the term is taken in the strict sense.’ Therefore, realism “has the right to create gigantic characters that never exist in reality and embody collective forces”.⁸⁷

To bring home the reinterpretation, Lunacharsky challenged Fadeyev’s definition—which had general currency—which stated that socialist realism was ‘method and style’. As Lunacharsky put it:

The term ‘style’ does not have a clear-cut and generally accepted meaning either in general European literature on the history of art or in ours. Yet I firmly oppose the use of the term ‘socialist realism’ in the sense of style. Socialist realism is a whole trend that will become dominant in a certain period. [...] major trends that cover decades, sometimes centuries and considerable groups have given rise to distinct styles in themselves. [...] Of all trends, socialist realism supposes and demands the diversity of styles. In fact, the diversity of styles logically follows from it.⁸⁸

A thorough analysis of the facts will easily show that such reinterpretation of realism dates back to an earlier period. Mayakovsky rallied representatives of the Soviet avant-garde to the camp of LEF with the tenet of ‘tendentious realism’, while Tairov used the term ‘concrete realism’ for a theatrical style that radically broke with conventions and which, in his words, could “of all styles claim to be the *genuine style of our age*”.⁸⁹ Yet these occasional instances of play on words cannot be regarded as terms, and neither was it a genuine definition when André Breton and Paul Éluard wrote in their “Notes sur la poésie” (1929) that “*La poésie est une pipe*.”⁹⁰

That we are compelled to admit that Lunacharsky’s reinterpretation fell into oblivion should in no wise be taken as belittling the absolutely positive and progressive character of his intention regarding cultural policy. In vain did he define it as a method. For at least two decades thereafter, socialist realism was discussed within the confines of realist style in the Soviet Union (and, after 1948, in the various people’s democracies). Neither

has the public at large accepted the new meaning of realism: even today, writer and reader associate it with a moderately naturalistic style. Ambiguity has arisen about the connotation of the term in the scholarly literature. Western Marxists and communist writers—who were allowed to do so—welcomed the opportunity to accord the label 'realist' to the romanticist Hugo, the symbolist Rimbaud, and the futurist Mayakovsky. They defined Bruegel's fantastic visions as realistic, and used the term 'new realist' to characterize the entire avant-garde ranging from impressionism to cubism.⁹¹ Soviet theorists, however, contended—as Simonov remembers—that 'in artistic creation the method of socialist realism determines style itself and it is practically style itself.' In this way, "they paid lip service to diversity and strove to shape all works after the same pattern."⁹² Neither were Western Marxists united in their usage of the term, since many of them, including Caudwell,⁹³ stuck to the traditional meaning of the term.

It can, therefore, be concluded that the reinterpretation did not serve artistic practice, and, in fact, sowed confusion over the pivotal concept of Marxist aesthetic. As Laxness wrote in 1954,

the usage of the concept of realism with any adjective is apparently nothing but *contradictio in adiecto*. The very fact that it is possible to speak of several types of realism instead of the sole, genuine, realistic realism, proves that realism is an obscure notion.⁹⁴

Sholokhov recalls that Fadeyev, when asked what socialist realism was, answered in a more simple way: "he said: 'The devil knows what it is'."⁹⁵

II. The Non-Existent Conception of 'Great Realism'

1. 'Petty' and 'Great Realism'

When, after the fascist takeover in 1933, Lukács had to leave Germany and return—via Czechoslovakia—to the Soviet Union, he was not able to further unfold his theory based on the principle of the duality of 'great realism' and 'non-realist great art'. For it had been decided in the Soviet Union that, in this or that sense, only 'realistic' art may claim the title 'great'. He lost no time in revising his theory, and elaborated the concept of 'great realism'.

Numerous analysts ascribe the emergence of this conception to political considerations. Many hold that fear dictated Lukács's alignment with Stalin's position,⁹⁶ or claim that he worked under disguise,⁹⁷ or that he was waging a partisan-style war against Stalinism.⁹⁸ Others qualify his 'great realism' as the art theoretical manifestation of the political program put forward in the "Blum Theses".⁹⁹ The latter assumption seems to other observers, including myself, to lack any foundation,¹⁰⁰ as the Stalin—Lukács relationship, too must have been much more complex than that. István Hermann's statement about the 1930s appears to carry the most conviction when he states that, at that time, Lukács's trust in Stalin was still dictated by inner conviction.¹⁰¹ It should be recalled that since his juvenile years, Lukács had professed the principle that "the Catholic should be papist,"¹⁰² and that only after *Literaturny Kritik* had to cease publication, did there emerge a widening gap between his private opinions and loyal public statements.¹⁰³

Upon returning to Moscow, Lukács was able to work under more favorable conditions. He became a staff member of *Literaturny Kritik*, which was launched in June, 1933. He was given the opportunity to publish articles in Russian and, thereby, to enter Soviet cultural life. In the circle of German writers living in exile in Moscow (which included Andor Gábor and Gyula Háý) he was a respected personality,¹⁰⁴ while his opponents abroad went so far as to consider him to be the helmsman of a powerful clique.¹⁰⁵

Stalin authorized P. F. Yudin to found and edit *Literaturny Kritik* in order to challenge (the disbanded) RAPP, pave the way for the formation of the unified Soviet Writers' Association, bring Plekhanovian orthodoxy and "vulgar sociology" under criticism, and help to give rise to a new Marxist aesthetic.¹⁰⁶ Lifschitz and Lukács were included in the staff in order to promote the latter goal. Lukács did not participate in the onslaught on RAPP; he made his debut as a contributor by publishing an anti-expressionist 'revelation'.

It was a decisive change in his conception of realism that he gave up the opinion admitting the existence of non-realistic great art, one that altered the realistic appearance—essence relationship of reality. He found fault with expressionism for failing to "preserve the general structure of immediate reality".¹⁰⁷ (In addition, he alleged that expressionism was heading toward fascism, and called it a trend that belonged to the fascist traditions of art¹⁰⁸—but that is beyond the province of this paper.) Lukács writes approvingly of the "realist writers"¹⁰⁹ and the "great realists"¹¹⁰ (mentioning Zola), yet it is not immediately clear what he means by these terms. Only one thing is certain: he backed every "passionate protest" against "experimentation with form".¹¹¹

Lukács's essay on Vischer (1934) is, as a whole, important, and the fruit of profound studies, but even though the notion of realism is now considerably more elaborate, it is, nevertheless, built on a grave terminological contradiction. On the one hand, Lukács describes realism as the "true-to-life reproduction of social reality",¹¹² that is, qualifies it as a style. In the same manner, he adds that realism may be "of small faith", "cowardly", "miserably moderate", and "shy of a genuine criticism of society"; as such, the tradition of "theorists and writers who became infamous in fascist times".¹¹³ On the other hand, the term is also used in quite another sense: to designate art that represents genuine, that is, social reality. When Lukács writes that, in dismissing Sue as "false", Marx reproaches him for the "absence of realism",¹¹⁴ Lukács has artistic truth, rather than a style, in mind. Only in that sense can he declare that there was a "realistic late period of romanticism".¹¹⁵ By using the terms "true realism that offers a criticism of society", "sham realism", and "pseudo-realism"¹¹⁶ within the same paper, Lukács suggests that the realist style is especially well disposed to reflect reality in a truthful and critical way because it is 'genuine' and realizes all its potentials only in the case that 'it has a critical attitude to society.' The idea—whether true or not—builds a link between the two meanings of the word. Lukács, on the pattern of Lunacharsky, transforms realism into a concept of methodology, yet also retains its original meaning, that is, a term of style typology, and he strives to connect the two.

Writings of subsequent years repeat these ideas. On the one hand, he writes that deviation from realism is a question of form, as realism may be "vulgar",¹¹⁷ "servile, empirical", or "petty and photographic".¹¹⁸ On the other hand, he extends the concept of realism, which he conceives in the sense of 'great literature', to a growing number of non-realistic trends of style: the classicism of Goethe and Schiller,¹¹⁹ the symbolism of Baudelaire,¹²⁰ and, in one place, even to the poetry of Hölderlin.¹²¹

Lukács's writings are marked by this dual meaning of realism down to 1948; what

is more, the distance between the two meanings is now small, now large. The scope of this paper does not allow me to offer a year-by-year account of these changes, which are devoid of an organizing principle or developmental trend. At one of the two extremes, Lukács is ready to admit as realistic even 'extravagantly' grotesque and fantastic representation, provided that he finds the content true to reality. In this sense, in the fantastic novellas,

it is the very depth of Balzac's realism that removes his art so completely beyond the photographic reproduction of 'average reality'. For the great concentration of the content lends the picture, even without the addition of any romantic ingredients, a sombre, gruesome, and fantastic quality.¹²²

Lukács wrote in 1940 that this position should be interpreted as follows:

Balzac used the romantic element, the grotesque, the fantastic, the bizarre, the ugly, the ironically or sentimentously exaggerated only in order to show up essential human and social relationships. All this was for Balzac merely a means, if a roundabout one, to the creation of a realism which, while absorbing the new aspects of life, would yet preserve the qualities of the older great literature.¹²³

His essays on Keller (1939) reflects the same view,¹²⁴ and he gave the clearest elaboration to this theory in 1945, in his introduction to the first Hungarian edition of Marx's and Engels's writings on literature. In that work he concludes the discussion of typical representation and the unity of essence and appearance with the following thought:

wayward poetic imagination and the fantastic representation of phenomena are fully compatible with the Marxist conception of reality. It is not accidental that Marx acknowledged some of Balzac's fantastic novellas and E. T. A. Hoffmann's works [...] Marxian aesthetic, which does not consider as realistic the most naturalistic representation of the world if it fails to express the essential organizing forces of life, accepts it as obvious that fantastic novellas by Hoffmann and Balzac constitute summits of realist literature because, with the very assistance of fantastic representation, those essential moments are expressed in them. The concept of realism for Marxian aesthetic is the realism of essence expressed in a sensuous artistic form. This constitutes a dialectical application of the theory of reflection in the realm of aesthetics. And it is not accidental that it is the very concept of type where this feature of Marxian aesthetic receives the clearest expression.¹²⁵

2. Non-Realistic 'Great Art' that Exists After All

It has to be mentioned at this point that, as is well known, a 'Marxian conception of realism' has never existed, while no connection whatsoever can be established between Engels's remarks on realism and fantastic representation, as they are historically associated with the realistic style.¹²⁶ Yet the conception described above is just one of Lukács's doctrines of realism, for, concurrent with it, we can find another one, which was connected to style typology. As early as 1934, in Lukács's study on Heine, the 1932 conception of reality, which states that realism is merely one of the possible stylistic embodiments of 'great art', reemerges. In that article, Lukács juxtaposes Heine with Balzac.

Heine wird, zusammen mit Balzac, der letzte grosse Dichter des westeuropäischen Bürgertums von Weltbeutung, weil er, ebenso wie dieser, eine besondere Form gefunden hat, in der die Widersprüche sich lebendig bewegen können [...] Stilistisch freilich sind Balzac und Heine, die einander persönlich und künstlerisch verehrt haben, die denkbar grössten Gegensätze.¹²⁷

The fact expressed in the latter statement is entirely irrelevant here. The French social situation 'allowed Balzac to represent the real contradictions with such immediately realistic means', while the German social situation demanded another style, a form that was 'lyrical, ironic, fantastic, and extremely subjective'. According to him, "at that time, that was the only possible *German form* of the sublimest poetic expression of the social contradictions."¹²⁸

Yet not only difference in social situation can allow the emergence of a non-realistic style of equal value with the realist one. As Lukács put it in his essay, "Parteidichtung", of 1945, varying degrees of consciousness may also permit this. In that article, one possible type of literary creation is that belonging to the writer who 'raises political issues unconsciously, often against his will and intention'. The other type is the 'great realist' who strives for 'giving a broad, profound, and comprehensive picture of the development of social life'. The third type is the 'political poet proper, the party poet'. He wants 'directly to influence the turn of events'. Such an activity demands the highest degree of consciousness, since in that case, 'the poet's outlook, subjective thoughts, and emotions not only give shape to the object, but are themselves the expressed and represented object.'¹²⁹

Those who are well versed in Lukács's conceptions of genre theory can recognize that, at this point, the differences in style are attached to differences in genre. A year later, Lukács said in clearer terms that non-realistic representation has an affinity to poetry, and the realistic to the major forms of epic and drama.¹³⁰

To sum up, Lukács had no distinct conception of 'great realism'. Until 1948 he used the term 'realism' in two senses: (1) to designate 'great art'; and (2) as a term of style typology. Apart from that, 'great realism' had only the connotation of 'very great art' (value orientation) or 'great art of the realistic style' (type of style). We might as well criticize Lukács's inconsistency in the usage of these terms, but there is no justification for developing particular theories around it.

III. The Conception of 'Great Realism' that Exists After All

Yet the preceding conclusion will be found rash if we take a closer look at the peculiarities of Lukács's conception of realism. This is all the more advisable as it cannot be accidental that so many scholars insist on speaking of a conception of 'great realism', instead of a simple 'realism'.

1. Avant-Garde as Anti-Realism

One such peculiarity is the way in which Lukács interprets the historical development of realism as conceived of in the sense of 'great realism'. As his historical analyses are incomplete in the sense that some periods are overlooked, it is unclear whether or not he had a comprehensive idea about the actual nature of that development at the time and, if he had, what was it like. It is certain, however, that the list of "valuable" realists begins with Homer, as Lukács declared that the "great realists", Scott, Balzac, and Tolstoy ("*mutatis mutandis*") created their works according to the same principle that is pointed out in Homer by Lessing".¹³¹ Shakespeare and Cervantes are almost stock mem-

bers of the list of 'great realists', and the heyday of that literature is put in the 18—19th centuries with Balzac's life work as the high point. Yet 'the evolution of *bourgeois* society after 1848 destroyed the subjective conditions that made a great realism possible' as the genuinely ingenious writers 'repudiated with hatred and loathing the way of life and development of their own class'; 'For the proletarian class struggle and its implications were beyond their understanding, they remained mere spectators of the social process.' This alienation gives rise to naturalism, a "new type of realism", in which the writer "turns into a specialist of literary expression, a virtuoso, an 'armchair scientist' preoccupied with the superficial traits of reality that meet the eye".¹³²

In this way, "the social evolution which forced the most sincere, upright and gifted *bourgeois* writers into the position of observers, at the same time inevitably drove them to fill the place of the missing essentials with literary substitutes."¹³³

Great realism, therefore, perishes in the era of decay. And besides the overtly apologetic anti-realism and pseudo-realism of the literature promoted by the reactionary bourgeoisie, we have a long chain of tendencies that try in a very 'radical' and 'avant-garde' fashion to liquidate the very foundations of realism. Whatever may be the intentions behind the representatives of these tendencies, objectively they only help the bourgeoisie in its struggle against genuine realism. This objective social function is shared by the entire literature of the decadent epoch, from naturalism through to surrealism.¹³⁴

In this decadent period, access to the peaks of genuine art is given only to those bourgeois writers who 'transcend ideologically the literary forms and methods of creation that emerged in the era of imperialism or have since undergone a transformation'. The transcendence is in effect a return, a revival of the "grand old legacy of realism".¹³⁵ The same return can lend greatness to socialist realism, which is "immediately and vitally bound up with the great traditions of *bourgeois* realism", even if it elevates the latter to a higher, "qualitatively different level".¹³⁶

Let us point out that Lukács here both criticizes the content of the works conceived in the isms and rejects as alien to art the innovations of form and technique introduced by the isms. As he puts it: 'unless young Soviet writers are forbidden to apply this technique, they will adopt the ideological elements of which it is a vehicle.'¹³⁷ The avant-gardist

literary styles arose on the basis of capitalist decadence out of an ideology that has lost the will and ability to grasp the social totality in its movement and reproduce it in a true-to-life fashion. All the forms of expression that subsequently arise are surrogates which essentially remain simply on the surface of things. [Only] the ideological encirclement of capitalism has the effect that forms of expression of bourgeois decadence are taken over into the literature of socialism.¹³⁸

The opinion of less well-meaning critics of Lukács—alleging that 'everything and the opposite of it all can be found in him'—appears to be somewhat corroborated by the fact that now and then Lukács recanted this extremely dogmatic tenet. In 1938 he wrote of symbolism that it was a trend artistically at a lower level, which was still "further from grasping reality".¹³⁹ A year later he unexpectedly wrote that "there are symbolists of various types", that symbolism may be of a revolutionary character, and that, in Ady's poetry, "the strength of lyric symbolism is the most important constituent."¹⁴⁰ Lukács discovered in the works of his friend, Becher, that the stream-of-consciousness technique, introduced by Joyce, may be realistic (in the sense of value),¹⁴¹ while he admitted that, in the works of Tibor Déry, who was so near to him, Proustian psychology and avant-gardist technique of time can fulfil a realistic function, which is "diametrically

opposed" to its original purpose.¹⁴² These are, however, self-contradictions set aside solely for writers whom he liked most. That his genuine opinion of the time was that avant-gardism as such was worthless, was made crystal clear in 1938—39 in the famous expressionism debate, the Brecht—Lukács debate. A comprehensive discussion of the debate—which provoked a wide variety of comments¹⁴³—would go far beyond the room allowed here. Suffice it to remark that, although I clearly side with Brecht in the evaluation of the avant-garde, Lukács's aesthetic gave a more exact and profound picture of art than Brecht's. In other words:

we should not seek an understanding of Lukács on the basis of his polemic with the avant-gardist movements, but should rather consider that, *despite* his occasional misconception and undervaluation of *avant-garde* endeavours, Lukács succeeded in exploring such a specificity of artistic representation, such a system of the theory of reflection that schools otherwise more sensitive to modern initiatives were not able to achieve.¹⁴⁴

The truth of this statement is emphasized by the fact that, by that time Lukács had become aware, in theory, that: 'Only vulgar sociology, which views its sole task as the discovery of so-called "social equivalents" for individual writers or styles, believes that with the identification of social origin every question is answered and resolved.'¹⁴⁵

2. Social Determinants of 'Great Art' of a Non-Realist Style

When Lukács rejected the techniques of the isms of the avant-garde, he set narrow confines to 'great art' of a non-realistic style. He carried the limitation further when he attached its validity to certain social conditions. It has been mentioned above that, in his essay on Keller, Lukács assigned fantastic representation (when conceived of in the sense of 'great art') to the sphere of realism. Yet it was for him an exception to the rule, an exception determined by a certain sort of social backwardness:

Dass Deutschland dennoch hinter der Zeit zurückgeblieben ist, drückt sich in der spezifischen Formgebung der Literatur aus, darin, dass ihr Realismus das Leben der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft in Deutschland nicht direkt im Sinne des französisch-englischen Realismus dieser Zeit gestalten kann; darin, dass besondere Formen des—monumentalen, phantastischen usw.—Realismus gefunden werden müssen, um diese konkrete Allgemeinheit der zeitgenössischen Probleme des Humanismus in eine dichterisch-sinnfällige Form zu giessen [...] Je mehr sich jedoch die deutschen Verhältnisse entwickeln, desto unhaltbarer wird dieser Stil, desto mehr entstehen auflösende Tendenzen in der Richtung auf einen Realismus im westeuropäischen Sinne. Je mehr die objektiven Bedingungen einer bürgerlich-demokratischen Revolution in Deutschland herangereift sind, desto stärker werden diese Bestrebungen.¹⁴⁶

Consequently, the normal way of the evolution of 'great art' is attached to the realistic style, to the West European English—French realism, while 'monumental and fantastic forms' are adequate only in an exceptional social situation. Once that is over, the evolution of art must return to the normal road, that of realism, taken in the sense of style typology.

The fact that by the aforementioned 'West European realism' Lukács meant realistic style can be easily proven by an essay on Heine, also mentioned above, where—as I have pointed out—realism connoted a style. There, the relevant point is put as follows:

Heine is looking for a poetry that expresses the profoundest contradictions of the era on the highest level of learning of the era. In France and England, the development of real events of social life allow—for a

Balzac or, at a lower level, a Dickens—the directly realistic representation of the real contradictions. The ‘anachronism’ of conditions in Germany [...] at the time rules out the emergence of great German realism. [...] As Heine intended to give an artistic criticism of conditions in Germany on the highest international level of the time, that is, genuinely on a general contemporary level and not in the German anachronistic spirit, he could not find on German soil a plot for a realistic representation of conditions in Germany, a plot that could have been valuable and realistically perceptible.¹⁴⁷

That is why he opted for a ‘lyric-ironic, fantastic-ironic, extremely subjective’ form.

Lukács apparently formulated this argument under the influence of vulgar sociology, but limitations of space do not permit us to prove this contention systematically here. In fact, Lukács’s other writings could be used to refute this argument. He pointed out elsewhere¹⁴⁸ that Balzac, too wrote works that are realist, though fantastic, rather than realistic in style, even though no social condition compelled him to do so. The relevant conclusion that we can draw from all this is that, at that time, Lukács considered the works of styles other than realistic as exceptional, rather than as natural manifestations of art.

3. ‘Triumph of Realism’: Triumph of Realistic Style

On the other hand, Lukács attributed extraordinary advantages to works written in realistic style. The conception has earned fame and created controversy with the label ‘triumph of realism’. In a latent form, the debate had been going on since the mid-1930s, and it centered on the relationship of the writer’s political views and artistic method. One group, which included Lukács, contended that, provided a writer applies the realistic method of representation, he may produce great art even if his views are retrograde and conservative. Members of the first group were called ‘*voprekists*’ (the Russian word for ‘notwithstanding’), and in the second half of the 1930s they rallied behind *Literaturny Kritik* under the name of ‘new trend’, or simply ‘trend’ (*‘novoye techeniye*’, or *‘techeniye*’). Members of the second group, referred to as ‘*Blagodaryists*’ (deriving from the Russian word for ‘owing to the fact that’), attached greater importance to the political views than to the literary method, and they were supported by *Literaturnaya Gazeta* and Fadeyev’s authority. An open confrontation occurred in 1939, when the *blagodaryists* sharply criticized a collection of essays by Lukács, *K istorii realizma* (1939), published in Moscow, and the representatives of the ‘new trend’, above all, Lifschitz. The polemic ended with their victory, owing to Fadeyev’s personal connections with men of influence. A party resolution of 1940 on literary criticism ordered *Literaturny Kritik* to cease publication (the last issue was its No. 11–12, 1940), on the ground that it had lost touch with the literary establishment and living literature. The defeat dealt a heavy blow to Lukács’s position: “I found myself practically barred from publication in the Russian literary press,” Lukács recalls, “not by the letter, but the consequence of the resolution. After that I could publish literary treatises only in the German-language *Internationale Literatur* and the Hungarian-language *Új Hang*.”¹⁴⁹ In the early 1940s he was even arrested, and it was due only to the intervention of Rákosi and Dimitrov that he was soon released.¹⁵⁰ These problems reemerged in numerous consultations after his return to Hungary.¹⁵¹

The idea which has as its point of departure an observation of Engels, who states that writers may create outstanding works of art despite retrograde political and social views is, in itself, an irrefutable truth. As Lukács emphasized, ‘it is a radical break with

the vulgar conception of literature and art that deduced the value of poetic works mechanically from the writer's political views, his so-called class psychology.¹⁵² In that sense it was a break with Plekhanov's orthodoxy and constituted a criticism of RAPP's one-time sectarian line and subsequent cultural policy that continued in the same spirit because the tenet gave a green light even to those living authors who failed to fall precisely into line with the political dictates of the Stalinist era. It was not by chance that an active role in the crusade against *Literaturny Kritik* was played by 'rappists' who had been given senior posts even after the dissolution of their organization: Fadeyev, who was transferred to the board of the writers' association from RAPP's board, and Ermilov, who had started his career as a secretary of RAPP.

Let us add, however, that Lukács was actually lax in some of his wordings. Instead of speaking of retrograde political views, which could be corrected by other progressive elements of a world view, he declared that "there are cases in which a politically and socially reactionary world outlook fails to prevent the development of a real masterpiece of realism."¹⁵³ In this statement he is wrong because, were it true, the 'triumph of realism' would not have any basis in the process of creation.

For the subject of this paper, the relevant conclusion is that Lukács attached the occurrence of the 'triumph of realism' to classicist-realistic conventions of style. He denied even Zola's naturalism, let alone fantastic or avant-gardist forms, the chance of producing the "triumph of realism".¹⁵⁴

4. Great Form of Realistic Style as the Ally of Democracy

It was on this bias that Lukács based a cultural political conception, which—erroneously—stated that there is an affinity between democracy and 19th-century great forms of realistic style. (An archetype of this conception is his theory of the novel of 1935, in which he described the realist novel, written on the pattern of epic, as the leading genre of socialism.)¹⁵⁵ Above we quoted a 1946 essay of Lukács's,¹⁵⁶ in which he clearly separated 'the great poetic representatives of the *citoyen* principle', who are 'lyricists in the first place', and whose 'lyric pathos permeates their representation', from the 'great realists', the authors of great forms in the realistic style. Upon offering a detailed discussion of the advantages of 'great realism' conceived of in this sense, the article concludes that "in their works and representation, the great realists are always allies of democracy, whether consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, provided they are genuinely great realists."¹⁵⁷ Lukács emphasizes that this opportunity is not given to the lyric poets and other authors who do not create great forms of realistic style. I have said 'emphasizes', as he makes it a point here to define what he really means by 'great realism'—which he otherwise used with so many connotations. 'Let us eliminate any misunderstanding, what we are speaking of here is the specifically modern realism of the 19th century (Balzac, Dickens, and Tolstoy).' Hungarian literature "has not undergone" this "period of great realism in the French and Russian manner" because, though we had "inspired genuine popular realism (*János vitéz* [John, the Hero], *Toldi*)" and "prose that emerged from anecdotic narration", "a style that is genuinely epic in its fresh rustic details which, however, is incapable of a novel-type epic synthesis (*Jókai*)."¹⁵⁸ For that very reason, Lukács argues, in the development of Hungarian literature after 1945, the leading role must be played by the great forms of 19th-century realistic style, which are willy-nilly attached to democracy. "May the democratic renewal

of the Hungarian people be accompanied by a renewal of Hungarian literature: the advent of a period of great realism, which our literature, colorful as it was, has so far missed."¹⁵⁹

Let us add in this context that his prepossession for great forms of the epic and drama was manifest not only in the political sphere. In the period of the advocacy of the conception of 'great realism' as well, he gave uncertain answers to the question whether the lyric and small epic forms possess the asset of intensive totality. True, in 1934 he wrote that "the briefest song is as much an intensive totality as the most powerful epic,"¹⁶⁰ in *The Historical Novel* of 1936—37, he wrote of the small epic forms that they fail to comprise this asset,¹⁶¹ and in his study on the Ady of 1939 he denied poetry the capability of reflecting intensive totality.¹⁶² Only in an article on the Becher of 1951 does the idea reemerge—in a cautious wording—that in poetry, too the 'universality of content' is an important asset, and that even a single poem may be a 'mirror to our era'.¹⁶³ On the other hand, *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, extends the principle of intensive totality to the whole of art.

5. Essence of the Conception of 'Great Realism'

The essence of the conception of 'great realism' is, therefore, that, under normal conditions of evolution, art is attached to representation in a realistic style, and that it can significantly depart from this style only under relatively backward social conditions. In a capitalist development after 1848, and from naturalism onward, all such attempts at renewing form are ab ovo artless and ideologically detrimental because democratic and socialist development can be promoted solely by the observance of the tradition created by the realistic style of the 19th century and especially its great forms.

Critics (Marxist and non-Marxist, domestic and foreign) are absolutely justified—from the scientific point of view—in declaring that this conception of Lukács's suffers from a retrograde sociological schematism that is isolated from reality,¹⁶⁴ and that it expresses the conservatism of a 'neoclassicist' taste,¹⁶⁵ and that it offers an idealized image of the 19th century.¹⁶⁶ Even Brecht's anger is understandable: during the debate on expressionism he wrote that Lukács was a "Murxist" rather than a Marxist ('Murks' is the German word for 'bungle', so the meaning of the pun is 'bungler').¹⁶⁷ However, to tell the full truth, it has to be added that, despite its negative aspects, the conception of 'great realism' was an important stride forward in the development of the Marxist theory of art, since Lukács elaborated in the same writings the theory of the most fundamental categories of artistic reflection, including typical, anthropocentric, and intensive totality, partisanship, and populism (the latter in its specifically Hungarian sense); he also elaborated epochal formulas for the study of the relationship of fictitiousness and truth, content and form, and many other such issues.

Provided that we analyze his conception not from a scientific point of view, but from that of cultural policy, it has to be pointed out that its real characteristics can be assessed only against its historical background. 'Great realism' meant the defence of classic cultural tradition and a demand for a relatively higher standard in the face of the powerful forces of the *proletcultist*-sectarian destruction of values and servile schematism. Viewed in this context, it has more than a few historical merits.

IV. Realism without Adjectives

1. Realism is not a Style—There is no Realist Style

The year 1948 marks a turning point—at least on a theoretical level—for, in the preface to his collection of essays, *A realizmus problémái* [The Problems of Realism], Lukács (as if forgetting his previous writings in which he declared that realism belongs to the realm of style typology)¹⁶⁸ says in case

realism is treated merely as one of the constantly changing styles, the fundamental aesthetic question is ignored, and so are the relationship of art to objective reality and, along with that, the objective criterion of the critical attitude to art, the result is subjectivism, arbitrary decision, lack of principles, and eclecticism.¹⁶⁹

Lukács defines realism as a “fundamental aesthetic question”, which runs as follows: “is it the purpose of artistic activity to approach objective reality with art’s special means of reflection and representation, to be truthful where the basic features are concerned?”¹⁷⁰ If we interpret the category in this manner, “our judgment is not limited by attachment to, or rejection of, any styles. Only in that sole case are we able to dissociate ourselves from false dogmatism, which attempts to define the dominant stylistic trends of the present (let alone, the future).”¹⁷¹ The tenet, “socialist realism is not a dogma on style, but rather a literary reflection of fast-developing socialist life”¹⁷² was smuggled even into his self-criticism of 1949. He stressed the same point in his study on Pushkin of the same period: there may be “decisive” changes within realism, for “realism is not a style but the social basis of every truly great literature.”¹⁷³ He often repeated this thought from the 1950s down to his death: “there is a fundamental truth at stake here: realism is not one style among others, it is the basis of literature; all styles (even those seemingly most opposed to realism) originate in it or are significantly related to it,”¹⁷⁴ and it is nonsensical to conceive of a ‘stylistic realism’.¹⁷⁵

2. Specious and True Contradictions

Far from giving prominence to this turn, Lukács was busy, so to say, ‘concealing’ it from the professional public. The essays in *A realizmus problémái* all reflect the conception of ‘great realism’, and in the preface Lukács is content to point out that there are no stylistic limits to realism, while failing to remind the reader that the collection should be understood keeping in view this modified conception. Similar negligence provoked false impressions of collections of his essays abroad,¹⁷⁶ so much so that left-wing critics could arrive at the conclusion that his writings should not be taken seriously.¹⁷⁷

However rigorously he reiterated that realistic style does not exist and never did, he failed to advocate this stance consistently where terminology was concerned. He could have found himself without any term to designate the style that in common parlance is referred to as realist. In a 1955 essay on Mann, he had no alternative but to confront realistic and fantastic representation, even though the two categories differ only stylistically.¹⁷⁸ He concludes his analysis of Mann’s fantastic style by saying: “this style is deeply realistic for all the apparently unrealistic ingredients which we have described.”¹⁷⁹ Again, ‘apparent’ realism connotes a style.

Lukács's works after 1948 show contradictions of content as well as terminology. Throughout his life, he stuck to his (clearly anachronistic) aversion to the montage technique, which he struggled to keep outside the boundaries of realism.¹⁸⁰ In a similar manner, he would refer to the avant-garde as an anti-realist tendency on the grounds of its alleged philosophical idealism¹⁸¹ and solipsist character, which reflected empty transcendence and its affinity to allegoric decorativeness.¹⁸² Lukács went as far as to declare that the avant-gardists 'subordinated the aesthetic conduct to religion and the religious need'.¹⁸³ (N. B.: at that time, on the revaluation of an earlier opinion, he conceded that the means of form worked out by the avant-garde may promote the development of 'traditional realism'.)¹⁸⁴ His conservative hostility is hardly compatible with the above-quoted tenet of the 'conception of realism without adjective' that states: 'our judgment is not limited by attachment to or rejection of any styles.'

3. Evaluation of the Conception of Realism

I am, however, of the view that the blame for mistakes of this type should be put on Lukács, the literary critic and literary historian, and not on his conception of realism. Although Lukács was attached to Thomas Mann with—to use the apt expression of Deutscher¹⁸⁵—an 'intellectual love', although he overestimated Balzac's importance (writers who deserved to no small extent Brecht's criticism from the other extreme as well),¹⁸⁶ and although these yardsticks distorted his system of measurement, his theoretical and abstract statements retain their validity. As a young man, Lukács was aware that, as he put it: "I am not a critic. I am not endowed with the faculty to determine the unquestionable and subtle quality of individual works."¹⁸⁷ His friend, Arnold Hauser, put it in the following—pertinent—way: 'when he described someone as an important writer or poet, his judgement was almost always wrong'—while 'Lukács is of enormous importance as a philosopher of art and aesthete.'¹⁸⁸

The truth of Lukács's conception is not refuted by the—fully justifiable—criticism that was put forward in the Hungarian debate on realism by theorists who proved the actual existence of realism as a trend of style.¹⁸⁹ It does not follow from their argument that Lukács's concept of realism is unhistorical and reflects the 'inadequate generality' of a transcendental typology,¹⁹⁰ that it relapses from Lenin to Aristotle,¹⁹¹ and that it is "shoreless" like Garaudy's conception.¹⁹² Artistic reflection may have categories which can change in the stream of history, yet, as regards their most general and essential characteristics, they preserve their validity.

Whether reflection is the sole social function of art or whether it offers us some more, remain an open question.¹⁹³ Advocates of the latter view often arrive at the (little convincing) conclusion that Lukács's conception of realism retreats to the pre-Marxian mechanistic materialist theory of reflection,¹⁹⁴ and that, unlike Brecht's views, even its Marxist character can be doubted.¹⁹⁵ Yet even analyses that are fairer—and consider the debates that Lukács carried out as debates among Marxists¹⁹⁶—often state that Lukács's conception of realism overlooks the changes in the functions of art, for socialist art assumes new social assignments and more directly joins political agitation and class struggle, as its purpose is both the transformation of the people—through its cathartic effect—and the social set-up.¹⁹⁷

I myself find the latter thought entirely problematic, as I cannot conceive how art can directly influence changes in the social system, except through a cathartic effect

exerted on individuals. At the same time, I share the view of numerous Hungarian theorists,¹⁹⁸ in that the sort of art that offers the values of realistic reflection and is called 'autonomous art' in Hungary, cannot be identified with art as a whole. At variance with Lukács's opinion I accept the need for 'agitative art' that is more directly attached to the political functions.

This is by no means to say that the functions of 'art as a whole' change in the course of historical development and that socialist art as a whole is marked by an increased role of the agitative function. Since the emergence of the distinct forms of social consciousness, 'agitative art' and 'autonomous art' have coexisted (along with other sorts of art). Historical changes can only result—from the functional point of view—in shifts in the importance of the one or the other.

During the proletarian revolutions and the antifascist struggle—as in all similar historical phases—the importance of the forms of 'agitative art', naturally, grew, which was rightly recognized by representatives of LEF, the Litfront, and other similar 'leftist' trends. They were, however, mistaken in the theory that this development must bring about a change in the function of 'art as a whole'. They overestimated the temporary importance of agitative genres. Lukács was right in defending 'autonomous art' against them, yet he, too identified this sort of art with 'art as a whole'. And his conception of reality does not apply only to 'autonomous art', of which he elaborated an ambitious and profound Marxist theory. This is an achievement in itself, in fact, a milestone in the history of aesthetics.

(Translated by Iván Sellei)

Notes

¹ Werner Mittenzwei: "Gesichtspunkte zur Entwicklung der literaturtheoretischen Position Georg Lukács", in *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, hrsg. von W. Mittenzwei (Leipzig: 1975), p. 95.

² See Helga Gallas: *Marxistische Literaturtheorie: Kontroversen im Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller* (Neuwied—Berlin: 1971); István Hermann: *Die Gedankenwelt von Georg Lukács*, übers. von E. Kiss (Budapest: 1978).

³ Miklós Lackó: "Politika, kultúra, realizmus: Lukács György a 100% időszakában" [Politics, culture, and realism: György Lukács in the period of 100%], *Új Írás* (1978) No. 2, p. 86.

⁴ Edit Erki: "Hermann Istvánál" [With István Hermann], *Élet és Irodalom* (February 22, 1975), p. 7.

⁵ Fritz J. Raddatz: *Georg Lukács in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: 1972), pp. 91, 129, 131.

⁶ See Johanna Rosenberg: "Das Leben Georg Lukács'", in Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*.

⁷ See Tibor Hanák: *A filozófus Lukács* [Lukács, the Philosopher] (Paris: 1972), pp. 60—62, 105—9.

⁸ See István Szerdahelyi: *A magyar esztétika története 1945—1975* [The History of Hungarian Aesthetics 1945—1975] (Budapest: 1976), pp. 93—94.

⁹ László Sziklai, the head, and Katalin Lakos, then associate of the Georg Lukács Archives and Library (LAL, which belongs to the Institute of Philosophy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), helped me a great deal in my researches, for which I hereby express my thanks.

¹⁰ See Rudolf Eisler: *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe* (Berlin: 1904), Bd. II, pp. 215—17. Note that it is not the classical rhetorical meaning of style that I refer to (cf. Heinrich Lausberg: *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* [München: 1960], Bd. II, pp. 817—18, but rather the way it is interpreted by Wellek and Warren: "Stylistic analysis seems most profitable to literary study when it can establish some unifying principle, some general aesthetic aim pervasive of a whole work" (René Wellek and Austin Warren: *Theory of Literature* [London: 1956], p. 182).

¹¹ See, e.g., Gero von Wilpert: *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur* (Stuttgart: 1964), pp. 557—60; *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry*, ed. by A. Preminger (Princeton: 1972), p. 685.

¹² Fernand Desnoyers: "On Realism", in *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*, ed. by G. J. Becker (Princeton: 1973), pp. 87—88.

¹³ Edmond de Goncourt: *Les frères Zemganno* (Madrid and Paris: 1879), p. ix.

¹⁴ See Georg Lukács. "Der Dramatiker des neuen Ungarns: Balázs Béla: *Misztériumok*", *Pester Lloyd* (March 2, 1913).

¹⁵ György Lukács: "Válasz a L'Effort libre körkérdésére" [Response to a questionnaire of *L'Effort libre*], in his *Ifjúkori művek 1902—1918* [Early Works 1902—1918] (Budapest: 1977), p. 588. (He wrote the German original in March, 1913.)

¹⁶ Georg Lukács: *Heidelberger Ästhetik 1916—1918* (Darmstadt—Neuwied: 1974), p. 12 (It was written between 1912 and 1918.)

¹⁷ György Lukács: *A modern dráma fejlődésének története* [The history of the development of modern drama] (Budapest: 1978) p. 30. (It was written in 1906—1907, and first published in 1911.)

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 39—40.

¹⁹ Georg Lukács: "Royal Highness," in his *Essays on Thomas Mann*, trans. by S. Mitchell (New York: 1965), p. 135—first published as "Thomas Mann új regénye" [Thomas Mann's new novel], *Nyugat* (1909) No. 21; his lecture on painting, believed to be written in 1913, was "Über die Kategorie der Malerei"—first published in *Acta Historiae Artium* (1973) No. 1—2.

²⁰ Since intensive totality is one of the most important original ideas in Lukács's aesthetic, its genesis is of interest. Tibor Hanák contends that it appeared first under Hegel's influence in *The Theory of the Novel* (cf. his *A filozófus Lukács*, p. 153). According to Helga Gallas (*Marxistische Literaturtheorie: Kontroversen im Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller*, p. 153), it originated in *History and Class Consciousness*, while István Hermann states that it emerged in the early thirties, under the influence of the new edition of Rickert's work (cf. his *Die Gedankenwelt von Georg Lukács*, p. 192). It is highly probable that Rickert exerted an influence on Lukács, yet Lukács referred to an earlier edition of the work as early as 1915. Another factor is believed to have been Simmel's view that only art can give a unified form to a fragmented world (cf. Georg Simmel: *Über soziale Differenzierung* [Leipzig: 1890]).

²¹ As far as Hungarian critical literature is concerned, the view is not given systematic elaboration and exists only in the form of scattered remarks. The view is challenged in Hermann's monograph. Among foreign critics, continuity is stated in a remarkable yet controversial essay: Alberto Asor-Rosa: "Il Giovane Lukács teoretico dell'arte borghese", *Contropiano* (1968), pp. 58 ff. It is challenged by Ursula Apitzsch: *Gesellschaftstheorie und Ästhetik bei Georg Lukács bis 1933* (Stuttgart—Bad Cannstatt: 1977).

²² See István Hermann: *A szocialista kultúra problémái* [The Problems of Socialist Culture] (Budapest: 1970), pp. 367—408; Hermann: *Die Gedankenwelt von Georg Lukács*, pp. 125—156. In the latter, Hermann gives a detailed account of the recent responses to Lukács's conception. Some of the works not included in his survey are: Federico Riu: *Historia y totalidad: El concepto de reificación en Lukács* (Caracas: 1968); Apitzsch: *Gesellschaftstheorie und Ästhetik bei Georg Lukács bis 1933*; Marija Hevesi: "Baloldaliság" a filozófiában [Leftism in Philosophy] (Budapest: 1979).

²³ Georg Lukács: "The Old Culture and the New Culture", *Telos* (Spring, 1970)—first published as "Régi kultúra és új kultúra" [The old culture and the new culture], *Internationale* (June 15, 1919).

²⁴ See Georg Lukács: "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat", in his *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. by R. Livingstone (London: 1971)—first published as "Die Verdinglichung und das Bewusstsein des Proletariats", in his *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (Berlin: 1923).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

²⁶ See Rosenberg: "Das Leben Georg Lukács'", in *op. cit.*, pp. 404—6.

²⁷ See Lackó: "Politika, kultúra, realizmus: Lukács György a 100% időszakában", in *op. cit.*

²⁸ Georg Lukács: "Marxismus und Literaturgeschichte", *Die Rote Fahne* (1922) No. 445.

²⁹ Georg Lukács: "L'art pour l'art und proletarische Dichtung", *Die Tat* (June, 1926).

³⁰ See L. Svetsova: "Proletár írószervezetek 1920—1930" [Proletarian writers' associations 1920—1930], *Helikon* (1966) No. 1—2, p. 9.

³¹ See O. V. Yegorov: "A Forradalmi Írók Nemzetközi Szövetsége 1930—1935" [The International Union of Revolutionary Writers 1930—1935], in "Jöjj el, szabadság!" ["Freedom, Come!"], ed. by M. Szabolcsi and L. Illés (Budapest: 1967), pp. 227 ff.; László Illés: "Kísérletek a proletáriróadalom megalapozására" [Attempts at laying the foundations of proletarian literature], *Új frás* (1972) No. 10.

³² See Lackó: "Politika, kultúra, realizmus: Lukács György a 100% időszakában", in *op. cit.*, p. 93.

³³ See Illés: "Kísérletek a proletáriróadalom megalapozására", in *op. cit.*, p. 96; János Mácza: *Esztétika és forradalom* [Aesthetics and Revolution] (Budapest: 1970), p. 262.

³⁴ See Georg Lukács: "Preface to the New Edition (1967)" in *History and Class Consciousness* p. XXXVI, György Lukács: "Előszó" [Preface], in his *Utam Marxhoz* [My Road to Marx] (Budapest: 1971), Vol. I, p. 25—the manuscript was written in October, 1969.

- ³⁵ See Henri Arvon: *Georges Lukacs ou le front populaire en littérature* (Paris: 1968), pp. 68—73; U. Apitzsch: *Gesellschaftstheorie und Ästhetik bei Georg Lukacs bis 1933*, pp. 145—46.
- ³⁶ See György Lukács: "Előszó" [Preface], in his *Marx és Engels irodalomelmélete* [The Literary Theory of Marx and Engels] (Budapest: 1949), p. 5.
- ³⁷ See Mácza: *Esztétika és forradalom*, pp. 293—94.
- ³⁸ See Georg Lukács: "The New Edition of Lassalle's Letters", in his *Political Writings 1919—1929*, trans. by M. McColgan (London: 1972)—first published as "Die Neue Ausgabe von Lassalles Briefen", *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* (1925) Vol. XI.
- ³⁹ Originally written for a Soviet literary encyclopedia, the treatise was published in instalments by *Der Rote Aufbau* of Moscow in 1931, under the title "Kritik der Literaturtheorie Lassalles"—better known is its later publication as "Die Sickingendebatte zwischen Marx—Engels und Lassalle", *Internationale Literatur* (1933) No. 2.
- ⁴⁰ Georg Lukács: "Die Sickingendebatte zwischen Marx—Engels und Lassalle", in his *Probleme der Ästhetik* (Neuwied—Berlin: 1969), pp. 490—91.
- ⁴¹ See Georg Lukács: "Franz Mehring", in *ibid.*, p. 390—written in 1933, the essay was meant to be an introduction to a collection of Mehring's literary writings (Moscow and Leningrad: 1934).
- ⁴² A. Lunacharsky: "Vistavka revoliutsionnogo iskusstva zapada", in *Ob iskusstve* (Moscow: 1982) p. 342.
- ⁴³ See Béla Köpeczi (ed.): *A szocialista realizmus* [Socialist realism] 2 vols. (Budapest: 1970) I, pp. 335—36, 369; II, pp. 36—37.
- ⁴⁴ A. V. Lunacharsky: "Vistavka revoliutsionnogo iskusstva zapada", in *Ob iskusstvo* p. 342.
- ⁴⁵ See A. V. Lunacharsky: "O novikh pesakh i osnovnikh liniakh proletarskogo iskusstva", in *Sobranie sochinenii* 9 vols. (Moscow: 1964) II, p. 471.
- ⁴⁶ See László Illés: *Józanág és szenvedély* [Reason and emotion] (Budapest: 1966), pp. 19—32, 127—31; Mácza: *Esztétika és forradalom*, pp. 248—62; V. V. Gorbunov: *Lenin és a Proletkult* [Lenin and the proletkult] (Budapest: 1976).
- ⁴⁷ L. Svetsova: "Proletár frószervezetek 1920—1930", in *op. cit.*, p. 12.
- ⁴⁸ A. A. Fadeyev: "Doloy Shillera!", *Na literaturnom postu* (1929) No. 21—22, p. 4.
- ⁴⁹ See "Kulturnaya revoliutsia i sovremennaya literatura: Rezoliutsia I. vsesoyuznovo syezda proletarskikh pisatelei po dokladu tovarisa Averbakha", *Na literaturnom postu* (1928) No. 13—14, pp. 4, 8; Y. N. Libedinsky: "Hudozhestvennaya platforma RAPPa" *ibid.*, (1928) No. 19, p. 9; Aleksandr A. Fadeyev: "A proletárirodalom országútján" [On the road of proletarian literature], in Köpeczi (ed.): *A szocialista realizmus*, Vol. II—first published in Russian in *Oktyabr* (1928) No. 11.
- ⁵⁰ See Svetsova: "Proletár frószervezetek 1920—1930", in *op. cit.*, pp. 10—11, 14—15; "A Lef" [The Lef], *Helikon* (1966) No. 1—2; Mácza: *Esztétika és forradalom*, pp. 263—68, 306—8.
- ⁵¹ Svetsova: "Proletár frószervezetek 1920—1930", in *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 11.
- ⁵² See Georg Lukács: "Die heiligsten Gueter", *Moskauer Rundschau* (1931) No. 45.
- ⁵³ See L. Georg: "Michail Scholochow", *Moskauer Rundschau* (1930) No. 41.
- ⁵⁴ See Georg Lukács: "Die Fabrik im Walde", *Moskauer Rundschau* (1931) No. 6.
- ⁵⁵ See Mácza: *Esztétika és forradalom*, pp. 225—26.
- ⁵⁶ See Georg Lukács: "Neuer Inhalt und alte Form", *Moskauer Rundschau* (1930) No. 2.
- ⁵⁷ See László Sziklai: *Történelmi lecke haladóknak* [A Lesson of History for Advanced Students] (Budapest: 1977), p. 239.
- ⁵⁸ See György Lukács: "A régebbi magyar irodalomhoz való viszonyunk" [Our relation to the Hungarian literature of old], *Sarló és Kalapács* (1931) No. 9.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- ⁶¹ See Georg Lukács: "Das Hohelied vom Fünffahrplan", *Moskauer Rundschau* (1931) No. 55.
- ⁶² See Simone Barck: "Wir wurden mündig erst in deiner Lehre ...: Der Einfluss Georg Lukács' auf die Literaturkonzeption von Johannes R. Becher", in Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, p. 251.
- ⁶³ The most important works that discuss the activity of the BPRS and *Die Linkskurve* and Lukács's activity therein are Werner T. Angress: "Pegasus and Insurrection: *Die Linkskurve* and Its Heritage", *Central European History* (1968) No. 1; Gallas: *Marxistische Literaturtheorie: Kontroversen im Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller*; Ingeborg Münz-Koenen: "Auf dem Wege zu einer marxistischen Literaturtheorie: Die Debatte proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller mit Georg Lukács", in Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, pp. 105 ff. Gallas's monograph sheds light on many facts. For a survey of the relevant German—Hungarian relations, see László Illés: "A magyar és német szocialista irodalom kapcsolatai" [The relations between Hungarian and German socialist literature], in his *Józanág és szenvedély*.
- ⁶⁴ Georg Lukács: "Willi Bredels Romane" *Die Linkskurve* (1931) No. 11.

⁶⁵ Georg Lukács: "Reportage or Portrayal?", in his *Essays on Realism*, trans. by D. Fernbach (London: 1980), p. 240—first published as "Reportage oder Gestaltung?", *Die Linkskurve* (1932) Nos 7, 8.

⁶⁶ Lukács: *Essays on Realism*, pp. 46—47.

⁶⁷ Georg Lukács: "A Virtue of Necessity", in *ibid.*, pp. 69—70—first published as "Aus der Not eine Tugend", *Die Linkskurve* (1932) No. 11—12.

⁶⁸ See Georg Lukács: "Gegen die Spontaneitätstheorie in der Literatur", *Die Linkskurve* (1932) No. 4.

⁶⁹ Lukács: *Essays on Realism*, pp. 55, 61.

⁷⁰ A detailed description of the debate would be beyond the scope of this paper. All I wish to point out is that the monograph of Helga Gallas—which is, besides, a remarkable achievement — makes a stronger criticism of Lukács than his opponents because it has an erroneous interpretation of the relationship of art and politics (cf. her *Marxistische Literaturtheorie: Kontroversen im Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller*, pp. 168—169). The study by Ingeborg Münz-Koenen contends in an unconvincing way that Lukács's conception of the time witnessed an idealistic interpretation of Marxism (cf. her "Auf dem Wege zu einer marxistischen Literaturtheorie: Die Debatte proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller mit Georg Lukács", in *op. cit.*, pp. 138—143). Münz-Koenen concentrates her criticism on Lukács's most progressive ideas and fails to note that a second-rate socialist novel like Ottwalt's brings more harm rather than good to the movement (cf. *ibid.*, p. 151).

⁷¹ See Lukács: *Essays on Realism*, pp. 52—53. At this point Lukács ignores the fact that a reportage novel can also be typical and that it is mistaken to blame the novel for failing to represent the 'whole of the process', as that is extensive rather than intensive totality.

⁷² See *ibid.*, pp. 50—55.

⁷³ See Georg Lukács: "'Tendency' or Partisanship?", in *ibid.*—first published as "Tendenz oder Parteilichkeit?", *Die Linkskurve* (1932) No. 6.

⁷⁴ A statement of Lukács's, in which he declared that he had always opposed RAPP (and Trotsky) should be seen in this context, though it is not acceptable; see his "Postscriptum 1957 zu *Mein Weg zu Marx*", in *Marxismus und Stalinismus* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: 1970).

⁷⁵ Georg Lukács: "Zur Frage der Satire", *International Literatur* (1932) No. 4—5.

⁷⁶ Georg Lukács: "Zur Frage der Satire", in *Probleme des Realismus* (Neuwied: 1971) Vol. I, pp. 89—90.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p. 95.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 95—97.

⁷⁹ In an earlier passage Lukács lists as synonyms the words: "realistic, average and typical". See *ibid.* p. 93.

⁸⁰ See Gallas: *Marxistische Literaturtheorie: Kontroversen im Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller*, p. 65; Gorbunov: *Lenin és a Proletkult*, pp. 265—267.

⁸¹ See Gallas: *Marxistische Literaturtheorie: Kontroversen im Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller*, pp. 67—71.

⁸² See *ibid.*, pp. 65—66.

⁸³ László Illés: "Újabb viták az avantgardról" [Recent debates on the avant-garde], *Kritika* (1964) No. 4, p. 18; further, see Gunnar Gunnarson: *Georg Lukács* (Stockholm: 1969), pp. 191—192.

⁸⁴ Béla Köpeczi: "A szocialista realizmus" [Socialist realism], in Köpeczi (ed.): *A szocialista realizmus*, Vol. I, pp. 26—27. For Gronsky's speech advocating socialist realism, see *Russkaya sovyetskaya literaturnaya kritika*, ed. by P. F. Yushin (Moscow: 1981), p. 150.

⁸⁵ Aleksandr Fadeyev: "O sotsialisticheskom realizme", in *Za tritsat let* (Moscow: 1957) p. 89.

⁸⁶ Georg Lukács: "Friedrich Engels als Literaturtheoretiker und Literaturkritiker", in his *Probleme der Ästhetik*, p. 534—first published in Russian in *Literaturny kritik* (1935) No. 8. (This part was omitted from the 1972 Hungarian translation.)

⁸⁷ A. V. Lunacharsky: "Sotsialistichesky realizm" In *Sobranie sochinenie* VIII, p. 495.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 518—519.

⁸⁹ For Mayakovsky and Tairov see P. F. Yushin (ed.): *Russkaya sovyetskaya literaturnaya kritika* (1917—1934) Moscow: 1981) p. 145 and p. 150.

⁹⁰ André Breton and Paul Éluard: "Notes sur la poésie", *La révolution surréaliste* (December 15, 1929) No. 12.

⁹¹ See Louis Aragon: "Le retour à la réalité", in *Pour un réalisme socialiste* (Paris: 1935); J. Lurçat, et al.: *La querelle du réalisme* (Paris: 1936) pp. 15—90.

⁹² Y. Simonov: "O sovetskoy hudozhestvennij proze", in *Vtoroi vsesoyuzni sjezd sovetskikh pisatelei* (Moscow: 1956) p. 89.

⁹³ See Christopher Caudwell: *Romance and Realism* (Princeton: 1970).

⁹⁴ See Béla Köpeczi (ed.): *A szocialista realizmus* II, p. 382.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 347.

⁹⁶ See George Lichtheim: *Georg Lukács* (New York: 1970) p. 78.

⁹⁷ See Gunnarson: *Georg Lukács*, p. 193.

- ⁹⁸ See Jules Dévrité: *Der Fall Lukács: Georg Lukács und der Stalinismus* (Cologne: 1952).
- ⁹⁹ See István Hermann: "Lukács György fejlődése A regény elméletétől a realizmus elméletéig" [György Lukács's development from *The Theory of the Novel* to the theory of realism], in Illés and Szabolcsi (eds.): *"Jöjj el, szabadság!"* pp. 437—38; W. Mittenzwei: "Gesichtspunkte" in Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, pp. 34—43, 69; Mittenzwei: "Der Streit zwischen nichtaristotelischer und aristotelischer Kunstauffassung: Die Brecht-Lukács-Debatte", in *ibid.*, pp. 165—70; Rosenberg: "Das Leben Georg Lukács'", in *op. cit.*, p. 409.
- ¹⁰⁰ See Kurt Batt: "Erlebnis des Umbruchs und harmonische Gestalt: Der Dialog zwischen Anna Seghers und Georg Lukács", in Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, pp. 209—10.
- ¹⁰¹ See Hermann: *Die Gedankenwelt von Georg Lukács*, pp. 209—11.
- ¹⁰² Arnold Hauser: *Im Gespräch mit Georg Lukács* (München: 1978), p. 54.
- ¹⁰³ See Lukács: "Preface to the New Edition (1967)" in *History and Class Consciousness*, p. XXXVIII.
- ¹⁰⁴ See Mittenzwei: "Gesichtspunkte", in Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, pp. 68—69.
- ¹⁰⁵ See Batt: "Erlebnis des Umbruchs und harmonische Gestalt", in Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács* pp. 205—206. This view seems to be just as far-fetched as its opposite, which alleges that, throughout the thirties, Lukács remained a little-known advocate of French—Russian relations (cf. Lichtheim: *George Lukács*, p. 78).
- ¹⁰⁶ For information on Plekhanov's orthodoxy, see Sziklai: *Történelmi lecke haladóknak*, pp. 119—96. Until recently, the critical evaluation of the 'school of vulgar sociology' had been one-sidedly negative, yet new research has come forward with a more differentiated assessment; cf. Lajos Nyíró: "Kutatási irányok a 20-as évek szovjet irodalomtudományában" [Trends of research in the literary scholarship of the Soviet Union in the 1920s], *Helikon* (1978) No. 1—2.
- ¹⁰⁷ Georg Lukács: "Expressionism: Its Significance and Decline", in his *Essays on Realism*, p. 105.
- ¹⁰⁸ See *ibid.*, pp. 87, 110—13.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 105.
- ¹¹⁰ Lukács: *Probleme der Ästhetik*, pp. 397, 412.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 396.
- ¹¹² Georg Lukács: "Karl Marx und Friedrich Theodor Vischer", in his *Probleme der Ästhetik*, p. 238—first published in *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo* (1934) No. 15.
- ¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 273, 280, 301.
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 244.
- ¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 273.
- ¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 243.
- ¹¹⁷ Georg Lukács: "The Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe", in his *Goethe and his Age*, trans. by R. Anchor (London: 1968), p. 95—written in 1934, the essay was first published as "Shiller i Gyote v yikh perepiske", in *Gyote i Shiller, perepiska* (Moscow and Leningrad: 1937).
- ¹¹⁸ Lukács: *Goethe and his Age*, pp. 79, 89.
- ¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 88—89, 96—97, 100.
- ¹²⁰ See Georg Lukács: "Zur Ästhetik Schillers", in his *Probleme der Ästhetik*, p. 93—first published as "Shiller kak estetik", in F. Shiller: *Stati po estetiki* (Moscow and Leningrad: 1935).
- ¹²¹ See Georg Lukács: "Hölderlin's Hyperion", in his *Goethe and His Age*—first published as "Hölderlins Hyperion", *Internationale Literatur* (1935) No. 6.
- ¹²² Georg Lukács: "Balzac: *Lost Illusions*", in his *Studies in European Realism*, trans. by E. Bone (New York: 1964), p. 60—written in 1935, it was first published as "Balzac: *Utrachennyye illyuzii*", in O. Balzac: *Utrachennyye illyuzii* (Moscow and Leningrad: 1936).
- ¹²³ Georg Lukács: "The Zola Century", in his *Studies in European Realism*, p. 94—first published as "A százéves Zola", *Új Hang* (1940) No. 5—6.
- ¹²⁴ See Georg Lukács: "Gottfried Keller", in his *Deutsche Literatur in zwei Jahrhunderten* (Neuwied—Berlin: 1964), pp. 338—339, 365—366—first published in *Internationale Literatur* (1939) Nos 6, 7.
- ¹²⁵ György Lukács: "Bevezetés" [Introduction], in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: *Művészet—irodalom* [Art and Literature] (Budapest: 1946), p. 20.
- ¹²⁶ See Szerdahelyi: *A magyar esztétika története*, pp. 81—82.
- ¹²⁷ Georg Lukács: "Heinrich Heine als nationaler Dichter", in his *Deutsche Literatur in zwei Jahrhunderten*, pp. 316—317—the first version appeared as "Genrikh Geyne", in G. Geyne: *Germaniya* (Moscow: 1934)—the final form is "Heinrich Heine als nationaler Dichter", *Internationale Literatur* (1937) Nos 9, 10.
- ¹²⁸ Lukács: "Heinrich Heine als nationaler Dichter", in his *Deutsche Literatur in zwei Jahrhunderten*, p. 318.
- ¹²⁹ See Georg Lukács: "Parteidichtung III", in his *Schriften zur Ideologie und Politik* (Neuwied—Berlin: 1967)—written in 1945, the article was first published as "Pártköltészet" [Partisan poetry], in his *Irodalom és demokrácia* [Literature and Democracy] (Budapest: 1947).

¹³⁰ See György Lukács: "Irodalom és demokrácia" [Literature and democracy], in his *Irodalom és demokrácia*. The manuscript of the study dates back to 1946.

¹³¹ Georg Lukács: "Erzählen oder beschreiben?", in his *Schicksalswende* (Berlin: 1948), p. 154.

¹³² Georg Lukács: "Tolstoy and the Development of Realism", in his *Studies in European Realism*, pp. 141–42—written in 1935, it was first published as "Leo Tolstoi und die Entwicklung des Realismus", *Internationale Literatur* (1938) Nos 10, 11.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

¹³⁴ Georg Lukács: "Marx and the Problem of Ideological Decay", in his *Essays on Realism*, p. 166—the manuscript of the study dates back to 1938, and it was first published as "Marx und das Problem des ideologischen Verfalls", *Internationale Literatur* (1939) No. 7—in 1939 it was published in Hungarian by Új Hang in instalments.

¹³⁵ Georg Lukács: "Friedrich Engels als Literaturtheoretiker", in his *Probleme der Ästhetik*, pp. 534–35.

¹³⁶ Lukács: "Tolstoy and the Development of Realism", in his *Studies in European Realism*, p. 203.

¹³⁷ Georg Lukács: "Kunst und objektive Wahrheit", in his *Probleme des Realismus*, Bd. I, p. 647 (a 1968 Hungarian edition of the essay fails to include this part)—written in 1934, the original title was "K probleme objektivnoy khudozhestvennoy formy", *Literaturny Kritik* (1935) No. 9.

¹³⁸ Georg Lukács: "Tribune or Bureaucrat?", in his *Essays on Realism*, p. 232—the manuscript dates back to 1939, and was originally published as "Volkstribun oder Bürokrat", *Internationale Literatur* (1940) Nos 1–3.

¹³⁹ Georg Lukács: "Marx and the Problem of Ideological Decay", in *op. cit.*, p. 162.

¹⁴⁰ Georg Lukács: "Ady, a magyar tragédia nagy éneke" [Ady, the great singer of Hungarian tragedy], in his *Magyar irodalom—magyar kultúra* [Hungarian Literature—Hungarian Culture] (Budapest: 1970), pp. 171–72—first published as "Ady politikai költészete" [Ady's political poetry], *Korunk* (1939) No. 10. Révai's apt statement, "this symbolism is realism," appears to have its origin in that statement of Lukács's (cf. József Révai: *Irodalmi tanulmányok* [Literary Studies] [Budapest: 1950], p. 206).

¹⁴¹ See Georg Lukács: "Johannes R. Bechers Abschied", *Internationale Literatur* (1941) No. 5.

¹⁴² György Lukács: "Levél Németh Andorhoz Déry Tibor regényéről" [A letter to Andor Németh about Tibor Déry's novel], in his *Magyar irodalom—magyar kultúra*, p. 522. The article was written in January, 1948.

¹⁴³ A few important contributions: Jürgen Rühle: "Gefährten am Kreuzweg: Anna Seghers und ihr Disput mit Georg Lukács", in his *Literatur und Revolution* (Cologne—Berlin: 1960); László Illés: "Régi viták az avantgardról" [Old debates on the avant-garde], *Kritika* (1963) No. 2; István Hermann: "Tények és összefüggések" [Facts and interrelations], *Kritika* (1964) No. 2; László Illés: "Újabb viták az avantgardról"; Klaus Völker: "Brecht und Lukács", *Kursbuch* (1966) No. 7; Mittenzwei: "Die Brecht-Lukács-Debatte", *Sinn und Form* (1967) No. 1; Klaus L. Berghahn: "Volkstümlichkeit und Realismus: Nochmals zur Brecht-Lukács-Debatte", *Jahrbuch für deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1973); Hermann: *Die Gedankenwelt von Georg Lukács*, pp. 218–225; Mittenzwei: "Der Streit zwischen nichtaristotelischer und aristotelischer Kunst-auffassung: Die Brecht—Lukács Debatte", in *op. cit.*, pp. 153 ff.; Batt: "Erlebnis des Umbruchs und Harmonische Gestalt: Der Dialog zwischen Anna Seghers und Georg Lukács", in *op. cit.*; Hans-Jürgen Schmitt: *Die Expressionismus-Debatte* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1976); Tamás Ungvári: *Brecht színházi forradalma* [Brecht's Theatrical Revolution] (Budapest: 1978).

¹⁴⁴ Ungvári: *Brecht színházi forradalma*, p. 140.

¹⁴⁵ Georg Lukács: "Erzählen oder beschreiben?", in his *Schicksalswende*, p. 129.

¹⁴⁶ Georg Lukács: "Gottfried Keller", in his *Deutsche Literatur in zwei Jahrhunderten*, p. 337.

¹⁴⁷ Georg Lukács: "Heinrich Heine als nationaler Dichter", in *ibid.*, p. 318.

¹⁴⁸ See Lukács: "Balzac: *Lost Illusions*" in *op. cit.*; "The Zola Century", in *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁹ György Lukács: "Előszó" [Preface], in his *Művészet és társadalom* [Art and Society] (Budapest: 1968), p. 12. It was written in 1967.

¹⁵⁰ For a more elaborate account of the debate over *Literaturny Kritik*, see István Hermann: *Die Gedankenwelt von Georg Lukács*, pp. 204–28; Barck: "Wir wurden mündig erst in deiner Lehre ...: Der Einfluss Georg Lukács' auf die Literaturkonzeption von Johannes R. Becher", in *op. cit.*, pp. 275–76; Sziklai: *Történelmi lecke haladóknak*, pp. 246–59, 302–21.

¹⁵¹ See Szerdahelyi: *A magyar esztétika története*, pp. 82–86, 101–102.

¹⁵² Georg Lukács: "Einführung in die ästhetischen Schriften, von Marx und Engels", in *Schriften zur Literatursoziologie* (Berlin—Neuwied: 1961), pp. 237–38.

¹⁵³ Lukács: "Marx and the Problem of Ideological Decay", in *op. cit.*, p. 139; György Lukács: "Régi és új legendák ellen" [Against legends old and new], in his *Magyar irodalom — magyar kultúra*, p. 411. The article was written in 1947.

¹⁵⁴ Lukács: "Balzac: *Lost Illusions*" in *op. cit.*, pp. 89–91.

¹⁵⁵ See Sziklai: *Történelmi lecke haladóknak*, pp. 292—4. An available collection of the texts referred to is Georg Lukács: *Écrits de Moscou*, trans. by C. Prévost (Paris: 1974).

¹⁵⁶ Lukács: "Irodalom és demokrácia", in *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹⁶⁰ Georg Lukács: "Art and Objective Truth", in his *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*, trans. by A. Kahn (London: 1970), p. 38.

¹⁶¹ See Georg Lukács: *The Historical Novel* (London: 1969), pp. 103—4—first published as "Istoricheski roman", *Literaturny Kritik* (1937) Nos 7, 9 and *ibid.* (1938) Nos 1, 3, 8, 12.

¹⁶² See Lukács: *Magyar irodalom—magyar kultúra*, p. 174.

¹⁶³ Georg Lukács. "Politische Parteilichkeit und dichterische Vollendung", *Der Rote Aufbau* (1951) No. 5, p. 402.

¹⁶⁴ See Ervin Gyertyán: "Életpraxis és elvontság" [Life praxis and abstraction], in his *Párbeszéd sokszemközt* [Dialogue with Many Participants] (Budapest: 1973), pp. 292 ff.

¹⁶⁵ See "Ernst Bloch und Georg Lukács im Gespräch mit Iring Fetscher, Johannes B. Metz und Jürgen Moltmann", *Neues Forum* (November—December, 1967).

¹⁶⁶ See Brack: "Wir wurden mündig erst in deiner Lehre ...: Der Einfluss Georg Lukács' auf die Literaturkonzeption von Johannes R. Becher", in *op. cit.*, pp. 273—74; Tibor Hanák: *Az elmaradt reneszánsz* [Renaissance Cancelled] (Munich: 1979), p. 364.

¹⁶⁷ Bertolt Brecht: *Arbeitsjournal: 1938—1942* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1973), p. 39.

¹⁶⁸ The turnabout affected the interpretation of both realism and style as such. Until then, Lukács referred to style as a synonym of artistic method, which is a 'decisive artistic problem' of an era (cf. Georg Lukács: "Tolstoi und die Probleme des Realismus", in his *Der russische Realismus in der Weltliteratur* [Berlin: 1952], p. 182). Here, differences can be attributed to the different interpretations of the typical. Therefore, questions of style had in Lukács a direct connection with questions of artistic truth (cf. Lukács: "Zur Ästhetik Schillers", in *op. cit.*, pp. 96—7. In the reinterpretation described here, style is conceived of as an element of 'artistic technique', independent of aspects of content and world view (cf. Leo Kofler: *Zur Theorie der modernen Literatur* [Neuwied—Berlin: 1962], p. 170; Szerdahelyi: *A magyar esztétika története*, pp. 97—102). It is a puzzling coincidence that in 1936 Lukács—who confronted in a pejorative sense the 'modern realists' with the 'classics of realism'—attributed the weaknesses in terms of content and method of the former to their 'literary technique' (cf. Georg Lukács: "Die intellektuelle Physiognomie der künstlerischen Gestalten", in his *Kunst und objektive Wahrheit* [Leipzig: 1977], p. 194), which, however, can be considered as a mistake in the usage of terms.

¹⁶⁹ György Lukács: "Előszó" [Preface], in his *A realizmus problémái* [Problems of Realism] (Budapest: 1948), p. 11.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 11—2.

¹⁷² György Lukács: "Bírálat és önbírálat" [Criticism and self-criticism], in *Társadalmi Szemle* (1949) No. 8—9, p. 591.

¹⁷³ Georg Lukács: "Pushkin's Place in World Literature", in his *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*, p. 231. The essay was written in 1949.

¹⁷⁴ Georg Lukács: "Franz Kafka or Thomas Mann?", in his *Realism in Our Time*, trans. by J. and N. Mander (New York: 1964), p. 48—first published as "Franz Kafka oder Thomas Mann?", in his *Wider den missverstandenen Realismus* (Hamburg: 1958).

¹⁷⁵ See György Lukács: "Előszó" [Preface], in his *Világirodalom* [World Literature], Vol. I, pp. 7—8. The preface was written in November, 1968.

¹⁷⁶ See György Lukács: *Wider den missverstandenen Realismus*, and his *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* (London: 1963).

¹⁷⁷ See Hans Magnus Enzensberger: "Die Aporien der Avantgarde", *Merkur* (May, 1962); Harold Rosenberg: "The Third Dimension of Georg Lukács", *Dissent* (Autumn, 1964).

¹⁷⁸ See Georg Lukács: "The Playful Style", in his *Essays on Thomas Mann*, p. 108.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁸⁰ See Georg Lukács: *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* (n. p.: 1963), Bd. I, pp. 723, 831—35.

¹⁸¹ See *ibid.*, Bd. I, p. 574.

¹⁸² See *ibid.*, Bd. II, pp. 772—75.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, Bd. II, p. 826.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Bd. II, p. 773.

¹⁸⁵ See Isaac Deutscher: "Georg Lukács and 'Critical Realism'", *The Listener* (November 3, 1966).

¹⁸⁶ See Mittenzwei: "Der Streit zwischen nichtaristotelischer und aristotelischer Kunstauffassung: Die Brecht-Lukács-Debatte", in *op. cit.*, pp. 177—81.

¹⁸⁷ György Lukács: "Kiknek nem kell és miért Balázs Béla költészete?" [Who want none of Béla Balázs's poetry and why?], in his *Magyar irodalom—magyar kultúra*, p. 136—first published as the preface to his *Balázs Béla és akiknek nem kell* [Béla Balázs and Those Who Want None of Him] (Gyoma: 1918).

¹⁸⁸ Hauser: *Im Gespräch mit Georg Lukács*, p. 56.

¹⁸⁹ See Szerdahelyi: *A magyar esztétika története*, pp. 216—21.

¹⁹⁰ Gallas: *Marxistische Literaturtheorie*, p. 173.

¹⁹¹ See Peter Demetz: "Georg Lukács auf dem Wege zu Aristoteles", *Merkur* (June, 1965).

¹⁹² Hanák: *A filozófus Lukács*, pp. 106—7.

¹⁹³ See András Horn: *Kunst und Freiheit* (Den Haag: 1969), p. 47.

¹⁹⁴ See Wilhelm Gimus: "Von der unbefleckten Empfängnis des Ästhetischen: Betrachtungen zur Ästhetik von György Lukács", *Sinn und Form* (1967) No. 1, p. 175; Erwin Pracht: "Sozialistischer Realismus und Leninische Abbildtheorie", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* (1971) No. 6, p. 759.

¹⁹⁵ See Völker: "Brecht und Lukács", in *op. cit.* p. 80.

¹⁹⁶ See Werner Mittenzwei: "Vorbemerkungen", in Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, p. 6.

¹⁹⁷ See Gallas: *Marxistische Literaturtheorie: Kontroversen im Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller*, pp. 168—70; Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, pp. 50—4, 77, 81, 92—3, 98; Mittenzwei: "Der Streit zwischen nichtaristotelischer und aristotelischer Kunstauffassung: Die Brecht-Lukács-Debatte", in *op. cit.*, pp. 192—203; Gudrun Klatt: "Korrespondenz und Widerspruch: Einige Aspekte der politisch-ästhetischen und literaturtheoretischen Auffassungen von Friedrich Wolf und Georg Lukács", in Mittenzwei (ed.): *Dialog und Kontroverse mit Georg Lukács*, pp. 310—57.

¹⁹⁸ See Szerdahelyi: *A magyar esztétika története*, pp. 481—82.

The Lukácsian Conception of Poetry

by

Péter Egri

I

Most of György Lukács's readers—whether sympathetic or otherwise—tend to acknowledge today that he was one of the classical Marxist aestheticians, and his work as a whole constitutes a major contribution to aesthetic thinking in general.

But few people—especially beyond the sphere of his immediate disciples—are aware of the fact that Lukács was intensely interested in poets and poetry; that he knew a great number of verse lines by heart; that in conversation he was in the habit of quoting a great variety of poets ranging from Goethe to Endre Ady; that as an adolescent, he admired Sándor Petőfi, Shelley, Keats, Swinburne, Baudelaire, and Verlaine, and somewhat later, Novalis and George; that he was among the first to recognize the national and international significance of Endre Ady and Attila József; that in his youth, he wrote a passionate defence of the Hungarian poet Béla Balázs (considerably overrating him); that in his numerous papers on poets, he made important pronouncements on various aspects of poetry; and that, ultimately, he summarized his observations in a definition of poetry, which found its way into his monumental aesthetic synthesis, *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*.

Though Lukács had written important studies on the history of drama (*A modern dráma fejlődésének története* [The History of the Development of the Modern Drama], 1911) and on the theory of the novel (*The Theory of the Novel*, 1915) in his—later superseded—idealistic, pre-Marxist period as well, his theoretically significant statements about poetry fell in the Marxist phase of his development.¹ This paper, concerned with the Lukácsian concept of poetry, rather than with Lukács's evaluation of individual poets, will therefore focus on the latter half of his scholarly activity.

Apart from his early writing under the influence of Alfred Kerr, Lukács was, throughout his creative life, strongly opposed to the superficial, merely impressionistic treatment of art, and endeavored to lay a firm and reliable groundwork for aesthetic judgment. This had already been tentatively apparent in his early recourse to the philosophies of Kant, Simmel, Dilthey, Max Weber, Kierkegaard, and Hegel, and became most obvious and fully developed in his Marxist period, when his chief concern was to elaborate a consistent theory of art as a reflection of objective reality. How far is this aim compatible with the subjective saturation of the lyric? Where is there room for the genre-constituting activity of the subjective ego in the objective framework of the Lukácsian concept of art and poetry?

First of all, we must consider the fact that in his study *Art and Objective Truth* (1934)

Lukács emphasizes: the justification of a motive in art does not depend on our ability to find a detail in outer world to which the motive corresponds. The crucial question is whether the motive is necessary for a correct reflection of the total process of objective reality. If so, then it makes no theoretical difference whether the artist observed the phenomenon in his surroundings, or brought it about by his creative imagination, on the basis of direct or indirect experiences. Comparing artistic reflection with its model, Lukács is far from restricting the correctness of the reflection to a photographically truthful representation of the factual details of reality. He discusses the problem from the viewpoint of the recipient ego as well, again driving the point home that, when we have an experience of a work of art, we do not consciously compare an individual experience with an isolated element of the work, but, instead, confront the total impact of the artifact with the totality of our life experience. Lukács also points out that the objectivity of the external world is in an inner, inseparable interaction with human practice, and criticizes Zola's theory of naturalism for disrupting the unity of the objective and subjective components in his concept of the artistic rendering of reality. It should also be borne in mind that, in analyzing the intensive totality of the self-contained world of a work of art, Lukács underlines the importance of the genre, the literary form, in which the work has been conceived. It is in interaction with the specific laws of a genre that the objective character of the presented sphere of life determines the quantity, quality, and proportions of reality focused in the work.²

Just how seriously Lukács took the part that the ego plays in the genre of the lyric can be seen in his papers devoted to lyric poetry. In these analyses, he treats the subject-object relationship in accordance with the increased importance of the operation of the ego in the organization of the genre, and applies his general aesthetic concept to poetry by highlighting the significance of the subject.

In his article on "Hölderlin's *Hyperion*" (1935), Lukács praises the poet's lyric, saturated with "*citoyen*" pathos, thirst for beauty, and elegiac sorrow, for not having fallen prey to either an academic, classicistic objectivism, or an amorphous, diffuse subjectivism, and writes in admiration of Hölderlin's style, which is "neither dryly and didactically intellectual nor atmospheric and void of thought".³

In his study "Heinrich Heine als nationaler Dichter" (1937), Lukács points out that, due to the historical anachronism of contemporary German social conditions, it was exactly the lyric-ironic, fantastic-ironic, highly subjective poetic pattern, rather than the broad social tableau of the Balzacian cycle of novels, that was suitable to synthesize the contradictions of social life.⁴

In his paper "Ady, a magyar tragédia nagy éneke" [Ady, the great singer of Hungarian tragedy] (1939), Lukács gives a theoretical generalization of his historical observations concerning the lyric:

The form of the lyric is in the last resort determined by the specific relationship between the *Ego* and the outer world [...] For every lyricist the *Ego*, the immediate personal experience, means, in terms of the creative process, something essentially different, something decisively more than for the narrator, or the dramatist. While in the case of the latter the *Ego* only plays a mediating role between the real and the represented world [...] in the lyric the poetic *Ego* is not only a mirror, but also the immediate factor of representation. Therefore [...] the lyricist in whose experiences the crucial questions of the external world are not reflected, or are not truthfully reflected, cannot be a really great lyric poet. But out of formal necessity, the lyric cannot be content with that much. In the lyric, personal experience is a means of expression as well, and the specific, indissoluble, immediate matter of the poem.⁵

In view of the fact that Ady's symbolistic poetry can by no means be considered a

mere photocopy of the visual world, the latitude of the transformational power of the subjective ego in Lukács's concept of the lyric is once more attested.

In interpreting Goethe's *Faust* (1940), too, Lukács remarks that, in Goethe's balladic lyric poetry, which suggests an inner dramatic movement of tension and its resolution, the landscape or some other motif only serves to quicken or slacken the inner motion in accordance with the nature of the lyrically expressed emotion.⁶

The fact that Lukács was far from expecting a poet to depict minutely the world of appearances can be proved from yet another aspect, by referring to his article "Babits Mihály vallomásai" [Mihály Babits's confessions] (1941). After quoting in agreement the opinion of Sophie Török, Babits's wife and a poet herself, to the effect that Babits projects his confessions into a lyrically stylized, graphically factual world, and thus, as it were, 'objectifies' them, Lukács immediately adds that this is not tantamount to Babits's being a more objective poet than Goethe or Petőfi, but should only be regarded as the psychological and stylistic consequence of the experience of 'there is no way to break out of my magic circle' (cf. Babits: "Jónás könyve" [The book of Jonah]). Hence, what Lukács considers lyrically decisive is not the indirect or direct expression of the poetic ego. What in his view really matters is "the equality of the relation of the lyrical *Ego* to the external world; the extent, depth, and intensity of the external world belonging organically to the inner life, development, and manifestation of the *Ego*".⁷

In his lecture on "Pártköltészet" [Poetry of partisanship] (1946), Lukács depicts the lyric type of the subject-object relation in even bolder strokes. On the one hand, he points out that whereas in Balzac's and Tolstoy's novels the triumph of realism corrects the distortions of the authors' world views, in poetry such a phenomenon is not possible.

In order to be really good poems, Petőfi's and Ady's verses had to be conceived correctly in the first place, because in this case the poet's conception, his subjective thought and emotion do not merely *mould* the object, but *are* the object, immediately expressed and represented.⁸

On the other hand, Lukács stresses that in every kind of true lyric, subjectivity, emotions, and desires, while being solidified into the outlines of the momentary existence of the personality, at the same time also expand to embrace the world in a direct way. The individual experience, Lukács holds, is the essential form of the poetic creative process, but it is not identical with the content experienced, which contains the whole world, especially society in its movement and change. To equate the former with the latter is, according to Lukács, no more than illusion.⁹

In his commemorative essay "A százéves Toldi" [The hundred-year-old Toldi], (1947), Lukács confronts Petőfi's explosive lyrical temperament and János Arany's contemplative, 'recording' lyrical ego, and shows their respective attraction to certain kinds of themes. Drawing the conclusion from his argumentation, he writes: "The theme is never merely an objective or legendary piece of reality, but it is also the contact of the poet's personality with it, his relation to it."¹⁰

The elucidation of the role played by the subjective ego in depicting objective reality led to significant observations on the genres. Analyzing "Pushkin's Place in World Literature" (1949), Lukács recognizes the fact that—unlike in the case of the works of Byron—in Pushkin's *Onegin* lyrical subjectivity does not impede but, on the contrary, furthers the unfolding of novelistic objectivity, graphic plasticity.¹¹

In his article "Madách tragédiája" [Madách's tragedy] (1955), Lukács compares the conclusion of Mihály Vörösmarty's poem, "A vén cigány" [The old gypsy], and the end of Imre Madách's poetic drama, *The Tragedy of Man*. He highlights the more subjective

nature of poetic composition and the more objective character of the dramatic structure, and then proves wittily that Madách uses an essentially poetic pattern in the last scene of his work.¹²

Hence, Lukács fully recognizes and energetically emphasizes the role and function of subjectivity in poetry. His view is dialectical in character. Far from linking lyric poetry to 'pure subjectivity', and the non-lyric genres to 'pure objectivity', in a metaphysically rigid and one-sided fashion, Lukács places the extraordinary achievement of the poet in the limelight: the ability to reach social and universal objectivity by focusing and intensifying individual and personal subjectivity.

II

This Lukácsian view, which occurs again and again in his analyses of poets like a leitmotif, explains Lukács's contradictory attitude to Christopher Caudwell's theory of poetry. Lukács's stance is indeed Janus-faced, one of admiration and criticism, corresponding to the great English Marxist aesthete's brilliant abilities and performances, and to what Lukács considered Caudwell's occasional idealistic, subjective approaches in his ingenious chief work, *Illusion and Reality*. Accordingly, Lukács readily acknowledges that Caudwell is a 'most talented English aesthete', who 'sees correctly that art appeals to man's self-consciousness'; he is a 'deep-thinking and progressive author', who 'emphatically underscores the social character of art, and perceives a balance between the emotional content of poetry and social relations even in rhythm'; he is 'justified to challenge Wittgenstein's theory of the "unspeakable"'; 'a keen-witted thinker' and 'a very gifted, witty English Marxist', whose 'main endeavor was to analyze aesthetic phenomena in a Marxist way'.¹³

But Lukács also criticizes Caudwell for subjectivizing poetry: this

most talented English aesthete [...] considers the lyric only from its evocative side and sees in it some mystic 'dream-work' which, unlike genres reflecting reality, expresses only pure, isolated subjectivity [...] Caudwell is right to state that art appeals to man's self-consciousness rather than to his consciousness. But he destroys what is correct in this statement partly by constructing a rigid metaphysical antinomy when considering self-consciousness an isolation from the world, and partly by attributing this effect only to the lyric.¹⁴

I can reinforce the duality of Lukács's evaluation of Caudwell by recalling a conversation we had in person in September, 1960. At the start, Lukács again expressed his high appreciation of Caudwell's aesthetic insight. But later he explained what he regarded as the weak point in Caudwell's standpoint. In his opinion, Caudwell partially fell victim to a tenet held by a part of twentieth-century bourgeois thinkers. The theory in question categorically confronts instincts with civilization. The real roots of the concept can be found in certain twentieth-century historical experiences, which then came to be incorrectly overgeneralized and unhistorically projected on the whole past of mankind.

In real men, Lukács went on explaining, biological and social elements are not separated in independent layers deposited on one another, but are, rather, combined in a dynamic and mutual interaction. To support his argument by some ontological examples, he referred to the simple facts that the biological properties of man living in society had been modified (e.g., his hair wore off drastically), and man as a biological being

had become socialized (e.g., the development of human love, from animal copulation through eroticism). Who, Lukács put the rhetorical question, would be able to tell mere instinct from passionate love in the embrace of Romeo and Juliet?

Caudwell makes an effort to resolve the rigid opposition between instinctive impulse and social environment, but he himself keeps the two poles too separate and distinct. In other words, he sets up the aesthetic equation in the wrong manner, and then seeks the solution in the correct one.

That is why, I may add, his sequence of ideas evolves in a series of contradictions in *Illusion and Reality*. Their brief summary and analysis are essential, both for the elucidation of his theory and for the clarification of Lukács's view.

(1) Caudwell states that "poetry expresses in a special manner the genetic instinctive part of the individual,"¹⁵ the special combination of genes typical of an individual, that is, the genotype. It is quite logical that, if poetry can be interpreted on the basis of the genotype, the most important element of poetry—rhythm—can also be deduced from it.¹⁶

(2) At this point we may ask the question: how is it possible to make the conception of poetry as expressing the individual genotype consistent with the known facts of the collective origin, character, and effect of poetry? Caudwell, when deriving poetry from the individual combination of genes, does not separate it from the common set of instincts. The particular genotypes do not only differ from, but are also similar to, each other; if they are individual combinations, they are so within the same species. Thus, when men revert to the genotype, they return "to the more or less common set of instincts in each man".¹⁷ "Poetry is the nascent self-consciousness of man, not as an individual, but as sharer with others of a whole world of common emotion."¹⁸

(3) Even now, however, the difficulties arising from Caudwell's derivation of poetry from the genotype, have not yet been overcome. Instincts are characterized by 'timelessness': the genotype is 'unchanging'. The "timelessness of instincts, the unchanging secret face of the genotype, which persists beneath all the rich superstructure of civilization"¹⁹ contradicts the changes in poetry.

(4) This contradiction seems to be lessened by the fact that Caudwell conceives of the instincts and, consequently, the genotype, as only relatively unchanging.

Instinct is what we call a simple repetition of hereditary habits, the mechanical reappearance of the old. Such simple responses to external or internal stimuli change from age to age, but, in relation to the rapid tempo of social life, there is a consistency about them which leads us to separate them as hypothetical entities, the instincts.²⁰

(5) But the difference in tempo between the biological and social changes is insufficient to explain the special way in which poetry changes. Caudwell's brilliant summary of the development of modern English poetry in various historical periods shows quite clearly how closely poetry follows the 'rapid change of social life'. It is Caudwell's theory of adaptation that is intended to bridge this gap. The function of poetry, in his opinion, is to adapt natural instincts to changing social conditions, through which process the instincts themselves are also changed. "In emotional introversion men return to the genotype, to the more or less common set of instincts in each man which is changed and adapted by outer reality in the course of living",²¹ says Caudwell, summing up all those characteristics of the genotype which are significant for his lyrical theory: its individual quality, collective aspect, static and dynamic factors, as well as the problem

of its relation to outer reality. This relation of the genotype raises another problem of poetry.

(6) If the function of poetry is to adapt the genotype, the instincts, to changing economic and social reality, then poetry must have connections with social reality. "Poetry expresses", Caudwell writes, "in a generalized and abstract way the dynamic relation of the ego to the elements of outer reality symbolized by words."²² And even more concretely: "The non-biological change of man, superimposed upon his relatively constant biological make-up during historic times, is the subject of literary history. This development is non-biological just because it is economic."²³

It is significant that this idea occurs throughout the book.²⁴

It is, however, also apparent, that we often encounter quite different views in *Illusion and Reality*. If, on the one hand, Caudwell considers the economic and social basis as fundamental for the development and understanding of poetry, on the other hand, he looks upon artistic concentration as a moving toward the instincts. In his opinion, the more an artist moves away from the surface of outer reality, the more he approaches the genotype. "Art performs its task [...] by taking a piece of environment and distorting it, giving it a non-likeness to external reality which is also a likeness to the genotype."²⁵ If, on the one hand, he states that a work of art is a reflection of the social conditions in a definite period, on the other hand, he excludes all the world standing behind the particular piece shaped in art.

The difference between art's piece of reality and science's is that science is only interested in the relation of that selected piece to the world from which it is drawn, whereas art is interested in the relation between the genotype and the selected piece of reality, and therefore ignores the whole world standing behind the part [...] The distinctive concern of science is the world of external reality; art is occupied with the world of internal reality.²⁶

Elsewhere Caudwell recognizes the fact of (mimetic) reflection in the case of the epic and drama, but denies it in respect of (modern, bourgeois) poetry: "poetry expresses in a special manner the genetic instinctive part of the individual, as opposed, say, to the novel, which expresses the individual as an adapted type, as social character, as the man realized in society"²⁷ It should also be borne in mind that Caudwell locates the beginning of the modern era in the fifteenth century, and it is rather difficult to understand why Sappho was a more 'mimetic' poet than, say, Shakespeare, Burns, Pope, Goethe, or Wordsworth.

(7) The ambiguity in the question of artistic reflection reveals itself in the particular problems of poetry, too. Inasmuch as Caudwell accepts art's (mimetic) reflection of reality, he cannot help giving a place to the objects of external reality and the ideas expressing ('symbolizing') its structure in poetry. Inasmuch as he denies, however, the (mimetic) reflection of outer reality in (modern, bourgeois) poetry, he must exclude real objects from it. Accordingly, in one passage he admits the lyric role of objects ("It is impossible to have affects in poetry without their adherence to symbols of external reality"),²⁸ whereas elsewhere he does not ("The emotions are not associated affectively with the portion of external reality symbolized by the manifest content").²⁹ Similarly, in one passage he maintains that ideas have a poetic role ("Poetry certainly evokes ideas"),³⁰ but elsewhere he adopts a contrary view ("Poetry is irrational").³¹

(8) Finally, we can find a contradiction between the theoretical and the historical parts of *Illusion and Reality*. The rather rigid juxtaposition of the genotype and the social ego established in the theoretical chapters, is quickened into a dialectical inter-

action in the fine chapters tracing the history of English poetry. The same chapters offer a practical denial of the theoretical statement, to the effect that "Mimesis [...] is not a specific characteristic of bourgeois poetry".³²

These contradictions lie partly in the theme, but partly in the author, or, rather, in his historical and personal predicament. At the time of writing *Illusion and Reality*, Caudwell was a convinced socialist who shortly thereafter gave his life for his ideals in the Spanish Civil War. His further development was cut short by his heroic death. Typologically speaking, and *mutatis mutandis*, his attitude of mind reminds the reader of Marx's half-Hegelian works, Lukács's early writings (*History and Class Consciousness*), or—even more remotely—Attila József's theoretical studies ("Hegel, Marx, Freud", "Eszttétikai töredék" [An Aesthetic Fragment]). At any rate, *Illusion and Reality* is a book full of profound and original ideas; a study without which no Marxist theory of poetry can be elaborated.³³

III

Lukács's observations concerning the specific character of poetic subjectivity made in his papers on poets, and his double-edged attitude toward Caudwell's treatment of the same topic, are best explained by his most general statement on the lyric given in *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* (1963) and anticipated in his study on "Bechers Lyrik" (1951).

Lukács's point of departure is to emphasize what he considers to be the common element in all the literary forms, and for that matter, in all art: the reflection of objective reality.

To avoid any rigid isolation of the so-called 'objective' and 'subjective' literary genres, he not only refers to the fact that the lyric, too, reflects objective reality, but also points out that subjectivity is not absent from the epic and from drama. It is, he believes, a modern prejudice to suppose that the more an epic work excludes the person of the narrator, the truer it becomes; and he stresses that, even in drama, where the author, as a rule, does not appear in person, the atmosphere, speed, and rhythm of the action, the external and internal worlds of the characters are permeated by the presence of artistic subjectivity; moreover, Lukács thinks it indispensable for the whole of Marxist-Leninist aesthetic to acknowledge the importance of the creative ego.

What makes the role of the ego specific to the lyric is the genre-creating significance of subjectivity, which even in the most objective type of lyric expression is the center of the work immediately perceptible and, therefore, sensuously-poetically formed. The qualitative difference in relation to other literary forms is derived from the specific activity, manner of existence, and dynamic role of the creative subjectivity becoming visible in the artistic form itself. The specific nature of this activity and manner of existence lies in the fact that the objective dialectic of appearance and essence is reflected through the subjective dialectic of approaching the essence. In other words:

the specific character of the lyrical form lies in the fact that the process of reflection appears in it as a veritable artistic process indeed. Whereas the forms of the epic and the drama—also relying on the operation of subjective dialectic—only represent the purely objective dialectic of phenomenon and essence in the artistically reflected reality, in the lyric the reality being shaped is developing before us, as it were, *in statu nascendi*. What develops in the epic and the drama as *natura naturata* in its objective dialectical movement, is born in the lyric as *natura naturans* before us.³⁴

This characterization of the lyric can serve as the basis of further analyses. Writing a paper on Marx's and Engels's views concerning art and aesthetics, Lukács proved that, although they did not give a comprehensive exposition of the topic, their observations were not just random remarks, but the manifestations of a unified theory. Therefore, in Marx's and Engels's utterances on art we have and have not a Marxist system of aesthetics.

Mutatis mutandis, the same applies to Lukács's statement on lyric poetry. Lukács never wrote a comprehensive treatise on the essence of poetry, but his pronouncements on its nature reflect a consistent view, which can be elaborated by reconstructing the system underlying and following from these pronouncements. In this sense, we may say that we have and have not Lukácsian concept of poetry.

The theoretical relevance of Lukács's statements on, and definition of, the lyric genre and poetry can be shown not simply by commenting on his comments, but by examining how far the content and form of poetry can be deduced from the Lukácsian delineation of its essence. Attention will be concentrated on the poetic attitude, emotion, imagination, the lyric perception of space and time, the poetic use of imagery, and the poetic function of the auditory plane (rhythm, rhyme, and onomatopoeia). Such an analysis will make it necessary to relate lyric poetry to the narrative and dramatic genres as well as to the plastic arts and music. We can attempt to define the place of the lyric in the system (rather than preconceived hierarchy) of arts through such a comparative analysis.

We should begin with the peculiarity of the poetic attitude: the artistic expression of a heightened subject-object relationship seen and shown from the point of view of the subjective ego; the merging of the subject and the object in a world-embracing self-expression and self-intensification effected in such a way and to such a degree that the subject of the creative process becomes its immediate object, too, and the process constitutes the very content and form of the work.

If we are to determine the lyric form of this relationship, we must lay equal emphasis on the existence and specifically poetic nature of the subject-object correlation. The subject-object relationship is a basic condition of human life and is, therefore, rendered in all three fundamental forms of mirroring reality: the manner of reflection characteristic of everyday life, science, and art.

To approach the specific nature of poetry, we should restrict the field. We may exclude the manner of reflection of everyday life on account of its immediate and practical nature, even if everyday life remains the natural raw material of poetry.

We may also discard the reflection typical of science because of its disanthropomorphic method, even though the achievement of generalization is a point of contact between science and art. Unlike science, and being itself a kind of art, poetry is fully anthropomorphic and represents human essence through the sensuous glowing of the phenomena of human life, that is, in the domain of the specific, which is general in relation to the particular, and particular as compared with the general.³⁶

Within the sphere of art, the lyric as a genre of literature should be discriminated from both the plastic arts and music. The plastic arts place man's external world into the focus of representation, whereas the internal world is only evoked indirectly, through the mediation of outer appearance. In music, it is the internal world that is immediately expressed, the external world being relegated to the category of 'undetermined objectivity' (*'unbestimmte Gegenständlichkeit'*).³⁷ It is only in literature that, projected on the mental plane of words, both man's external and internal worlds become directly represented.

The last step that we have to take if we are to arrive at the subject-object relationship typical of poetry is drawing a dividing line between the lyric and the epic on the one hand, and the lyric and drama, on the other. In the world of the epic, subjective endeavors are realized against the recalcitrance of matter of objective circumstances, shown in an abundance that is unknown and impossible in lyric poetry. In drama, the intensity of subjective endeavors is increased to the point of conflict, but the power of objective circumstances is also felt in a more radical way: partly in the outcome of the conflict, and also in the disappearance of the personality of the story teller. (The appearance of the narrator in some twentieth-century plays reestablishes an epic, or sometimes a poetic principle in the drama, which, by its nature, is destined rather to present than to represent the world.)

In the lyric, and especially in poetry, the subject-object relationship is qualitatively different. Here the organizing center of the work is man's internal world, a dynamic or a momentarily more or less static state of mind with a necessary minimum—but no more than a minimum—of reference to the external world that has evoked it. Even in good descriptive poetry, only such pictures of nature appear as correspond to the inner mood, the subjective attitude of the poet. Anything expressing such an attitude is in its place, and nothing irrelevant to such an inner representation of a specific subject-object correlation is justified (cf. Wordsworth: "I Wandered Lonely").³⁸

It is not difficult to understand that there is an intimate connection between the category of *natura naturans* and the poetic attitude. *Natura naturans* presupposes the subjective approach of the poetic ego to a human situation, a piece of external reality. If the objective dialectic of appearance and essence is shown through the subjective dialectic of approaching it, then the subject-object relationship underlying the poetic attitude must be characterized by the predominance of the subjective side and the discarding of every external detail that does not qualify the subjective view of the world in a given state of mind.

A further important feature of poetry, also dependent on the category of *natura naturans*, namely, its saturation with emotions, should be referred to the poetic attitude. Without such a reference, we may easily fall victim to a one-sided interpretation of the part played by emotions in poetry. This role has often been overestimated, and sometimes, by reaction, underestimated.

The traditional view of poetry is inclined to divide human faculties among the various kinds of reflection, and to relegate visual perception to painting, emotions and imagination to poetry, logic to science and philosophy, and so on. The fallacy of such a conception lies in the fact that every basic branch and kind of art builds up the reflection of the human world and, therefore, finds itself confronted with the totality of objective reality. The proposition of a branch and kind of art permits shifting emphases on, and the specific organizations of, the categories of reality and the appropriate human faculties reflecting it, but precludes the possibility of a metaphysically one-sided interpretation.

The method of science should, of course, be logical, but nobody could seriously deny the importance of imagination in scientific discoveries and reasoning. Visual perception is certainly decisive in the appreciation of painting, but without its operation, no enjoyment of literature, including poetry, would be possible, since visual perception is the natural basis of visual imagination.

Accordingly, the domain of reflecting emotions cannot be equated with the domain of poetry. There is admittedly no poetry without emotions, but there is emotion without poetry, both in everyday life and in every branch, kind, and work of art. The anthro-

pomorphic character of all art presupposes the evocative existence and function of emotions in every artistic creation. It is sufficient to think of Leonardo's paintings to realize the emotional charge that painting can have.

But the expressively close linking of poetry with 'pure emotions' is false, not only because of the aesthetic and psychological impossibility of a one-sided division of real qualities and human faculties; and not even only because of the importance of the emotional world in painting. It is also absurd because it would imply an identification of poetry with a misconception of music. Of all the arts, music is the only one in whose 'determined objectivity' ('*bestimmte Gegenständlichkeit*') pure emotions have an absolute predominance. In music, there is a double reflection: emotions reflect objective reality and music reflects emotions, the intensive totality of an emotionally composed and perceived human world.³⁹

But even behind the musical reflection of emotions, there lurks the undetermined objectivity of the whole human world. Musical emotion is, in fact, the emotional equivalent, expressed in tonal systems, of all human experience. It would, for example, be difficult to deny the presence of analytic, logical discipline in Bach's *The Art of the Fugue* or doleful philosophical contemplation in the second movement of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7*.

The other extreme in the assessment of the function of emotions in poetry is the tenet, expounded by T. S. Eliot, that poetry is an "escape from emotion".⁴⁰

This claim, an imagistic reaction to Victorian and post-Victorian over-emotionalism, and a manifestation of an artistic alienation from life, has its practical denial in all good poetry, including much of Eliot's. Even if the emotional fragmentariness and the philosophical and mythical imposition of outward order on his poetic material run parallel with his theory of the necessity of banishing emotions from poetry, his poetry is certainly not unemotional.

Between the Scylla of overestimating and Charybdis of underestimating the significance of emotions in poetry, there is no middle ground in the apparent solution of denying both extremes and acknowledging a stronger presence of emotions in this genre, as compared with other ones. The specific role played by emotions in poetry cannot be defined by terms of quantity, or even degree. It is not a matter of 'more' or 'less' emotions, or 'stronger' or 'weaker' feelings. At the height of the conflict of a drama, the emotions presented and evoked can be extremely strong; indeed, they can have a greater intensity than in a simple, tender song.

The emotional charge and impact of poetry seems to be dependent on the specific quality of the subject-object relationship discussed in treating the poetic attitude. The very definition of emotions given by psychology throws into relief the importance of a spontaneous subjective reaction to an objective fact. "Higher emotions reflect the significance for our life of an event, situation, object, phenomenon, etc. or, to use a more simple term, their relation to the individual."⁴¹ It is these direct, immediate, spontaneous reactions that the homogeneous medium of the poetic attitude streamlines, concentrates, and integrates into a unified pattern, in which other manifestations of the ego (will, fantasy, reflection, etc.) also expressing some kind of reaction to the represented piece of reality are synthesized, too. It is the quality of such a synthesis, saturated with emotions, that constitutes the content of the poetic attitude.

The fact that ideas also take part in this synthesis can be proven not only by the aesthetic argument that the concept of an attitude as a total manner of subjective reaction to objective reality is obviously broader than the sphere of emotions, and includes in-

tellectual reactions, but by the practical experience of poetry as well. The fact that, in a philosophical poem, thoughts can appear not only as the subject matter of the poem, but also as the guiding principle of its structure, that is, as a formal element, points in the same direction. The harmony between the intellectual, emotional structure and the rhyme scheme in the Shakespearean form of the sonnet is not only an example of renaissance plasticity in which felt ideas become audible, but also a plastic example of the integrating power of the poetic attitude.

It can be deduced from the category of *natura naturans* that emotions should have a qualitatively significant function in this attitude. Even in everyday life, the appearance of a new phenomenon in a person's sphere of experience is accompanied by strong and fresh emotions, corresponding to the need of spontaneous self-orientation in the face of something not yet experienced. These emotions immediately refer the new phenomenon to the ego. Without such a mechanism, human life would be impossible. To the extent that the phenomenon becomes known, it loses its original power of evoking what might be called the emotions of self-orientation.⁴² Now, if the world is experienced according to the pattern of *natura naturans*, the incessant approach toward reality keeps emotional interest alive, preventing it from flagging.

Poetic imagination can also be explained by the category of *natura naturans*, and is directly connected to the nature of the poetic attitude. The direction of its operation can be understood on a similar basis as that of poetic emotions.

In traditional realistic fiction, imagination—usually, if not compulsorily—reproduces the verisimilitude of an objective world. When we are reading the works of, say, Balzac or Dickens, we have the impression that the way in which objects are linked, the method by which relations of persons to each other and to their environment are shown, correspond to the manner in which connections of this kind exist in real life, even in everyday life. This correspondence is very far from being an identity; the epic requirement of the totality of objects (Hegel) is fulfilled by a radical selection and concentration, and by a no less radical reference of all objects to human actions and perceptions. Nevertheless, the imagination of the novelist usually brings about this concentration in such a way that the overall impression of the coherence of everyday reality should be kept, even increased.

In an easily identifiable type of realistic drama (Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, Miller's *All My Sons*, etc.), the playwright's imagination also preserves the appearance of the verisimilitude of objective surroundings, even if the depiction of objective circumstances is subordinated to the representation of the conflict, and the requirement of the totality of objects is not valid. In music, creative fantasy flies freely with the flight of emotions, unchecked by any direct influence of an objective environment.

Poetry seems to take an intermediary position between the so-called 'objective genres' of literature and music, as regards the operation of fantasy as well. On the one hand, unlike pictorial and musical imagination, but like novelistic and dramatic fantasy, poetic imagination uses a double focus, directly representing man's internal and external worlds.

On the other hand, poetry places the emphasis of the subject-object relationship on the subjective side, and aspires to assure the free expression of emotions and fantasy. In this respect, it has points of contact with music. Therefore, poetry—in a process not unlike that in music—uses words conveying and depicting the external world like fiction,

but arranges words in such a manner that they should give a free outlet to emotions and imagination.⁴³

Nowhere can the efficacy of the category of *natura naturans* and the validity of the poetic attitude be seen more conspicuously than in the fact that, in poetry, the structure of the external world is shaped, according to the requirements of the poet's (internal) self reflecting the specific quality of his subjective relationship to a given human situation. Whereas in the novel the author's imagination, as a rule, reproduces the verisimilitude of outer circumstances, in poetry, the poet's creative fantasy produces a world subject to his inner view. While in the evocative effect of fiction, emotion and imagination are the by-products of the circumstantial representation of the everyday appearance of the objective world, in poetry the external world becomes the imprint of the internal, subjective pattern of feeling and fantasy. Here the objective coherence of the external world is replaced by the subjective coherence of the self experiencing some aspect of the world.

The transformation of the usual structure of the external world by the power of poetic fantasy is, of course, a possibility that is realized in various poems in very different measure. A poem offering a natural description can give a faithful rendering of some aspect of a landscape. In such a case, the inner mood of the poet and the physical appearance of the landscape coincide. Usually, however, even in an instance of this kind, the angle of reflection, the choice, organization, and quality of the picture betray the predominance of the subjective interest.

On the other hand, the poetic changing of the customary objective pattern of outer conditions can be very considerable. In this respect, it is worth taking a glance at the artistic function of dreams and visions in poetry and fiction. Dreams and visions are some of the most subjective phenomena of human imagination, and, thus, when they take into possession the bulk or the whole of a poem, the genre of lyric poetry, itself a subjective universe, does not suffer an essential change. The result may be a different type of poetry, but certainly a sort of poetry. (Shakespeare: "Sonnet XLIII", Milton: "On His Deceased Wife", Burns: "The Vision", Blake: "A Dream", "I Saw a Chapel all of Gold", "The Land of Dreams", "The Crystal Cabinet", "Visions of the Daughters of Albion", Shelley: "Vision of the Sea", Keats: "La Belle Dame sans Merci", "On a Dream After Reading Dante's Episode of Paolo and Francesca", D. G. Rossetti: "The Blessed Damosel", Poe: "The Raven", Baudelaire: "Le Rêve d'un curieux", Rimbaud: "Ophélie", "Bateau ivre", Verlaine: "Clair de Lune", Mallarmé: "Apparition", Joyce: "I hear an army charging upon the land", piece XXXVI of *Chamber Music*, "Nightpiece" in *Poems Penyeach*, etc.).⁴⁴

In recent fiction, the increasing artistic significance of dreams and visions can also be observed. In Balzac's *Lost Illusions*, they are no more than the natural manifestations of a sleeping person, mentioned in a cursory manner. In Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, Anna's recurring dream of an old peasant seems to assume the symbolic significance of an incipient leitmotif. In Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, the inner psychology of dreams and visions is elaborated, and the dreaming and the waking states are mingled in the consciousness of Raskolnikov. In Kafka's *The Trial*, the intermingling of dreams, visions, and external reality takes place not only in the consciousness of the chief protagonist, Joseph K., but also in the mind of the author himself. At the same time, the appearance of an objective verisimilitude, factual interest, artistic economy, and discipline is maintained. In Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, even this hard objective layer becomes impressionistically and poetically softened and blurred, an achievement

paralleled by that product of Joyce's Proustian stage, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In *Ulysses*, and especially in *Finnegans Wake*, objective reality becomes subjectively fragmented, and is, ultimately, completely broken.⁴⁵

For the nature of poetic imagination, two things are important in this development. The first is the fact that the growing subjectivization of the objective world of fiction, indicated by the quantitative and qualitative growth of dreams and visions, has been accompanied by an increase of poetic qualities. The second element, being the consequence of the first, is that the final outcome of this dreamlike, visionary, and poetic subjectivization of the *natura naturata* world of fiction is not another kind of novel, but a poetic dream myth (e.g., *Finnegans Wake*) standing nearer to *natura naturans* than to *natura naturata*.

The magic work of poetic imagination naturally transforms the presentation of space and time as well. The performance of various works, genres, and branches of art to build up the concentrated mimesis of a human world necessarily incorporates such basic forms of existence as space and time. The quality, manner, and proportion of reflecting space and time are typical of a given branch and genre of art, and, therefore, both they and their relationships can be characterized by a peculiar kind of reflection.

The division of arts into static and dynamic groups was already made by Plato; their classification into spatial (the fine arts) and temporal (music, literature) ones has been well known since Lessing. The hidden and secondary presence of time in the form of a Lessingian 'fertile moment' in the spatial arts has also been generally acknowledged; the appearance of distant and indirect space associations in the high and low pitches, chords, long-sustained tones (cf. Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture*), dynamic differences (cf. the Bydlo movement in Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*) of music can also be pointed out.⁴⁶

Music is a temporal art in a sense qualitatively different from literature. At first sight, it seems to be very easy to define the way in which music incorporates time. The length of time during which the tones in a composition follow one another is a definite duration, which can be measured exactly and can even be prescribed by fixing metronomic values. The movement of tones over the period of the composition obviously corresponds in time to the process of emotions expressed by the tones (even if the emotional state evoked by the piece of music is likely to remain after the composition is not actually heard).

By establishing all this, however, the problem is far from being exhausted. Already Beethoven's slightly ironic and humorous treatment of the metronome in the second movement of his *Symphony No. 8* might be considered a kind of warning against an over-mechanical approach to the problem.

Furthermore, although the temporal coincidence of the movement of tones and emotions remains even if the speed of performing the work is increased or decreased, the total effect of the work may still change in a very great measure. Slight changes in tempo are, of course, possible; the performance of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5* is several minutes shorter if the orchestra is conducted by Toscanini instead of Klemperer, and we may feel both interpretations to be adequate. If, however, the speed is further increased or decreased (by, e.g., setting a gramophone incorrectly), the tones may totally lose their original evocative power, and will only inspire comic emotions. This is not only an example of how a quantitative change is transformed into a qualitative one, but is also indicative of the fact that the quality of the temporal process in music depends on the nature of a real emotional process outside music. The movement of tones in time

can only be adequate to the simultaneous movement of emotions in a piece of music if the latter, in some way, is also adequate to the movement of reality outside the work.

The force of this conclusion is further corroborated by a comparison between music and fiction. If we restrict the temporal analysis of music to the tonal and emotional duration of the composition, then we are only concerned with a length of time corresponding to the period of reading a novel, although it is fairly obvious that the time needed for a receptive experience must be quite different from the time represented and expressed by the work. Similarly, several decades of an objective historical process are condensed in Shakespeare's histories, in the frame of a performance lasting only a few hours.

If we now turn our attention to the relationship between the temporal processes inside and outside music, further difficulties arise. Music is directly concerned with emotions; and emotional processes tend to cover objective developments with a subjective 'carelessness', as far as objective time is concerned. It is a matter of everyday experience that an event, like a stone flung into a lake, can form long-moving emotional rings in the mind. The deviation between objective and subjective time found an early representation in the witty dialogue between Rosalind and Orlando in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.⁴⁷ Realistic fiction also often differentiates between subjective and objective time (cf., e.g., Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*).

The fundamental concern of music with emotions, and of emotions with a subjective experience of time, does not, however, mean that all ties are cut between the movement of tones and emotions inside music and the movement of objective processes outside music. The musical process evokes an emotional world that is typical of the objective development of a certain period of human life. Beethoven's symphonies, for example, constitute a specific human world, reflecting the heroic struggle of man in the period of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. The objective process itself belongs, of course, to the undetermined objectivity of the actual musical world. The emotions that these symphonies condense, increase, and express, however, represent a period which differs from that of the Enlightenment and that of Romanticism. Haydn's symphonies—with their practice of developing one basic mood organically, with movements differing from each other mainly in quantity (tempo, dynamics), degree and approach, and attaining without too great obstacles the shining joy of the final movement—were still conceived in the spirit of the Enlightenment. The qualitative differences of mood to be observed between the movements of Beethoven's symphonies from *Symphony No. 3* on already mark a new period. The extreme emotional contrasts between the first, second, and third movements in *Symphony No. 3* or *Symphony No. 7*, and the hard-won victory and jubilation achieved in the last, crowning movements correspond to a Hegelian dialectical development of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, rather than the relatively unhindered rising of the Haydn symphonies. (Mozart has a middle structural position, with his early works standing nearer to Haydn, and his later ones paving the way for Beethoven.)

When in the new period of Romanticism the organic, spontaneous, victorious development of human abilities became problematic, the last movements of crowning glory in the symphonies often became forced, and—to quote an early example—in one of the greatest of romantic symphonies, Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*, the last movement remained, in fact, unwritten. From the romantic point of view, the symphony is completely finished with its unparalleled second movement of elegiac resignation.

Therefore, the question, 'what is the measurable duration of such and such a piece

of music?' can be answered, but it is aesthetically irrelevant; the question, 'what is the measurable time relationship between the musical process and an extra-musical emotional process?' (such as the composer experienced in life reacting on an event), usually cannot be answered, and, artistically, it is again irrelevant; the problem 'is there a relationship between the musical process and an objective development characteristic of a definite social and historical period?' should be answered in the affirmative, and can be considered a pertinent question. Thus, the temporal movement of tones in music expresses a simultaneous movement of emotions; these give a concentrated and abbreviated rendering of real, dispersed, emotional processes, which, in turn, reflect, usually in a subjective manner, objective developments belonging to a definite period in the life of the composer, a specific social and national unit, as well as those belonging to the whole of mankind.

Unlike the musical rendering of reality, and due to the bifocal—both outer and inner—manner of literary representation, in the genres of literature both the actual objective time processes and their inner, emotional reflection are directly represented. The manner, time span and angle of this reflection, however, change with the three main literary genres.

In the traditional novel, an accomplished objective development is mapped and reproduced as an objective process viewed by the story teller and represented in the past. Here the emphasis is on what in music remains in the unseen background: the concrete manner of an actual development shown in full factual and objective detail. The subjective time and (occasionally) space experiences of the protagonists and even of the author can be, and often are, shown, but the objective concreteness of space and time is the dominating factor, to which the subjective spatial and temporal perceptions are referred.

In the traditional realistic drama, once again, an objective process is shown taking place in a concrete setting and time, but the lack of the narrator and the presence of an audience make even past events appear as taking place before the eyes of the onlookers. that is, in the present.⁴⁸

Poetry seems to be in an intermediary position between the so-called 'objective genres' (the epic and drama) and music. It is similar to the novel and drama (and different from music) in its capability to represent directly a given section—both real and imaginary—of space and time, but it is also related to music on account of its much greater emotional and imaginative poetic freedom in the reflection of objective settings and time processes than is generally the case in any other literary genre. This greater freedom appears in a number of ways.

For one thing, while the subject matter, manner of representation, and effect of the novel are ultimately concerned with the past, and the way of presentation as well as the effect of the drama give the onlooker a present experience (even a past subject matter being 'present' on the stage), poetry can also evoke the future. The words 'can also evoke' should definitely be emphasized. Although grammar is a part of poetry, poetry is not a part of grammar, and even if fiction is primarily connected with the past, and drama with the present, it does not follow from this that poetry should be exclusively or chiefly associated with the future.⁴⁹ Besides, the writer may use, in certain passages, especially in the dialogues of a novel, a present-tense narration, as a stylistic device, even if the basic aesthetic time relation is located in the past. There are utopian novels and plays, even if, as a rule, they are not the most characteristic or valuable specimens of the genre. What is, however, exceptional in the novel, appears to be quite common

in poetry, which, through its association with the category of *natura naturans*, can elongate actual objective tendencies into the future, or to project desired or dreaded future events onto the imaginary plane of subjective time (cf., e.g., Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind", or Joyce's "O Sweetheart, hear you", piece XVIII in his *Chamber Music*). This achievement of poetry differs from the epic anticipation of social types existing in the present but becoming general in the future.

Secondly, the greater freedom of poetry in the treatment of time and space is also manifested in the possibility of choosing various shifting and alternating—past, present, and future—settings. This differs from epic examples in which depictions in the past tense alternate with dialogues in the present. Such modifications in a novel do not change the fundamental aesthetic relationship of a story teller relating essentially past events, whereas in poetry the aesthetic focus is usually also shifted with the change of time (cf., e.g., Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely", or Joyce's "O cool is the valley now", piece XVI of his *Chamber music*).

Thirdly, the poetic handling of time also seems to be more free in expressing or implying a special emphasis on the presence of a subject whose perceptive, emotional, imaginative, and reflective reactions to an objective event or process in the past, present, or future are, therefore, conceived of as taking place in the present. Thus, in the specifically poetic type of the subject-object relationship, the object can be represented in the past, present, and future alike, but the lyrical activity of the subject, which is the organizing principle of the representation of the object, is taking place—explicitly or implicitly—in the present (*natura naturans*).

This consciousness of the present is different from the sense in which the action of a drama is felt to be taking place in the present. In the case of poetry, it is the poet's experiencing the phenomena being represented that is taking place in the present, while in drama the represented events themselves are received by the audience as happening in the present. The poetic doubling of the temporal plane into one on which past, present, or future events are shown, and into another one, or which they are being lived by the poet (linguistically not necessarily expressed by the present continuous tense) makes it possible that the focus of lyrical interest could be shifted from one plane to the other (e.g., Milton: "On His Deceased Wife", Burns: "John Anderson My Jo", Joyce: "I hear an army charging upon the land", "Tilly").

Fourthly, the poetic emphasis on a subjective experience in the form of a present process has the direct consequence that the poem evokes a strong emotional current not unlike the temporal-emotional process expressed by music (e.g., Shelley: "The Cloud", Joyce: "Strings in the earth and air", piece I in his *Chamber Music*). This differs from the stream of emotions represented by a novel, in that such a stream—less continuous and less concentrated than the poetic current—is but a by-product of an objective narrative, is linked with the past through the feelings of the protagonists active in the past, and arouses present emotions in the reader only indirectly, without being the direct expression of the author's inner self. Dramatic emotions integrated into an objective present process are similarly indirect.

Fifthly, *poetica licentia* also appears as the lyrical significance of the subjective time of wandering recollection and wondering imagination, or emotionally hued memories and magic fantasy (e.g., Poe: "The Raven", Joyce: "Nightpiece").

We may attempt to define the specific quality of poetic imagery by once more adopting Spinoza's tenet of *omnis determinatio est negatio*, and taking a bird's-eye view of the role played by graphic, visual concreteness in various branches and kinds of art.

Dance presents three actual dimensions filled with moving figures. Sculpture shows three physical dimensions of static figures or freezes one moment of a movement into stasis, which only our animating fantasy can resolve into motion. Painting captures two dimensions suggesting the third (depth) by perspective. Fiction uses a vast canvas, populating it with a number of three-dimensional, developing characters, depicting their complex relationships, as well as their external and internal worlds. The canvas, however, is that of linguistic imagination. Nothing is actually shown, everything is only evoked. In drama, if it is for and on the stage, the characters do appear, but the emphasis on graphic, objective detail decreases with the increased importance of passion, action, speed, and conflict. In music, the visual concreteness of objects disappears; visual pictures may occasionally emerge while listening to music, but they are not necessary, and will vary with different persons—only their emotional quality is likely to be similar. The emphasis is not on the representation of factual blocks, but on the expression of emotional and imaginative currents, the intensity and complexity of shifting emotional and imaginative relationships.

Poetry stands between fiction and music from the point of view of the importance of objects and their graphic visibility. It is similar to fiction and different from music in its use of graphic verbal imagery. On the other hand, it is different from fiction and similar to music in a substantial reduction of the epic abundance of objective details and in the organizing power of the emotional and imaginative factor.

One of the most effective artistic devices corresponding to this middle position is the trope (metaphor, personification, allegory, symbol, metonymy, synecdoche, etc.). In a trope, the transfer of a name to the meaning of another word on the basis of similarity or other point of contact between the contents of the words results in a specifically new image, whose graphic and imaginative qualities correspond to its peculiar emotional charge. This is the immediate consequence of the type of subject-object relationship that underlies the poetic attitude and follows from the sphere of *natura naturans*. The subjective, emotional importance of an outward piece of reality can best be brought home by comparing or identifying it with a phenomenon (person or thing) of great emotional and imaginative value. The relation between the two phenomena expressed in a poetic trope implies a heightened subject-object relationship, characteristic of poetry.

This is, of course, not to deny the occurrence or even the frequency of tropes in fiction, or, for that matter, in everyday speech. But in everyday speech, tropes, through frequent use, lose much of their evocative power. In a traditional, realistic novel, tropes are subordinated to more simple, descriptive pictures (*natura naturata*), while in poetry it is the merely descriptive images that are subordinated to tropes (*natura naturans*; cf. Shelley and Dickens, Poe and Twain, Hugo and Balzac). The very brevity of an average lyric poem, which Poe emphasizes and in some respects overemphasizes in *The Philosophy of Composition*, and which, in comparison with the length of a novel, can actually be quite conspicuous also calls for a sensuous concentration. This is achieved by the trope in the visual sphere, and by rhythm and rhyme on the auditory plane.

A further fundamental feature of poetry is the genre-constituting function of the auditory plane (rhythm, rhyme, onomatopoeia, etc.). In this respect, too, poetry seems to take a crucial middle position in the system of arts.

In the plastic arts, the auditory plane has no significance; auditory impressions, if they appear at all, are incidental and associational (Bruegel's peasant scenes).

In music, the auditory plane is central, the whole message of the work is committed

to the qualities, quantities, and relationships of tones. Here the visual plane is unimportant; visual impressions, if they crop up at all, are no less incidental and associational in music than is auditory experience in the plastic arts.

In literature, through language, the auditory plane emerges. In modern epic, characterized, as all epic is, by the 'totality of objects', the function of the auditory plane is reduced to a minimum (the prose rhythm of fiction, occasional onomatopoeia, tone painting, etc.). In a dramatic performance, the text is spoken and acted, and prose rhythm is often more concentrated, but even in drama, the auditory plane is not fundamental for the genre.

It is only in poetry that auditory experiences contribute essentially to the total artistic effect. A word or a phrase in a drama can be an auditory sign of a meaning, but a synonym could also perform a similar or even the same function. A rhyme in a poem, however, cannot be substituted by a word similar in meaning but different in sound, without the complete annihilation of the artistic effect. Meter in verse also has obvious points of contact with rhythm in music. Thus, from the viewpoint of the artistic significance of the auditory plane, poetry seems to stand between fiction and drama, on the one hand, and music, on the other.

What explanation can be given for this position? For one thing, even at first sight, it seems to be obvious that there is a tendency for a reciprocal connection between graphic and auditory qualities in a number of branches and kinds of art. This might suggest that in order to make general trends and concepts artistically specific and accessible for the senses, the need for increasing the significance of the auditory plane emerges, where the importance of the visual plane decreases. Poetry, having an intermediate position on one plane, can be expected to take a similar position on the other.

Secondly, the importance and dynamic character of auditory processes seem to be connected with the quality of emotional (and imaginative) processes as well. Emotions usually take the shape of a process: they are changeable and changing, indeed, Protean. Even moods, 'states of mind', usually express a delicate, fragile, and fluctuating equilibrium, subject to change. In this connection, it is worth quoting Hemingway, who, discussing problems of representing graphically and dynamically "what really happened in action," characterizes the basis of emotion as "the sequence of motion and fact".⁵⁰ If the most typical manner of appearance of emotion is a process, and auditory phenomena are also constituted as a process, it is understandable that the former can be expressed by the latter and that emotional processes become especially closely connected with auditory processes in certain branches and forms of art (music and poetry), in which the emotional aspect is a special organizing factor of the artistic world.

The tendency of emotions to become subjectively detached and relatively independent from visible objective, factual motives and constellations also helps to understand why emotional processes can so readily be associated with non-visual, auditory processes.⁵¹

At this point, there is a noticeable connection between auditive-emotional processes and the category of *natura naturans*, which is itself a subjective process of approaching objective reality.

Thus far we have analyzed the common features of auditive phenomena in poetry. Now we must turn our attention to rhythm and rhyme, two important phenomena of lyric poetry.

An embryonic form of the specific subject-object relationship characteristic of the poetic attitude and derived from the category of *natura naturans* can already be observed in the most primitive kinds of work rhythm. When, in primitive times, people wanted

to move a heavy object, they concentrated their physical and mental energies with the help of the organizing and labor-saving means of rhythm. It goes without saying that, even in such a primitive instance, the operation of rhythm must have been accompanied by strong and condensed emotions, which were even increased by the joy felt at the success of an achievement implemented and facilitated by rhythm. Already at this stage, conditions for an integration of physiological and biological pulsation, as well as the rhythm of economic and social processes were present.

In magical practices, the work to be done with the help of rhythm already had a mimetic character (the imitation of hunting and fighting accompanied by dance, music, and rhythmic exclamations), and thus made possible the detachment of rhythm from the actual labor process. In these instances, the condensed collective passions of a whole community were added to the previously mentioned factor of emotional concentration by rhythm.

In poetry proper, the object is not actual (as in work), nor is it actually shown by imitation (as in magic dances), but becomes further abstracted, into a mere verbal denotation. But objects, evoked by words, rather than shown in physical action, can be arranged and grouped with much greater freedom according to the inner, subjective requirements of rhythmic, emotional concentration, which itself is in poetry further removed from the actual requirements of a magic, ritual dance; hence, it becomes extremely flexible, capable of expressing a great variety of subjective relationships to the objects represented in the poem.⁵²

The intermediary position of poetry among fiction, drama, and music can also be perceived in poetic rhythm. In a novel or a prose drama, it is the representation of an objective development or conflict (*natura naturata*) that is of central interest. Rhythm is, accordingly, loose, showing no uniform pattern. This applies even to drama, although here, prose rhythm is often more discernible than in the novel.

In music, where, instead of the reproduction of the epic totality of objects, it is the tonal expression of emotions that evokes an intensive internal totality, rhythm is metrically patterned and fundamentally regular. (The great freedom of rhythmic variations, syncopation, etc., appears in music within the pattern of a general regularity, as an internal contradiction.)

In poetry, the subjective advance to an objective world is represented and expressed (*natura naturans*), and as a consequence, the quality of the subject-object relationship, conceived of from the inside, presupposes the immediate, simultaneous appearance of both a visual minimum of the objective, and a lyrical maximum of the subjective, pole of the relationship. Therefore, the rhythm of poetry displays a double face.

On the one hand, poetry cannot dispense with the linguistic representation of objects, phenomena, and their connections—therefore, in poetic rhythm, linguistic quantities and stresses both supply the basis of a rhythmic pattern, and have an independent, non-metrical life as well. On the other hand, the whole world of poetry is based on the subjective organization of phenomena expressing the needs of self-orientation of the ego, and, hence, linguistic pattern in poetic meter show significant points of contact with musical regularity.

While the rhythmic variations within a regular musical pattern show but an internal contradiction, the deviations, often contrasts, between meter and rhythm in poetry, constitute an external contradiction of two different elements, a musical and a linguistic one. In this respect, meter is the ideal and tendency of rhythm, whereas rhythm is the linguistic realization of meter. In music, meter and rhythm are more organically related;

the greatest rhythmic expressions of the peaks of human self-consciousness can be found in the extremely strong metrical pulsation of the music of Bach, Beethoven, and Béla Bartók. (Beethoven's rich syncopation remains within the pattern, and Bartók's characteristic application of rubato rhythms is but a necessary modern modification of a classical tendency that ultimately becomes victorious in his works, e.g., in *Music for String Instruments, Percussion, and Celesta*.) In poetry, the deviation of meter and rhythm is fruitful and functional (cf. Shakespeare's "Sonnet CXXIX", in which irregular rhythm expresses the dissipation of spirit in lust, whereas the purposeful deliberation of laying the bait is rendered by a metrically clear iambic pentameter: "On purpose laid to make the taker mad"). The coincidence of meter and rhythm on a large scale usually characterizes the epigons, rather than the great classics of poetry.⁵³

The fact that it is really the combination of representational and expressive tasks that renders the rhythm of poetry Janus-faced can also be proven by reference to the rhythm of (non-schematic) painting. In pictorial representation, the rhythm of the rigid symmetry of plane geometry is resolved in the representation of a human situation. A case in point is Raphael's *Madonna with the Goldfinch*, where the austerity of the tentative triangle form is toned down, indeed broken, by the vertical lines of the trees in the background.

Mutatis mutandis, the relationship between the rhythm of music and poetry is similar to the connection between the rhythm of architecture and painting. A cathedral is an 'object', but it does not represent an object: it expresses a specifically organized, emotionally concentrated human space experience which is realized by a symmetrical space rhythm, whose regularity is partly a physical necessity, partly the bearer of a positive human ideal; and is not unlike the controlled regularity of musical rhythm. Although Lukács is certainly right in challenging the tenet held by Schelling, Friedrich Schlegel, Goethe, and Hegel, that architecture is frozen music,⁵⁴ yet, from the point of view of a necessarily regular rhythmic pattern, there is a grain of truth in the parallel.

In figurative painting (and, for that matter, sculpture), however, the artistically fertile external contradiction between a patterned regularity and a representational deviation from it is no less discernible than a similar and similarly fruitful contradiction between meter and rhythm in poetry. If, in poetry, this contradiction appears on the acoustic plane, this only accounts for the increased emotional significance of the lyric based on the category of *natura naturans*.

Besides poetic rhythm, rhyme is also an auditory element serving to express the specific subject-object relationship that is typical of the poetic attitude and dependent of *natura naturans*. First of all, a rhyme implies at least two (often more) objects, phenomena which are evoked by the words constituting the rhyme.

These objects, however, are seen and shown from the angle of the specific subjective significance that they have for the ego of the poet. Thus, rhyme becomes the medium of an emotional and imaginative concentration. Rhyme is largely responsible for the functioning of the auditory plane in poetry, and, by relating words auditively to one another, it lends an emotional tonality and tension to the poem (cf. the fine onomatopoeic quality of the mournfully pealing rhymes of Shakespeare's "Sonnet LXXI", or the tender, languid music of full rhymes in "Strings in the earth and air", piece I in Joyce's *Chamber Music*).

Words joined auditively become naturally associated in content as well. The quality of association may range from emphasizing a similarity to underlying a disparity. Between these distant poles there is a vast territory allowing for both overt and hidden

associations, giving space for the operation of fantasy, introducing the category of undetermined objectivity to poetry, and enveloping the objects represented with a gentle, imaginative, and emotive aura, often more suggestive than picturesque (e.g., the ingenious and fearful amassing of similar rhyme effects suggesting the pathetic agony of swooning to death in Keats's "Bright Star!").

Tropes refer words to one another on the basis of a similarity and association of their contents. Rhymes create (or emphasize) association of contents by a similarity of sound. In both cases, a connection is brought about, expressing the specific subject-object relationship characteristic of the poetic attitude.

Rhymes being parts of a sentence and members of a subjectively progressing and deepening emotional sequence (*natura naturans*) have an intellectual as well as an emotional aspect. The image that they represent and the meaning that they convey link them with the so-called 'objective' literary genres (the epic and drama). The sound effect that they produce, the emotions that they express through sounds, link them with the melodies and harmonies of music. The rhyming words must fit the intellectual pattern of the sentence, but the choice of the words is also determined by the musical-emotional requirements of the rhymes. This duality reminds one of the contradiction between the linguistic aspects of rhythm and the relatively independent musical aspect of meter. Thus, the middle position of poetry stemming from the subject-object relationship of the poetic attitude is also reflected in the double allegiance of rhymes.

This middle position of poetry between the epic and music in the system of arts is also suggested by a tendency in their historical development. One can often observe that historical conditions favoring fiction are much less favorable for music; and that circumstances promoting the development of music do not help the flourishing of fiction. The blooming of lyric poetry, however, may accompany both that of fiction and that of music.

For example, the great period of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English novel (Defoe, Swift, Fielding, Sterne, Dickens, and Thackeray) was rather poor in music. The heyday of English Renaissance music (Byrd, Dowland) and the prominence of English baroque music (Purcell) coincide with the embryonic phase of the development of the English novel. In the twentieth century, when English music had its great revival (Vaughan Williams, Britten), the novel either could not continue the earlier tradition of critical realism with equal power and penetration (Galsworthy, Wells, Amis, and Braine), or became openly subjectivized (Woolf, Joyce). Poetry, however, prevailed in all these periods. A similar tendency is most conspicuous in the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries in Austria and Germany, where the achievements of Bach, Händel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and Mendelssohn certainly were not matched by those of the novelists, while poetry reached a high level. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Berlioz was a lonely giant in France, whereas the novel rose to classic heights (Stendhal, Balzac). Poetry, again, flourished. In the whole of American culture, the novel has been more significant than music, whereas poetry has been a flourishing genre. In Hungarian culture as a whole, the importance of poetry and music has been much greater than that of the novel.

Of course, we cannot speak of an absolute law; counter-examples could also be quoted (e.g., from nineteenth-century Russia). But the pattern is too obvious to be easily dismissed, and a tendency can be established. The development of the novel seems to be promoted by a homogeneous and large-scale social trend, bringing about a real network of existing objective relationships, which a tableau consisting of the 'totality of objects'

can depict. In music, however, a great artistic summary and synthesis can be achieved on the basis of a historically justified desire for such a development as well. Marx's statement that classical German philosophy was the intellectual equivalent of what the French actually accomplished in revolutionary deeds can, I think, be applied to classical German music, too: it was the emotional equivalent of English and French bourgeois developments in the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries. Poetry, with its Janus-faced nature, its heightened subjective reaction to an objective constellation which the quality of the genre does not require to show extensively, can survive both as the companion of the novel and as the fellow-traveler of music.

The category of *natura naturans* and the specific nature of the poetic attitude derived from it may also be instrumental in elucidating the reduction or abandonment of rhythmic regularity in free verse, even if Lukács himself did not come to such conclusions. This is all the more significant since both the intransigently avant-garde and the equally extreme anti-avant-garde approaches to the problem are fraught with inherent contradictions.

In the avant-garde view, free verse is a liberation of emotions from the shackles of the imposed patterns of traditional poetry. This concept is congruent with the avant-garde world view, which holds that reality has no truth and truth has no reality and, therefore, seeks to express truth by disintegrating the plastic appearance of reality and the artistic forms that throw it into relief. The uprooting of regular rhythm and rhyme is the manifestation in verse of the general tendency of the avant-garde art to demolish traditional forms and values.

But the idea that free verse is a liberation of emotions is contradicted by the general aesthetic experience and observation that rhythm and rhyme have proven to be concentrated forms, the very shapes of emotions, rather than their fetters. It goes without saying that, under given historical circumstances, there may crop up and, in fact, do develop such emotions which can only find an outlet if they shatter, rather than conform to, patterned measure and rhyme, but this gesture cannot find justification in equating the poetic forms of emotions with their fetters in terms of a general poetic relevance.

The equally one-sided anti-avant-garde way of reasoning disregards the historical circumstances leading to free-verse expression in avant-garde poetry, refuses to acknowledge the openness to the future of an important set of avant-garde lyric, and is only willing to consider free verse as a totally unjustified disintegration of preceding poetic forms. There is, of course, a close connection between the fragmentariness of the avant-garde world view and the fragmentation of the verse form.

But the utter disharmony of the avant-garde life experience, the underlying crisis of values, can by no means explain the great variety of, and the frequent recourse to, the free verse before the avant-garde period, most notably in the poetry of Walt Whitman. There can be no doubt about the fact that Whitman's world view was perfectly coherent. Far from being fragmentary, it was certainly untouched by the crisis of values typical of later avant-garde poets. Whitman strongly believed in the possibilities of a bourgeois democratic development, which he energetically supported and extolled. Even if the dynamic force, the flooding continuity of the emotional current, is much stronger in Whitman's powerful lyrical stream than, say, in the broken progress and staccato cadence of T. S. Eliot's intellectually checked, painfully punctured, intensively imagistic, highly refined, involved, and complex poetry, the presence of a kind of free verse in both cases seems to require a consistent explanation.

It is at this point that the category of *natura naturans* may help with a hypothesis. To express the objective dialectic of appearance and essence through the subjective dialectic of approach presupposes a world-encompassing self-intensification of the poetic ego, the raising and stepping up of individual subjectivity to the level of integrating certain essential features of social, universal objectivity. Rhythm and rhyme are means and forms of this self-invigoration, resulting in a dialectical interaction and unity of the opposed poles of the subjective and the objective, the ego and the world, the individual and the community. This common relationship may naturally assume an infinite variety of forms, depending on the poetic ego, the social community, the historical epoch, the sub-category of the chosen genre, and so on, without an essential change of its basic structure. This very structure may, however, undergo a considerable modification, again on the scale of innumerable possibilities, but fundamentally tending toward a polarization.

If the poetic ego finds it impossible to experience the social world totally, the emphasis of the above-delineated relationship shifts in the direction of the isolated individual, who usually suffers a personal crisis and—in extreme cases—undergoes a personal disintegration. This happens in the Eliotian type of avant-garde free verse.

If, however, the poetic ego becomes, as it were, immersed and submerged in a social community to the extent that the usual relationship between the poetic ego and the community becomes structurally shifted, but this time in the direction of the community, the conditions for the free-verse form are once more given. This latter case might explain the Whitmanian kind of free verse.

Between these two polar possibilities, let us emphasize once more, a number of variations appear. It may suffice to mention the free-verse poetry of left-wing expressionists and surrealists, in whose instance the rejection of the external world of immediate realities and an abstract identification with a future community create an important intermediary category.

There is another corollary that may contribute to explaining the adoption of free verse by Whitman and Eliot. Marx and Lukács often speak of the "prosaic" nature of life in highly developed bourgeois societies.⁵⁵ The content of the metaphoric term is obviously the large-scale intrusion of commodity relationships into the most various aspects of life. There is one sphere in which the metaphor can be taken in its original sense, too: the domain of prose literature. There are a number of reasons why both the metaphoric and the non-metaphoric uses of the word can be considered relevant to the literary and artistic process.

First, when commodity relations grow widespread, the epic poetry of classical antiquity becomes the prose fiction of the bourgeois period. The novel is a 'bourgeois epic' (cf. Hegel, Fielding, and Lukács) in this sense, too. That the measure of Greek harmony could not be maintained under the new circumstances is shown, among other things, in the change from the epic in verse to the novel in prose. (This tendency is not eradicated by such transitional forms as Pushkin's *Onegin*, a novel in verse.)

Secondly, with the energetic penetration of commodity relations into the most varied terrains of life, the drama underwent a similar change as did the epic (from the verse form of Greek and Renaissance drama to the prose form of modern bourgeois plays). This general tendency is not invalidated by the occasional appearance of verse plays in modern times.

Thirdly, while the extensive and intensive critical analysis of life in a social stage based on the expansion of commodity relations was chiefly given by the novels of the

critical realists, the subjective revolt against, and escape from, this sort of life was mainly offered and made by the poems of the romantics and the symbolists, the representatives of two characteristic nineteenth-century poetic trends that did not and could not draw an extensive picture of the life they revolted against or escaped from. The attitude of the romantic lyricists and, even more, of the symbolist poets, was congruent with the poetic form they chose, and the ideal of harmony inherent in the tied rhythm and musical rhyme of their verse form could largely be maintained and realized because the attitude of subjective revolt and escape did not make it necessary (or even possible) to incorporate a comprehensive picture of the contemporary world. (The dichotomy between critical realist fiction and romantic or symbolist poetry is again far from being a rigid opposition, as realist poetry and romantic or symbolist novels—sometimes lyricized novels—attest.)

Fourthly, in the above context, one can expect that, when the unhampered spread of commodity relations reaches a new phase, even poetry, or at least a branch of poetry, will approach the prosaic nature of existing conditions and, giving up its closed harmony, will get nearer to prose. It is little wonder that—after some notable European and occasional American antecedents⁵⁶—the breakthrough took place in Whitman's America, which was undergoing an unprecedentedly vigorous bourgeois development, and in Whitman's poetry, which was drawing its inspiration and pathos from this development. This pathos, which relied on the democratic nature of the transformation of American life, the progressive and seemingly uninhibited character of the process, and the experience of the frontier, clearly indicates that Whitman had an emotionally and intellectually coherent and harmonious view of the world. But with the structure of his poetic experience he anticipated the European free-verse movement, just as the social development that he expressed anticipated later European phases of development.

T. S. Eliot was confronted in the United States and later in Europe with an even more advanced stage of the universality of commodity relations under the conditions of monopoly capitalism, at the time of devastating world wars, cataclysmic disharmonies, and deep crises of traditional values. This helps to explain why he resumed, refined, and carried further the free-verse form inaugurated by Whitman, intoning it in American poetry; and this is the reason why, for him, no organic, coherent world view based on secular norms was possible. The world thus became in his eyes a disharmonic and cacophonous 'waste land', a heap of broken images that the poet could not identify with. Hence the specifically fragmentary type of Eliot's free verse.

Fifthly, this development of poetry is paralleled by that of music, in which disharmony is no more a metaphor than prose is in literature. When Wagner in his later operas and—in a less heroic and more intimate way—Debussy in *Pelléas and Mélisande* radically reduced the use of separate and closed arias, thereby bringing the structure of music closer to the flexible prosody of the text, they took steps similar to the ones taken by the free-verse poets. Furthermore, when Schönberg, Berg, and Webern decomposed the major and minor scales, tonalities, melodies, and harmonies of pre-classical, classical, and romantic music, and composed their works in an atonal, twelve-note serial scheme, they brought about a musical model, which, in its expressionist disharmony and constructivist rigorosity, matched the pattern of Eliot's free verse. The increasing endeavor of avant-garde music to include 'concrete' noises in the composition allows even more room for the prosaic phenomena of everyday life.

Sixthly, with the emergence of a new set of realizable human values, with the reappearance of human measure and harmony, free verse and atonal music tend to close

their forms. The result is a new kind of tied poetic and musical idiom, which incorporates and synthesizes the achievements of free verse and atonal music in an elastic, modern pattern (such as the lyric of Eliot's successors, Auden and Spender, the later poetry of Éluard, Aragon, or Attila József; some later compositions by Schönberg, the music of Bartók in general, and especially in his last period characterized by an equilibrium of avant-garde disharmony, popular melody, and pre-classical and classical discipline).

The converging and corroborating evidence of all these factors and developments seems to suggest that if the category of *natura naturans* is placed in a historical and comparative perspective, it is suitable for interpreting not only the metrically tied and rhymed poetry, but also the free-verse form of more recent lyric developments.⁵⁷

All this seems to point to the general validity and applicability of the Lukácsian conception of poetry, both in historical and theoretical terms. The significance of *natura naturans* for poetry clearly appears in the fact that it is possible to deduce from it such seemingly disconnected phenomena as the subject-object relationship of the poetic attitude, the poetic function of emotion, imagination, space and time, or the lyric role of trope, rhythm, and rhyme. Finding a unifying principle helps to bridge the gap between an abstract philosophy of the nature of poetry and a mechanically technical description of rhythmic patterns and rhyme schemes, a duality not infrequently encountered in analyses of the lyric. In the meantime, while throwing into relief the genre-constituting importance and activity of lyric subjectivity without expelling the objective world from the sphere of poetry, Lukács's view keeps lyric poetry within the framework of a universal theory of the aesthetic reflection of reality.⁵⁸

Notes

¹ For Lukács's early treatment of poets and poetry, see his "Ady Endre", in his *Magyar irodalom — magyar kultúra* [Hungarian Literature—Hungarian Culture] (Budapest: 1970); "Platonism, Poetry and Form: Rudolf Kassner", "On the Romantic Philosophy of Life: Novalis", "The New Solitude and its Poetry: Stefan George", "The Bourgeois Way of Life and Art for Art's Sake: Theodor Storm", in his *Soul and Form*, trans. by A. Bostock (London: 1974); *Balázs Béla és akiknek nem kell* [Béla Balázs and Those Who Want None of Him] (Gyoma: 1918).

² Georg Lukács: "Art and Objective Truth", in his *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*, trans. by A. D. Kahn (New York: 1971), pp. 28—9, 32—3, 36—7, 38, 40—1, 43.

³ Georg Lukács: "Hölderlin's Hyperion", in his *Goethe and his Age*, trans. by R. Anchor (London: 1968), p. 154.

⁴ Georg Lukács: "Heinrich Heine als nationaler Dichter", in his *Deutsche Literatur in zwei Jahrhunderten* (Neuwied — Berlin: 1964), pp. 316—9.

⁵ György Lukács: "Ady, a magyar tragédia nagy énekese" [Ady, the great singer of Hungarian tragedy], in his *Magyar irodalom — magyar kultúra*, p. 169.

⁶ Georg Lukács: "Faust Studies", in his *Goethe and his Age*, pp. 247—8. This is all the more noteworthy since it was Goethe who called Schiller's attention to the poetic advantages of transforming his ballad "The Cranes of Ibycus" by conforming to some facts of objective reality (the pattern in which cranes fly). Schiller accepted Goethe's suggestion. See Georg Lukács: "Correspondence Between Schiller and Goethe", in his *Goethe and his Age*, p. 73.

⁷ György Lukács: "Babits Mihály vallomásai" [Mihály Babits's confessions], in his *Magyar irodalom — magyar kultúra*, p. 248.

⁸ György Lukács: "Pártköltészet" [The poetry of partisanship], in his *Magyar irodalom — magyar kultúra*, p. 296.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

¹⁰ György Lukács: "A százéves Toldi" [The hundred-year-old Toldi], in his *Magyar irodalom — magyar kultúra*, p. 422.

¹¹ Georg Lukács: "Pushkin's Place in World Literature", in his *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*, p. 250.

¹² György Lukács: "Madách tragédiája" [Madách's tragedy], in his *Magyar irodalom — magyar kultúra*, pp. 568—9.

¹³ Georg Lukács: "Über die Besonderheit als Kategorie der Ästhetik", in his *Probleme der Ästhetik* (Neuwied — Berlin: 1969), p. 768; *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* (n. p.: 1963), Bd. I, pp. 98, 267—8, 276, 598; "Bechers Lyrik", in his *Schicksalswende* (Berlin: 1956), pp. 229—31.

¹⁴ Lukács: "Über die Besonderheit als Kategorie der Ästhetik", in *op. cit.*, p. 768.

¹⁵ Christopher Caudwell: *Illusion and Reality* (New York: 1947), p. 21.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

²⁰ Christopher Caudwell: "Beauty", in his *Further Studies in a Dying Culture* (London: 1950), p. 90.

²¹ Caudwell: *Illusion and Reality*, p. 124; cf. p. 27.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 291.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 32, 36, 62, 63, 69, 125, 155, 171, 202—4, 261.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21; cf. p. 123.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 212; cf. pp. 30, 130, 253—4.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 127; cf. pp. 154—5.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 123.

³³ For an illuminating discussion of Caudwell's theory, see Maurice Cornforth: "Caudwell and Marxism", *The Modern Quarterly* (Winter, 1950—51) No. 1, pp. 16—33; G. Thomson: "In Defence of Poetry", *The Modern Quarterly* (Spring, 1951) No. 2, pp. 107—34; "The Caudwell Discussion", *The Modern Quarterly* (Summer, 1951) No. 3, pp. 259—75. For a confrontation, from different sides, of Caudwell's and Lukács's conceptions of aesthetics and poetry, see Péter Egri: "Caudwell Ísraelméletéről" [On Caudwell's theory of lyric poetry], *Filológiai Közöny* (1962) Nos 1—2, pp. 46—59; József Szili: "Művészet és valóság" [Art and reality], *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* (1974) No. 3, pp. 308—29; Péter Egri: "Lukács és Caudwell költészetfelfogásáról" [On Lukács's and Caudwell's conceptions of poetry], *Irodalomtörténet* (1975) No. 3, pp. 710—35.

³⁴ Lukács: "Bechers Lyrik", in *op. cit.*, p. 231; *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, Bd. I, p. 663. In the original German text '*natura naturata*' and '*natura naturans*' are not paraphrased. In the Hungarian version of the definition, '*natura naturans*' is paraphrased as "teremtő természet" ('creating nature') in the Becher essay, see György Lukács: "Johannes R. Becher", in his *Német realisták* [German Realists] (Budapest: 1955), p. 417, and as "teremtődő természet" ('nature being created') in the volume of aesthetics, see György Lukács: *Az esztétikum sajátossága* [The Specificity of the Aesthetic] (Budapest: 1965), Vol. I, p. 613. Both passages were translated by I. Eörsi and checked by Lukács. We may consider both paraphrases aesthetically correct, the linguistically more adequate 'creating nature' describing the process from the viewpoint of the poet, and 'nature being created' marking the same process from the side of the poem. The two opposed terms, *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* had originally been handed down from Averroës to the scholastics, who meant by the former 'God', and by the latter 'the created universe'. See *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis conditum a Carolo du Fresne domino Du Cange* (Niort: 1885), pp. 575—6. Renaissance philosophy challenged this view; Giordano Bruno, in his *Eroici furori*, considered nature unified, simultaneously creating and created. Spinoza, in his *Ethics*, tended to interpret theological terminology in a materialist sense. For him, *natura naturans* was substance, the material world in its unity, and *natura naturata* was constituted by the 'modes', the totality of the particular things of the material world. See György Nádor's note to Spinoza's *Etika* [Ethics] (Budapest: 1952), p. 133. Schelling distinguished nature as the subject matter of the philosophy of nature (nature as a creating subject) from nature as the subject matter of the natural sciences (nature as the mere subject matter of cognition). In his dialectically slanted philosophy tinged with irrationalism and tending from subjective to objective idealism, *natura naturans* was tantamount to an ultimately spiritual 'absolute' (*natura naturans absoluta*). From this, there are derived ideal and real natures. *Natura naturata idealis* is the spiritual world of monads, *natura naturata realis* is the material world. See R. Eisler: *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe* (Berlin: 1904), pp. 708—15. Coleridge, influenced by Schelling's *Über das Verhältnis der Bildenden Künste zu der Natur*, used the expressions in a special sense: "If the artist copies the mere nature, the *natura naturata*, what idle rivalry! If he proceeds only from a given form, which is supposed to answer to the notion of beauty, what an emptiness, what an unreality there always is in his productions, as in Cipriani's pictures! Believe me, you must master the essence, the *natura naturans* which presupposes a

bond between nature in the higher sense and the soul of man." Samuel Taylor Coleridge: "On Poesy or Art", in his *Biographia Literaria* (London: 1969), Vol. II, p. 257; cf. Vol. I, pp. LXXVII—LXXXIII. Poesy, however, is a "generic or common term" for all art (*ibid.*, p. 255), and thus is not identical with poetry. Besides, in Coleridge's view, "the artist must imitate [...] the *Natur-geist*, or spirit of nature" (*ibid.*, p. 259). Thinking in a philosophical framework and terminology naturally different from Lukács's, Coleridge meant by *natura naturata* nature proper, rather than the epic and dramatic kinds of its reflection, and used the category *natura naturans* to denote the artistic shaping of beauty, rather than to describe the poetic expression of the world. In beauty, he saw the unity of the manifold, the coalescence of the diverse, the union of the shapely with the vital, which is conceived by intuition and qualified by the Kantian disinterested aesthetic pleasure. Yet there lurk certain elements in Coleridge's conception, whose real contents in their totality seem to contain some illusions to lyric poetry: such are, I suppose, the intimately personal fusion of subject and object, the subjective animation of the objective world, the interpretation of *natura naturans* in terms of experience and process, as well as its organic connection with beauty. It was Lukács who first applied the two terms to distinguish with unambiguous clarity the lyric from the epic and dramatic genres, in the philosophical framework of a Marxist aesthetic conception.

³⁵ Georg Lukács: "Marx and Engels on Aesthetics", in his *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*, pp. 61—88.

³⁶ Lukács: *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, Vol. II, pp. 193—266.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 720—40.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 637—40.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 330—401.

⁴⁰ Thomas Stearns Eliot: "Tradition and the Individual Talent", in his *Selected Essays* (London: 1963), p. 21. In his later essay, "The Social Function of Poetry", Eliot recanted his anti-emotional view: "poetry has primarily to do with the expression of feeling and emotion [...] poetry is the vehicle of feeling." Thomas Stearns Eliot: *On Poetry and Poets* (London: 1965), p. 19.

⁴¹ László Kardos: *Általános pszichológia* [General Psychology] (Budapest: 1964), p. 200.

⁴² It should be noted that intimacy with objects may also raise emotions. These are, however, of a different sort, and do not belong to the present line of argument.

⁴³ The words 'like' and 'not unlike' have been chosen deliberately. Poetry is an independent kind of art, and, hence, in spite of displaying some traits that are similar to those of fiction and music, none of its elements can mechanically be identified with the features of fiction or music. Poetry is quite different from anything like the mathematical addition of fictional entities, or musical emotions.

⁴⁴ Caudwell even speaks of poetry's dreamwork in Chapter X of his *Illusion and Reality* (pp. 198—240). The greater freedom of poetic (and musical) imagination explains why romantic, symbolist, and expressionist poetry (and music) are usually more significant and organic than the fiction they produced.

⁴⁵ For a detailed analysis of this process, see my *Álom, látomás, valóság* [Dream, Vision, Reality] (Budapest: 1969).

⁴⁶ See József Ujfalussy: *A valóság zenei képe* [The Musical Picture of Reality] (Budapest: 1962), pp. 61—4, 67—70, 74—7.

⁴⁷ William Shakespeare: *As You Like It*, Act III, Scene II, in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (London: 1962), p. 230.

⁴⁸ See Georg Lukács quoting Goethe approvingly in his *The Historical Novel*, trans. by H. and S. Mitchell (London: 1962), p. 131. See also Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (Stuttgart: 1953), Bd. III, p. 492, where he even sees a connection between the representation of action as a sequence of events unfolding in the present and the rising of poetic feelings and concepts in the present. This follows from Hegel's view that drama is a synthesis of the epic and the lyric (*ibid.*, pp. 479—80).

⁴⁹ E. S. Dallas recommends the following series: epic—third person, past time; drama—second person, present time; lyric—first person singular, future. See his *Poetics* (London: 1852), pp. 81, 91, 105. John Erskine links the epic with the future, drama with the past, and poetry with the present. See his *The Kinds of Poetry* (Indianapolis: 1920), p. 12. In Roman Jakobson's view, the sphere of the lyric is the first person singular, present tense, while that of the epic is third person, past tense. See his "Randbemerkungen zur Prosa des Dichters Pasternak", *Slawische Rundschau* (1935). René Wellek and Allan Warren draw the following conclusion: "Such explorations of the basic kinds, which attach them on the one extreme to linguistic morphology and at the other to ultimate attitudes towards the universe, though 'suggestive', are scarcely promising of objective results." See their *Theory of Literature* (Harmondsworth: 1963), p. 228.

⁵⁰ Ernest Hemingway: *Death in the Afternoon* (Harmondsworth: 1966), p. 6.

⁵¹ In Hegel's aesthetic system, music is discussed after the fine arts and before literature ('Poesie'), and lyric poetry ('lyrische Poesie') is treated after the epic ('epische Poesie') and before drama ('dramatische Poesie'). This order corresponds to the logical requirements of the dialectical triad (thesis, antithesis, synthesis), in which the similar pole of subjective antithesis has been allotted to both music and lyric poetry. If the grouping of the branches and kinds of art were not based on the triad, the order would be: the fine arts,

literature (the epic, drama, lyric poetry), and music. In this arrangement, lyric poetry and music have neighboring positions, and lyric poetry is placed between the epic and drama on the one hand, and music, on the other. The idea of the triad has its dialectical relevance for drama, which really seems to bring into the new quality of a dialectical synthesis some features of the epic and the lyric. But in the invariable application of the triad formula, Hegel's idealistic system also appears. This makes Hegel think that poetic subjectivity does not continue in action, and thus poetry is detached from action (*op. cit.*, p. 323), for he considers the lyric as the antithesis of the epic, and the epic is characterized by action. Lyric poetry, however, expressing the approach of the subject to the dialectic of the appearance and essence of the object (*natura naturans*), cannot, in fact, be separated from action as such.

⁵² See Karl Bücher: *Arbeit und Rhythmus* (Leipzig — Berlin: 1909); Lukács: *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, Bd. I, pp. 254—84. It is not my task here to give a detailed discussion of the exact way in which the rhythm of poetry was derived from human activity, work, which, in turn, could make biological and physiological types of rhythm conscious. But, in principle, it is obvious that the rhythm of human activity could only hope for success if it adapted itself to the rhythm of nature.

⁵³ See Lukács: *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, Bd. I, pp. 272—4. In poetry and music, rhythm steps up human self-consciousness. In beat music, it enhances the aspect of the particular in the personality. This seems to suggest that in poetry (and music), as branches of art, there must be a movement tending to raise the merely particular to the universal level of mankind in the personality even outside the sphere of rhythm; and it is always the actual process that rhythm intensifies. This fact prompts us to pay an increased attention to tropes and to the interaction between trope, rhythm, and rhyme in poetic analysis.

⁵⁴ Lukács: *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, Bd. II, p. 402. Though Wölfflin pointed out a certain deviation between regularity and irregularity in baroque architecture, similar to the contrast between meter and rhythm in poetry, his observation does not modify essentially our view of the general symmetry of architecture. See his *Renaissance und Barock* (München: 1926), pp. 64 ff., 123 ff.

⁵⁵ See, e.g., Lukács: *The Historical Novel*, p. 185.

⁵⁶ In taking stock of the antecedents, prose tending to verse should be discriminated from verse approaching prose, even if, occasionally, the two tendencies may meet half-way. In a more narrow and strict sense of the term, free verse belongs to the latter group. Poetry moving toward the novel is, of course, only one trend in modern times, indicating a shift of the boundaries between genres. This trend is complemented and counteracted by the novel moving closer to poetry, i.e., the lyricization of fiction, manifesting an endeavor on the part of the novelist to counterbalance the prosaic nature of reality and the consequence of an increasingly subjective approach stemming from the modification of the subject-object relation typical of the epic.

⁵⁷ From the foregoing it must have become obvious that the term 'poetry' has been considered throughout this essay as the most clearly crystallized form of the lyric. All the means and formal procedures that make poetry closely knit (verse rhythm, rhyme, tropes, etc.) serve the purpose of the intensification of the poetic self necessarily focused in lyric expression, where the subject and the object of artistic creation are identical: the poetic ego. This does not, of course, mean that every kind of poetry is lyric: advertisement poems or verse formulations of grammatical rules are certainly not. Nor does the statement that poetry is the clearest and most concentrated form of the lyric mean that there is no lyric without poetry: novels and dramas may have, to a smaller or greater degree, a lyric character, even if they are written in prose. But as a rule, the more lyric they are, the more they show a tendency to incorporate traits typical of poetry (a tighter rhythm, original tropes, repetitive rhetorical phrases, etc.), even if their concentration does not reach a degree characteristic of poetry.

It is in Lukács's definition of the specificity of the lyric reflection of reality that his life-long concern with the identical subject-object finds its most closely knit expression. The philosophical analysis of the subject-object relationship already crops up in his early idealistic scheme. See Georg Lukács: "Die Subjekt-Objekt Beziehung in der Ästhetik", *Logos* (1917/18), No. 1, pp. 1—39; *Heidelberger Ästhetik 1916—1918* (Darmstadt — Neuwied: 1974), pp. 91—132. The identical subject-object looms large, as an idealistic trait, in his *History and Class Consciousness*, where he, like Hegel, identifies objectivization with alienation, thus taking a philosophical position not unlike the world view of left-wing expressionists, later strongly attacked, and treated with more understanding only in Lukács's very last years; cf. his *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. by R. Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: 1975), pp. 123—4, 204—5; for Lukács's later critique, see his 1967 "Preface", in *ibid.*, pp. XXII—XXIII. The identical subject-object is given a materialist philosophical critique in his *Der junge Hegel und die Probleme der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft* (Berlin: 1955), pp. 418—9, 428; it reappears as applied to art in materialist aesthetic terms in *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*: 'the proposition that there is no object without subject, which epistemologically has a purely idealistic meaning, is fundamentally important for the subject-object relationship in aesthetics' (Bd. I, p. 558), and it reaches an especially sharp formulation in Lukács's definition of the lyric (*ibid.*, Bd. I, p. 663; cf. also his "Ády, a magyar tragédia nagy énekesé", in *op. cit.*, p. 169).

⁵⁸ Lukács's concept of poetry has evoked and inspired a number of comments. It may be taken as a symbolic

fact that the first author to write sympathetically about the Lukácsian view in greater detail was a poet, István Eörsi, Lukács's disciple and translator ("György Lukács and the Theory of Lyric Poetry", *The New Hungarian Quarterly* [1965] No. 18), persuasively arguing that, in poetry, the continuity of the objective world is replaced by the continuity of a subjective relation between the poet and the world (p. 44). László Forgács, in his *A költészet bölcselete* [The Philosophy of Poetry] (Budapest: 1971), pp. 81, 83, Ferenc Fehér, in his "Problematikus-e a regény?" [Is the novel problematic?], *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle* (1971) No. 1—2, p. 164, and István Szerdahelyi, in his *Költészetesztétika* [The Aesthetic of Poetry] (Budapest: 1972), p. 74, offer interpretations of Lukács's definition of the lyric. Lukács himself, in the course of a conversation that we had in the summer of 1970, expressed the opinion that he continued to believe *natura naturans* to be an important category of poetry, but thought that his assertion of its decisive role as a determinant of the lyric could only be tested by applying it to poetic analysis. That is what I attempted in my *A költészet valósága* [The Reality of Poetry] (Budapest: 1975), delineating the Lukácsian conception of poetry (which I had a chance to discuss with Lukács), and putting the theory to the practical test of detailed analyses of poems, poetic genres, as well as lyricized fiction (Joyce) and drama (O'Neill). All this seems provide counter-arguments against A. Reiser's view holding that Lukács's realism-oriented aesthetic is scarcely applicable to lyric poetry. See A. Reiser: "The Aesthetic Theory of Socialist Realism", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (1957) No. 2.



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Although György Lukács is widely known all over the world, the international scholarly public knows little about the progressive and multifarious literature dealing with Lukács in the native country of this great Hungarian thinker. There are various reasons for this. Although there is no denying the fact that the study of Lukács's *oeuvre* started relatively late—only in the first half of the seventies—in Hungary, it is also true that this research has steadily gained momentum since then. The other reason is the well-known isolation of the Hungarian language, which is a major impediment because only a few writings of Hungarian Lukács-scholars are available in translation.

This research, however—quite understandably—can rely on sources which are only available in Hungary and in the Hungarian language, and it can interpret Lukács's activities in the intellectual atmosphere and social environment in which Lukács himself—except for his years of emigration—lived and worked. By virtue of these advantages the writings of Hungarian authors can provide a more reliable image of Lukács than that currently reflected in the international scholarly literature.

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