

THE SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE: GEORG LUKÁCS

by

KENNETH O'BRIEN

B.A. (Honours) Social Sciences, University of Leicester, England, 1968.

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EXAMINING COMMITTEE APPROVAL

DAVID BETTISON  
Senior Supervisor

JOHN MILLS  
Examining Committee

JERALD ZASLOVE  
Examining Committee

## ABSTRACT

Lukács' writings on the sociology of literature are presented and examined; and his theory that there is a direct relation between the "dialectic movement of history and the great genres of literature which portray the totality of history." This definition of the literary process is accepted as an hypothesis. The sociology of literature in North America and Europe is examined in the context of Lukács' ideas. It is concluded that the positivism of North American sociology of literature ignores the historical specificity of contemporary literary forms. Part of the explanation for the perspective of Kenneth Burke and Hugh Duncan is shown to derive from partial elements of the epistemology of the Classical Greeks and Hegelianism. Similarly Lukács' philosophy of literary criticism are shown to be modifications on a rigidly Marxist economic determinism as well as Hegelian idealism. Lukács' concept of literary realism -- in contemporary society as those forms of the novel which portray the specific problems of individuals and classes and the resolution of social contradictions within the "totality of the movement of history"-- is examined in relation to the processes of capitalist development in Europe. It is argued that literature provides more than "extensions of social reality", as Burke and Duncan imply. Some of the implications of Lukács' formulations for a sociological conception of 'social reality' are discussed throughout the thesis. The purpose of this discussion is to suggest the

significance of a sociological concept of the individual as varying with the political and economic transformations of society.

In conclusion, it is suggested that Lukács' sociological formulations on literature though going beyond those of the symbolists, was inadequately used by him in his attempt to analyse twentieth century literature; and some of the significant aspects of the work of novelists such as Kafka, Camus and Ellison are suggested. The importance of the "individualism" of these novelists are related to wider problems of philosophy and the "one dimensionality" of contemporary society.

## CONTENTS

	page
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
ONE: HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS: CLASSICAL GREEK EPISTEMOLOGY FROM PLATO TO PLOTINUS	12
TWO: 1. HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS: THE HEGELIAN DIALECTIC	24
2. Hegel's Philosophy In Relation to Art	27
THREE: LITERATURE IN AMERICAN CONTINENTAL SOCIOLOGY	51
FOUR: GEORG LUKÁCS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF LITERARY CRITICISM	77
FIVE: GEORG LUKÁCS' SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE	110
1. Realism and Lukács' Concept of Totality	114
2. The Totality of History and Historical Movement	120
3. The Totality of Philosophical and Concrete Existence	136
4. The Theory of the Historical Novel	145
SIX: FROM THE HISTORICAL TO THE CONTEMPORARY NOVEL	167
1. The Problem of the Bourgeois Novel	174
2. Literary Philosophy and Social Change: Marcuse's One Dimensional Society	177
3. The Concept of Individual and Contemporary Literature	192
4. Summary Remarks	199
CONCLUSION	206
BIBLIOGRAPHY	216

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## INTRODUCTION

Criticism is interesting, after all, only to the extent that it is viable, and much of what is published today is less pertinent than literary scholarship or the historical consciousness of those who guard a literary tradition.<sup>1</sup>

In his polemics against the mono-causally oriented Marxists of his own day, that is to say, the economic determinists, on the one hand, and the "positivistic sociologists," on the other hand, Georg Lukács developed a philosophy of literary criticism and elements of sociological epistemology, which retain their importance today, partly because of our ignorance (sociologists') of it; but mostly because of its profound significance for a critical sociology.

In an analogous criticism of sociological specialization and scientific objectivity, John Horton, made a strong plea for a sociological realism, almost equal in its force to Lukács' plea for critical realism in literature. Both pleas were specific and general. Horton's plea concentrated on the paradoxical later dehumanization and reification of the concept of alienation and anomie: a dehumanization which obscures the radical criticism of nineteenth century industrial society, in which the status of these concepts were weapons, as it were.<sup>2</sup> Georg Lukács, uses the critical literature of novelists from the time of Walter Scott, Balzac; through the nineteenth century novelists of the periods of Leo Tolstoy. He continues with novelists of the early twentieth century to reinforce his perspective

that the modern contemporary literature such as the novel and the drama, should not be reified by either modern creative writers or critics. Rather these critics and writers can transform the past literary traditions, and re-establish the novel as a critical weapon against modern capitalism. In doing this they will be continuing the traditions of Western literature.<sup>3</sup>

The really great novelists are in this respect always true born sons of Homer. True the world of objects and the relationships between them has changed, has become more intricate, less spontaneously poetic. But the art of the great novelists manifests itself precisely in the ability to overcome the unpoetic nature of the world, through sharing and experiencing the life and evolution of the society they lived in. It is by sending out their spontaneously typical heroes to fulfil their inherently necessary destinies that the great writers have mastered with such sovereign power the changeful texture of the external and internal, great and little moments that make up life.<sup>4</sup>

For Lukács then, the modern novel is only significant if it carries on the epic and dramatic tradition of the Western literature. And the novel is realist in so far as the principal characters and the typical situations in which they act concentrate all the forces of change at a particular time; forces of change that are historically present in a given society. Realism as conceived by Lukács must necessarily be in conflict with capitalism as "reality". The great conflicts of the time, must come to dramatic consciousness in the typical hero in any narrative. Stating this position in an earlier work, Lukács expounds his philosophy of literature thus:



Since human nature is not finally separable from social reality, each narrative detail will be significant to the extent that it expresses the dialectic between man as individual and man as social being.<sup>5</sup>

The implicit plea for a critical sociology against modern industrial capitalism in John Horton's work, is made explicit in Lukács' philosophy of literary criticism. It is a plea directed against philosophy, sociology and creative writing, thus:

...It is these tensions and contradictions both within the individual, and underlying the individual's relation to his fellow human beings -- all of which tensions increase in intensity with the evolution of capitalism -- that must form the subject matter of contemporary realism.<sup>6</sup>

What is significant in Lukács' work is the unique nature of his Marxist perspective. It provides insight on two levels of analysis. On the first level are the questions in sociology of the relations between the individual and society, character and social structure, objectivity and subjectivity in the social sciences and the nature of social reality. On the second level of analysis, Lukács attacks positivistic treatment of literature in sociology with his articulation of aesthetics. He does this by a somewhat unique presentation of changes in art form by historical period. Lukács views the simple, formal historical categorization of (changes in art form) genres in art history, as sterile and meaningless. He argues that leads to a mystification of art forms, on the part of literary critics. As an alternative, Lukács presents

an analysis of aesthetics as culturally relative phenomena, that is dependent on the nature and constellation of social forces, at any given period in a society's development, and the artist's involvement in this milieu. In addition, the modes and means of conceptualizing 'social reality', are viewed by Lukács as being dependent on the particular literary tradition existing in a society. It is the artist's understanding of these, his philosophical and historical analysis of these forces, which determines what and how the art produces.

In Lukács system, the means by which the literary critic/sociologist can analyse literature is to use the dialectic to understand the relation between past, present and future, and the manner in which these are characterized in typical situations and characters. The novelists develop these situations in fiction by sharing and experiencing the 'life' and evolution of the society they live in. These situations are presented as charged with the forces of change at a particular time. The characters are typical, Lukács asserts, when their innermost beings respond in opposition to the given social order. The typical, in short, is the concentration of all forces moving for social change. This is in contradiction to the average. For example the individual hero in a novel, though determined by these social forces, must as an individual have a conscious view and larger vision that leads to a new society. This then, is Lukács conception of critical realism. It is essentially the struggle between a superior individual, and a society that he must master, not escape from.<sup>7</sup>

If a common basis for literary realism is defined as the social, political and economic representation of human interaction and societal development, it would be rightly argued that this is tautologous, because it does not deal with the ways in which the artist is influenced in his choice of literary material. That definition also does not establish some of the sociological criteria for literary interpretations and criticisms. /At the core of this is the question what are the relations between artistic processes such as literature and social life in its more general sense of political and economic development.

This thesis attempts to examine the theoretical explanations of the foregoing relations. I will do this in the following manner. First of all I intend to examine the work of the major American sociologists Kenneth Burke and Hugh Duncan against the background of the classical philosophers, the Greeks and Hegel. It will be shown that questions of the nature of social and literary reality, one aspect of which is the question of the relation between the individual and society, are framed in a particular manner which has been termed in sociology, positivism. I will point out some of the difficulties of this method and show how Georg Lukács resolved these problems. I will discuss the ways in which Lukács adopted a Marxist-Hegelian perspective to do a number of things. First of all to assert that the artistic process raises the questions about the nature of specific reality and are based on analyses pertinent to the development of the compositional features of capitalist

social structures. Thus questions about the relations between the individual and society cannot be resolved without recourse to the nature of specific features of developing capitalism in Europe. Secondly delineation of the specific features, the historical and existent features of the development of capitalism, raises the whole problem of human consciousness as class consciousness. At this point I will show that Lukács saw this not simply as a reflection of existent social structures but as determining the direction and development of capitalist society in Europe.

I will demonstrate in my analysis that resolution of the first question about the reality value of literature is partly dependent on a Marxian approach to the sociology of literature, as formulated by Georg Lukács. To do this I will present an analysis of the earliest development of the reflection theory of art, the Classical Greeks and later in the eighteenth century philosopher Hegel. I have selected these two areas because they provide a common source to the American continental and European approaches to the sociology of literature. And the reason is that despite the later sociological formulations the work of Hegel contains both conservative and radical tendencies. I will suggest in Chapter Three that quite apart from the sociological methods of analysis and the empirical materials investigated by the two approaches to the sociology of literature, the problem with the symbolic functional "school" in sociology is that reciprocity between individuals and social groups is a basic pre-supposition, and therefore the framework

is geared to demonstrating that literature performs the functions of "equipment for living" -- the device is similar to Weber's "means-ends" schema of social action.<sup>8</sup> It is for these reasons that this brand of sociology is termed positivism.

The question becomes what then is the particular value of a Lukácsian approach to the sociology of literature? And what is the nature of Lukács' formulation? In my discussions I will demonstrate that as a theoretical tool, a heuristic device, Lukács' work provide major advantages though the weakness of his empirical analysis of nineteenth century novels are provided towards the end of the thesis together with some of the reasons and suggestions for going beyond Lukács' theory.

First of all I will demonstrate that Lukács' methodology rests on a clearly argued philosophy of the relations between being and existence. This is his sociology of knowledge.<sup>9</sup> That by utilizing the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic, Lukács constructed the concepts of totality in his substantive sociological analysis. Thus we find the totality of history and historical movement. Here what Lukács does is to argue that from the early Greek civilizations, certain structural changes such as the increasing power of the State over small scale patriarchal institutional forms of authority were differentiations in economic life which manifested themselves in philosophy. In art too forms and content of literature change, the epic tends to give way to drama and tragedy, and so on. The second concept of totality is that of philosophical and concrete existence. Briefly it is the ways in which philosophical and ideological explanations arise out

of and influence the consciousness of intellectuals and artists, while for the contending economic and political classes their consciousnesses are determined by their places in the struggles. Thirdly is totality of form and content in literature. The discussion of the thesis will be to relate these themes to the generally formulated question of the relation between consciousness and existence. My aim is to demonstrate that thus formulated literature and art are more than extensions of social reality, in the sense that they simply illustrate sociological notions about the nature of social reality. My contention is that the claims of some theorists such as Segerstedt, as an extreme case, are claims for theories of social reality based on their definitions of the concepts they use and their own observation of social behaviour.<sup>10</sup> Both of these are not fully reliable guides and as Lukács argues lend an eternal quality to the nature of "social facts". This is not to suggest that these models do not have valuable utility. But specificity is gained at the price of distortion.<sup>11</sup>

The criticism of distortion applies to Lukács' attempt to extend his theoretical analysis based on nineteenth century fiction to twentieth century literature just as well. I suggest toward the end of the thesis that the specific formulation of the historical novel conceived of a rigid system of class relations in which the influence of class ideology on individual weltanschauungis fairly predictable. Therefore the Lukácsian conception of the individual "type" is fairly accurate. But in the twentieth century the problem of individual forms of

consciousness needs to be re-thought. The question is why is Lukács' model limited, when applied to contemporary literature? We will examine here some of the social structural and philosophical explanations of the changes leading to an attempt to illustrate a more complex individual consciousness. The question behind this line of analysis is: what are some of the forces directing literature away from the narrative concerns of the historical analysis and toward the "mental state of the individual". I will discuss Marcuse's general thesis in One Dimensional Man and Eros And Civilization. I will suggest that class conflicts have not evaporated, but rather become subsumed -- in terms of their original character -- in wider problems of technology and bureaucracy. In this context the focus of investigation will be on the philosophical and literary critical analyses of twentieth century social life as explanations of structural changes.<sup>12</sup> Finally the discussion moves to the ideological debates with existentialist philosophy which may have obscured Lukács' outlook, his inability to recognize the nihilist element in early twentieth century literature which may no longer be a dominant factor in more recent novels. But I suggest a continuity in concerns between the literature of writers like Camus and Ralph Ellison. I suggest that the disintegration of character only conflicts with Lukács use of his own theory, not specifically with his theory of the novel.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Alfred Kazin's introduction to Georg Lukács Studies In European Realism, Grosset & Dunlop, New York, p. XIII.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. John Horton The Dehumanization Of Anomie And Alienation, British Journal of Sociology, 15th December, 1964, pp.283-300.

<sup>3</sup>Op. cit. Kazin's Introduction to G. Lukács, pp. VII-X.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 10, Lukács' statement, quoted by Kazin.

<sup>5</sup>Georg Lukács Realism In Our Time, translated from the German by J. & M. Mander, World Perspectives, Harper Row, 1964, p.75. The above is also published, London 1963 as The Meaning Of Contemporary Realism.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.75. What Lukács suggests here is that the writer is not simply a product of his age, but seeks to comprehend it as a totality. See also Georg Lukács Historie et Conscience de Classe, p. 65.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 30-31. Lukács, who was in his early pre-1923 period, of development, influenced by Weber, seems to use the concept "understanding" in very much the same way that the latter does, i.e. the observation and theoretical interpretation of the 'subjective states of mind' of actors. Though Weber uses it among other terms, mainly 'verstehen'. The frame of reference for this is action. Because of Lukács' acceptance of the 'dialectic' as a method of analysis, he did not have to confront the technical methodological problem which Weber had of dividing meanings into (a) the actual existing meaning in the given concrete case of a particular actor; and (b) the theoretically conceived pure type of meaning, subjective meaning; for the unity of theory and praxis as a stated assumption resolved this conceptual division (see my later discussion of Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein). Also Lukács uses 'type' in a slightly different sense from Weber. Cf. Max Weber The Theory Of Social And Economic Organization, translated by O. M. Henderson & Talcott Parsons, edited with an introduction by Talcott Parsons, Free Press, New York, 1964, pp. 87-91. Lukács also broke with his early teacher Max Weber on the question of human action and human freedom, the former seeing historical necessity, where the latter saw deliberate choices between open alternatives. For Weber's analysis see From Max Weber Essays In Sociology, Translated and edited with an introduction by Hans Girth and C.W. Mills, Routledge Kegan Paul, London, 1948, pp. 70-74.



<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 56-57.

<sup>9</sup>Helmut Wagner "Types Of Sociological Theory: Toward A System Of Classification", American Sociological Review, 1963, pp.735-742. Wagner sees Hegel's work as the basis for a sociology of knowledge, p. 741.

<sup>10</sup> See Torngy Segerstedt, The Nature Of Social Reality: An Essay In The Epistemology Of Empirical Sociology, Bedminster Press, New Jersey, 1966.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. C.W. Mills, Images of Man: The Classic Tradition In Sociological Thinking, George Braziller, New York, 1960, pp. 37-39.

<sup>12</sup>This line of analysis of social reality and the individual and society question is different in approach from the epistemological formulations of Tiryakin, Peter Berger or William Barrett.

## CHAPTER I

## HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS: CLASSICAL GREEK EPISTEMOLOGY

## FROM PLATO TO PLOTINUS

In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. This is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine-conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life process we demonstrate that development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life process.

(Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels, The German Ideology reprinted in Marx and Engels "Literature and Art" p.12)

Until the publication of Georg Lukács' Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein, Marx's philosophical system and consequently his aesthetic formulations were not perceived as having any significant indebtedness to Hegel. Partly because of the tendency of Marxist analysts to treat Marx and Engels' philosophy and aesthetics as though they did not have strong Hegelian roots, the former's continuity in European thought up to that time and the significance of classical Greek philosophy for Marx and Engels, appeared not to be fully realized. However if we understand the significance of Greek philosophy and aesthetics for Hegel, the last of the grand philosophical "empire builders", and the connection between Hegel and Marx and Engels, then we cannot deny the clear continuity between Marx and Engels in the nineteenth century

and what came before. Georg Lukács' contribution to our understanding is that he, by developing a Marxist aesthetics that was very Hegelian, provided this link.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the various periods in the development of philosophy, in Europe, the question: what is the nature of reality, occupied a prominent place in philosophic concern. Beginning with Socrates' notion of beauty, in terms of whether a thing serves the end for which it is designed, with unity and profitability Plato developed a more comprehensive theory of aesthetics and reality. Plato believed that beyond the world of appearances, there is an ideal beauty, the only reality capable of being loved. This alone is capable of satisfying the philosopher's passion. But in his Republic, Plato deals with the nature and role of art in society. It is this which is of concern to us. Plato saw the true reality as God's creation, an immaterial thing, permanent, and unchanging in time and place. The artisan's creation is a lower level of reality, an image of the "true reality." Finally, there is the artist's imitation of the artisan's image. In the process of education toward the Socratic-Platonic ideal state, the philosopher-censor is to be accorded the task of selecting works of art for the education and enjoyment of the young Guardians. This is important for two reasons: just because the artist is nothing more than a blind imitator, tied to the sensuous, and by his very nature incapable of reason. Secondly, because, ignorant of his own best interests and therefore those of the public good, the city state, the artist cannot know true realities, perfect truth, beauty and goodness. Only the

philosopher can know these. The philosopher censor will see to it that art gives expression to the highest moral and aesthetic standards, promotes the public welfare.

Hegel's philosophy of the Absolute Idea as the ultimate reality, formulated more than two thousand years after Plato, has many of its roots in Greek philosophy. Even the Hegelian notion of "becoming" in his dialectics can be traced to aspects of Platonian ideas, for example Socrates' reported speech of Diotima of Mantinea. The following is an extract of Plato's expectation of a philosopher, that although the latter should appreciate the beauty and goodness in individual's and things, Plato expected him to go beyond these, for they are imperfect exemplifications.

And soon he will himself perceive that the beauty of one form is akin to the beauty of another; and then if beauty of form in general is his pursuit, how foolish would he be not to recognize that the beauty in every form is one and the same! And when he perceives this he will abate his violent love of the one, which he will despise and deem a small thing and will become a lover of all beautiful forms; in the next stage he will consider that the beauty of the mind is more honourable than the beauty of outward form ..., he will create many fair and noble thoughts and notions in boundless love of wisdom; until on that shore he waxes strong and at last the vision is revealed to him of a single science, which is the science of beauty everywhere! Here he will perceive a nature which in the first place is everlasting, not growing and decaying, secondly not fair in one part and foul in another, either in time or place!<sup>2</sup>

Thus the beauties of earth (of man or thing) are steps only to this absolute beauty of immaterial form. In the foregoing, one can observe a dialectical element in Platonic form. But it is constituted of elements derived from the exigencies of Plato's ideal city state. Thus Plato's aesthetics and philosophy of the social order though connected are ontological, because Plato recognized only one real form that created by "God": all reality existed within that form. Plato's aesthetics does not deal with the "roots" of content in art, except to ground them in form, the absolutes of beauty and goodness.<sup>3</sup> It is with this that Hegel's philosophy has to deal. Hegel had the task of retaining the absolute quality of reality and specifying the nature of content of that reality. That is in Platonic terms the nature of that form.

But Hegel's writings on aesthetics did not only draw a lot of its ideas from Plato alone. In a closer examination, one finds that much of the subtlety and sophistication of Hegelian aesthetics resemble in parts the formulation of two other Greek philosophers, Aristotle and Plotinus. In fact Aristotle's Poetics has for long been hailed as the single most important predecessor of modern aesthetics.

Aristotle's conception of art although influenced by Plato's view that art, by its very nature, is imitative and emotion arousing, involves metaphysical and psychological views significantly different from Plato's.<sup>4</sup> By taking the view that art is not simply a copy of things, but a real thing, Aristotle defines art in terms of its capacity to transform

the potential into the actual, to create something that otherwise would not have been. Aristotle takes the concept of purposive activity, and suggests that art is intelligent, discriminating activity, which brings to completion what nature might have attempted, but failed to accomplish. Thus the work of art, originating in its maker, is partly a consequence of a process of fitting means to a specific end, but one which involves rational deliberation and imaginative vision. But art still emulates nature in its essential striving. Similarly, Aristotle conceives of beauty whether of art or a living creature, in terms of a manifested unity of its parts, the function that thing is meant to perform and how it performs it, and its total effectiveness.<sup>5</sup>

Much of Hegel's later analysis and classification of the various arts and his aesthetic arguments, suggest a development of Aristotelian ideas. Later in the analysis we will look at Hegel's classification of the arts into the Symbolic, Classical and Romantic forms of expression in terms of the development towards the "Absolute Idea." But just as Hegel's analysis can be seen as a significant aspect of his theme of increasing self-consciousness of the Spirit, so Aristotle's idea of art as imitation that proceeds to imitate objects in terms of the media of expression, was significant for his plea that the content of a work of art must be understood partly in terms of the selected media of expression. But Aristotle's work in retrospect was not important simply in its provision of a perspective for analysis of the origins of art in general

and of the different forms of art, including poetry. The work of the early Greeks, and of Aristotle in particular provided a later basis for epistemological debates about the nature of social reality. It seems that what Aristotle was getting at in his writings was that art provides various modes for the conceptualization of social reality; where Social reality is defined in terms of what men do, the imitation by others of what men do and the possibilities, the potentialities for action.

Since the objects of imitation are men in action, and these men must be either of a higher or lower type (for moral character mainly answers to these divisions, goodness and badness being the distinguishing marks of moral differences), it follows that we must represent men either as better than in real life, or as worse, or as they are. It is the same in painting. Polygnotus depicted men as nobler than they are, Panson as less noble, Dionysius drew them true to life.<sup>6</sup>

For Aristotle, imitation is one instinct of our nature, for by contemplating and reproducing objects, we learn and infer. Aristotle does not expand significantly on this point. Similarly he designates as other instincts, harmony and rhythm. But starting with these natural gifts and developing special aptitudes, improvisations and so on, Poetry is born.<sup>7</sup> An analogous formulation of imitation as the origin of art, though given an historical materialist bias was put forward by Ernst Fischer.<sup>8</sup> Despite Fischer's stress on the basic need of man to transcend the limited reality of the "I",

his work has a familiar Aristotelian ring. What Fischer did was to concretize and demystify Aristotle's concept of imitation.

Rather than deal more intensively with the analysis of this "need to imitate" on the part of man, Aristotle shifted his work to the early development and distinctions of form in art, or the distinctions of imitation. Aristotle saw three factors as important here -- the medium, the objects being imitated and the manner of imitation. By resuming his categories of reality of good and bad, Aristotle argued that Comedy aims at representing men as worse than they are in actual life while tragedy aims at representing them as better than they are in actual life. Aristotle's main concern in his Poetics appears to be focussed on tragedy.<sup>9</sup> But in this work the three factors constitute the form of a work of art. The manner in which these constituents are used depended on the kind of action the artist wanted to represent. Aristotle describes epic poetry, tragedy and comedy and shows the way in which form varies in all three. Starting with the origins of poetry, Aristotle traces in Poetics, the divergences in imitation which develop, divergences based on the natural dispositions of the early poets. For Aristotle states:

Writers of greater dignity imitated the noble actions of noble heroes; the less dignified sort of writers imitated the actions of inferior men at first writing invectives as the former writers wrote hymns and encomia.<sup>10</sup>

From this analysis Aristotle sees the historical



emergence of the genres, tragedy and comedy, from the earlier singular epic poetry. Aristotle explains the initial divergence as being due to improvisation. But we find that Aristotle's analysis of the development of these genres and much of its contribution to later analysis of literature, gives great emphasis to "form," for "content" continues to be analysed in terms of the Aristotelian categories of normative behaviour and behaviour better and worse than that norm. Initial form is defined in terms of the particular style of epic poetry. For example Aristotle defines tragedy in terms of its six parts, plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle and melody.<sup>11</sup> But all these elements must combine in action to produce a unified whole.

The notion of unified whole of action imitated by the artist was taken up by one of Aristotle's pupils, Plotinus. Just as Aristotle modified Platonian metaphysics, so Plotinus developed on Aristotle. Plotinus developed a metaphysical system, almost wholly mystical in nature. The major tenet of this system is that all being, all existence, emanates from a dynamic spiritual principle, a transcendent Godhead, which Plotinus called The One. We cannot say what the One is, nor can we have knowledge of it, since it transcends being and knowledge, and has no form, personality or intelligence. Plotinus suggests that were there no One, nothing would exist. But from it, various levels of being are generated, each level connected to the preceding one. At the furthest remove from the One, there is matter, formless, unlimited, pure non-being,

the source of evil and ugliness. In short, Plotinus suggests that the artist, taking this matter does not simply copy existing things, but gives sensuous representation to the forms of things which he inwardly envisages. That is to say, it is a manifestation, inwardly perceived, and revealed in outward concrete works of the artist.<sup>12</sup>

Thus we see that in Greek philosophy reality is reified in one way or another. And the work of Plotinus, influenced by both Plato and Aristotle provides a point of departure for the work of Hegel. This is significant in two senses. First, because Hegel's work seemed to provide a link, formerly missing between classical Greek philosophy of art and aesthetics and, nineteenth century philosophical thought.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, because the metaphysical system of Hegel and significant parts of his aesthetics have their roots in the work of Aristotle and Plotinus. Witness, for example, the similarity between Plotinus' The One and Hegel's Absolute Spirit. Further, Hegel's notion that the Absolute Spirit unfolds itself in the various stages and kinds of art, as part of the development of the dialectic in history. Hegel's philosophy exercised unparalleled influence on nineteenth century German philosophy, from the work of Karl Marx and Engels to that of Simmel, and Weber. Despite the rejection of much of Hegelian thinking in twentieth century philosophy and sociology, much debate persists over the significance of Hegel's writings on art and philosophy. For Hegel held quite dogmatically that art passes dialectically through three stages -- symbolic, classical and romantic --

in its attempt to express the Absolute more absolutely. But these forms can never do this as successfully as religion and philosophy; art will eventually pass away, and be replaced by religion and philosophy. What Hegel's work re-opened was the whole question of art: what was its reality or representation as Hegel held; (also the problem of the relation between individual consciousness and social reality.)

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The point here is not one of an implied denigration of Marx's and Engles' philosophy or aesthetics. Nor am I saying that Marx and Engles deceived us into interpreting their formulations as being epistemologically revolutionary. I simply draw attention to the strong roots of their thinking in Classical Greek philosophy. My reference to Marxist critics who ignore the Hegelian and therefore Greek roots of Marx and Engles' work refers to Ralph Fox The Novel And The People (1945); John MacMurray, see Aspects of Dialectical Materialism for his essay, to a lesser extent, Christopher Caudwell; also Leon Trotsky Literature And Revolution. Many of these Marxists recognize Marx's adoption and reversal of the Hegelian dialectic and that is all.

<sup>2</sup>Plato Symposium, 210-212, in The Dialogues of Plato translated by Benjamin Jewett, Vol. I, pp. 580-582.

<sup>3</sup>In fact in most of Plato's Dialogues the emphasis in his aesthetics is with reference to education, and the training of guardians. Poetry which Plato regarded as the least imitative of the arts was still representations of the third removed from reality. Poets, themselves not being conscious of their imitation of good forms. Moreover art and poetry represented for Plato, the lower, less rational part of our nature. Hegel's own view is very close to this. See also, Plato The Republic translated and introduced by H.P.P. Lee, Part X, book 1.

<sup>4</sup>See Peyton Richter's Perspectives In Aesthetics Ch. 2, p .54.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>6</sup>Quoted by Richter, Ibid., pp. 58-59, as selections from Aristotle's Poetics.

<sup>7</sup>See Leon Golden and O.P. Hardison Aristotle's Poetics: A Translation And Commentary For Students Of Literature, pp. 75-76. The translators here make a similar point, though explicitly, pp. 75-76.

<sup>8</sup>See Ernst Fischer, The Necessity of Art: A Marxist Approach. 1963 especially Capter I. The origins of Art. Though clearly Fischer does not view the need to imitate as an isolate, it is vital to his formulation.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., Aristotle's Poetics p. 3.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>12</sup>See P. Richter, p. 76

<sup>13</sup>Some aestheticians, for example, Peyton Richter suggest that little comprehensive work was done until Alexander G. Baumgarten (1714-62) who developed the Aristotelian concept of cognition, in terms of higher cognition to apprehend truth; lower cognition to apprehend beauty. See Richter pp. 4-11.

## CHAPTER II

## HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS: THE HEGELIAN DIALECTIC

Herzen's description of Hegel's doctrines as the algebra of revolution was singularly apt. Hegel provided the notation, but gave it no practical content. It was left for Marx to write the arithmetic into Hegel's algebraical equations.

(E. H. Carr, What Is History p. 136)

Hegel's metaphysical and philosophical system, which he saw as the only meaningful solution, at the time, to the question: what is the nature of social reality, and how is it knowable? has its traditions in Greek philosophy, precisely in its claim that reality is essentially spiritual. Where Hegel differed from his predecessors is in his claim to distinguish logical from epistemological problems. Thus Hegel argued that if enough was known about a thing to distinguish it from all other things, then all its properties could be inferred by logic.<sup>1</sup> The dialectic itself has its roots in philosophical conceptions prior to Hegel, roots which can be traced to Platonian and Aristotellian epistemology. Though this "fact" and its exact constituents do not appear to have been forcefully established by later philosophical critiques of Hegel. For example Isiah Berlin alludes to this in the following statement:

The conception of growth by which the acorn is said potentially to

contain the oak, and to be adequately described only in terms of such development, is a doctrine as old as Aristotle and indeed older.<sup>2</sup>

However what is unclear in Berlin's analysis of Hegelian philosophy is that the presence of a dialectical component--which is unclear to Berlin himself-- in Greek conceptions of reality and aesthetics cannot be extended to imply that that philosophy (taken as a system) was historically ordered. For all of Greek philosophy and epistemology was a-historical, in addition to being "clothed" in mysticism; the notion was that reality was essentially "extra-social." What is significant therefore in Hegelian dialectics, and in its contribution to the philosophy of early Marx, is that the Hegelian mysticism or rather reification involved in the Absolute Spirit is essentially different from that of the Greeks or even from its later clerical, and Christian dominated antecedents.

For Hegel, the use of the concept Absolute Spirit, appeared to mean not so much a sacred process; but rather one which expresses itself in the ideas and actions of a plurality of finite minds. Hegel suggested that this is so because Spirit involves self-consciousness. But each of the finite minds through which Spirit acquires self-consciousness is only an infinitesimal part of reality. Thus as Lukács so clearly points out in his Historical Novel, philosophy up to the time of Hegel, seemed to have developed from a

conception of integrated being and meaning, soul and essence, inner and external life; through to the dominance of the Platonian dichotomy in which thought was separated from existence. This "philosophical alienation" persisted right through to the Enlightenment and was resolved by Hegel. Hegel, then, whose philosophy of history is crucial for this discussion, used his concept of the Spirit, self-consciousness, freedom and the dialectic, to establish:

- 1) That it is Spirit which provides the unity in any understanding of history. For the affairs of men are not developing in some uniform or repetitive fashion.
- 2) The direction in historical development toward Spirit, cannot be explained in terms of the physical condition of an "external" environment alone. This is what the French materialists had done. Rather the historical laws of development are identical with the laws of being of everything that exists.
- 3) Spirit is therefore identical with reality; and each of its phases imply all its other phases.
- 4) Thus for Hegel, temporal priority is identical with logical priority, and earlier phases are necessarily antithetical to later phases of historical development.
- 5) Hegel also taught that there was no essential divorce between concrete material existence and mind or thought.<sup>3</sup>

Starting with certain basic concepts, for example, being substance, quality, cause, effect, finite and infinite, Hegel found them contradictory in themselves, thus they are identical and pass into one another, for example Being (thesis), passes into Nothing (antithesis), which is temporarily resolved in Becoming (the synthesis of Being and Nothing). This process of logical understanding can be carried on until we reach a



concept which is not self-contradictory and which Hegel calls the Absolute Idea.<sup>4</sup>

Hegel thus suggests that the concepts in terms of which we describe our experience form a hierarchy, whose highest member contains all the others within itself, and it alone (the highest member) is self consistent. For Hegel states metaphorically in his "Introduction":

For knowledge is not the divergence of the ray, but the ray itself by which the truth comes in contact with us; and if this be removed, the bare direction or the empty space would alone be indicated.<sup>5</sup>

For Hegel then there is no real dichotomy between the concepts which we use in philosophy and the things we analyse with those concepts. They are one part of a unified "Reality." What Hegel was getting at was the presupposition that "absolute truth" as conventionally understood in philosophy, was not different from "truth." Hegel also rejected the idea of science as a form of knowledge rejecting other forms of knowledge, "as a common view of things." Hegel goes on to show by a process of dialectical reasoning that scientific and unscientific knowledge, truth and untruth, are part of a process of development towards an Absolute Idea that cannot be understood (i.e. the particular forms of knowledge) in themselves, but only in terms of their theses and antitheses. For he states:

The scepticism which ends with the abstraction "nothing" or "emptiness"

can advance from this not a step farther, but must wait and see whether there is possibly anything new offered, and what that is -- in order to cast it into the same abysmal void. When once on the other hand the result, is apprehended, as it truly is, as determinate negation, a new form has thereby immediately arisen: and in the negation the transition is made by which the progress through the complete succession of forms comes about of itself.<sup>6</sup>

In an elaboration of his theory that the Absolute Idea was Spirit, Hegel argues that not only is the process whereby Spirit comes to full self knowledge dialectical, and coherent; but also that Spirit in this production of knowledge of a world, does not at first know that it has produced that world. This is not simply because this process is only manifest in finite minds, but because Spirit only comes to know itself in the process of knowing a world. Therefore, at first Spirit takes the world as something outside itself, "contrasting itself, as Spirit, to nature as the opposite of Spirit." By taking the notions of reflection and experience, Hegel suggests, Spirit comes to know that world, its product, as itself. Another important aspect of this dialectical process, then is negation. This too is linked in Hegel's scheme to his position on language -- necessarily the product of finite minds acquiring self consciousness -- which is not the product of any one finite mind or group of finite minds. But the creation and process of language itself (Hegel's outer reality) transforms in its development

the inner reality or the finite minds of individuals. At the same time language and other universals themselves change in a constant dialectical process. Self consciousness therefore, either of a particular individual finite mind or group and the language and culture come to be perceived not as opposed realities but projections of the Spirit itself.

From the psychological point of view objective reality in and for itself and determinate individuality had to be brought into relation to one another; here, however, it is the whole determinate individuality that is the object for observation, and each aspect of the opposition it entails is itself this whole ... The mouth that speaks, the hand that works, with the legs too, ... are operative organs effecting the actual realization, and they contain the action qua action, or the inner as such; the externality, however, which the inner obtains by their means is the deed, the act in the sense of a reality separated and cut off from the individual. Language and labour are outer expressions in which the individual no longer retains possession of himself per se, but less the inner get right outside him, and surrenders it to something else.<sup>7</sup>

It is clear from the preceding discussion that Hegel's metaphysical system was quite different from the Greeks, though much of the stimulus and tone resembles the work of Aristotle. What appears similar is the notion of Spirit which Hegel's scheme exalts as the reality per se. But looked at closely "Spirit" can also be seen as a metaphor, for once we accept the validity of the dialectic and Hegel's use of

certain psychological explanations, then Spirit is not static or problematic, though it remains an a priori.<sup>8</sup> It appears valid also that though concerned with the same set of problems as Plotinus was, Hegel's scheme moves beyond the former's work in that Plotinus spoke in terms of particular temporal features as manifestations of a God, but that God was a static "thing," separate from temporal realities. Whereas for Hegel temporal things are not separate from Spirit, just as the subjective psychological is not separate from objective universals. They dissolve in the dialectical process and each is thereby transformed.

Hegel's metaphysical notions differed in one other important respect from that of the Greeks and some of his later predecessors. Prior to Hegel all reality and specifically all beauty and aesthetics tended to be seen not simply as springing from an ultimate source outside of temporal forms; but temporal forms themselves, art, sculpture and even social institutions were seen as moving more or less toward this ultimate form, a higher level of existence. So that not only was much stress placed on types of temporal forms (as in the case of Aristotle's Poetics) to the almost complete neglect of the actual relationship in social relationships; but the movement of these temporal forms was one way toward the ultimate reality. Developing his notion of the dialectic, Hegel's system gave rise to a less deterministic epistemology -- via the concepts of negation and reflection -- in which the dialectical relationship between (Absolute Idea)

developing self-consciousness and "temporal reality," its historical development was one of "attraction" and "repulsion." When Hegel speaks of his concepts, this process of attraction and repulsion does not appear to be clearly distinct from the dialectic as a general category. This process only becomes clear on Hegel's elaboration of the process of alienation.<sup>9</sup>

In Hegel's epistemology, self-consciousness -- distinct, though not separate from individual, finite forms of consciousness -- must realize itself in relation to nature, "to other selves similar to self, and to the Ultimate Being of the world." Consciousness has therefore to find its oneness with three distinct types of phenomena, and in two distinct processes, form and content. Ultimate Being of course is expressed in different forms through its development. Being furnishes different forms in which the principle -- which remains the same -- is manifested.<sup>10</sup>

Hegel was grappling with three levels of problems here, though his aim was to validate his notion that alienation, or Unhappy Consciousness, was not so much a necessary condition, as one due to a misunderstanding of the mind, its duality of self; a necessary condition for the full development of the world spirit.

Hegel saw consciousness of self in stages and the awareness of self in relation to nature as the just stage in the development of consciousness. The next problem, that of the consciousness of self, Hegel saw as the basic condition

for the consciousness of anything.

But in reality, self-consciousness is reflection out of the bare being that belongs to the world of sense and perception, and is essentially the return out of otherness. As self-consciousness is movement. But when it distinguishes only itself as such from itself, distinction is straight away taken to be superseded in the sense of involving otherness.<sup>11</sup>

This consciousness of self in its early stage is awareness of separation of man from nature. Hegel further talks about consciousness of self in relation to other selves, as another condition of the development of self-consciousness. But this is different from the general discussion of consciousness. For here Hegel seems to be talking about degrees of self-consciousness: for example his discussion of servitude, slaves and masters and so on.<sup>12</sup> Hegel does not keep clear in his analysis these three distinctions of problems. Rather in one section of his book he discusses the process of organic nature and the observation of the sciences at that time and it is here that one discerns his metaphysical notion of attraction and repulsion.

Hegel makes two distinct statements about the nature of reality. The first appears to be, but is not really contradictory to the second. The first describes Hegel's conception of a more or less completed process. He states in his preface to the Phenomenology Of The Mind:

Spirit is alone Reality. It is the inner being of the world, that which essentially is, and is per se; it assumes objective, determinate form, and enters into relations with itself -- it is externality (otherness), and exists for self; yet in this determination, and in its otherness, it is still one with itself -- it is self contained and self complete, in itself and for itself at once. This self-containedness, however, is just something known by us (finite minds -- my emphasis), it is implicit in its nature (an sich); it is Substance spiritual. It has to become self-contained for itself, on its own account; it must be knowledge of spirit, and must be conscious of itself as spirit. This means, it must be presented to itself as an object, but at the same time straightaway annul and transcend this Objective form; it must be its own object in which it finds itself reflected. So far as its spiritual content is produced by its own activity, it is only we (the thinkers), (Emphasis G.W.H.) who know spirit to be for itself, to be objective to itself; but in so far as spirit knows itself to be for itself, then this self-production, the pure notion, is the sphere and element in which its objectification takes effect, and where it gets its existential form. In this way it is in its existence aware of itself as an object in which its own self is reflected. Mind, which, when thus developed, knows itself to be mind, is science. Science is its realization, and the kingdom it sets up for itself in its own native element.<sup>13</sup>

The second statement on the nature of reality deals with spirit in the dynamic of its historical development and is another way of conceiving the dialectic. Here Hegel's view is similar to that of his friend Goethe.

The relation of these two aspects (organic and inorganic) in the case of organic form, this form in which the organism is embodied, is one aspect turned against inorganic nature, while in another it is for itself and reflected into itself. The real organic being is the

mediating agency, which brings together and unifies the self-existence of life (its being for itself), with the outer in general, with what simply and inherently is.<sup>14</sup>

Ernst Fischer, in an elaboration of this aspect of Hegel's work, (the attraction and repulsion tendencies of nature and reality) further summarizes Hegel's view of reality in this connection as:

A state of suspended tension between being and non-being, in which both being and non-being are unreal and only their incessant interaction, becoming, is real.<sup>15</sup>

"Becoming is real," this is the core of the Hegelian dialectic, and it is Hegel's manner of describing the process of attraction and repulsion. It is also the basis of his epistemology for demonstrating his arguments about "alienation" (Entfremdung). For time and again, Hegel demonstrates that the opposition between subject and object, the historical form of the conflict between form and content, man and his environment and so on, conflicts which exist in organic as well as between organic and inorganic forms, are just "products of men's minds." These levels of opposition have their referents in existence.<sup>16</sup> But Hegel's theory of the "dialectics of nature" was important in a related connection, in so far as it provided him with an empirically viable demonstration of the relations between content and form and the transformation of quantity into quality in both nature and cultural life.<sup>17</sup>



But Hegel's epistemology of the philosophy of nature, of the contradictions and transformation of the relations between men and the natural environment, and men and men in social relations and the process of "reflection," the development of self-consciousness and of knowledge and therefore the movement towards real self-consciousness; is not posited in some uniform and mechanical fashion. For Hegel argues that as long as reality is not shaped by reason it "remains no reality at all in the emphatic sense of the word."<sup>18</sup> In terms of Hegel's general philosophy then, nature qua nature, although constituting corresponding processes of contradiction and transformation as those observable in social life are not processes of conscious action in the same terms as in social life but rather, processes at the lower level of existence. At the lowest level of nature, these processes are not reality itself but the appearance only of reality.

Hegel's general philosophy then has two basic epistemological categories, one an epistemology of his philosophy of nature, another of the philosophy of social and political life. Both systems are logically connected, the former a kind of metaphysical generator of the latter. The definition of reality as the Absolute has at its basis "Reason," an essentially historical force or Geist. The definition of reality as the process of becoming, in the realm of nature even, is an elaboration, supportive of the whole system. But why this particular kind of philosophical formulation, why this definition of freedom, the relation in

Hegel's conception of man and society? And what role did history play in Hegel's scheme and its importance for later philosophical formulations? It is to these questions that we now turn.

## HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY IN RELATION TO ART

Both the economic and formalist interpretations of art may seem extreme and may possibly be incorrect. But the fact remains that they are possible alternatives to the Hegelian analysis.

(Jack Kaminsky -- Hegel On Art p. 169)

What Lukács criticizes as wrong theory in Hegel, becomes later on wrong theory in Engels -- that is the extension of the dialectic to nature. In this Hegel himself concentrated in both the Phenomenology Of The Mind and Lectures On The Philosophy Of History, on an epistemology which would demonstrate the relations between the historical development of human institutions and the dialectical movement towards man's freedom, that is towards the highest level of the Geist. But another significance of Hegel's philosophy of history is its influence on later thinkers, up to today. This 'Hegelianism' was more forcefully put in perspective recently by Lucien Goldmann, when he said:

But all purely cultural action is also condemned in advance if it does not rest on a reality. Or at least on social and economic action which allows men to maintain and even to develop mental structures favouring the comprehension of their condition and an attainment of consciousness.<sup>19</sup>

It is this continuing influence of Hegel's philosophy of history on later European philosophy and particularly on the work of Georg Lukács, which is of interest to us. Here what is crucial is not some abstract concern about the nature of reality, or even the problem of whether the substantive elements of Hegel's system can be validated. The problem is

much more complex.

As we observed earlier, although he applied aspects of his epistemology to an understanding of the world of things, objects of inorganic matter, Hegel did not see this as a crucial problem. In fact Hegel was demonstrating that matter, plants and lower animals, though constituted of the two forces of 'attraction' and 'repulsion', could not realize their own and therefore could not 'realize their own potentialities into being'. For such realization is the process of the true subject, and is reached only in man. Hegel argued that man alone has the power of self realization, of actualizing and moulding his potentialities according to the notion of reason. But reason presupposes freedom, i.e. the power to act in accordance with knowledge of the truth. It was to demonstrate this 'fact', this unity of experience, transformation and reason that Hegel expounded on natural phenomena. In his more abstract work, his statements seem to refer to the freedom of the individual consciousness and its realization. For he states:

With the thought which consciousness has laid hold of, that the individual consciousness is inherently absolute reality, consciousness turns back into itself. But the process of its activity when completely developed, has forced it to make explicit its self-existence, and turned this into an objective fact. In this process it has itself become aware, too, of its unity with the universal, a unity which seeing that the individual when sublated is the universal, is no longer looked on by us as falling outside it, and which, since consciousness maintains itself in this its negative condition, is inherently in it as such its very essence... . This consciousness comes on the scene directly in the form of reason..., this reason, appearing thus

immediately, comes before us merely as the certainty of that truth.<sup>20</sup>

Hegel turned to history and an analysis of earlier civilizations for two main reasons then. These we will term epistemological -- meaning to demonstrate logically and substantively, the idea that being, the individual on first attaining consciousness tries to deny itself as object, and asserts itself principally as subject (hence that stage of alienation in history where man is estranged from other men and therefore from himself).<sup>21</sup>

The second reason, we term political, that is to say, the fact of Hegel's concern with the political-economy of his own times. Hegel developed his early concepts of freedom and reason in German confederacy, in sharp contrast to France (1790's).

The German Reich was decaying. As he declared, the German state was 'no longer a State' (emphasis...Hegel .) Elements of feudal despotism, transformed into petty oppressive small states were competing with other petty despotisms. The urban middle class was too small and distributed to form a meaningful opposition. The positive aspects of the Enlightenment were censored and repressed in fears of a 'terror of revolution'. Religion, but specifically Protestantism, had induced and diverted claims for emancipation into an acceptance of the status quo. 'Social reality became indifferent as far as the true essence of man was concerned.' The 'educated' classes, unable to apply their reason to reforming society, transcended the decay of existing social conditions, by involving themselves in science, art, religion and philosophy. Culture was then essentially idealistic, it became the 'true reality'. Marcuse describes Hegel's system

'as the last great (attempt) expression of this cultural idealism ... , the last attempt to render thought a refuge for reason and liberty.'<sup>22</sup>

Assessing the significance of Hegel's philosophical debate against the Kantian 'transcendental consciousness'<sup>23</sup> and its sway in German idealism, [the existing historical conditions in Europe at that time] Marcuse suggests that Hegel developed a philosophy of 'historical optimism'. This 'pan-logism', takes the principles and forms of thought from the principles and forms of reality, so that 'the logical laws reproduce those governing the movement of reality.' Hegel argued that the Kantian formulation of this dichotomy of world of objects and the senses, intuition, expressed an existing contradiction in society between man, or the individual and the social order, the conditions for whose resolution existed as a negation of that stage of development.

Rejecting the tradition of idealism, Hegel postulated Reason as the 'sovereign of the world'. But philosophy provides the general categories for understanding history, since true being is reason, manifested in nature and realized in man. This realization takes place in history. And since reason realized in history is mind, Hegel's thesis is that the motivator of history is mind, hence Geist. But man, the individual, confined to particular conditions, develops his consciousness in terms of his personal interests. Those individuals whose actions create new forms of life, rather than repeat old patterns, are 'world historical individuals' (Lukács' term). They

anticipate the necessary foundations for higher forms of life, and thus clash with the particular interests of ordinary individuals. They are however, only the agents of 'World Mind', (Weltgeist) victims of a higher necessity. This aspect of Hegel's system was taken over by Georg Lukács, both the notions of collisions, for his analysis of drama, as well as his later notion of the various types of characters.

Hegel's political philosophy, with an analysis of the historical development of various classical civilizations as its basis, is presented in the form of an explanation of two dialectical triads. The first consists of abstract right, morality and ethical life. The second is constituted of the family, civil society and the State. Abstract right and morality constitute the thesis and antithesis of the first triad. They necessarily go together and yet there is tension or contradiction between them, which is resolved only in ethical life. The family and civil society constitute the thesis and antithesis of the second triad, and Hegel also says of them that they are necessary and yet contradictory of one another, the contradiction being resolved in the State.

Hegel's dialectical scheme "implies that the three members in the first triad are related to one another in much the same way as the three moments of the second." For Hegel the first triad is not related in some mechanical fashion to the second. Hegel saw it as a real synthesis of the ideal and the real, a synthesis rooted in his ethical theory, which was at once a critique of Kant and Fichte and partial agreement with

Schelling's philosophy. What was stressed in fact, was that the basis of morality and right, is not some abstract concept; but an ideal entity with a real content. Thus for Hegel, man's universal nature realizes itself in the concrete, 'spiritual and ethical totality of the nation'.<sup>24</sup> Hence for Hegel individual morality is only part of a more comprehensive ethical whole which finds expression in the State. Here there is no opposition between the real and the ideal, for the State reconciles the ethical ideal, the State, being of course the higher 'ethical totality' (Sittlichkeit). To substantiate this, Hegel argues that the internal juridical process of the State are products of an organic process -- one which is seen in the dialectical historical development toward the State -- rooted in a people's or cultural past. The dialectic is then the evolutionary process itself by which 'consciousness develops from an initial opposition between consciousness and reality to an absolute consciousness, in which the ideal world of consciousness coincides with the real.' It is the self-development of thought and of reality.<sup>25</sup>

There are three aspects of Hegel's thought, at this point, which on the one hand reveal the importance of his philosophical and historical system, while on the other hand are points of departure and contention for the intellectual development of both Marx and Lukács. These are 1) Hegel's historical analysis of concrete institutions and their dialectical movement. 2) Hegel's insistence that the dialectic is not just a method of thinking or an artifice in a philosophical



exposition, but the very structure of social reality itself, a point which the early Marx accepted almost totally, and which the young Georg Lukács reiterated with as equal force as Hegel. This became for Lukács the key to an unfolding of class struggles and the process of class consciousness. 3) Finally, the ambiguity of the status of art-religion and philosophy (the Absolute Spirit) in Hegel's system, which Marx claimed to have resolved in 'The German Ideology' by sublating the Hegelian system in the form of the materialist conception of history.

Hegel conceptualized art as an activity which throughout the dialectical historical development toward the Absolute Idea, expresses what "men ought to be." He argued that along with other institutional forms of social life, art will progress (from the Symbolic, to the Classical to the Romantic), but finally on the achievement of self-consciousness by men, art will decline in favour of philosophy and religion. Hegel reasoned that the reason for this is that the immediate material of art is social conflict, because it expresses the potential for a new synthesis. But given its nature art cannot express the will towards the Idea in conceptual form. Art therefore expresses this will through images and symbols. After taking the various means by which the Idea for unity is expressed, Hegel argued that the poetic form of art, drama and literature is the most important art form.<sup>26</sup> In short the other stages of art, the Symbolic and the Classical, are negated by other forms which develop more adequate mediums for expressing the idea -- Hegel had in mind the structures of architecture and sculpture

and music. The former gives an explicit image of mind and intelligence in action.

Poetry is the universal art of the mind which has become free in its own nature, and which is not tied to its realization in external sensuous matter, but expatiates exclusively in the inner space and inner time of the ideas and feelings. Yet just in this its highest phase art ends by transcending itself, inasmuch as it abandons the medium of a harmonious embodiment of mind in sensuous form, and passes from the poetry of imagination into the prose of thought.<sup>27</sup>

Hegel saw poetry as containing all the qualities of earlier modes of expression. Hegel's treatment of the problem of poetry, resembles at times the utterances of the early Greeks, particularly the idea that the highest forms of art, that is painting, music and literature are manifestations of the 'Idea of Beauty'.<sup>28</sup> Where he differs from them is his use of a dialectical method in analysing historical stages of development, but the metaphysics resemble that of the Greeks.

In conclusion there are two ideas from the above discussion which provide the thematic basis for most of the discussion in the subsequent chapters of the thesis. First Hegel can be seen as formulating fairly systematically the notion of artistic symbolism. Secondly Hegel's idea that all art, even some aspects of mechanics are manifestations of the processes of the "infinite mind", taking concrete shape in finite minds. The artist is closely tied to symbolism and imagery, and therefore products of art must reflect processes

of metaphysical and philosophical speculation.<sup>29</sup> It is possible to detect in Hegel's thinking also the equivalence of concreteness, and imagery with individuality, to some extent finitude. Whereas abstraction and therefore the abstraction of poetry, in the sense of its mode of expression with closer attainment of the Idea, resolution of conflict and so on, develop with the vertical dialectical process. These elements of later thought held sway in sociology.

Most of the literature suggests the historical links between what is now symbolism in American literary sociology, and the fixed notion of the individual with Hegel's speculations. At the same time Simmel developed his brand of sociology of art. It is to this discussion that we now turn, that is a critique of the "American Literary School". In a subsequent Chapter we will examine some of the consequences of Marx's inversion of the Hegelian dialectic for later Marxists, particularly George Lukács.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>J.B. Baillie has suggested in his introduction to Hegel's Phenomenology Of The Mind, that the Greeks, just as much as Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, influenced Hegel's philosophy. See The Phenomenology Of the Mind, translated by J.B. Baillie, New York, 1931, p.20. The point about Hegel's logic is not simply that he took over the most important aspect of the dialectic from the Greeks, for as we have seen in the previous chapter, the Greeks largely perceived reality as an extra-social phenomenon, hence art as imitation. But reality was fixed for the Greeks. Man approached an appreciation of it, not by increasing self-consciousness; but depending on his class background. However the Greek concept of imitation, did have dialectical aspects, which Plato outlined. See Peyton Richter's Perspectives, pp. 48-49.

<sup>2</sup>See Isiah Berlin, Karl Marx: His Life and Environment, Oxford University Press, 1963, p. 47. Though discussing the problem in metaphorical terms, Berlin is here acknowledging Hegel's debt in connection with the background of the dialectic in Greek philosophy, a point not fully emphasized in some works on Hegel. For example, see John Plamenatz, Man and Society, a Critical Examination of Some Important Social and Political Theories From Machiavelli to Mare, Vol.II, Longman's, Green & Co. Ltd., 1963, pp. 134-137 and pp. 141-142.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Hegel, Ch. VI, B. Here one finds most of what Hegel has to say about the nature of reality.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 253. Plamenatz, Vol. II, Ch. IV, also presents a fairly systematic criticism of Hegel's entire political philosophy. Our concern is with selected aspects, particularly of the dialectic and the Hegelian formulation of civil society and the state and the development of art and religion.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Hegel p. 132.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 339-340.

<sup>8</sup>Plamenatz suggests that much of Hegel's epistemology is not so profound if we treat his metaphysical language as metaphors, though professed Hegelians would no doubt reject this approach. See Man And Society, Vol. II, p. 131.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., Hegel, pp. 217-267. Also Plamenatz's failure to outline or develop Hegel's process of attraction and repulsion, is one of the reasons for his inability to cope with some of the analytical problems in the Phenomenology. See Plamenatz pp. 141-142.

<sup>10</sup>See Ibid., Hegel's Phenomenology, J.B. Baillie's introduction to Truth Of Self Certainty, p. 217.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., Ch. I4, pp. 217-267.

<sup>12</sup>The real concern at this stage is not to pursue Hegel's analysis of alienation directly. This is not a central aspect of the research problem. However Hegel's concept of alienation is central to his scheme and one of his ways of demonstrating the unity of reality. And in some sections of the Phenomenology where he discusses science and organic nature he seems to imply that alienation may be attributable to the early dichotomization of organic nature after the Reformation. But this is done by implication only. The three stages in the process of consciousness, outlined above are discussed by Hegel as though they were two. For he says; In this process...consciousness experiences just this appearance of particularity in the unchangeable, and of the unchangeable in the particularity. Consciousness becomes aware of particularity in general (G.W.F.H.), in the immutable essence, and at the same time it there finds its own particularity. For the truth of this process is precisely that the double conscious is one and single. This unity becomes a fact to it, but in the first instance the unity is one in which the diversity of both factors is still the dominant feature. Owing to this, consciousness has before it the three fold way in which particularity is connected with unchangeableness. (my emphasis). In one form it comes before itself as opposed to the unchangeable essence, and is thrown back to the beginning of that struggle, which is from first to last, the principle constituting the entire situation. At another time it finds the unchangeable appearing in the form of particularity; so the latter is an embodiment of unchangeableness, into which in consequence, the entire form of existence passes. In the third case, it discovers itself to be the particular fact in the unchangeable. The first unchangeable is taken to be merely the alien external Being (God as Judge), which passes sentence on particular existence; since the second unchangeable is a form or mode of particularity like itself. (Christ), it, i.e. the consciousness, becomes in the third place spirit (Geist), has the joy of finding itself therein, and becomes aware within itself that its particularity has been reconciled with the universal (the religions communion). Thus we see Hegel stating the case of the resolution of alienation.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>15</sup>Ernst Fischer The Necessity Of Art, A Marxist Approach, Penguin Books, 1963, p. 124.

<sup>16</sup>See Herbert Marcuse, Reason And Revolution: Hegel And The Rise Of Social Theory, Humanities Press, 1963, 2nd edition, p. 23. Most analysis of Hegel's work accept this interpretation as valid. See also F. Engels Dialectics of Nature, International Publishers, New York, 1940, pp. 26-34: for a substantive treatment of Hegel's epistemology of the philosophy of nature. It is a clarification of Hegel's abstract treatment in the Phenomenology. Engels' treatment has been described by Hook as an appreciation of Hegel's ideas on nature. See Sidney Hook, From Hegel To Marx: Studies In the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx, Studies In The Intellectual Development Of Karl Marx, Humanities Press, 1958, p. 69.

<sup>17</sup>This aspect of the thesis is developed in another chapter, but it is worthwhile noting that on this problem Engels argued that all qualitative differences in nature rest on differences of chemical composition or on different quantities or forms of motion (energy) or, as is almost always the case, on both. Hence it is impossible to alter the quality of a body without addition or subtraction of matter or motion, i.e. without quantitative alteration of the body concerned. In this form, therefore, Hegel's mysterious principle appears not only quite rational but even rather obvious. Ibid., Dialectics , p. 27.

<sup>18</sup>See H. Marcuse, Ibid., pp. 10-11. Marcuse states the Hegelian formulation of inorganic and organic nature emphatically, suggesting also that the original definition of reality changes its meaning within the conceptual structure of Hegel's system. Real comes to mean not everything that actually exists (this should rather be called appearance), but that which exists in a form concordant with the standards of reason. Real is the reasonable (rational), and that alone. For example the state becomes a reality only when it corresponds to the given potentialities of men and permit their full development. Any preliminary form of the state is not yet reasonable, and therefore not yet real. Ibid., p. 11. Marcuse suggests, however, that this radical element in Hegel's system became modified and Hegel became more idealist, in the German tradition, later in life, setting freedom of thought before freedom of action; reconciling himself to some of the intolerable conditions of 18thC German society (pp. 12-16). T. Parsons makes a similar suggestion in relation to the Hegel's epistemological formulations of his

philosophy of nature, concluding that this was the most unsatisfactory aspect of the Phenomenology, and the problem of Hegel's Geist. See T. Parsons Structure of Social Action Vol. II, Free Press edition, 1968.

<sup>19</sup>Lucien Goldman Criticism And Dogmatism In Literature, essay in Dialectics of Liberation, edited by David Cooper, Penguin Books, 1968, (edited by David), p. 133.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 'The Phenomenology', pp. 272-274.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., For the historical movement to absolute freedom discussed in world history see Hegel's Philosophy Of History, translated by J. Sibree, London, George Bell & Sons, 1905, p. 110. Here Hegel states 'The History of the World travels from East to West, for Europe is absolutely the end of History, Asia the beginning... Here rises the outward physical Sun, and in the West it sinks down: here consentaneously rises the Sun of self consciousness, which diffuses a nobler brilliance. The History of the World is the discipline of the uncontrolled natural will, bringing it into obedience to a Universal principle and conferring subjective freedom. The East knew and to the present day knows that one is free; the Greek and the Roman world, that some are free; the German World knows that all are free. The first political form therefore which we observe in History, is Despotism, the second Democracy and Aristocracy, the third Monarchy. See also Karl Lowith From Hegel To Nietzsche, Holt Rinehart & Winston Inc., (1964), p.32.

<sup>22</sup>H. Marcuse Reason And Revolution, pp. 14-15. See also Peter Demetz, Marx, Engels and The Poets, for treatment of the way in which Hegel's system was used by Young & Old Hegelians alike to induce social revolution in eighteenth and nineteenth century Germany. To Demetz, this is the age of 'liberal democracy' prior to Marx's system. Also translator's Introduction to 'Phenomenology', p. 16, for a general statement on Hegel's political concerns at the time. Another level of concern which Baillie mentions, as influencing Hegel's work, and is elaborated by Raymond Williams Culture And Society 1780-1955, Penguin Books, 1961, p. 48 *passim*, is the estrangement of the educated and the artist from his work, writing, with the development of the publisher, who then controlled the productivity of the writer and therefore his thought. Hegel, no doubt resented this loss of freedom, with expanding bourgeois society.

<sup>23</sup>Kant's 'transcendental consciousness': These acts of intuition and understanding that are common to all individuals, and constitute the very conditions of existence. 'Transcendental consciousness' in turn produces the world of objects as a universal and necessary order.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. Louis Dupré, The Philosophical Foundations Of Marxism, Harcourt Brace & World Inc., 1966, p. 22. See also pp. 3-65 for the background to Hegel's later philosophy of history, but especially pp. 1-22, for Hegel's criticism of the Philosophers mentioned.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., Dupré, p. 27.

<sup>26</sup>See Jack Kaminsky, Hegel On Art: An Interpretation Of Hegel's Aesthetics, State University of New York, 1962, pp. 29-38.

<sup>27</sup>Bernard Bosanquet, tr. and introd. The Introduction To Hegel's Philosophy Of Fine Art, Kectan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., London, 1905, pp. 208-209.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 210-211.

<sup>29</sup>Jack Kaminsky, op. cit., p. 168.



## CHAPTER III

## THE CONTINENTAL AND AMERICAN SCHOOLS

Art as the intimate concern of the poet, painter or musician has little reality value for the art sociologist, as for example the music produced by a man whistling to himself. It is only when literature, painting and music are objectified, only when they assume a concrete expression or an atmosphere that they have a sociological reality value; only then do they express something that is meant to be understood or to produce social effect.

(Alphons Silberman: International Social Science Journal Vol. 20, #4, 1968.)

Alphons Silberman in arguing for an empirical sociology of art -- that is one which independently proceeds from the same basic assumption as general sociology, the observation of "facts," generalizations based on factual observation, and general interpretative theory -- attacks the two broad approaches which form the body of this thesis. That is to say, Silberman suggests that two main approaches, the sociology of knowledge and the other, the cultural approach in sociology are both unsatisfactory for the following brief reasons. In the first approach the concern is to find out which type of thinking would be influential in men's thought processes at particular periods of historical social development. And what is the correlation between philosophical "intellectual standpoints," on the one hand, and social currents

such as styles in art, fashions and so on, on the other hand? In the second approach art and particularly literature is seen as an auxiliary to sociology proper. Here Silberman seems to be implicitly criticizing the pragmatic approach of the symbolic interaction school of thought. Silberman terms this approach structural-functional.<sup>1</sup> The major contribution of whose analysis is the suggestion that previous works -- the allusion is to the work of Duncan -- confused a clearly recognizable distinction. The distinction is at two differentiated levels, between the aesthetic environment through which producer or artist and consumer or audience are brought together by way of the artistic material. In this way form and content are brought together.<sup>2</sup> On another level of differentiation there are the social functions which establish the relationships between persons, ideas and cultural standards or patterns of behaviour. Aesthetic functions also play a role here, but not a central one.

The importance of Silberman's work centres on two terms, distinction and separation. When art is approached from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, there is the tendency for the analyst to work in terms of social currents, i.e., forms of art on the one hand and correlations between these forms and thought or intellectual standards on the other, as though they were clearly separable things.<sup>3</sup> In the work of some other sociologists, particularly, Hugh Duncan

and Robert Hall, there is less separation in the analysis, but some confusion of the real and the ideal. In this connection, Silberman notes that a sociology of art must be developed which can intervene. Where observations in sociological analysis indicate such confusion, for where this confusion exists:

Writings allegedly on the subject of the sociology of art, but which have an exclusively political, ideological hue, leaning to the extreme right, or the extreme left; for historical facts are so over spiritualized that the effects of reality vis a vis ideas are neglected and the ideas are finally represented as facts.<sup>4</sup>

This is a very pungent criticism of most of the sociological works dealing with the arts. A criticism which touches on the symbolic approach of the action theorists such as Kenneth Burke, as equally on the sophisticated Marxists theorists such as Lucien Goldmann and Georg Lukács. But nowhere in this critique does Silberman suggest specific ways of establishing his sociology of art. He does not suggest criteria for choosing and observing the "facts" in art, in order to lend sociological import to them. His analysis suggests the shell of a methodology, but does not go beyond this rather negative criticism.

In terms of Silberman's criticism that sociology has traditionally treated literature and literary criticism as a peripheral branch of the social sciences, an appendage, as it were, he may have overstated his case. For although in general

terms this may be so, it appears fruitful to make some distinctions between the work of the European early sociologists -- largely the founders of sociological thinking -- and the enthusiastic but nevertheless more pragmatic quantitative brand of sociology which sprang from the former, but utilized different philosophical and methodological foundations in North American sociology.

There is another important reason for striking the distinction between intellectual development in Europe and North America. In North America the course of social and philosophical development appears less easy to trace as an independent one from the early consistent development recorded by later social scientists. Critical social science was no less present in one "society" than in the other. But later social science in North America did assume a distinctly empirical outlook.<sup>5</sup> The reasons for this distinction rest in the historical socio-economic development of North America, in contrast to the pattern of development experienced in Europe. All of T.B. Bottomore's work in Critics of Society, is permeated with the notion that criticism in the humanities and social science does not develop in a vacuum, but with the intention (of the critic) of "critically examining the institutions of earlier societies to discover what degree of freedom and rationality they incorporated, and also in the more important sense" of looking in contemporary society for new "movements of thoughts" which were destined to change and overthrow the old order of society. But Bottomore does not

make a clear enough distinction between the perspective of the social scientist and the novelist or poet, and again the literary critic.<sup>6</sup>

If one concurs with Lowenthal -- that the artist portrays what is more real than reality itself -- by focus and exaggeration, the importance of the literary critic's perspective assumes greater significance. For as Lowenthal suggests,

... most generalized concepts about human nature found in literature prove on close inspection to be related to social and political change.<sup>7</sup>

Lowenthal also suggests that it is only with the end of the Spanish Inquisition, and later in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but particularly with the emergence of Shakespearian drama and the emerging disintegration of feudalism, that literary criticism assumed more positive aspects. For it was during this period that elaborate literary creative writing emerged and later development of the novel.<sup>8</sup>

But why does Silberman term the work of writers such as Lowenthal, "structural-functional?" Secondly, how does this school -- structural functional -- of sociological literary analysis and criticism view the task of the sociologist of literature? Some investigation of both problems assists in clarifying the significance of literary interpretation for the development of sociology, specifically a "critical sociology."

Lowenthal sees the role of the "creative writer," that is to say, the novelist, dramatist, playwright and poet, as that of describing and naming new experience. Thus, "the artist's desire to recreate the unique and the important often leads him to explore hitherto nameless anxieties and hopes." But the specific treatment of these themes, that it penetrates the personal and intimate, which are represented in imaginary characters and situations, leaves the creative writer's work to be completed by the sociologist of literature. Lowenthal says that the role of the sociologist is

...to relate the experience of the writer's imaginary characters and situations to the historical climate from which they derive. He has to transform the private equation of themes and stylistic means into social equations.<sup>9</sup>

But what does the above mean? Lowenthal is said to be a functionalist in so far as for him the writer is attempting to grasp the ways in which individuals and groups are adapting to the problems which they face in the social environment.

Man is born, strives, loves, suffers, and dies in any society, but it is the portrayal of how he reacts to these common human experiences that matters, since they almost invariably have a social nexus.<sup>10</sup>

Lowenthal's perspective is "functionalist" in so far as for him the problem in "reality" is adaptation of the individual to the historical forces generating new forms of social relations

within a given society. Lowenthal suggests his perspective as follows:

As social history, (that is literature as social history - emphasis K.O.B.) it suggests an arc, curving upward in the first tentative gropings toward modern individualism, rising to a plateau of confidence in the individual, and finally declining at the point where the individual feels threatened by technological and social forces. Each end of the trajectory marks a period of stress.<sup>11</sup>

In a much later work on the problems of literature and popular culture, Lowenthal remarks, more specifically:

The primary aspect is to place literature in a functional frame within each society and again within the various levels of stratification of that society.<sup>12</sup>

However a closer analysis of Lowenthal's work reveals a curious use of historical material. His functionalism is not therefore of an a-historical type, for in his Literature And The Image Of Man, Lowenthal attempts to illustrate "the context of the individual's growing awareness of his own history and of the social conditioning of his roles." Robert Merton's work can be seen as the theoretical justification for Lowenthal's analysis. For Merton suggests:

Examination of how the social structure operates to exert pressure upon individuals for one or another of these alternative modes of behaviour (Conformity, Innovation, Ritualism, Retreatism and Rebellion) must be prefaced by the observation that people may shift from one alternative to another as they engage in different spheres of social activities.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the functional type perspective of Lowenthal's work, he is aware of the differing perspectives of European and American sociology, which in turn have influenced the approaches to the sociology of literature.<sup>14</sup> Lowenthal's work is termed a perspective because he recognizes the limitations of rigidly technique oriented work of American scholars on the one hand, and the historical philosophical approach of the Europeans on the other, and suggests that both have weaknesses. Lowenthal thus makes a distinction, which other sociologists of art have followed between literature as art and popular literature which excludes really creative writing, created by individuals and for individuals. This type of literature, he suggests, gives the most "telling truths" about society and the individual, and is not read by the "broadest strata" of society. The market oriented, popular literature, as another type, serves as indicators of the socio-psychological characteristics of the multitude. By studying the organization, content and symbols of this type of literature we learn about typical forms of behaviour. This distinction and the accompanying research orientations gave rise to the work of sociologists such as Paul Lazarsfeld, who moved from Vienna, and Lasswell and Lowenthal himself -- the communications research of the 1940's and 1950's. Another aspect of this distinction is the work of Kenneth Burke and Hugh Duncan, with its philosophical and epistemological roots in the works of Dewey and James. There appear to be overlaps however. Robert Merton has suggested that there is partial explanation



for this, on the level of the sociology of knowledge. He suggests European and American variants of a sociology of knowledge. The European variant consists of finding out the ways in which knowledge and thought are affected by the environing social structure. The main focus here is the shaping of intellectual perspectives by society. The American variant, however, has its focus in the sociological study of popular beliefs. It is focussed on opinion rather than knowledge.<sup>15</sup> Merton suggests further, that these are not rigid distinctions for opinion shades into knowledge, which is only that part of opinion which is socially certified by particular criteria of evidence. And just as opinion may grow into knowledge, so knowledge may "degenerate" into opinion. In one sense this distinction can be put under the headings of a European concern, centering on the cognitive plane of knowledge whereas the American concern is with information. These differences of focus not only mean that the European variant tends to view knowledge in terms of an intellectual elite -- and the works of Karl Mannheim and Max Weber attest to this -- while the American variant, concerned with opinion, deals with the masses: but they hold implications for differing views of social reality as well. In short then, Merton suggests the European school centers on the esoteric doctrines of the few; the American, on the exoteric beliefs of the many.

What are the implications of Merton's analysis for an understanding not so much of the differing research

orientations in an increasingly specialized development of sociology, but for the differing ways in which "social reality" is constructed in sociology, and the place of literary analysis in this construction? Although Merton's analysis may be a valid one, what cannot be overstressed is that in the sociology of literature it is only in European sociology that more intensive research and debate was originally undertaken. It was primarily in Europe that this research tended to question, at a theoretical level, the nature and development of art forms, the relation between the development of these forms, and the particular structure for example of literature, music and paintings; as well as the form and content of these art forms at any point in their historical development. It was in European social science also, that questions such as the underlying assumptions of art criticism and of sociology itself, as well as the correlations between them began to develop.<sup>17</sup> Even the work of Lowenthal and Lazarsfeld, can be seen to have part of their roots in the sociology and philosophy of Max Weber and Georg Simmel.<sup>18</sup>

Hugh Duncan has remarked:

Sociological conclusions derived from the use of symbolic material must be appraised by asking, "How does the social scientist analyze the specific symbolic material he offers as data?" For until we know how the symbolic content itself is analyzed, we really know very little about the validity of the stated conclusion.<sup>19</sup>

This supports the thesis that what he terms symbolism obscures a more significant facet of his approach to literary analysis in sociology. The above statement suggests an ideational interpretation of culture in general and literature in particular, of the reflection hypothesis of art.<sup>20</sup> This hypothesis, briefly stated, suggests that literature "reflects" society, and is at least as old as Plato's concept of imitation. The ideational variant of the reflection hypothesis, best elaborated by Pitirim Sorokin in Social And Cultural Dynamics, suggests that art and literature deal with persons and events of religious, or similar significance; the style is symbolic, formal and conventional. Sorokin also suggests that "sensitive literature," another variant, represents secular events; the style is sensual and erotic, and realistic.<sup>21</sup> Duncan's work, can be seen as a hybrid of Sorokin's and Kenneth Burke's. For Duncan postulates that although artists create forms of expression which religion, science and the State use to communicate ideas and visions, art is not explained by religion, science and so on. Knowing the religion, science or economics and politics of a society may help us to understand art -- but "not until we understand them in the art work itself." Duncan's analysis assumes a theory or assumptions of social psychology, which are never clarified. For example, he states:

The author is not unique in having an emotion, he is unique in his ability to take the initiative in expressing what all feel, but what the author alone can bring to some kind of form which clarifies what is felt.<sup>22</sup>

Apart from earlier criticism of the psychological assumptions of this kind of analysis, Jean Paul Satre would disagree strongly with Duncan, arguing that what an author expresses is subjective and emerges as "content," which then modifies the "form" of a literary work.<sup>23</sup> Satre states:

Thus the writer meets everywhere only his knowledge, his will, his plans, in short himself. He touches only his own subjectivity: the object he creates is out of reach; he does not create it for himself.<sup>24</sup>

From the foregoing analysis it can be tentatively stated that in sociological terms, Duncan's statement, quoted at the beginning of this section reveals the following. The relevant question with regard to the literary presentation of "social reality" and the sociological interpretation of that reality, are dominated by assumptions which reveal Duncan's positivistic conceptions of social science. That is to say methodological problems of content analysis in literature supercede the relevant questions. In so far as Duncan is representative of symbolic analysis -- the others being Robert Hall, Lewis Coser and so on -- the difference between them and the Marxist oriented European thinkers focuses on the organizational reality to which the symbols expressed in literature refer. The question as to how adequately analysis of the symbolic content of literature is adequate -- which is perhaps a lower level of concern -- seems to be established in Duncan's scheme once and for all. The dynamic

focus of analysis becomes lost in the positivist scheme of things. How this is so, is the problem we now turn to.

In American sociological analysis of literary material, literature is given a unique orientation. The tendency exists to view characterization, dialogue and the structure of "plots" as extensions of social reality.<sup>25</sup> Some twenty years after Dewey, Kenneth Burke, and his student Hugh Duncan, elaborated the pragmatist approach into the symbolist paradigm, which dominated literary analysis in America but which nonetheless has contributed much to our understanding of human interaction.

Burke's work, mainly philosophical in nature, was concerned with a breaking down of human interaction into five basic categories. These categories were Act, Scene, Agent, Agency and Purpose.<sup>26</sup> The categories are based on the analysis and abstraction of literary and linguistic materials. Here, the underlying question was, for Burke, "What is the nature of action" and human motivation? How are forms of thought incorporated by individuals and groups, and how are they elaborated? In his utilization of linguistic and literary material, what Burke attempts to demonstrate is not simply the ways in which symbols are significant in human discourse and action in general and how they emerge, but how readily realism (the nature of all action in general) leads into symbolism. Thus logically, as well as 'naturally', symbolism cannot be divorced from realism for Burke, or for his pupil Duncan.

Burke's philosophical system, from which is derived his conception of social reality, is significant not simply for its clarification of John Dewey's ideas.<sup>27</sup> Burke's ideas also have an implicit theory of knowledge. This theory is subsumed under his concept of "equipment for living," which briefly means the clarification and codification into verbal symbolism of ways of thinking and feeling which are proven and timeless, and assists man, or equips man, in accomplishing tasks indigenous to his environment. The best example of this is the proverb. Like Dewey, Burke viewed this equipment as societal phenomena, developed through experience. Burke's theory of knowledge would argue that in all civilizations, there are typical recurrent situations, to which men have found typical solutions, (strategies, which become concretized in proverbs, exhortations, and so on). These climates of opinion are shaped by our individual patterns of livelihood, and assume the quality of spiritual values. These are learnt through socialization and experience, and reinforce our ways of thinking and feelings. They are social things, knowledge, but how they are used vary in different societies. But, essentially, social and ethical patterns, values, proverbs and so on are integrally related. In his book, Philosophy Of Literary Form, Burke suggests that in the development towards capitalism, these ethical values have been exploited by individuals for private ends, profits. It is because of this that the basic integration between work patterns and ethical patterns is

constantly in jeopardy and frequently impossible.<sup>28</sup>

Extending his analysis of knowledge to literature, Burke suggests that sociological criticism of literature should seek to codify the various strategies which artists have developed with relation to the naming of situations. The realism of the literature, as well as of its analysis, would be that the situations expressed and represented in literary form would be typical recurrent situations, not peculiar to our own situations at all. Burke summarized his ideas in his chapter: "Literature As Equipment For Living":

Realism does not exist for its own sake. There is realism for promise, admonition, solace, vengeance, fortelling, instruction, charting, all for the direct bearing that such acts have upon matters of welfare.<sup>29</sup>

Taking the proverb as an example, Burke extended his analysis in this connection to the most complex and sophisticated works of literature (seen as proverbs writ large ). He states:

Such leads, if held admissable, should help us to discover important facts about literary organization (thus satisfying the requirements of technical criticism). And the kind of observation from this perspective should apply beyond literature to life in general, thus helping to take literature out of its separate bin and give it a place in a general sociological picture.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, Burke can be viewed as having developed a theoretical scheme which has its basic roots in the work of Dewey the pragmatist, who in turn was influenced by Hegel, the

idealist. For Burke, language was both symbolic and real, the primary means by which social reality and communication of it has meaning. And the role of the social analyst was that of an observer, of the dramatistic presentation "placed" before him. Burke also viewed his concept of the act as a substitute for the concept of realism.<sup>31</sup> He considers his conception of literary form as realism, because he treats generic terms as names for real substances; individuals as members of a group, in contrast to nominalism which treats generic terms as mere conveniences of language, and groups as aggregates of individuals.<sup>32</sup> Thus any art form, its meaning, etc., are real.<sup>33</sup> Having investigated Burkes "equipment for living," in relation to his five categories, for the analysis of any work of literature or any social situation, one finds ambiguity in the system. For example there is an overlap in his definitions of Rhetoric, Symbolic and Grammar, so that Rhetoric and Symbolic elements, seem to hover about the edges of Grammar. Of his definitions of the types of 'equipment for living' only 'Grammar' is defined in terms of specific social situations, i.e., doctrins of law, politics and so on. These are used in Rhetoric, to outwit or cajole others. They are as symbolic 'equipment', in the sense that we use them in appeals in the fine arts. Burke's "equipment for living" thus tends to be ambiguous.

Further understanding of Kenneth Burke's substantive analysis of literature as a sociological problem, leads us into the work of Hugh Duncan. For the latter's work closely



resembles that of the former, and Duncan is seen as a modern pioneer in the sociological analysis of literature in America.<sup>34</sup>

Duncan stresses the various kinds of relationships which can exist between the artist, "his" audience, and the critic. He conceives of literature in modern society as not being extensively controlled by any one other single institution.

In our society there is no single institution which possesses unlimited power over literature, but a number of competing institutions, which once they go beyond their own public or publics must legitimize their position through successful appeals to a general public opinion.<sup>35</sup>

Given this very dubious assumption, Duncan then proceeds to establish the differing circumstances in terms of his abstract model in which one or two of these sectors will determine the social reality of the literary product.<sup>36</sup>

Duncan's typology of interaction between "sectors" visualizes the following situations of author, public and critic. First there are small intimate groups communicating directly: Speaker -- that is the author -- and audience, know each other's reactions almost immediately through reciprocal responses. Criticism is not a specialized role, and forms of expression and content bear close affinity to social reality. Secondly, when literary production is monopolized by a class, the author reaches his audience primarily through the critic, for example, the clerics of the Middle Ages and the Chinese literati as well as the court

writers of Europe. Here, presumably -- Duncan does not explicitly state this -- both form and content in art become highly stylized. He does state:

Critics conceive of their role as  
guardians of a craft skill or a tradition;  
as advocates of specific social institutions.

The general public is therefore seen as vulgar in this setting. Thus the particular literary conception of social reality is critic controlled. Thirdly, the author exercises control over his representations; but the critic may conceive of his role as a prophet. Fourthly, the critic and author exercise equal control over representations, but both pretend to discuss, to present what the people want. Fifthly is the situation in which author, public and critic assume mutual responsibility to one another. Here literature emerges as an institution in its own right and seeks power on the same level as other institutions. Duncan posits variants of all five types of relationships.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the clarity with which Duncan presents his model, there are important ambiguities which he failed to resolve in his work. His work is focussed on a very general level of social action, one in which literature is treated as a homogeneous whole, in an extremely functionalist manner. Having defined the author's position in relation to audience and critic, Duncan goes on to establish the lines of communication between them; all in terms of a presupposition about the universality of the content of literature and its

meaningfulness. But the genesis of that content, that is to say the validity or representativeness of the characters and situations represented, are never questioned. Hence the overly positivistic nature of Duncan's entire scheme. In short, then, we learn very little from it about the way in which the artist's conception of social reality is formulated. In the preface of his major work, Duncan suggested that

Situation must be understood in terms of "form", just as "form" must be understood in terms of situation.<sup>38</sup>

If we are to accept this, then "form" and "content" become different ways of talking about the same thing. But first of all, this is to underplay the autonomy of form and content in terms of the problem of aesthetics. That is to say the problem of "situation" and its changing elements are then treated in a very mechanical way, by rigidifying the language which express these situations. For example by rigidifying the forms of novels the increased stylizing may clothe "dead" content or situations. Further, if Shakespeare's forms of drama and tragedy had remained intact, because of institutional controls, would this have exercised a determining influence on the subjects of the modern novel? Duncan himself raises the problem of new actions or phases of action and the raising of these by an author. He also suggests that man's self-consciousness is raised to new levels of intensity, on a symbolic level, when we would know nothing in our ordinary

life of these new situations. But the analysis is left at that point. Consequently Duncan must presume a theory of the imagination as part of action; but one which is equally effective at all levels of a social structure, and one which permeates all groups equally.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>C. F. Alphonse Silberman: A Definition Of the Sociology of Art, International Social Science Journal (U.N.E.S.C.O.), Vol. 20, #4, 1968, pp. 569-570. The former problem of the sociology of knowledge will be more extensively discussed in a subsequent section of the thesis.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 584. Silberman's analysis at this point is not altogether clear. What he seems to be suggesting is that there are within the context of any social structure, given periods which correspond to certain artistic styles or genres. A Genre can be defined as a type of form, as the term which describes the distinct varieties of any given form of literature, music, architecture and so on. There is still apparently a great deal of confusion on this aspect of artistic analysis. For example Thomas Munro, Toward A Science of Aesthetics. Bobbs-Merrill Co. Inc., (Liberal Arts Press, 1956) suggests pp. 183-191, under the rubric of aesthetic morphology, that generalizations such as the classical or romantic school may be useful classificatory terms, but tend toward rigidity and vagueness as well as the dynamic quality of artistic processes (pp.32-33). Using the historical as well as the critical variations and changing apperceptions of art as basic criteria of definition, Munro continues that form can be defined as the way in which (a work of art) its details are organized. Aesthetic form occurs not only in art but in all types of object, natural or artificial. A flower and a machine have aesthetic form; so does a city or a sunset. It is not the same as physical form (molecular and atomic structure), but consists rather in the structure which a scene or other object appears to have, as an object of aesthetic perception. The way the arrangement of colour, scene, characters and so on function as a stimulus to perception and understanding. (p. 161). But recognizing the ambiguity of this definition, Munro goes on to use the concept of 'genre' (my term) to provide more sociological meaning. Here the spatio-temporal and causal relations of objects and their presentation come into greater focus. For he states that in genre (my term) the ontological status of the 'material' or characters as in fiction as related to matter, mind, universals, reality is a metaphysical problem with which aesthetic morphology is not primarily concerned. He calls, what I term genre, 'biological morphology' that for a science of aesthetics, it is the 'science of structural organic types'. In art it will be the concept which denotes the many recurrent types of form which can be distinguished and classified. (p. 185):

Alan Beckett, New Left Review, No. 54, March-April, 1969,

uses the concept genre, in an empirical study of contemporary pop music, as a form of art and within this category soul music, which has various genres or sub-genres, rock blues, country rock, soul jazz, and so on as genres. Though Beckett recognizes the socio-economic and political basis of form, his emphasis on aesthetic analysis of sound, beauty, stylistic techniques, etc., is left to the level of genre, and here fluidity is a main characteristic.

<sup>3</sup>I have in mind here, the general perspective of Karl Mannheim especially in Ideology And Utopia, Routledge Kegan Paul, 1960.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., Silberman, p. 584.

<sup>5</sup>T. B. Bottomore Critics of Society: Radical Thought In North America, Pantheon Books (Random House) 1968: States The course taken by social criticism in North America was quite different from that in Europe, because the society itself was very different (p. 16). But this statement is a later qualification of his early general statement of all societies. A criticism which proceeded from socialists, reformers and social scientists (in both Europe and North America -- emphasis K.O.B.) This criticism was amplified by writers and journalists. Poets became revolutionaries as did Heine and Shelly: novelists turned to the discussion of social issues -- religious unbelief, the power of wealth, the struggle between classes, the rise of the working classes, industrial and political conflicts -- in what is called the naturalistic novel (p. 10). Bottomore also suggests that the critical tradition is primarily European, stressing the importance of Hegel's philosophy as the high water mark of critical social articulation. This point is significant for my later analysis.

<sup>6</sup>Critics of Society, is a very general set of essays, probably not intending such distinctions, but they are nevertheless important for the perspectives of social scientist, poet or novelist and literary critic. The book was compiled from a series of radio broadcasts, and was not intended as a thesis.

<sup>7</sup>G. Leo Lowenthal Literature And The Image Of Man: Studies of European Drama & Novel, 1600-1900. Beacon Press, 1957, pp. IX-X.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., Lowenthal pp. X-XI, see also Bottomore, op. cit., pp. 4-5. Bottomore sees social criticism as being just as old as human society itself, but the real beginnings of modern social criticism as a major influence in human affairs appeared in the eighteenth century.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., Lowenthal, p. X.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., Lowenthal, pp. XII-XIII. See also Leo Lowenthal Literature, Popular Culture, And Society. Pacific Books, 1961, pp. XII-XIII.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. XIII

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Lowenthal Literature, Popular Culture, And Society Chap. 5, p. 141. Robert Merton in Social Theory And Social Structure, pp. 37-42. Free Press, 1957, suggests that functionalist analysis is both static and dynamic as well as ideologically neutral, just as is dialectical materialism, pp. 37-42. Merton's work also seemed to have provided the theoretical basis for Lowenthal's analysis of adaptation.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Merton, p. 140.

<sup>14</sup>The concept perspective is used in the Mertonian sense here which is taken from Karl Mannheim. Perspectival statements are presumably not incorrect, if their author recognizes and allows for their partial nature, they are then simply abstract formulations of certain aspects of the concrete situation. They are however, definitely invalid if they are submitted as significantly complete representations of the phenomena in question. Ibid., R. Merton, p. 506.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., R. Merton, p. 440.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., Merton pp. 441-453.

<sup>17</sup>Merton is then only partly correct in his analysis; however the point to be emphasized here, is the possibility of detecting distinct streams of research, once American sociology began to be concerned with literary material. Hence the literary symbolism of twentieth century American sociology and the Marxist variants of literary criticism of Lukács, Lucien Goldmann, T. Adorno and the earlier Christopher Caldwell, even of Raymond Williams, can be seen as addressing themselves to different problems. See one explanation for this in T.B. Bottomore's Critics of Society, Ch. 2. The course taken by social critics in North America was quite different from that in Europe, because the society itself was very different. (p. 16)

<sup>18</sup>See for example Max Weber's statements on literature, newspapers, mass culture and democratization in Hans Gerth and C.W. Mills From Max Weber: Essays In Sociology, Routledge Kegan Paul, 1948. pp. 178-179.

<sup>19</sup>Hugh D. Duncan Language And Literature In Society.  
Badminster Press, 1953.

<sup>20</sup>For an analysis of the reflection hypothesis, see Milton C. Albrecht, The Relationship Of Literature And Society, American Journal Of Sociology, 1953-1954, Vol. LIX, pp..425-436.

<sup>21</sup>Pitirim Sorokin Social And Cultural Dynamics published  
American Book Co., Bedminster, 1937.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Duncan, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup>See Jean-Paul Satre What Is Literature, translated from  
the French by Bernard Frechtman, Washington Square Press,  
1966, Ch. II.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-26.

<sup>25</sup>By extensions of social reality, I mean the pragmatic  
approach to art, a variant of the reflection theory,  
developed as early as 1934 by John Dewey, Art As Experience  
(op. cit.). In an analysis of the functions of fine art,  
he suggested:

A primary task is thus imposed upon one who  
undertakes to write upon the philosophy of  
fine arts. This task is to restore the  
continuity between the refined and the  
intensified forms of experience that are  
works of art and everyday events, doings and  
sufferings that are universally recognized  
to constitute experience. (p. 3)

Dewey, further suggests that in the course of societal  
development, the forces at work that removed the arts from  
everyday experience are the same ones that removed religion  
and so on. (p.6) Capitalism and the increasing specialization  
of the division of labour are viewed as other powerful  
influences. (p. 8). Ernst Fischer, The Necessity Of Art,  
Penguin Books, 1959, makes a very similar argument in respect  
to the development of the arts, their evolution from an  
identity between art and experience, in terms not so much of  
sense perception as does Dewey (p.115), but rather of material  
necessity and man's early needs.

<sup>26</sup>See Kenneth Burke A Grammar Of Motives p. 3. Burke's  
categories of Act, Scene, Agent, Agency and Purpose, can be  
defined and related in the following manner: Scene is  
defined as the background of the act, the situation in which



the act occurred. Act is the word which names what took place in thought or deed. Agent: what person or kind of person performed the act. Agency: what instrument or means the agent used to perform the act. Purpose: Any complete statement about the act. Burke views the foregoing categories as a basic paradigm for all actual situations and literary works-- what he in later works termed equipment for living. But in the 'Gram he discusses the relations between each category (see pp. 15-20).

<sup>27</sup>Robert Merton, op. cit., p. 198, makes a case for the similarity of ideas in terms of Dewey's conception of occupational psychosis. See also Kenneth Burke Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies In Symbolic Action, Louisiana State University Press, 1967, Ch. The Nature Of Art Under Capitalism, pp. 314-322, also K. Burke Permanence And Change. It is also worth noting that Dewey's philosophy, derived much of its substance from Hegel's system. It has a dialectical quality which sees the finite individual as adjusting to the environment, through a process of experimenting, one of the direct consequence of this process is experience. But this experience which is akin to spirit in Hegel's system, realizes its fullest form in aesthetic experience. It is to artistic and aesthetic experience that the philosopher must go to experience integrity. For here, he is freed from the forces that impede and confuse its development as experience. See Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhn's Philosophies of Art And Beauty: Selected Readings In Aesthetics From Plato To Heidegger, New York, Random House Ltd., 1964, pp. 577-79.

<sup>28</sup>K. Burke The Philosophy of Literary Form, op. cit, pp.315-316.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., Burke, p. 296.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., Burke, p. 296.

<sup>31</sup>K. Burke, op. cit. Grammar Of Motives, p. 128.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., Grammar, p. 248.

<sup>33</sup>Burke's basic system of the forementioned fine categories are analysed within other categories his equipment for living developed. These categories are:  
 Rhetoric: A term to describe the basic stratagems, which people employ in endless variations, for the outwitting and cajoling of one another.  
 Symbolic: Other notes, concerned with modes of expression and appeal in the fine arts and with purely psychological or psychoanalytic matters.

Grammar: is the theological and metaphysical and juridic al doctrines; the forms and methods of art, best illustrate the concerns of Symbolic Ideal material revealing the nature of compromises, expressed in Rhetoric. For example the observations on parliamentary and diplomatic devices, editorial bias, sales methods and incidents of social sparring.

<sup>34</sup>Duncan's bibliography in Language And Literature In Society, is indeed extensive and has been cited in many works, including Lowenthal's Literature And The Image Of May, Milton Albrecht and Robert Escarpit The Sociology of Literature. (Lake Erie College Press 1965).

<sup>35</sup>Duncan, op. cit, pp. 63.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp.66-74.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 70-71.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

## CHAPTER IV

## GEORG LUKÁCS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF LITERARY CRITICISM

The restriction of the method (dialectic) to the socio-historic reality is very important. The misunderstandings which arise from Engels' presentation of the dialectic rest essentially upon the fact that Engels -- following erroneously here Hegel -- extends the dialectic onto the cognition of nature as well. The decisive characteristic of the dialectic -- mutuality between subject and object, unity between theory and practice ... is not present in the knowledge of nature.

(Georg Lukács Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein p. 17 pub. Neuwied Luchterhand 1968.)

The above, perhaps one of the best known of Lukács' many statements on the relation between the philosophy of Marx and of Hegel, thrust him into the mainstream of the polemic between Marx and the early Hegelians about the nature of reality, specifically social reality. But as a Hungarian and a Communist party member, Lukács insistence on the dialectic, as the key to the formulation of a scientific method, over and above the historical materialism posited by Marx and Engels made Lukács the deviant of the Communist world, from the 1920's to the present day. Lukács career is thus expressible as an irony of the recurrent clash between his Marxism and the realities of the U.S.S.R. Communist power, in the nation's most crucial period of development, 1920's to the post World War II times.

What is deviationist in Lukács is his following of

the Hegelian dialectic, but more important his impressive criticism of Frederick Engels, that Marxist intellectual par excellence . In his first major work, History And Class Consciousness, (not yet translated into English), Georg Lukács took up the problem of the relations between historical changes in concrete social conditions and the expression of these conditions as forms of thought, or expressed levels of consciousness by various groups. Concluding an involved but systematic analysis, Lukács decided:

La réponse à cette interrogation, nous pouvons la trouver également chez Marx. Le matérialisme historique sous sa forme classique (qui malheureusement n'est passée dans la conscience collective que sous une forme vulgarisée), c'est la connaissance de soi de la société capitaliste.<sup>1</sup>

For Lukács the response to the question, how patterns of thought were formed, was clearly not solvable in some vague concept of collective conscience -- as Durkheim had thought, nor as his predecessor Auguste Comte (1798-1857), had decided by his positivistic stages of the development of knowledge. But where is the response to this question? Lukács alludes to an answer in his typically polemical form by calling the concept of conscience collective in its vulgarized form in capitalist societies, a vulgarized form of knowledge. In fact he terms this type of method "gross categories of abstraction".<sup>2</sup> Lukács sees the answer in Marx, though not in "Matérialism Historique", for that too is the knowledge

of capitalist societies so called. The polemical force of the Lukácsian "system" is directed against both East and West, the Soviet as well as the capitalist world. This is the significance of matérialisme historique as the decisive factor. Nevertheless this polemic is not yet made explicit by him. He does however accept the dialectic in opposition to historical materialism as the factor, the method in theory and practice --as we shall see.<sup>3</sup>

In the Lukácsian system, where Marxism is concerned, orthodoxy refers far more to method exclusively, than it does to "factors or particular statements or single theses." It is the Marxist dialectic -- which Lukács views as not expandable -- that provides a meaningful relationship between consciousness and reality, and makes the unity between theory and praxis possible as well.

It is possible to interpret the relationship between consciousness and historical process, between theory and praxis, in at least two ways. But these need not be viewed as mutually exclusive in order to appreciate Lukács' general philosophy or its sociological significance for his uniquely literary criticism. Victor Zitta's otherwise excellent biography of Lukács, presupposes a real separation between the personal psychological, causal sequences of a person's intellectual development and the wider scientific problems with which that person attempts to deal.<sup>4</sup> The dilemma of the division between an understanding of Lukács contribution in terms of the biographical, the development of Lukács'

philosophy seen at any point as immediate personal response to existing historical conditions on the part of one man; and Lukács' work seen as an objective synthesis of the intellectual conditions of his time, an attempt to search for the key to "Social reality"; are posed by Zitta.

Zitta's interpretation of Lukács' early work; which I shall term "social psychological", is comprehensive and appears to be factually accurate. But Zitta views Lukács as unable to "liberate himself from himself".

Lukács probably ranks among those men in our civilization who have been impelled -- in the midst of a deep and disturbing intellectual and moral crisis in the West -- to seek with urgency a stable and redeeming Weltanschauung as a way out.<sup>5</sup>

This admitted behaviourist interpretation of Lukács' ideas is also significant, because the author, in engaging the artificial Chinese Wall between values which -- objectified -- are facts, and facts which -- subjectified -- are values; "between the normative and the ontological order of things", suggests that Zitta is engaging Marxism (which is for Zitta the continuing similar theoretical -- and epistemological threads between Marx and Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxembour and Lukács), which he identifies with the politics and history of the Soviet Union. By this position Zitta condemns both the Marxist dialectic, as well as Marx's historical materialism, to hopeless teleological sterility, notwithstanding the distinction which we must make between Marx's formal dialectic

and the use of the dialectic by later "Marxists." Zitta juxtaposes the subjective contradictions of Lukács' intellectual and political life, its Faustian and Mephistophelian traits, with the undeveloped aspects of Marx's system. The analogy of Lukács and Marx's theory, become inevitable contradictions directly manifested in the totalitarianism of Soviet and East European politics.<sup>6</sup>

In noting the weaknesses of a psychological interpretation of any work of art, as of any philosophy, Jose' Ortega Gasset argues: "We must get over the error ... which makes us think that a man's life takes place inside himself and that, consequently, it can be reduced to pure psychology." In other words, what Zitta neglects is "our movement" forward in relation to the world.

In Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein, Georg Lukács suggests that it is only when consciousness (which is the only meaningful interpretation of conscience collective) coincides with the decisive course which the historical process must take toward its "proper end", that theory and practice can serve its historic purpose and make this course actually possible. The proper end is that which is constituted by human freedom; but not an end which is an invention of the human spirit. Elaborating on this statement, Lukács takes Marx's statements about the appearance of the proletariat in history. "When the proletariat announces the dissolution of the existing order, it only declares the secret of its own existence, for it constitutes the effective dissolution of

this order."<sup>7</sup> Of this statement, Lukács suggests that the theory within which the idea expressed is made, is not related to revolution in a more or less contingent way, --it is not bound to it loosely, or through a "misunderstanding." Rather it is in its very essence, nothing more than the intellectual expression of the revolutionary process itself. "Each stage of this process is fixed deeply in theory so as to become by its generalisation, communicable, useful, susceptible to development. And just as it is the consciousness of necessary development, so it becomes at the same time the necessary precondition of the development which must follow." Thus we see that for Lukács, the basis for any systematic conception of social and economic reality was the dialectical method as expounded by Marx. And historical facts were not ordered in some contingent manner. Social Scientists' consciousness of the historical role of social classes is the key here. This is one of the keys to later criticism -- that Lukács work bears the stamp of Hegelianism.<sup>8</sup>

Lukács' choice of the dialectic, rather than an emphasis on historical materialism, criticizes also Engels' Anti Dühring as inadequate. Here too, Lukács criticizes (in Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein) Engels for conceptualizing the dialectic by opposing it to the metaphysical. By doing this, Lukács suggests, that Engels changes the whole dimension of the concept from being a methodological one, for a proper perspective on history, to being a historical one. Here Lukács is apparently referring to Engels work, The Dialectics



Of Nature.

L'éclaircissement de cette fonction de la théorie ouvre en même temps la voie à la connaissance de son essence théorique: c'est-à-dire à la méthode de la dialectique. Le fait d'avoir négligé ce point tout simplement décisif introduit beaucoup de confusion dans les discussions sur la méthode dialectique; car que l'on critique les développements de Engels dans l'Anti Dühring, qu'on les estime pour incomplètes voir insuffisants, ou qu'on les considère comme classiques, il faut néanmoins reconnaître qu'il leur manque précisément cette dimension. En effet, Engels décrit la conceptualisation de la méthode dialectique en l'opposant à la conceptualisation (méthaphysique).

Again referring to the way in which once Engels had applied the dialectic, as though it were a metaphysic, this had implications for a sociological use of the dialectic, which made it appear as though the internal relations in any historical process of any society then reduced itself to functional reciprocal ones; Lukács remarked:

...que, par conséquent, la causalité unilatérale et rigide doit être remplacée par l'action réciproque, mais l'aspect le plus essentiel de cette action réciproque, la relation dialectique du sujet et de l'objet dans le processus de l'histoire, n'est même pas mentionné, et encore moins placé au centre... des considérations méthodologiques.

Clearly then, Lukács' argument is that in Engels, the dialectic becomes a smoothly flowing process of continuous transformation of one determination into another, resolving contradictions which pass into each other. Thus it is Engels' methodological

conceptualisation of substructure and super-structure, as simply reciprocal, which Lukács attacks as Hegelian. Therefore as far as Lukács is concerned history becomes superfluous in epistemological terms in Engels' Anti Dühring. Whereas, it should be placed at the centre of methodological consideration. For it is only in this manner that the dialectical method becomes a revolutionary one; one in which the central problem is that of changing reality.

Lukács took the problem one step further, by looking at "facts" in the social sciences. Here he is commenting on Marx's statement, in the Contribution To The Critique Of Political Economy, that in all social and historical sciences, one must always consider the movement of economic categories as "categories expressing forms and conditions of existence." Lukács argues that any "science" which takes the immediacy of the "facts" as its basis, and views this form of their objectivity as the point of departure for scientific (objectivity) conceptualisation, accepts essentially the terms of capitalist society. As social scientists, we must, Lukács suggests, penetrate to the historical context of the facts, if we are not to accept them as immediate and given. To do the latter is idealist -- again an allusion to Hegel -- that is to confuse the intellectual reproduction of reality with the structural processes of reality itself. Rather as social scientists, Lukács suggests, we see not a reflective connection between the intellectual and structural processes of reality, but an organic one.

Further in Lukács' elaboration of the above methodological position, he uses the problematic of the dialectic to reopen the problem of the specific historical relationship between the individual and society, particularly capitalist society. Lukács begins from the pre-supposition that the dialectical conception of a totality and its constituent elements, is the only method of reproducing reality intellectually. A concrete totality is thus the basic category of reality -- another Hegelian aspect of Lukács' position. Just as Hegel's logic suggested that the relationship between the whole and its parts constitutes the dialectical passage from existence to reality. But, Lukács suggests, the contradictions of the relationship between the individual and society, like the contradictions of intellectual reproduction and concrete reality, and similarly that of the novel and the writer; belong to the nature of capitalist society. If we simply demonstrate that an opposition exists between the self-interest of the individual and the social forms in which it is confined, as a matter of "positive" science, the economic antagonism which is expressed in the class struggle evaporates into a conflict between the individual and society. And then it becomes difficult to grasp the necessity for the emergence of capitalist society, and consequently its nature and decline. For the individual and society conflict will be posed as timeless, objective and so on; a kind of Kantian philosophy, in other words. Hegel's dialectic in that sense, failed to surmount the duality of thinking and being, subject and

object, and the idealism of the Spirit, and therefore renders the dialectic a sham, for it did not reveal the "interior" dialectic of the historical process. For in Hegel's scheme, his knowledge of matter was in the subject, rather than the self-acknowledgement of that particular part of matter, human society.<sup>10</sup>

Lukács' rejection of Hegel's Weltgeist, and re-assertion of the dialectic is a direct rejection of much of his own earlier thinking. What is the nature of this rejection? In the intellectual period prior to writing, History and Class Consciousness, Lukács though concerned with the nature of reality and our consciousness of it, formulated an epistemology different from that earlier outlined. Strongly influenced by neo-Kantianism, but sceptical of many aspects of it, Lukács was caught in the dilemma where he rejected the idea that the "empirical" world was knowable in the final analysis, merely as a product of understanding. And here, he was rejecting an important aspect of Hegel's thought. Yet on the other hand, could Lukács accept the notion that ultimate reality or its attributes, are beyond the reach of the human mind?

Though Watnick suggests that Lukács saw morals and aesthetics as "cognisable" through intuition." Here we see the strong influence of classical Greek philosophy on Lukács thought. Moreover, Watnick, Lukács' biographer, holds that the latter argued that the writer artist could mainly grasp the immediacies of the existing world. All that philosophy

could legitimately do would be to formulate canons of validity, which could be used to evaluate the work of writers who were specialists. In this role, the philosopher becomes a critic. Given the above then, Lukács concluded that scientific method, though adequate in terms of its own limited aims, had little to offer to aesthetics, and its problems of meaning and purpose for existence. At this time then Lukács formulated an epistemology based on the assumptions of "flashes of intuitionism." An idea which derived from the work of the German social philosophers, Simmel and Dilthey.

Another aspect of Lukács' early aesthetics, and one derived from his acceptance of intuitionism, was to conceptualise aesthetics into two categories. On the level of aesthetic values, there were abstract forms, which constitute the categoric apriori of all art, but which the artist as such, could not attain. At this period for example Lukács viewed "Poetry" as prior to, greater and more important than all works of poetry. The idea was then present before all its manifestations, it is a spiritual value, a mover of the world and a builder of life, in its own right. As an artist, the artist is concerned with concrete images (Bilder), not with their meaning (Bedeutung). The area of meaning is the province of the philosophical critic. The artist and the platonist are thus "polar opposites."

The early Lukács, therefore saw as significant, for his own intellectual development, a breaking down of the divisions between literature and society, "culture and public life." Added to this, the inability of Lukács or his contem-

poraries, to express discontent with the fundamental questions of social life openly; Lukács held form and poetic expression as the "preparation for revolution."<sup>13</sup>

Summarizing this aspect of Lukács development, his alienation from the existing social conditions in Hungary at the time, his dissatisfaction with the intellectual responses of his contemporaries, to these conditions; Zitta states:

His (Lukács') poetic prose is an expression and tacit admission of an inability to find in straightforward and ordinary prose a germane vehicle for his experiences, his aspirations, and his search for "truth". Lukács thirsted for a truth that could not be expressed in prose; not in Hungary, nor probably anywhere, or at anytime.<sup>14</sup>

The above statement expresses the deep disillusionment of a man unable to develop a Weltanschauung (prior to Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein) in terms of the prevailing neo-Kantianism of his philosophy. It was in this climate that Lukács turned to Hegel, then Marx for an "objective" idealism. It was in this climate that the idea became present before all its manifestations, that one of the mainstays of Lukács thought became "abstract forms", the genesis of his later "critical realism." This meant that for Lukács, the writer could achieve greatness without addressing himself to the ultimate nature of reality. Consequently the realism which Lukács sought, and one which he found in developing his Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein, was one to be embraced by the writer

himself, for the sake of his own work and for his audience, not something prescribed from outside. The consciousness of the writer, then became the point of departure for Lukács did not leave the problem simply at that level, for that too was a kind of "subjectivism."

However, when the implications of Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein are taken as a whole -- that is on its wider philosophical and literary political levels, two aspects can be detected. On the one hand, the reassertion of the dialectic as a method became a means for reconciling and reconstituting a vital relationship between what Lukács saw as the historical fate of mankind. A fate which was clarified in Lukács own discovery of the genesis of capitalist society in general, and the Hungary of his time in particular. On the other hand, the dialectic became a method for assessing the different forms of creative intellect. The forms created by the artist or writer. And an assessment of these forms by the philosopher critic. For example Lukács summarized the important role for the critic of literature in the preface to the Historical Novel, when he said:

What I had in mind (when writing the book) was a theoretical examination of the interaction between the historical spirit and the great genres of literature which portray the totality of history -- and then only as this applied to bourgeois literature; ...In such an inquiry it is obvious that even the inner, most theoretical, most abstract dialectic of the problem will have an historical character.<sup>15</sup>

"Historical Spirit" is Lukács' term for the dialectic move-

ment of history. As a Marxist theoretician and critic of literature then, Lukács is not concerned with an all embracing epistemology. His use of the dialectic is aimed at revealing "the historical roots of modern bourgeois literature," both in terms of the pre-existing social conditions, as well as the pre-existing literary forms. This aim determines the methodological problem of all Lukács' "empirical works." It is only when Lukács' epistemology is seen within the context of this limited scope that his peculiar definitions and use of concepts, such as drama, tragedy, and so on, become meaningful; that his concepts of social reality and literary realism are made clear. For:

Then and then alone, could the real strength of Marxist dialectics become tangible to all, could it be made clear to all that it is not something essentially and primarily intellectual, but the intellectual reflection of the actual historical process ... The second important methodological approach is to examine the interaction between economic and social development and the outlook and artistic form to which they give rise.<sup>16</sup>

The foregoing can be seen as one aspect of Lukács' philosophy of action. A philosophy permeated throughout by the notion that philosophy has the important task of interpretation, by means of the Marxian dialectic. Interpretation of the relation between material life and the thought processes to which they correspond. At this level of analysis the role of the artist is passive in the sense that he simply represents aspects of these actual processes.<sup>17</sup> But Lukács, in another



aspect of his philosophy of action, assigned another role to the artist, the role of critical realism. This role and its choice by the artist is dependent on what form of expression and philosophical outlook the artist adopts. One aspect of this role can be summarized in the constitutive characteristics of understanding (Weber's verstehen) and weltanschauung.<sup>18</sup>

What is the relationship between Lukács Marxist -- Hegelian dialectic and his philosophy of action? The answer to this question puts into more meaningful context all of Lukács' analysis of the historical development of literary forms. Commenting on the principal themes of Lukács' History And Class Consciousness, in an attempt to identify Lukács' concern with alienation, Zitta states:

Lukács' Marxian Weltanschauung -- in essence -- is based upon an exposition of alienation and the dialectic, the two central themes that emerge from his pre-communist period of development, and their extension to the proletariat and the revolution. Purely formalistically, alienation signifies a low point of subjective experiences and objective conditions, where the subject is not identical with the object, or where it experiences a "split;" the dialectic on the other hand, is the high point which -- transcending alienation -- unites the subject and the object, and heals the "split."<sup>19</sup>

Both Zitta and Watnick have argued that Lukács even from his pre-Marxist days was obsessed first by self-alienation, and then later the social process of man's alienation. Lukács was at first influenced by the concept of self-alienation, a concept developed by Hegel in his Phenomenology Of The Mind, but refined by Simmel, one of the leaders of the German

sociology school.<sup>20</sup> Hegel we recall, insisted that it is only with the dialectical movement of "experience" away from the object and back to the subject, the universality of the mind, that there would be consciousness at all, and an end of alienation. The end of alienation for Hegel, is realized in the realized full development of the Idea, the synthesis of the real and the ideal, the identity of truth and reality, of subject and object.

But, Hegel's idealistic identification and interpretation of the ideal and the real forced him to give the historical State of his day an ideal necessity, which thus justified the existing political structures, "even if they conflicted with the true nature of the State."<sup>21</sup> Fredrick Engels, commented on the confusion of this identification, on its conservative and revolutionary aspects, in his discussion of the relationship between Hegel, Feuerbach and Marx.

The course of evolution of Feuerbach is that of a Hegelian -- a never quite orthodox Hegelian, it is true -- into a materialist; an evolution which at a definite state necessitates a complete rupture with the idealist system of his predecessor. With irresistible force Feuerbach is finally forced to the realization that the Hegelian pre-mundane existence of the "absolute" idea, the "pre-existence of the logical categories" before the world existed, is nothing more than the fantastic survival of the belief in the existence of an extra-mundane creator; that the material, sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality; and that our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily

organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of the mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter.<sup>22</sup>

But Engels also notes that Feuerbach stopped at this point in his thinking, for he was unable to overcome the "customary philosophical prejudice," against the name materialism. For Feuerbach confused materialism as a general world outlook resting on a definite conception of "the relation between mind and matter, and the special form in which this world outlook was expressed at a definite stage of historical development, viz., in the eighteenth century."<sup>23</sup>

Despite Engels' criticism of Feuerbach's thesis, Feuerbach attacked Hegel's basic assumption that consciousness of self is basic to consciousness of anything. He attacked Hegel's conception of man's self-consciousness by arguing that Hegel alienated man's self-consciousness by making it distinct from man, and merely an object of him.<sup>24</sup> In short Feuerbach suggests that it is attributes of human consciousness that are attributed to God, and thereby placed man within the framework of the natural world, as a species of animal. Feuerbach suggested that religion alienates man from himself by leading him to attribute his own nature, which is intersubjective, to a separate being God. It is man then who creates God in his own image, rather than man simply being a tool whereby God comes into self-awareness.<sup>25</sup>

Feuerbach's anthropology, is that the doctrine of God (which Hegel developed) must be changed into a doctrine of man. This is one aspect of his Philosophy Of The Future,

for the concrete emancipation of man, "a realization of the Hegelian philosophy, but by its negation." To do this, thought has to be re-analysed in non- Hegelian terms, terms by which Being is subject, thought is predicate. That is thought must be seen as springing from Being, rather than Being springing from thought. Feuerbach's philosophy of action which Marx and Engels criticized as being romantic is analogous to the early ideas of Lukács. Both Feuerbach and Lukács were concerned with the problem of alienation, the former viewing it as essentially internal and subjective, the latter almost as consequence of material progress. Lukács notion of alienation is in this sense idealistic, for it is based on and derived from Simmel's notion that "human institutions were an objectification of the spirit." That is to say forms of self-alienation. Simmel argued that an inescapable clash existed between man's creativity and his social norms and institutions.

In the above sense, Lukács began to develop a philosophy of action, rooted in the polemics of German philosophy and sociology. Although Lukács' "starting position," was not taken from Marx and Engels, he concluded and elaborated his philosophy of action by adopting a Marxist posture, and therefore by sublating the Feuerbachian analysis of alienation, and its institutional manifestations. The period in which he began to develop his philosophy of Action, with the publication of Die Seele und die Formen, (1911) (The Soul And The Forms), falls midway between his immersion in Simmel and Dilthey's

work, plus a development around Hegelian philosophy, and conversion to Marxism. The Marxist posture then, developed through four distinct stages: neo-Kantianism, the German philosophy and formalistic sociology of Georg Simmel and Dilthey; Hegelianism and finally the Marxist dialectics, expressed in Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein.

The consistency and development of Lukács' thought which both Victor Zitta and Morris Watnick see as integral to an understanding of Lukács' works, revolve around what Zitta sees as Lukács' self-estrangement, deriving from his dissatisfaction with the dichotomy between literature and society, culture and public life, that is politics (the inability, due to repression of radical intellectuals in Hungary, prior to 1914.) Zitta describes this as Lukács' dissatisfaction with a career as either literary essayist or philosopher.<sup>26</sup> Watnick, approaches the analysis from the perspective of Lukács' inability to accept the existing philosophical tendencies of his day, as providing solutions to his concern with man's alienation from the existing social order. This was an alienation which Lukács attempted to transcend in the Die Seele und die Formen, a book in which Lukács emphasized form as the ultimate category, for an understanding and revolutionizing of the world. But these abstract forms could only be known through experience and intuition, and in terms of the artist was a near-subjective experience. The Nyugat movement, which Lukács led at one point took this thesis to a point, where they advocated that

the artists develop a "language," which would express poetically socio-political viewpoints, create new horizons and prepare for the revolution.<sup>27</sup>

The consistency earlier mentioned in the development of Lukács' intellectual position is not however, smoothly flowing, but rather a dialectical movement. It was during Lukács' contact and dialogue with Georg Simmel that the former developed a more systematic and less mystic conception of alienation. At this point Lukács learned from Simmel's sociology that conflict between the claims of the individual and the claims of society produces a "tragic ambiguity," which tends to pervade the core of every social formation; and an internal alienation of the individual from those social formations. But Simmel in his formalistic, a-historical fashion saw these tendencies as universal and morphological. The key idea which Lukács reinforced during this period and which facilitated his shift to Marx's dialectical method, however, was that the individual has an inherent drive toward unity and wholeness, which rebels against the segmented role functioning demanded by the society. A drive which is channelled in human action toward resolution of the conflict.<sup>28</sup> Given the above, the later key (Marxian) to an understanding of alienation could resolve around Lukács' revival of Marx's notion of "human essence," a notion which lends itself to aesthetic interpretation, and the dialectical unfolding in human action to a resolution of alienation. In other words, given the influence of Simmel's sociology, Lukács could later

easily view alienation as the crisis in modern society, society whereby man is deprived of his self-identity and autonomy. But this alienation can be resolved by "individual types," transcending their situation in concrete action, in history. But before Lukács could attain this position, he had to criticize Georg Simmel's position. This Lukács did in 1923 in Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein. Here Lukács calls the symptoms of alienation as expressed in "bourgeois philosophy" objectification (Verdinglichung). This can be seen as a criticism against Simmel who argued that institutions in society were an objectification of the self, that is self-alienation.

It may be noted that Lukács' criticism of Simmel is similar to Engels' criticism of Feuerbach. However Lukács' alluded criticism of German philosophy is part of a larger criticism of the philosophy of Descartes and Spinoza, from which Lukács concluded that bourgeois philosophy had failed to grasp the world completely.<sup>29</sup> Lukács' criticism in relation to the work of Simmel and Weber is sociologically relevant in so far as Lukács argues that objectification cannot be overcome when the individual, rather than the class, is made the centre of the sociological epistemology. For the maker and creator of history is the collective entity. Thus, "the individual can never come to be the measure of things," because the individual necessarily confronts objective reality as a complex of inflexible things which he finds ready and unchangeable, which he can accept or reject only in a

subjective judgement.

In his biography of Georg Lukács, Morris Watnick suggests that the First World War produced the need for a re-evaluation on Lukács' part, of which the consequence was Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein. Similarly, Watnick also suggests the spectre of the Second World War, and the "shock of knowing that he had shared the same teachers with many spokesmen for Nazism," may also be a cause in Lukács' strong rejection of the book as part of his serious intellectual development. The point is that Lukács was strongly influenced by Simmel and Weber. And his later developments on types of literary characters may well have been taken from Weber's use of the ideal type.

When placed within the historical context of Weber's work, Lukács' formulation of "the ordinary" and "the essential" life, become more meaningful. These two concepts are epistemological focus points for Lukács' development of his types of characters, as portrayed in literature. As stated earlier, in his earlier formulations but particularly prior to History And Class-Consciousness, Lukács had decided that theory and practice, or as he saw it then, the alienation of thought from existence, and alienation of the individual from society, are only resolved in action. But this required a scale of preferences. Only in this way, Lukács thought, could man's self-hood be restored. Incidentally, a humanism of a kind very similar to that which underlies the work of Feuerbach, can be noted here.<sup>30</sup>



Lukács, then posed the question of ordinary and essential life, with the basic pre-supposition that life was the most unreal, and that genuine life was always impossible on the empirical plane of living. Lukács suggested that in ordinary life, we fulfill ourselves, only marginally. "Our life has no real necessity here, merely what is empirically given."<sup>31</sup> Lukács, then sees life as a range of possibilities coupled with a corresponding order of literary forms, ranging from the ordinary life in which all choices are possible, and in which therefore nothing is achieved, or realized. In essential life, the individual is faced with absolute norms which demand the ultimate of man. This is a life of high tension and action which demand ultimates, best represented in tragedy. Lukács suggested further, that in ordinary life absolute ethical values are compromised away for the sake of needs. In life dramatized in tragedy on the other hand, it is itself, which is sacrificed for the sake of these values. And it is only in the latter rare moments that we become our "real" human selves.

Both Watnick and Zitta agree that these early formulations which appear in Die Seele und die Formen (The Soul And The Forms), pre-supposed abstract forms as created by the human mind, as essential, but also that Lukacs' search for the relationships of these forms to man's existence presumed an ethical problem. But this concern of Lukács and specifically his modification of character types based on the dichotomy of ordinary and essential have their roots in Kant

and Hegel. (Note -- Hegel's world historical individual for example).<sup>32</sup> As a Marxist, in the 1920's, Lukács restated his formulation of the tension between the "real" and the "ordinary" life in terms of the divergence between proletarian class consciousness and the felt interest of the workers. The tension would no longer be the concern of the individual ego (as Simmel suggested), but of the proletariat as a class. And its resolution would be sought in the experiences of action, but dialectical action in Hegelian terms; between the proletariat as a maker of history and the history it made.

As presented above therefore, Lukács transformed his early conception of the relation between the individual and society, in terms of the dialectical movement of historical class relations. This is one aspect of the continuity in Lukács' work. Similarly by conceptualizing the class consciousness as a system of thought imputed to a social group, Lukács was grafting the Weberian notion of an ideal onto Marx's sociology of classes. At this time, Lukács was developing a doctrine of proletarian class consciousness peculiarly his own. But moreover, Lukács was also setting the impetus for a Mannheimian sociology of knowledge, though one minus its Marxian tendency. For it was Lukács highly instrumental Marxism which suggested to Mannheim that all social and political doctrines which pass for knowledge, might be better regarded as existentially determined doctrines.<sup>33</sup> Watnick suggests that in so far as Lukács' Marxism gave rise to Mannheim's relativism, it was "ultra

relativistic," just as was Mannheim's sociology of knowledge.

But Lukács' History And Class Consciousness was not simply the product of an epistemological shift of emphasis from the subjectivism of the individual to the consciousness of social classes -- both proletarian and bourgeoisie. Lukács also suggested that the resolution of this contradiction must be sought in the experience of dialectical action. That is to say a resolution in Hegelian terms. And this statement made Lukács' work heretical to the Comintern. For what the latter attacked was the assignment of an active role to human consciousness well beyond the Leninist "reflection doctrine." Whereas Lukács was consistently seeking a less "mechanistic doctrine" of consciousness. The Comintern found that Lukács' doctrine conflicted with the Leninist doctrine of the proletarian vanguard as the revolutionary transforming group. Further however, Zitta notes that the beginning attack on Lukács came from within the Hungarian party, despite the prominence of place given to the proletarian elite in Lukács book.<sup>34</sup>

It is interesting to note that Zitta and Watnick argue different reasons for Lukács' later retraction of some of his earlier themes in History And Class Consciousness. Zitta in attempting to explore the political psyche of Lukács reveals a fanatic "Jacobin", and argues that it is not so much alligiance to the Communist party at the time, but rather from the contradictions of a "split in personality." One of a "terroristic normativism," as Zitta calls it:

having experienced a deep and perpetual alienation from social life, Lukács, says Zitta, advocates a conscious terrorism to transform that life. Zitta terms this a dialectic transformation of alienation through terror. Lukács' views on force as an indispensable ingredient of Marxism has immediate policy implications. If force used by Marxists turns into terror, it does so partly because terror is the correlate of Marxist "spirituality," the maintenance of emancipation intact, and partly it is a product of the connatural behaviour of unpredictable dialecticians who cannot trust even themselves.<sup>35</sup> Further on, Zitta suggests that Lukács was simply an extreme elaboration of his Russian critics, "one may say that Lukács' Marxism appears esoteric, elitist, totalitarian, terroristic and fundamentally reactionary and irrational in its views on society and politics."<sup>36</sup> For Zitta then, Lukács was a "gnostic activist," a personality which is consistent even in his pre-Marxist period. With this formulation of Lukács' Weltanschauung, Zitta attempts to expose Marx's theory of the dialectic, Marxist developments of political consciousness and Lukács epistemology in social psychological terms as dangerous religious dogma.

Watnick's treatment of Lukács' epistemology is on the other hand on two basic levels, the philosophical and the sociological. In terms of the first, Lukács tried to establish the superiority of Marxism as an account of the object of knowledge. But one which "runs the Hegelian course." In this connection Lukács is seen as attempting to make the world intelligible, and logical. In terms of the second level,

Lukács saw the actual world of data as an imperfect realization of the rational world, but this is misleading for only Marxism incorporates as an ideology the "highest truths" of the dialectic of history. But "proletarian class consciousness," which is identical with these higher truths is the only ideology capable of breaking with the existing conception of social relations as fixed and immutable. This makes the proletariat the instrument of reason in history vis à vis the bourgeoisie. The former is achieved in conscious action and choice, one which therefore negates and transcends the positivistic existentialism of "ordinary existence." This was therefore a Marxism in the Luxembourge tradition of mass spontaneous action, for it is on the existential "plane" of choice, commitment and action that the dialectic of history would have to be enacted, not through "laws of motion of the economic system." It is this brand of Marxism which conflicted with the proletarian vanguard, elite theory of the existing Communist party. For the latter viewed the vanguard as initiator of working class activity. In a sense then the Party had to denounce the genuinely revolutionary elements of Lukács theory. For it was their alter-ego best expressed by that other Hegelian, Stalin. Nevertheless Lukács may have submitted precisely because of the priority of the Party, in his outlook, a priority of a social and intellectual kind.<sup>37</sup> Lukács himself had probably replied to his critics, even before they appeared on the scene, for he himself had written in Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein:—

Solitude is the genuine essence of the tragic; for the soul, having fulfilled itself in destiny, may have others of its kind, but no companions.<sup>38</sup>

Politically, Lukács had relented under the force of anger of Zinoviev and the Fifth Congress Of The Communist International, but intellectually and ideologically Lukács held to his position, as his later works reveal, and transcended the onslaught of his critics.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Georg Lukács into the French Histoire et Conscience De Class, Kostas Axeles and Jacqueline Bois, published Lies Editions De Minuit, 1960, p. 263.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 263-264.

<sup>3</sup>Note that Lukács style of writing is very involved and convoluted, as well. This makes his works difficult to comprehend.

<sup>4</sup>See Victor Zitta's Georg Lukács' Marxism Alienation, Dialectic Revolution: A Study In Utopia And Ideology. pub. The Hague, Martin Minjhoff, 1964. This aspect of the analysis of the work of Georg Lukács is important because of Lukács' refusal to acknowledge as intellectually relevant his early publication of Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein translated into the French Histoire et Conscience De Classe.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Zitta, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., The Introduction & Summary and Conclusion . Though resisting the charge of psychologism, Zitta emphasizes the immediacy of Lukács philosophy for his general emotional rejection of the immanent, and inability to articulate the transcendent. At other points in the work, Zitta suggests Lukács is guilty of bad faith in the existentialist, Sartrean sense, as a factor in Lukács rejection of History And Class Consciousness.

<sup>7</sup>Taken from "Zur Kritik des Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie Einleitung", in Deutsch-Französische Tarbücher, Feb. 1844. Translated by T.B. Bottomore in T.B. Bottomore & Maximilien Rubel Karl Marx, Selected Writings In Sociology And Social Philosophy, p. 190. Pelican Books, 1963.

<sup>8</sup>On this question Zitta remarks: Lukács thought stands somewhere at the convergence of the Marxian and Hegelian tradition of thought. Some people claim that Lukács is the greatest living disciple of Marx; others again that he is one of the most knowledgeable of the living Hegelians. From these claims alone one could infer that Lukács is a synthetic exponent of two nineteenth century thinkers who dominate various trends of thought in the present century. See Victor Zitta's work, p. 119. Victor Zitta sees Lukács as moving intellectually through two stages, a pre-Marxian stage, highly influenced by Hegelianism. But a stage Zitta terms "Gnostic Activism", which tapers off into radical

scepticism( roughly 1908-16). Secondly his Marxian stage, one which modifies from dogmatic Marxism to mature Marxism (roughly 1916 - present day).

Morris Watnick's biography Georg Lukács: On Aesthetics And Communism, seems clearer to this writer on Lukács intellectual changes (though Watnick too stresses Lukács Marxism as being "tainted" by an overly Hegelian dialectic ). Watnick sees a neo Kantianism, a Hegelian and a Marxian stage. Ref. Soviet Survey 1958 - 1959. See also: Peter Demetz Marx, Engels And the Poets, University of Chicago Press, 1967, who supports Watnick's description.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., Histoire et Conscience De Classe (1960) p. 20.

<sup>10</sup>This criticism of Lukács follows closely Marx's own criticism of Hegel, in the Critique of Political Economy.

<sup>11</sup>Morris Watnick, Georg-Lukács: On Aesthetics And Communism, Soviet Survey, No. 23, January-March, 1958, p. 62. But Watnick also suggests that Emil Lask's influence, his semi-phenomenology, also facilitated Lukács' later shift to Hegel's objective idealism. Victor Zitta (see earlier reference) discusses this same point but suggesting that Lukács raised this problem philosophically because he was unable to reconcile the intellectual milieu of his time with the then existing social-political conditions in Hungary. Hence, Lukács' book, The Soul And The Forms (Die Seele und Formen) published in 1911, in which Lukács discusses the contrasting positions of the poet and the platonist. The former generalizes in his own experiences, which eventually become poetic constructs. But the poet reveals himself and examines himself to his public. The platonist (philosopher) on the other hand, is artificial for his constructs are based on haphazard experiences, for he seeks an autonomous world, while the world which he actually experiences, is strange and only capable of articulation, through the experiences of poets. For all this, see Zitta's Chapter I "Promethean Impulses", pp. 21-35, but especially, p. 26.

<sup>12</sup>Quoted by Morris Watnick, from Die Seel und die Formen pp. 34-35, Soviet Survey, No. 23, Jan-March, 1958.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Zitta, p.33.

<sup>14</sup>C. F. Victor Zitta, p. 34.

<sup>15</sup>See The Historical Novel - Georg Lukács, translated by Hanna and Stanley Mitchell, from the German, Lukács' preface to the English Edition (1960), p. 13, published by Merlin Press Ltd., Great Britain, 1962.



<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>17</sup>This analysis of Lukács is similar of imagination. A process in which the writer is creative and not primarily concerned with the presentation of actual truth of particular events, as is the historian, or with the abstract relations of ideas and reality, as is the philosopher. See Francis Connolly's The Types of Literature, Harcourt Brace & World, Inc., (1955) p. 3.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 3. Here Connolly makes a similar point with his reference to the literature of knowledge, as another type. Here the role of the artist is interpretative of facts, ideas or happenings. This type of literature ... appeals primarily to the sense of reason or intelligence. Inherent in this notion of Connolly's is the presupposition of intuition, on the part of the artist. A problem which Lukács thought he had resolved in his Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein, by his use of the dialectic. But one which Ortega Y. Gasset and Georg Simmel as well as Benedetto Croce had to deal with. For example, Ortega Y. Gasset discusses the problem of the reality of art in terms of the removal of the artist from the real event, as the condition for pure observation. Writing of the novel Gasset asserts: The author must build around us a wall without chinks or loopholes through which we might catch from within the novel, a glimpse of the outside world. See Ortega Y. Gasset The Dehumanization Of Art And Other Writings On Art And Culture, p. 85, published, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956. Georg Simmel, taking the Hegelian concepts of becoming and being, Simmel insists that the artist caught most deeply by life, is at the same time driven to creative formation, which puts the duality at a new point of rest, no longer tied to the psychological origin of the work. See Georg Simmel 1858 - 1918: A Collection of Essays, With Translations And A Bibliography, edited by Kurt Wolf, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup>Zitta, op. cit, p. 118.

<sup>20</sup>Hegel op. cit., The Phenomenology, pp. 80-81.

<sup>21</sup>See for example, for this widely accepted criticism of Hegel, Louis Dupré The Philosophical Foundations of Marxism Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966, pp. 97-98. Herbert Marcuse Reason And Revolution, p. 246. Marcuse declares Hegel's identity of real and ideal preposterous, and contradicting some of the implications of the dialectic, in Hegel's own system. Also Karl Lowith From Hegel to Nietzsche, op. cit, pp. 162-73. But for a detailed critique of the Hegelian philosophical system by Karl Marx and Engels, see The German Ideology, edited by Pascall, International

Publishers, New York, 1965. Also K. Marx's The Economic And Philosophical Manuscript of 1844, translated by Martin Mulligan, edited with an introduction by Dirk J. Struik, International Publishers Co. Inc., pp. 170-193.

<sup>22</sup>Fredrick Engels Ludwig Feuerback And The Outcome Of Classical German Philosophy, edited by C.P. Dutt, International Publishers, Co. Inc., 1941, pp. 24-25.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>24</sup>Lowith, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>25</sup>See Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence Of Christianity, translated by G. Eliot, Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1957, pp. 244-245.

<sup>26</sup>Zitta, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

<sup>27</sup>Zitta, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>28</sup>See Kurt H. Wolff (edited) The Sociology of Georg Simmel, Glencoe...: Free Press, Illinois, 1950, p. 315. also Wolff Conflict And The Web Of Group Affiliations, Glencoe, Free Press, 1955, section on 'Conflict'. For a summary of Simmel's ideas on alienation and conflict see E.V. Walter Simmel's Sociology Of Power: The Architecture Of Politics, an essay in Georg Simmel of Collection of Essays with translations and a bibliography, edited by Kurt Wolff, Ohio State University Press, 1959, pp. 139-166. In another section of the thesis the sociological tradition of individual society as a dualism is more extensively discussed. Here I merely wish to indicate Lukács as influenced by the German school.

<sup>29</sup>Zitta op. cit. pp. 153-154; also p. 160. In a later section I will take up this debate to show how Lukács used the above argument in his literary criticism.

<sup>30</sup>Marcuse, op. cit., pp. 270-273.

<sup>31</sup>Morris Watnick, op. cit, p. 66; see also Zitta, op. cit. p. 54. See also G. Lukács' Realism In Our Times (1964) p.24.

<sup>32</sup>Watnick for example traces Lukács formulation to the influence of Emil Lask at Heidelberg, prior to 1911. Lask had a semi-phenomenological notion of real essences, but one which facilitated Lukács later shift to Hegelianism. Op. cit, pp. 2.

<sup>33</sup>Watnick, op. cit., p. 63. Mannheim himself does not acknowledge the influence of Lukács on his own epistemology. But Mannheim does recognize in the concept of ideologies that these are rationalizations of class -- in its broader sense -- interests, which must distort the actualities of social life, if they are to serve those interests effectively. Watnick suggests however, that the consequences of this construction of sociology of knowledge, was the intellectual paralysis of total scepticism. For the radical modification of Lukács original statement in Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein, was Mannheim's assumption of interest charged thinking as inherently deceptive. This led to relationism, which despaired of the attainment of objectively valid knowledge, except in the neutral fields of science.

But further implications of Mannheim's position in relation to the question of social reality will be resumed in a further section of the thesis.

But T.B. Bottomore in Karl Marx: Early Writings, translated and edited by T.B. Bottomore, introduced and forwarded by Erick Fromm, McGraw-Hill 1964, makes a point similar to Watnick's, that Lukács elaboration of Marx's early writings, suggests that Marx's theory has the relativistic character of all historical thought. He also notes that Marcuse's Reason And Revolution alludes to this fact as well. But Bottomore neglects to mention a) that Lukács came to reject Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein later in his career, as both Zitta and Watnick do, or b) That even disregarding Lukács statement in later works on class consciousness and the dialectic as a method, his literary criticisms remain valid.

<sup>34</sup>Zitta, op. cit., pp. 140-143, suggests that it was not so much the content of attacks on Marxism as the jealousy of Bella Kun, and the leader of the Hungarian Communist Party that caused the attacks on Lukács. In fact Zitta suggests that Lukács may have been appealing to the Comintern in his book. Zitta also suggests that it is Thomas Mann's exposure of Lukács personality in The Magic Mountain which stimulated his retreat from his earlier position (p.143).

<sup>35</sup>Zitta, op. cit., p. 197.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>37</sup>Watnick, op. cit., pp. 79-80. Part IV of the Biography.

<sup>38</sup>G. Lukács Die Theorie des Romans, Zertschieft fur Aesthetik und Allgemeine Kuristwassenschiaft, Bd. XI, Heft 3, 1916, p. 237. Quoted in Morris Watnick, Soviet Survey 23, (January - March, 1958) p. 61.

## CHAPTER V

Truth soon changes by domestication into power; and from directing in the discrimination and appraisal of the product, becomes influential in the production. To admire on principle is the only way to imitate without loss of originality.<sup>1</sup>

(Samuel Taylor Coleridge  
Biographia Literaria.)

As we saw in the last chapter the central focus for Lukács' philosophy of literary criticism in Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein was that reality could only be seized and penetrated as a totality. And only a subject which itself is a totality is capable of this penetration.<sup>2</sup> Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein can be seen as emphasizing human action in a period of working class advance. The problem whether literary criticism became for Lukács an alternative to compliance, defense of, or opposition to Stalinist politics is not as relevant in terms of our discussion for the importance of Lukács' work.

What Lukács continued to emphasize in his writings after 1925 is that the category of totality, the determining feature of the whole over the parts is the essence of the method which Marx took from Hegel. Having argued vigorously for the dialectic method as a philosophical epistemology adequate for an understanding of economic, just as well as

literary development, Lukács would likely resent a discussion of his theory of literature in terms of the reflection notion discussed in an earlier chapter. But I think this is valid if it aids our understanding of what Lukács was arguing against. The key terms of definition of the reflection theory of literature in the essential function, is to explain in social and historical terms, rather than individual ones, the quality and greatness of literature, as well as its style, content and forms. How can Lukács' method be seen as the more adequate analysis in terms of the foregoing, when the concept of totality appears so nebulous at first ?

Lukács suggests that the achievement of such a totality demands the transcendence of individualism. On the one hand, an individualism, whether characterized by the isolated capitalist or fragmented worker, or for that matter the somewhat psychoanalytic characterizations of action albeit individual symbolic ones, fixated on a neo-Freudian system, such as Kenneth Burke's system. For this kind of critical system sees the world as subjecting individuals to a destiny beyond their control. Burke's symbolic action, though admitting of public content, is concretized only in individual strategies.<sup>3</sup> Even if we regard Burke's work as the most sophisticated critical system developed outside of the Marxist system, his dramatisic pentad is operational only when we select one or two characters from a literary work and analyse them against a "scene" or narrative background of a benevolent but unchanging social environment.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, Lukács was also arguing against the individualism of early Stalinist socialist realism, which tended to develop in the Soviet Union. Here the forms of action were on the heroic proletarian worker, and a literary criticism which stressed the primacy of the economic environment in the narrative.<sup>5</sup> Making a guarded, but nonetheless poignant attack on the economic naturalism of much literature of Stalin's day, Lukács states:

In the illustrative literature of Stalin's day realism was supplanted by an officially prescribed naturalism, combined with a so called revolutionary romanticism, officially prescribed likewise. On the level of abstract theory, no doubt, if nowhere else, naturalism was contrasted in the thirties with realism. But this abstract idea could be clothed in flesh and blood only by being set in opposition to the "illustrative literature"; for in practice the manipulators of literature denounced all facts, not in accordance with government regulations -- though they denounced no other kinds of facts as "nationalistic."<sup>6</sup>

Given the foregoing, Lukács suggests that for the creative writer taking either of the two suggested positions, action is only possible if such a writer accepts the laws of society as "natural laws", or if he retreats into a purely ethical position. As a political rider, Lukács suggests that the working class if organized in a form corresponding to its consciousness, is able to overcome such false dichotomies as individual, society, ethics and science; theory and practice, and so on.

According to Lukács, both vulgar Marxism and the bourgeois tradition in literature have converged in taking a

one sided view. They have attempted to situate works of literature within a social historical totality, but have not studied the way in which the writer creates a totality within his works. Lukács' perception in terms of the reflection theory then, is that the writer is not simply the product, does not simply reflect his age, but seeks to comprehend it.

It was Lukács' need to comprehend which gave rise in his early work to a concern with form.<sup>7</sup> With the development of a dialectic of a Hegelian kind, Lukács tends to relate literary form to historical epochs. In his early work, Lukács contrasts the modern age with what he calls the "closed civilizations" of Greece and medieval Christianity, a world less rich than our own; but less problematic because of the overriding sense of totality. To this age belongs the epic. Some of the earliest known epics are the works of the classical Greeks, Homer and Virgil or the later works of Milton. In its earlier form Lukács views the epic as highly descriptive in style, drawing the entire social environment. A kind of historical illusion as it were, in which men are acting, but the structure, the definite structures of their characters remains vague. With the collapse of this closed world the epic form changed. But what Lukács attempts is not a description of artistic types corresponding to historical development, which emerge, develop and disintegrate in some organic fashion.<sup>8</sup>

The next dominant type of literature, the drama, arose out of the epic world. Lukács conceives of the classical drama as arising out of the historical growth of social

antagonisms in life, which produces both tragedy as the genre of portrayed conflict, as well as satire or comedy. Comedy in the Greek tradition, described the domain of everyday reality, of people "inferior to ourselves."

The novel in the classical form is also for Lukács a descendant of the drama. It really emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but took its specific form as the bourgeois novel, during and after the French Revolution. Walter Scott, whom Lukács sees as perfecting the early constitution of the historical novel, is seen as providing a new conception of reality, which is concentrated in the historical novel. The novel, like the epic, attempts the portrayal, presents a total reality. But the descriptions of the outer objective world are drawn in the context of the inner life of man. The novel creates a content and form for presentation of historically immanent problems in society. And since the significance of the French Revolution is the breakdown of feudal social structure and the emergence of the bourgeois, then capitalist society is the reformation of new class relationships, and so on; the European critics tended to define the novel as a genre in its bourgeois form, in terms of its presentation of this reality. Both the situations, the characters and the narrations of this art form, are historically specific, in the sense that the conflicts and structural contradictions of this epoch tended to reflect themselves in the novel.

#### REALISM AND LUKÁCS' CONCEPT OF TOTALITY

If Lukács' early work is connected to his later works,



a clear bias emerges, in which he traces the history of literary types --such as the above three -- which coincide with the development and evolution of Greek civilization. Lukács does not tolerate any notion of a history of thought in the above connection, prior to the Greeks.<sup>9</sup> One can contrast Lukács' perspective in this context with that of the English Marxist Christopher Caudwell. The latter in contrast to Lukács sees the sources of poetry in particular and literature in general, not so much in Greek thought and philosophy, but in "Heightened" language and religion. Caudwell states in his chapter "The Birth Of Poetry," (Illusion And Reality):

Religion spoke always in rhythm or metre, and just as the epic grew out of poetic theogony glorifying aristocratic history, so the early agricultural ritual, cast in metrical form, became the Athenian tragedy and comedy, and finally, after various vicissitudes, survives as poetical drama today in opera and the Christmas pantomime. ...The form peculiar to poetry in a civilized age, i.e., the primitive form of all literature. A consideration of poetry must therefore be fundamental for a consideration of literary art.<sup>10</sup>

Ernst Fischer too, in his broad panoramic analysis of the evolution of the written word, traces its sources, not to the Greeks, but to primitive man and the necessity to conceptualize objects of nature. A necessity which rested in imitation and religion.<sup>11</sup> Fischer's work is at odds with Lukács' analysis of the origin of forms in Greek society. Fischer states in his first chapter on The Function of Art:

Archaeological, ethnological, and cultural

discoveries no longer allow us to accept classical Greek art as belonging to "our childhood." On the contrary we see in it something relatively late and mature, and in its perfection in the age of Pericles we detect hints of the decadence and decline.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to the broad perspective, the panoramic style of Ernst Fischer, Lukács proposes a philosophical one. A perspective based on the dialectical analysis of the three basic influences on the modern bourgeois novel, the epic, the drama and the classical novel. He explains in the forward to the Historical Novel the reason for this approach, and the basic suggestion is that the "real spade work" for a complete historical analysis of the developments leading to the contemporary novel, has not been adequately done so far.<sup>13</sup> The theoretical perspective developed in this work is compatible with his earlier definition of the novel:

The novel is the epic of a time when the extensive totality of life is no longer immediately given, of a time for which the immanence of meaning to life has become a problem, but which nonetheless, has not ceased to aim at totality.<sup>14</sup>

In Lukács early work there is no attempt to connect the disintegration of totality of consciousness with the specific social and economic forms of capitalism, however. Nevertheless, Lukács had taken an important step towards a dialectical concept of totality in consciousness -- what his pupil Lucien Goldmann terms collective group consciousness "or" group vision. A concept first systematically used

by Lukács, and previously by Dilthey, though in an imprecise manner.

World vision is a term for the whole complex of ideas, aspirations and feelings which link together the members of a social group (a group which in most cases, assumes the existence of a social class ).

Individual writers and philosophers may express this vision, on an imaginative and conceptual plane. Goldmann, like Lukács, sees any great literary and artistic work as the expression of a world vision. This vision is the product of a collective group consciousness which reaches its highest expression in the mind of a poet or thinker.<sup>15</sup> Methodologically speaking what Lukács says only implicitly, but what is made explicit in Goldmann's analysis, is something of great sociological importance, first discovered by Emile Durkheim, though not purged of its positivistic implications. And that is that both positivism and empiricism, which are opposed to dialectical thought, presuppose that at any given moment in a particular investigation there is a certain amount of definitely acquired knowledge, from which scientific thought moves forward, in a more or less straight line, without being normally obliged to keep returning to problems already solved. Rationalism, because it assumes the existence of innate and immediately accessible ideas and empiricism by its reliance upon sensation or perception fail to see that ideas are only a partial aspect of a less abstract reality: that of the whole living man.<sup>16</sup>

We can see from the foregoing analysis then that

given the particular development and configuration of Lukács' thought, forms of literature are significant in his early chronological analysis of art. Lukács suggests that by the time of the prominence of tragedy there developed a philosophical alienation with rigid opposition of meaning and being confined by the transcendence of Platonic thought. The period of prominence of tragedy was one concluding the age of Homeric epic forms, when the content of communicated literature withered. This marked a dichotomy in the totality of philosophical thought and artistic expression -- a rigid separation in man's consciousness, not previously expressed between man's concrete situation and man's potential.<sup>17</sup> Also Lukács expressed this separation as a kind of historical inevitability, but one which from then on, expressed itself in men's literary concerns. In his later writings, however, a more systematic and less mystified explanation emerges. Nevertheless, this explanation reveals a certain consistency with his earlier writings -- this is particularly clear in The Historical Novel and Realism In Our Time.<sup>18</sup> The concept of realism is lodged in the totality of form, and the former concept is clarified, so that Lukács sees the whole, not just as the sum of the parts, but as determining the parts. Methodologically, realism is not achieved by accumulation of factual details, but by the creation of a structure which allows for the literary and sociological analysis of the understanding of the totality of existence -- which in turn gives place and meaning to every detail.

The concept of totality has at least three meanings. First, the totality of history and historical movement. This is in contradistinction to the unilinear, mono-causal movement of say evolutionary theory in anthropology, a lot of which Fischer uses unquestioningly. Secondly, the totality of philosophical and concrete existence, for example, the relation of the novel to the French Revolution and polemical debates over the comprehension of social change. And finally, the totality of form and content in literature. In the chapter entitled "Reification and the consciousness of the Proletariat," in History And Class Consciousness, Lukács discusses the aspect of concrete existence in his second category of totality. He suggests:

The process of labour is fragmented in an ever increasing proportion, into abstractly rational partial operations, and this disrupts the relations of the worker to the product as a totality, and reduces his labour to a special function repeating itself mechanically.<sup>19</sup>

What Lukács attempts to demonstrate here is that the fragmentation in production leads to the alienation of man, and to philosophical alienation, one aspect of the foregoing, which is expressed in the novels of modern bourgeois society, itself an expression of the particular process of alienation of contemporary capitalist society. It is partly because of these, argues Lukács, that we have false dichotomies such as reason versus feeling.

How, then, does Lukács connect the three categories

of totality, and how do they relate to his later formulation of the historical novel? One of the fundamental features of Lukács' philosophy of literary criticism, in its relation to his substantive theoretical and empirical analysis, is that he makes a clear distinction between description (beschreiben) and narration (erzählen). And in his polemical discussions the two methods are dialectically opposed -- because the meaning of literature is posed in terms of its totality, its inner coherence, social significance and how it portrays what it portrays. As a preemptory illustration which pervades all of his translated works, Lukács asserts that Walter Scott and Honore Balzac narrate, that is, they represent social life realistically, in terms of the form of literature corresponding to their social epoch. They create typical characters and situations revealing the historical forces, in their contemporary facets. The naturalists, on the other hand, describe in uncombined, unselected details, unhistorical constellations, in which characters are historically and so realistically distorted in presentation and narrative detail. Later contemporary bourgeois literature is specifically susceptible to this. But underlying both positions are not simply formalistic stylized differences, but radically different ideological and historical perspectives. <sup>20</sup>

#### THE TOTALITY OF HISTORY AND HISTORICAL MOVEMENT

To return to our problem of Lukács' concept of totality of historical movement, as one aspect of his analysis,

Lukács sees the writer's and philosopher's view of the world, their weltanschauung, as it were, as underlying their works. There are two assumptions which are related and which concern us here. First of all, for Lukács, as for his earliest predecessor Aristotle, man is essentially "zoon politikon" a social animal. This is the basic presupposition of any realist outlook. Given this view, formalistic philosophy, just as its correlate formal styles, cannot be regarded as a priori categories, from which we analyse social-historical life. Rather philosophies, like formal styles, types and genres of literature are rooted in specific epochs of social development and cannot be usefully abstracted from these bases. As Lukács states:

Content determines form. But there is no content of which Man himself is not the focal point. However various the données of literature, the basic question is and still remains: what is Man.<sup>21</sup>

Thus the human significance of literature, its styles and the prevailing philosophies cannot be separated from their social environment. For this is the context in which they were created.<sup>22</sup>

In order to elaborate on his chronological historical analysis that the historical drama came after the historical epic, first conceptualized in Greek art; Lukács provides two levels of analysis. On one level, Lukács attempts a synopsis of a theory of our knowledge of reality, and man's ways of conceptualizing, comprehending and changing that reality. On another level,

Lukács uses the dialectic to show the historical roots of the contemporary bourgeois novel in the early epic, in drama and the advancements on them. The first level of explanation though distinct from, is vital to an understanding of the second level of analysis.

Lukács asserts that real, substantial, infinite and extensive totality of life can only be reproduced mentally in a relative form.<sup>23</sup> This relativity however, acquires a peculiar form in the artistic reflection of reality. For to become art it must never appear to be relative. For instance, a purely intellectual reflection of facts or laws of objective reality may openly admit to this relativity, in fact it must do so. For if any form of knowledge pretends to be absolute, thereby ignoring the dialectic character of the merely relative, that is the incomplete reproduction of the infinity of objective reality, it is inevitably falsified. But it is different with art, for no character can contain the infinite wealth of features, and of reactions, to be found in life itself. But the nature of artistic creation consists in the ability of this relativity, to be presented, be made to appear as life itself. Indeed artistic creations may even be heightened, above that of an imperceptible objective reality.<sup>24</sup> In passing, the following significances for sociology can be attached to this position of Lukács'. First of all, although Mannheim's sociology of knowledge has parts of its root in Lukács' qualified statements in History And Class Consciousness, Lukács made a statement about the reality of knowledge in terms



of its method. What he seems to be saying is not that our conception of reality and formulation in thought, and knowledge is relative, but rather that attempts to grasp and conceptualize social life cannot ignore the dialectic -- he does not recognize any knowledge or statements as Marxist which ignores this tenet. This is a long way from Mannheim's position. Secondly, Lukács statement of reality has a strong historical content, in the context of art. For according to Lukács the artistic presentation of reality and its apparent "larger than life" aspect, has its roots in the Greek past.<sup>25</sup>

In terms of Lukács' treatment of the historical roots of the contemporary novel, he has stated:

The general paradox of art is sharpened in those genres which are compelled by their content and form to appear as living images of the totality of life. And this is what tragedy (drama) and epic must do.<sup>26</sup>

The effect of totality in any art is dependent on the artist's grasp of the important "normative connections of life", transformed into the immediacy of the personal features of actual human beings. Form in both epic and tragedy has the task of giving immediacy to the totality, to individual life in varying ways. Lukács defines epic and dramatic form in much the same way that Hegel does.<sup>27</sup> In Hegel's scheme epic was characterized from its earliest days, by "totality of objects"; drama, in contrast was characterized by "totality of movement." Both epic and drama are also characterized by action. The epic then focuses on objects in such a way that the effect (on us, the

audience -- emphasis mine) is a clear conception of men in interaction with their social and historical environment. The same is true of the classical epics of Greek antiquity. Although these were mainly concerned with the lives of gods, kings and generals. This means that for Hegel, the epic representation of the interaction of individual characters in interaction with others and with their environment, gave the effect of a totality of a stage of historical development. The foundations of this interaction, the objects, social and natural, which in life are permanently related to the activity of men, become in epic presentations, significant. This gives the impression of "totality of objects". Lukács puts it thus:

The demand for a "totality of objects" in epic is essentially a demand for an artistic image of human society which produces and reproduces itself in the same way as the daily process of life.<sup>28</sup>

Drama on the other hand, aims at representation of the internal-ity of total movement, it is an artistic image of human aspirations in mutual conflict. It is as if the objective, external forces of a particular epoch and significance, the breakup of the feudal family or political system, the transformation of the pre-Napoleon French Revolution into a bourgeois democratic one, are transformed in such a way: that they manifest themselves in the colliding actions of the characters on a dramatic stage. The dress, make up, external settings of the stage however, have no other significance than the working out of these colliding actions. They further action in dialogue,

effect and so on. Lukács illustrates this economy of presentation of external objects -- that is the specific historical setting of the stage -- by showing the at once specificity and generality of Shakespeare's dramas. In King Lear, the totality of movement is centred around the relations of Lear and his daughters; Gloucester and his sons, and so on, the internal resolution of the breakup of the feudal family. The specific structure of the dramatic collisions in Lear spring from the wider, general problematicness of the feudal family. But the portrayal of this collision, a necessary historical event, is reduced to the typical representation of the most important "attitudes of men", to those social and historical movements, out of which the specific collisions, such as Lear, arise, and which the collision dissolves. Summarizing this perspective on the drama, a perspective with a serious significance for a dialectical sociology of the relations between man and society, a necessarily historical, spatial, temporal relationship, Lukács asserts:

Any figure, any psychological feature of a figure which goes beyond the dialectical necessity of this connection, of the dynamics of the collision, must be superfluous from the point of view of the drama. Hence, Hegel is right to describe a composition which resolves itself in this way as the totality of movement.<sup>29</sup>

In Lukács' system then, the historical reality with which he is concerned, has two aspects, epistemologically speaking: the totality of objects, and the totality of movements. In the former, the tendency is descriptive, chronological and

analytical, spatial temporal connections are drawn in full. The relations between past and present institutions, patterns of beliefs, political systems, the significance of particular events, wars and so on are described. But the narrator presents a reality to which we relate in an "after the fact manner." In the latter, the particular significance of what is presented changes, for the audience. Specific, concrete conflicts which derive from the particular configuration of the "totality of objects", are drawn and have to be resolved. There is economy of description, detailed objectivity. In fact external objects are only meaningful in so far as they further the working out of human, finite collisions. The audience relates at a different level of response. To achieve this effect the element of "typicality" is drawn. The richness and breadth of this typicality is dependent on the phase of historical development to which this dramatic genre relates or corresponds, on the topic chosen by the dramatist and his artistic skill. At this point, uppermost in Lukács' mind is the question: is the significance of Shakespearean drama related to the particular historical forces working out in Shakespeare's day, the defeat of the old feudal nobility, the syncretical rise of the precursors of eighteenth century English bourgeoisie; and Shakespeare's ability to draw typical characters from a historical past, dusted of their unique esoteric quality and infused with new meanings? Or is the relation of Shakespearean drama to the development of that nation's capitalism (a willy nilly, one)

one of coincidence. Lukács answers the question thus:

It is certainly no accident that the great literature coincides with the great, world historical changes in human society.

Hegel saw in the conflict of Sophocles' *Antigone* the clash of those social forces which in reality led to the destruction of "primitive" forms of society. Again Aeschylus' *Oresteia* can be seen as the collision between the Greek matriarchal and patriarchal social order. Lukács makes a similar case for the "flowering" of tragedy during the Renaissance. But this time it was the "world historical collision", between a dying feudalism and emergence of bourgeois and pre-capitalist class society. Lukács concludes that if the social analyst, translates the formal requirements of the tragic, dramatic collision in a dialectical fashion, then "One can see in them the most highly generalized features of revolutionary transformations in life itself reduced to the abstract form of movement."<sup>30</sup>

But the processe of this movement, its abstraction, is qualified later in Lukács analysis, for as we have seen, he argues against a mechanistic stylization of abstract form. Partly because Lukács' intention is a demystification of abstract form, but, specifically because he is opposed to the intellectual isolation of dramatic collisions. Since these are merely representations of concrete social processes, taking place or about to take place in the society. Therefore in terms of the consistency of Lukács' use of the dialectic

as a method of analysis, which signifies an opposition to the excessive focussing of a dramatic situation to a short, temporal-spatial perspective. Lukács suggests two factors which dialectically relate the ramifications of the epic to the drama, and so validates, in his opinion, the notions of the totality of history and historical movement. The first link Lukács terms: the individuality of the dramatic hero. The second, he terms, the "moment in history", or the parting of the ways. We shall now turn our attention to a brief analysis of both notions, since they are significant as possible, specific interpretations of the sociological problem of the relations between individuals and the societies to which they belong. As a literary phenomenon, this aspect also provides Lukács with a philosophical and theoretical explanation of one way of viewing the relationship between epic and dramatic forms of literary material.

The concept of "world-historical-individual" is taken from Hegel, minus its idealistic content, in the sense that in Hegel's scheme, the choice of, and actions of individuals are negated as we move through the scheme, towards the final resolution of the dialectic of history, the Absolute Spirit.<sup>31</sup> Now, in Hegel's analysis, we saw that the world historical individuals are the great human beings in history, they are however agents of progress. The "world historical individual's" own particular purposes contain the substantial will of the world spirit. But in Hegel's analysis, his "great men" were Napoleons and those like him. They were great

whether they were conscious or otherwise at the period of their actions. Talcott Parsons has adequately summarized the epistemological and sociological consequence for methodology of this aspect of Hegelian thought, the "emanation theory", in terms of the unitary Weltgeist, for the way in which individual events or acts are constituted.<sup>32</sup> Marx's analysis, which Lukács also draws on, modifies Hegel's concept in two ways. First it denies the existence of individual action as determined in the Hegelian idealistic sense, by suggesting that action has consequences for contradictory processes of social development. Secondly, because Marx placed human action on the level of social groups, classes, and leaderships as based on class consciousness rooted in material conditions, rather than supra-human forces, such as "Weltgeist". Thus we have Marx's classic statement, that "Hegel starts from the state and makes man the subjectivized state; democracy starts from man and makes the state the objectivized man".<sup>33</sup> Lukács, at this point, taking as his basis Marx's interpretation of the problem, asserts that the world-historical individual with his supreme involvement represents a high point dramatically "both in life and art." In other words, the nature and character of the individual portrayed in drama is a problem which hinges around the concrete areas in life situations, in which the dramatic development is possible. That is to say, only those situations which tend towards drama in life itself, are capable of dramatic expression. We therefore cannot presume an either over objective or over subjective collision. Lukács elaborates

this point by an analysis of drama from early Greek tragedy and up to the twentieth century, shows that the world-historical individual has to be further distinguished from the "dramatic hero." The "world historical individual" may be a character in a dramatic presentation, but is not necessarily the hero. He is more likely to be one in the epic, because here the generalization of content presentation allows for the portrayal of "public" figures, in "public" roles. But ever since Euripides' introduction of private life and everyday manners into dramatic presentations, the range of typical characters has broadened. Just as the ramifications of the class struggles throughout history have broadened.<sup>34</sup> Similarly just as there are world historical individuals, whose lives contain little potentiality for drama, so there are dramatic heroes, for example, in modern bourgeois drama who can hardly be called "world historical individuals" in Lukács' sense of the term. Two examples from contemporary literature can be illustrated within the context of Lukács' analysis. The first is Albert Camus' central character in The Outsider Meursault. In this short novel, Meursault, the absurd man, perceives the world as being not quite irrational; but not quite rational either. He regards all his fellow men as strangers.<sup>35</sup> Thrown into the consciousness of an absurd existence and environment, Meursault rebels, finally murdering an Arab on a beach, one Sunday morning, but is convinced in his confrontation with law and the trial court, that he has "nothing to justify". In the two dramatic scenes in the novel, the courtroom and the scaffold, Meursault's



actions and responses are polarizations of significance. In the first scene, Meursault is un-cooperative (by the standards of conventional values) with both the hostile audience as well as his defence lawyer. Despite the fact that the latter narrates an impassioned plea that Meursault should be judged for the alleged murder not for having put his mother in an old people's home.<sup>36</sup> In the concluding "scene", Meursault is made to speak by Camus in an almost schizoid manner at the impressions of the preparation for his own execution. He says:

Once he'd (the priest) gone, I felt calm again. ...Then just on the edge of day-break, I heard a steamer's siren. People were starting on a voyage to a world which had ceased to concern me, for ever... . It was as if that great rush of anger had washed me clean, emptied me of hope, and gazing up at the dark sky spangled with its signs and stars, for the first time, the first, I laid my heart open to the benign indifference of the universe. ... For all to be accomplished, for me to feel less lonely, all that remained was to hope that on the day of my execution there should be a huge crowd of spectators and that they should greet me with howls of execration.<sup>37</sup>

From the foregoing, we see that Meursault's impressions show little concern with his fate. For Meursault's only final meaningfulness is in death. The paradox, of course, is that his body confines his experience to the present, yet, the irony of this final confrontation is Meursault's silence.

The second illustration is taken from Fraz Kafka's Metamorphosis. Here the author narrates the dramatic sequences,

in contrast to the former novel in which the author's narration and the main character are united in form. If the two formal dramatic confrontations of this novel are taken, a similar polarization is visible. The first confrontation is the consciousness of the main character's recognition and consciousness of his metamorphosis into a human sized insect and drastic "alienation" from his social environment, his close relatives and employer. What is significant here again is the response of others to Gregor Samsa's "new state". In this scene, Gregor, as an insect, enters the living room of the family's apartment.

Suddenly, for the first time that whole morning, he (Gregor) experienced a feeling of physical well being; his feet were on firm ground; he noticed with joy that his legs obeyed him wonderfully and were even eager to carry him wherever he might wish. But while, under the nervous influence of his need for haste, he hesitated on the spot.

Gregor's mother, on the other hand was faced with a sight she had not expected.

He saw her suddenly jump... . "Help for God's sake, help" ! "She turned her head, the better to see Gregor; then in flagrant contradiction, she began to retreat madly.

In the confusion however, ..."Gregor had no time to bother about them. The manager (Gregor's boss) was already on the stairs; with his chin on the balustrade, he was looking back for the last time.<sup>39</sup> We also observe the father's revolution,

portrayed by his physical attack on Gregor.

What Kafka portrays in this scene is the physical manifestations of polarization and the main character's consciousness of it. In the two above novels, the drama, in contrast to Lukács' own examples is rarely expressed in dialogue. And although Lukács' own theoretical formulation of dramatic collision discounts Kafka's main work as naturalist and defeatist, the recognition of dramatic effect, the totality of collision is present just the same.

In the final scene of Kafka's as in Camus's work, the resolution of the dramatic collision is final, death, albeit for the main character. A new era, or the potential for it, emerges out of this resolution. Kafka narrates it thus:

Hardly was he in his room before the door was slammed, locked and double bolted. So sudden was the crash that Gregor's legs gave way ... ; as she (Gregor's sister) turned the key in the lock, she cried to her parents, "At last"! ... He realized that he must go, and his opinion on this point was even more firm, if possible than that of his sister. He lay in a state of peaceful and empty meditation till the clock struck the third morning hour. He saw the landscape grow lighter through the window; then, against his will his head fell forward and his last feeble breath streamed from his nostrils<sup>40</sup>

In both excerpts given above, the initial dramatic confrontation is underlined by a factual separation of the main characters from other human beings. The resolution of the conflict equally reinforces this separation. Despite the varying ideological, and theoretical positions of Camus

and Kafka as novelists and Lukács as literary critic, what they all have in common is the uncompromising self-assertion of the dramatic hero. A fact which stands out in all the novels written by the former two novelists.<sup>41</sup>

There is another observation which can be made from the foregoing analysis. In Lukács' theoretical analysis the distinctions of epic and dramatic literature were partly technical, but primarily, historical ones. The historical distinctions were seen to have developed from the classical sources of literature in Western Civilization, the ancient Greek world. The specific development was the increasing complexity of social life and the break up of the "primitive" community. A process which expressed itself in philosophical formulations -- the separation of spirit and existence. As we saw also, this "philosophical alienation", expressed itself in epistemological formulations throughout the history of Western and Central European philosophy, until Hegel's ascendancy. At the same time the emergence of the novel is an attempt at a dialectical synthesis in eighteenth and nineteenth century literature to resolve an artistic manifestation of a fundamental social contradiction. So that the historical novel is neither wholly dramatic nor epic in character in any formal sense. Rather it too is a synthesis, although in a chronological historical sense, the novel succeeds the drama as the dominant literary type. Lukács summarized this theoretical explanation as follows:

Since it is clear that the facts of life which drama reflects can and must be represented in epic, too, it seems equally obvious that these facts occur permanently in life; which would mean that life is constantly providing the possibilities for genuine great drama.<sup>42</sup>

But the above statement goes beyond the contemporary novels we have previously examined. The latter is bitterly criticized by Lukács as naturalistic in philosophy and content. To these criticisms we will return later. The point to be stressed here is that in so far as both Kafka and Camus, as well as other novelists, portray the unfolding of social events; that is, events involving a group of people, their growth and the ways in which people are moulded or transformed by these events, their works have an epic quality. On the other hand, in so far as these same works have a portrayal of immediate and radical conflict of a social nature, they are dramatic. Kafka's work as the portrayal of polarized individual opposition to bourgeois conventions, bureaucracies, or on a psycho-analytical level primary processes of domestic patriarchal authority; and Camus' work as alienation from foreign systems of justice and morality, qualify for a consideration of contemporary analysis, for which Lukács' work is partly suitable as sociological critique, but which Lukács refused to give.<sup>43</sup> But the suggested reasons for this, the close theoretical and epistemological identification of philosophy and literature by Lukács, is a problem to which we shall return in a subsequent chapter.

THE TOTALITY OF PHILOSOPHICAL AND CONCRETE EXISTENCE:  
 THE RELATION OF THE NOVEL AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

What is lacking in the so-called historical novel before Sir Walter Scott is precisely the specifically historical, that is derivation of the individuality of characters from the historical peculiarity of their age.<sup>44</sup>

In the foregoing analysis, the totality of historical movement as one contemporary level of articulation for an understanding by sociologists of the development of literature, was as part of a continued search for totality, constituted of external objective reality and internal subjective experience. This was a search for totality unconsciously or philosophically, that was sought in literature precisely because it was lacking in social life, after ancient Greece. Thus the reality which was portrayed in literature from Plato right up to the contemporary novel, just off the press, cannot be understood simply as imitation of, cataloguing and describing of banal external here and now. For the very nature of literature is its concern with the future, as well as interpreted presentation of the past and the present. In this Lukács, in his early Seele und die Formen, has seen three distinct and related processes - searches for totality, philosophy. Literature and half way between them, the essay. This sociological statement is difficult to match in lucidity and insight. Every form then corresponds to a world outlook, the essay being similar to the historical novel in so far as both represent an expression of man ill at ease with the world. A phenomenon not infinite

in scope, but historically traceable to Ancient Greece and the Middle Ages.<sup>45</sup> This then is Lukács' *raison d'être*, the only sociological and intellectual context within which the above quoted statement can be meaningfully understood.

Stylistically then, the historical novel was not simply influenced by the epic and classical drama, the novel has its roots in the French Revolution. For Lukács, at this level of analysis, it is the historical, philosophical and ideological interpretation of the Revolution, corresponding to the actual social changes of the period, which partly determined the specific literature of this period and the succeeding genres of the novel.

According to Lukács, there are two main conflicting philosophical positions at this time. One which he terms reactionary -- this tends to glorify the romantic novel of the Restoration. The other philosophical - ideological which Lukács terms progressive historicist and which attempts the first large scale periodization of historical movement. This is the basis of the new realism. Here capitalism is presented with clarity, in all its contradictions. The notion of the "transitory nature of this society, appears tangibly and plastically before us". Hegel was the first to express this idea systematically, with his expression of the universal laws of transformation of "quantity into quality". Man is seen as a product of himself, and his own activity in history. On this level of analysis, Lukács sees as the most important feature the ideologically radical thinkers and writers,

attributing historical specificity to events and social situations. And this is the most important feature of realist literature, starting with Sir Walter Scott. But, like all art, it cannot present historical particularity in a strictly relative way, such as other forms of scientific knowledge, for example, are presented. The historical specificity has to be generalized, as it is in the nineteenth century English novel.<sup>46</sup>

Considerations of the above problems are summarized by Lukács under the heading of the concept of totality of philosophical and concrete existence. What does this mean in elaboration of our understanding of modern literature specifically? And what is the specific significance of historical epistemology?

Lukács provides an answer to the above questions which revolves around an analysis of the Enlightenment, especially "the last phase" of it, and an understanding of history as the concrete pre-condition of the present. This analysis is directly relevant to an analysis of modern literature, of which Lukács states:

It is only during the last phase of the Enlightenment that the problem of the artistic reflection of past ages emerges as a central problem of literature.<sup>47</sup>

The specific philosophy of history which developed in this phase of the Enlightenment was an awareness of thinkers, a need to ascertain the "causes of the greatness and decline of the classical states", as important theoretical preliminaries for the future transformation of society. And this sense of



history developed both before and after the French Revolution. The latter event makes France the spiritual leader of the Enlightenment. This is so precisely because the analysis of the disintegration of the feudal order taking place around the French Revolution, was partly theoretical. The nature of theoretical analysis about social transformation is varied and the variations are progressive as well as reactionary, giving rise to historicism as well as naturalism. And this is so precisely because the French Revolution in its political economic form developed many stages, some of which were contradictory as well. The philosophical-ideological debate was therefore extremely lively. This is evidenced by the political radicalism of Voltaire, the positivistic conservatism of Auguste Comte, etc. The German counterparts were Goethe, Schiller and Hegel on the one hand and Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels, on the other. Just as how the disintegration of feudal absolutism and the rise of German nationalism, under the banner of the Young Hegelians follows in the wake of the French Revolution. In England, by contrast, the concrete mastering of bourgeois society, and the consistent and successful application (to literature) of specifically historical viewpoints, occupies a more dominant status. Witness for example the brilliant principles of the bourgeois political economy worked out by Adam Smith. This is because one can trace the breakdown of the concrete feudal political economy to as early as the Elizabethan era. But note that Smith's theories of capital development presume the prior process of the separation

between the conditions of production as the property of definite classes, and labour power, in the process of agricultural production.<sup>48</sup>

Lukács comments on Marx's observation of Adam Smith's assumption of a completed process of agricultural transformation as follows: -

This unawareness of the significance of the historical sense already present in practice, of the possibility of generalizing of historical particularity of the immediate present, which had been correctly observed by instinct, characterizes the position which the great social novel of England occupies in the development of our problem.<sup>49</sup>

In other words, the prevailing conditions of social development, the hardships of the labouring poor, or the capitalist accumulation and the prevailing ethic, drew the attention of writers to the spatio-temporal character of people and circumstances. But no clear understanding of history prevailed, that is history as the precondition of the present. Christopher Caudwell elaborated on Lukács analysis, though unwittingly when he summarized the position of poetry in the whole period, through the French Revolution to the nineteenth century, as follows:

The bourgeois illusion is, in the sphere of poetry, a revolt. In Wordsworth, the revolt takes the form of a return to the natural man, just as it does in Shelley. Wordsworth like Shelly profoundly influenced by French Rousseauism, seeks freedom, beauty -- all that is not now in man because of his social relations -- in Nature. The French Revolution now intervenes. The bourgeois demand for

freedom has now a regressive tinge. It no longer looks forward to freedom by revolt but by return to natural man.<sup>50</sup>

Thus we see that the generation and process of English pre capitalism, and the French Revolution, produced as a consequence a genuine search for philosophic and literary explanations of the reality of capitalist society. But often the poetic critique of that society had an idealistic form, a realist literature in idealist garb. The English novels of Fielding, Richardson and much later Charles Dickens portrayed varying aspects of this reality. But the particular form and content of that literature must then have been determined by the particular historical perspective of the novelists.

But the philosophic expression of history, particularly the way in which this was grasped by the writer, is a direct product of neither English nor French development, but rather of Germany's political development. That is to say, it is the particular influence of the French Revolutionary wars, and the processes leading toward the ideological development of nationalism, which gave rise to the historical drama, such as Goethe's work and then to the early development of the historical novel. Lukács suggests that the German form of the Enlightenment was in conflict with French culture, its revolutionary aspects. This was because of parochial monarchical absolutism, national division, the political and economic fragmentation of the country, and so on.

The German form of Enlightenment necessarily

engages in sharp polemic with this French culture and it preserves this note of revolutionary patriotism even where the real content of the ideological battle is simply the conflict between different stages in the development of the Enlightenment that is the culture of liberal bourgeois democracy - developed by radical thinkers ( emphasis mine, K.O.B. ).<sup>51</sup>

The consequence of the foregoing is that German thinkers revert to German history, partly to reawaken previous greatness. This reversion is expressed artistically. But this process of historical content in philosophy and literature must be reactionary, since the past must be seen as a kind of "Golden Age". Yet Lukács does not make this point, rather he views the process as being more radical than its counterpart in the rest of Western Europe.<sup>52</sup> This is the weakest aspect of Lukács otherwise detailed analysis.

Perhaps the strong aspect of this analysis is Lukács' assessment of the effects of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century. First of all, limited wars gave way to mass wars, in the sense of the goals as well as the means for achieving these goals. The French Republic, versus absolute monarchies, necessitated the expansion of popular propaganda, and the creation of mass armies, particularly in relation to the civilian population. But this was true for both sides, the movement of troops meant the widening of experience and horizons of previously limited peasants, in terms of the development of consciousness. Thus states Lukács:

It is in the nature of the bourgeois revolution that, if seriously carried through to its conclusion, the national idea becomes the portrayal of the broadest masses... . Thus in this mass experience of history the national element is linked on the one hand with problems of social transformation; and on the other, more and more people become aware of the connection between national and world history. This increasing consciousness of the historical character of development begins to influence judgements on economic conditions and class struggles.<sup>53</sup>

In fact as early as 1829, Thomas Carlyle made a similar observation, though not stated so directly, on the overall effects of the French Revolution. Though of course Carlyle had a different set of presuppositions. For Carlyle, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars were the off spring of the development of increasing and expanding knowledge.<sup>54</sup>

In this phase of Western European development, especially in Germany, the influence of the above mentioned forces on the development of ideas is that human society and progress are no longer seen as unhistorical, in some idealist fashion. The historical largely internal struggles of classes are viewed more closely as keys to an understanding of development. Condorcet's work can be seen as the first systematic attempt in France to develop such an analysis. By this slow process of the sublation (aufgehoben) of early Enlightenment thought, a more meaningful philosophy of history, as an approach to human problems came into being. But it was an approach in which the characteristic achievements of the French Revolution became the basis for future social development. It

was as Lukács terms it, a "historical humanism". For Lukács, Hegel expressed this latter concept in a supra-individualistic "world idea", philosophy. Sir Walter Scott, expressed it in a type of literature which pointed out the basic contradictions in the development of bourgeois society, while yet recognizing the bourgeoisie as the new dominant group, as the forces leading to "social progress".

## THE HISTORICAL NOVEL

The influence of Walter Scott can be felt in every province of literature of his age. The new school of French historians formed itself under the influence of the Scottish novelist. He showed them entirely new sources which had so far remained unknown despite the existence of the historical drama of Shakespeare and Goethe.<sup>54</sup>

A general observation regarding literary critics as varied as Lukács, Caudwell, Raymond Williams, Arnold Kettle, and Ian Watt, among others, is the overriding status of the English novel in their frameworks. These critics tend to view the English novel as the dominant form of literature. Although this is the case for different reasons and over different epochs. The English novel exercises wide influences on literary development.

Lukács sees the particular features of Scott's novels as being an elaboration on epic literature with the broad delineation of manners and circumstances attendant upon events, the dramatic character of action and the new role of dialogue. The basis of this approach was the conviction that the apparent peaceful social development of the period was only the ideal of an historical conception, from the birds eye view of a philosophy of history. But the organic process itself was one of ceaseless class struggles and contradictions, and the forceful resolution of uprisings of the proletariat.<sup>55</sup> Lukács sees Scott's greatness as paradoxical, for in other matters the latter was often a "narrow conservative".

That is to say, Lukács' comprehension of the actual

texts of Walter Scott result in Lukács' formulation of the theory that what changes in the modern historical novel in contradistinction to the classical epic or the typical literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is the "middling hero".

What Lukács actually investigates is the plot and subject matter of the novel. Lukács' view is that what makes Scott's work significant and realistic is the concrete presence in his novels of 'heroes', who are average English gentlemen, more or less mediocre, who never grew a passion, and never became symbols of devotion to a great cause. Lukács' explanation introduces into the textual analysis of Scott's works two factors external to the particular novels themselves. First is the genesis of the historical novel, developed by Scott, in the epic and dramatic presentations of earlier epochs. In dialectical thought this is a necessary process.<sup>56</sup> Secondly, is the consideration of the philosophical and ideological transformation of Scott's position into his literary production.

The particular transformation produced by Scott, is his break with earlier Romanticism. Romanticism, in this sense, is the philosophical mood which is in opposition to the disadvantageous consequences of earlier capitalism, a mood which nevertheless corresponds to that stage of capitalism. Byron's poetry is the obvious example. This type of poetry expresses an opposition to capitalism. But the translation of the opposition is into a lyrical subjectivist absolute and thus one in which poetic translation minimizes or ignores the social-historical, the objective presentation of this opposition.<sup>57</sup> In contrast,



Scott weaves around an ordinary central character the social-historical events typical of this particular era of English middle class society. In this sense Scott's work has a purely epic character. This feature of modern literature remained after Scott, but with the addition of particular historicity of the contradictions of capitalist society. In this form of the novel the totality of the work is presented to us, but with the great historical figures in the style of the classical epic -- occupying a peripheral place. This is realistic in so far as the great historical figures are in reality produced by the historical events themselves. This, argues Lukács, is realistic in terms of the particular complexity of the age in which Scott is writing, the early capitalist society.

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. The important leading figure, who embodies an historical movement, necessarily does so at a certain level of abstraction. Scott by first showing the complex and involved character of popular life itself, creates this being which the leading figure then has to generalize and concentrate in an historical deed.<sup>58</sup>

Nevertheless, Lukács notes that Walter Scott ignored largely the historical genesis of capitalism itself, an important epic feature in a classical sense. Rather, the presentation of reality is such that the role of the central characters of Scott's novels is as mediators, between two opposing historical forces. Thus Lukács' term the 'middle hero', is given to Scott's

characterization.

Another aspect of Lukács' conception of totality of concrete existence is demonstrated by the manner in which a creative writer transforms an earlier stylistic practice that was used to present a general characteristic of a given historical epoch. A major feature of society in Scott's days was the dramatic concentration and complexity of certain crises of a number of human beings and how they coincide and interweave within the determining context of the historical crises, on the societal level. But the picture of reality presented is not a single isolated crises, in the above context, but a chain of crises, each conflict giving birth to a new conflict.<sup>59</sup> The significance of this quality of Lukács' analysis cannot be overstated. Lukács asserts of Scott's work, as he was to do of the work of Balzac and Tolstoy, in his later assessment of the historical novel.<sup>60</sup>

But for Scott the historical characterization of time and place, the historical "here and now" is something much deeper. For him it means that certain crises in the personal destinies of a number of human beings coincide and interweave within the determining context of an historical crisis. It is precisely for this reason that his manner of portraying the historical crises is never abstract, the split of the nation into warring parties always runs through the centre of the closest human relationships. Parents and children, lover and beloved, old friends, etc. confront one another as opponents, as the inevitability of this confrontation carries the collision deep into their personal lives. It is always a fate carried by groups of people connected and involved with one another; and it is never a matter of one single catastrophe, but of a chain of catastrophes, where the solution of each gives birth to a new conflict. Thus the profound grasp of the historical factor in human life demands dramatic concentration of the epic framework.<sup>61</sup>

On the one hand the significance of Lukács' work is that in terms of the history of European literature, the historical novel constitutes a combining of the major features of the classical epic and dramatic styles in literature. But this combination does not take place in a stylistic vacuum in some abstract manner. Lukács locates its development as an intellectual conceptualisation of the manner in which the historical forces of capitalism are developing in this period. On the other hand, Lukács is asserting that in one sense this particular combination in creative writing is made possible precisely because certain intellectual groups in Europe were developing a new world vision -- a world vision which manifested itself in the practical activity of novelists, of the stature of Scott, Balzac and the later Tolstoy, etc. It influenced their weltanschauung as it were. Creative writing then is not narrowly defined in terms of the specific political bias of the writer. This is a sociological statement of profound significance -- one which even Mannheim's modification of Lukács had to respect.

Another way of restating and elaborating the above analysis would be in terms of the dialectic. Although it is popular, and even justifiable as a scientific endeavour to make a distinction in the meaning of the 'dialectic', it is difficult to separate them, i.e. the distinctions. First, social scientists can view the dialectic as a basic framework for the analysis of social reality, which recognizes its complex and dynamic nature, the existence of internal contradictions and the masking of the true level of reality by ideology.

Secondly the dialectic can be distinguished as a preconstituted view of the structure of the social totality assuming the existence of a central contradiction, the determination of all other parts of the social whole by this, the inevitability of the revolution as 'negation of the negation' and so on. That is to say, it is a metaphysic. Marx's analysis is dialectical in the first sense, and Lukács' 1923 formulation of Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein is in one sense an attempt to reassert this view. However when The Historical Novel is looked at closely, the specific inter-relations of the analysis includes an understanding in the second sense. But Lukács seems to be saying that this is the peculiarity of bourgeois capitalism, in its genesis and development. That paradoxically, the ideologies of liberalism and individualism exist and are stressed precisely because it fosters the particular class relations of capitalism. That the classes are tied historically is obvious in the economic structure of capitalism, that the relations of social groups are also tied in a horizontal sociological sense is not so obvious. Lukács thought he had liberated himself from an overly naturalistic and positivistic sociology, because he emphasized the historical and immanent role of philosophical interpretations of history and of political ideology. This thought led him to the harsh criticism of later authors who failed to manifest the perception of this role, by lending to human relations an a-historic, if not a temporal quality. Where Lukács is unjustifiably critical of Joyce, Zola and Kafka is that ironically he recognizes the process of literary exaggeration in representing social reality

in the works of the historical novelists, Scott, Flaubert and Tolstoy and Balzac. This exaggeration is both artistically necessary and applauded by Lukács. On the other hand, his criticism of Kafka, Joyce and others, loses its sociological relevance where he fails to see the formal textual products, their works, as being influenced by the same exaggeration of effects which made Scott and Tolstoy great novelists. This criticism of Lukács is a serious one, for it touches on his use of literary criteria in his assessment of the authors he favours. But it is at a distinct level from any attempt to look more closely at the other theoretical criteria in any overall criticism of Kafka, Joyce and so on.

At another level of comprehension and explanation -- these two constitute the method of dialectical sociology -- Lukács at once reveals another difference between the epic and the historical novel and the articulation of the internal structure of the historical novel. To achieve this Lukács demonstrates the relative position of "world-historical individuals" and "maintaining individuals" in both types of literature and the connection in both types, with the existential basis of events in both historical epochs.

What matters ... in the historical novel is not the re-telling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events.... Here there are deep differences between epic and novel. The all national character of the principal themes of epic, the relation between individual and nation in the age of heroes require that the most important figure should occupy the

central position, while in the historical novel he is necessarily only a minor character... . The antagonisms in the old epics are predominantly national ones. The great national opponents say, Achilles and Hector, represent socially, and therefore also morally very similar orders: the moral scope of their actions is approximately the same: for the one, the human assumptions behind the actions of the other are fairly transparent and so on. All this is quite different in the world of the historical novel. Here the "world-historical individual" is, even viewed socially, a party, a representative of one of the many contending classes and strata. However, if he is to fulfill his function as the crowning summit of such an artistic world, then he must in a very complex, very indirect way -- also render visible the generally progressive features of the whole of society, of the whole age.<sup>62</sup>

Lukács asserts that the content of literary realism is manifested in the portrayal of the living basis of historical events in their intricacy and complexity; in their manifold interactions with acting individuals. What is achieved in this kind of analysis is that Lukács transforms his early concern with the individual versus society problem, into a historical and literary problem. For at the basis of this problem is the relations of social groups, and their expressions in varying 'world visions'. The categories of 'world-historical individual' and 'maintaining individuals' are both conceptualized as categories of the typical characters. Typical, in the sense that their inner-most beings are determined by the objective forces at work in the society.<sup>63</sup> As Lukács suggests what is no more than an individual particularity in the arts and sciences may become typical in its literary presentation.<sup>64</sup>

As a kind of general axiom which provides the basis for his discussion of the 'maintaining' and the 'world-historical individuals', Lukács asserts that:

The typical is not to be confused with the average though there are cases where this holds true, nor with the eccentric though the typical does as a rule go beyond the normal. The typical hero reacts with his entire personality to the life of his age.<sup>65</sup>

What then are 'world-historical' and 'maintaining individuals'? According to Lukács the world-historical individual concentrates the main features of events into motives for their own actions and for influencing and guiding the actions of the masses. Maintaining individuals are those who experience the smallest oscillations in this basis as immediate disturbances of their individual lives. Lukács undertakes a dialectical analysis of these two categories of individuals in different historical epochs, and their positions as placed by the writer. During the pre-dominance of the epic form, social life was much less differentiated than it became after the eighteenth century. Given the basic aims of literature from the classical Greeks, the need to create the impression of life, as it normally is on the whole, and abstract potentiality, the need to transcend the immediate concrete existence, the hero, 'world-historical individual' occupied a dominant role in literature, for the prospect for change rested with this personality. By the time of the historical novel however, the hero could not be stylized and romanticized. For in actuality, the significant genesis of

historical changes in society were popular transformations. Transformations which had affects on everyday material and non-material life. But although the historical novel, in strictly literary manner, tries to grasp a totality, 'maintaining individuals' do not constitute the end all of this form. The best illustration of this is Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace, a novel in which the leading personalities, the general staff of the army, the heroes, as well as the smaller characters, the privates, the prisoners of war, the disasters of the old-fashioned noble family; constitute a totality. But it is a totality in which the dramatic interactions of the domestic and emotional planes, and the characters involved in them, are determined by the wider historical forces presented by Tolstoy.

The historical novel then, does portray both categories of characters. However the relative dominance of either is dependant on the subject chosen by the creative writer. One outcome of this kind of analysis is that the early historical novelist, particularly Walter Scott, is able in the first instance to demonstrate the way in which heroic acts are not carried out by popular heroes alone. But that the particular concentration of social events brings out the human potentialities that exist among the masses. Lukács discusses this aspect of his theory later, under the headings of 'concrete' and abstract potentialities, asserting that this is a fundamental part of modern historical realism. Concrete potentiality is concerned with the dialectic between the individual's subjectivity and objective reality. The literary presentation of objective reality thus



implies a description of actual persons inhabiting a palpable, identifiable world. Abstract potentiality on the other hand belongs wholly to the realm of the subjective. Abstract potentiality is richer than actual life. They are imagined possibilities which do not determine social development.<sup>66</sup> In the case of both "world-historical individuals" and "maintaining individuals", Lukács is concerned with concrete potentiality.

Georg Lukács elaborates on the potentialities as a theoretical pre-condition for an understanding of the genesis of the historical novel by suggesting two features of its development. First that the early historical novel had to strive for historical faithfulness by bringing out 'necessity', the tragic decline of old feudal relations. This historical necessity is the complex interaction of the concrete historical circumstances in their process of transformation, in 'their interaction with concrete human beings', who are influenced by these circumstances. These individuals act in a way, according to their personal passions, and the necessity is the resultant of the influence of transforming circumstances on personal passion and action. Secondly, the psychology of the characters corresponds to the age of their up-bringing. In individual referents of action, the characters are spatially-temporally bound. That is to say, the ways in which potentialities are portrayed are congruent with the values, manners and patterns of behaviour of the period which form the background to the narrative. According to Lukács, in the historical novels of Scott, Balzac and Tolstoy, there is never any modernizing of

psychology.<sup>67</sup>

In summary then all the above discussed features of the historical novel, raised by Lukács, point to a changed totality. Lukács appears to have concluded that the historical novel is best portrayed in Walter Scott's work precisely because the latter developed and typified all the features which distinguished the historical novel from earlier forms and later modern novels. Scott's characters express feelings and thoughts about real, historical relationships in a much clearer way than actual men and women of the time could have done. The historical reality is more real, more exaggerated than the actual features of social life of the time.

In keeping with his dialectical method, Lukács raises the two essential features of this analysis. On the one hand the actually changing social relationships, best exemplified in the French Revolution of the eighteenth century and its sounding of the death knell to feudal relationships in Western Europe. On the other hand the philosophical debates and supporting and intense opposition to these forces of radical changes. In one word the great question was individualism, which can be interpreted in at least two ways. Lukács implicitly discusses individualism when he mentions the actual and literary processes whereby historical changes have widespread influences on the masses. Wars and political events become national issues, propoganda extends the events beyond the confines of the noble aristocracy and the feudal military. Again ordinary characters

are transformed into heroic figures, so that individuals momentarily transcend their immediate status. Their social consciousness develops.

Ian Watt in an alternative explanation of the rise of the novel, though accepting the profound impact of the French Revolution, suggests an alternative explanation. For Watt, it is individualism in the form of the rise of Cartesian philosophy which is significant. In so far as Watt sees the novel as extending in its historical genesis to the works of Fielding and Defoe, his analysis is chronologically more comprehensive. Descartes' philosophy of individualism shifted attention to the external world of objects, individual sense experiences, albeit particular experiences. Watt raises the particular manner in which this problem is raised, and their portrayal in the works of Fielding and Defoe. They are a greater unity of characterization between the general type, in terms of abstract qualities and values, and particular individuals. Locke's definition of personal identity is an identity of consciousness through duration in time. The ways in which the above are opposed to Plato and Aristotle's theories that Ideas were the ultimate realities. That these Ideas or Forms were essentially unchanging through time.<sup>68</sup>

Watt also notes that the attitudes of authors are other criteria of analysis. Prior to Fielding and Defoe, authors such as Shakespeare, Donne and Johnson, tended to support the traditional economic and social order, and opposed the tendencies

of individualism. By the eighteenth century, Defoe etc., were supporting, variously, the new order, bourgeois individualism.<sup>69</sup> This view is opposed to the earlier articulated views of Georg Lukács. To demonstrate his view Watts analyses Defoe's novel The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe. In Lukácsian terms, however, Crusoe is presented in an unrealistic timeless setting, and in this sense 'Crusoe' does not qualify as a historical novel, but rather as a Romantic novel. Though again even Romanticism opposed the degrading aspects of bourgeois capitalism. Secondly, the novelist here does not portray the real historical contradictions in the development of economic individualism. Man Friday is in no position to comprehend, let alone challenge the tenets of Crusoe's vulgar mercantilism. Many of these criticisms were noted by Watt himself.<sup>70</sup>

Nevertheless in so far as Watt's analysis emphasizes the attempt of Defoe to universalize capitalism, spatially as well as philosophically, his analysis is profound for an alternative trend in the development of the novel, and one started before the rise of Walter Scott. The sociological relevance of this takes us back to the problem of the individual-society. Clearly, two trends emerged during the development of the novel. One, the naturalistic notion of the individual, which relies on subjective interpretation of social life. The most modern trend of this artistic approach can be located chiefly in the works of Albert Camus. The development also gave rise to the novels and plays of Brecht and the period of socialist and critical realism. Although the latter is less developed, Lukács sees the future of

the modern novel as a genuine artistic activity in the latter. The question whether even this generalization is altogether valid, as Lukács implies, is the problem to which we now turn.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, London Everyman's Library, J.M. Dent and Sons, 1906, Ch. IV, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Histoire et Conscience de Classe, Paris, 1960, p. 60, translated from the German Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein.

<sup>3</sup>See for example his Philosophy of Literary Form.

<sup>4</sup>As an illustration of my point, see Kenneth Burke's analysis of John Steinbeck's contemporary novel of the agricultural depression of the 1930's in the U.S.A. in The Grapes Of Wrath, in Permanence And Change. See also Stanley E. Hyman The Armed Vision: A Study In The Method Of Modern Literary Criticism, Vintage Books, 1947, pp. 334-335.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Georg Lukács Solzhenitsyn And The New Realism, Socialist Register, 1965, where for practical political purposes Lukács guardedly attacks the extremes of Stalin's "Socialist realism", pp. 179-215.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Georg Lukács, p. 204, passim.

<sup>7</sup>See for example Georg Lukács Die Seele und die Formen, published by Gonthier, 1963 edition.

<sup>8</sup>For an evolutionary analysis of types of literature in this context, that is to say types in terms of the lyric poetry of Classical Greece, giving rise to epic prose, Homer, etc., then Drama, with its genres, tragedy and comedy, then the novella and the novel, see Thomas Munro, Evolution In The Arts And Other Theories Of Culture History, Cleveland Museum Of Art, Especially pp. 145-152.

<sup>9</sup>This is Peter Demetz's explanation, See Peter Demetz Marx and Engels And The Poets: Origins Of Marxist Literary Criticism, University Of Chicago Press, 1967, p. 201.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Christopher Caudwell, Illusion And Reality: A Study Of The Sources Of Poetry, International Publishers, New York, 1937, pp. 13-14. This also means that Caudwell defines literature more broadly than Lukács does.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Ernst Fischer, The Necessity Of Art: A Marxist Approach translated by Anna Bostock, Penguin Books, 1963, especially pp. 36-38.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Fischer, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. Georg Lukács The Historical Novel, Merlin Press, 1962, translated by Hannah & Stanley Mitchell, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Georg Lukács, Theorie des Roman, Goutier, 1936, p. 42.

<sup>15</sup>Lucien Goldmann, The Hidden God: The Study of Tragic Vision The Pensées of Pascal And The Tragedies of Racine, translated from the French by Philip Thody, Humanities Press, New York, 1964, pp. 17-19.

Goldmann contends that this is a conceptual working hypothesis, indisputable to an understanding (in the Weberian sense of *verstehen*) of the way in which individuals actually express their ideas, for example individual authors. It is a reality which goes beyond individual writings and ideas. See also Lucien Goldmann's Materialisme Dialectique et Histoire de la Philosophie, in *Revue Philosophique de France et de L'a Stranger*, 1948, No. 46.

<sup>16</sup>The Hidden God, op. cit., pp. 4-8.

<sup>17</sup>Later Greek thought tended to put the "Golden Age" in the past, because in the epics of Homer and Hesoid, we get a picture of large and small-scale self-sufficient households, with no extensive specializations. Homer and Hesoid therefore regarded with some trepidation the changes taking place in Greek civilization and this manifested itself in their writings. Their philosophies in contrast to the works of Plato, gave rise to speculations on alienation by Marx and Engels and the philosophical concerns of Lukács. But from the conceptions of Homer and Hesoid, we get a picture of the early polis, which took the form of a community of equally participating citizens. With interminable warfare and the disintegration of the original polis, we get a picture from the writings of Plato and the Sophists of increasing class stratification and integration of similar groups in various polis, specialization and privilege, example in rhetoric, which tended to bias the impartiality of the administration of justice. And in the fifth century, the weakening of the cohesion of the polis as a unit of political organization, its natural bounds broken by the formation of group ideology (class) extending horizontally and alienation within the individual polis.

Cf. H.D.F. Kitto, The Greeks, Penguin Books, 1951, for the relativism of Sophist philosophy and the breakdown of traditional structures and life values, especially pp. 159-169.

<sup>18</sup>It is worth noting that the political capitulation of Lukács, discussed in the last chapter, is an ironic move, meaningful for a man of Lukács genius, who seems to understand the strategy of sublation, just as well as the existentialist do.

See for example Ian Buchall's Lukács As Literary Critic, International Socialism, No. 36, April-May, 1969, pp. 36-38. This is so, because the "totality of form" remains as a consistent theme, The Historical Novel, op. cit., pp. 90-92.

<sup>19</sup>Histoire et Conscience de Class, op. cit., p. 115.  
Note: that Victor Zitta's biography concentrates on this category in his analysis, and ignores the others.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. Peter Demetz The Uses of Lukács, Yale Review, No. 54, 1965, p. 348. \*

<sup>21</sup>Realism In Our Time, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 19, Lukács uses the term "distinguished" in his text, though I have placed the emphasis of Lukács meaning on the notion of "Separation".

<sup>23</sup>Historical Novel, op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 89-91. For the first time in his philosophical development Lukács has alluded to the relativity of our presentations of reality in his works. This is qualification of his statements in Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein. See analysis in previous section of this thesis.

<sup>25</sup>In this connection the works of Henri Lefebvre The Sociology Of Marx, translated from the French by Norbert Guterman, Pantheon books, New York, 1968, pp. 36-37 and George Lichtheim, Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study. Fredrick Praeger, New York, 1961, though exhaustive have treated Lukács' ideas scantily. For example Lefebvre criticizes Lukács on the basis of History And Class Consciousness alone, for placing all meaningful totality into the hands of the proletarian. What Lukács is really getting at here is (not theories of reality) but the philosopher's approach to it. Lichtheim by discussing Gramsci's Modern Prince (London, 1957) in the same breath as Lukács History confuses the issue (pp. 360 and 368). The only significance touched by Lichtheim in relation to both texts, is political organization. See also Harry Slochower Literature And Philosophy Between Two World Wars, Citadel Press, New York, 1964, pp. 5-13.

<sup>26</sup>Historical Novel, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>27</sup>Hegel, op. cit.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 95.



<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>31</sup>See earlier analysis on Hegel, as historical precedents to Lukács' formulation.

<sup>32</sup>Structure Of Social Action, op. cit., pp. 478-479.

<sup>33</sup>Marx's statement is taken from Henri Lefebvre The Sociology of Marx, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>34</sup>Historical Novel, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>35</sup>Note that this view is regarded as the philosophy of Albert Camus, as outlined in his essays The Myth Of Sisyphus. There is a difference between the approach to the absurd of the human existence of the Existentialists and writers such as Camus. For Camus, death is the inevitable conclusion to the fundamental absurdity of human existence. It is the final sublation. This fundamental absurdity manifests a cleavage between man's aspirations of being and existence and the total, insurmountable dualism of mind and nature, social life being a part of this nature.

Cf. Charles Glickberg The Self In Modern Literature, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1963, especially Chs. 9 and 10. Also Jean-Paul Sartre Literary And Philosophical Essays, translated by Annette Michelson, Collier Books, 1962, pp. 26-44.

<sup>36</sup>Cf. Albert Camus The Outsider, translated by Stuart Gilbert, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1946, pp. 102-103.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 126-127.

<sup>38</sup>Franz Kafka Metamorphosis, translated by A.S. Lloyd, Vanguard Press Inc., New York, 1946, pp. 30-31.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 90-91.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. Angel Flores and Homer Swander, (editors) Franz Kafka Today, University Of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1964, p. 26. Also see The Self In Modern Literature, op. cit., P. XXI.

<sup>41</sup>Lukács' Historical Novel, p. 107.

<sup>42</sup>Lukács Realism In Our Times, op. cit., p. 20 passim.

<sup>43</sup>Lukács Historical Novel, op. cit., p. 19.

44G. Lukács Die Seele und die Formen, op. cit., La Théorie du Roman, op. cit.

45 Historical Novel, op. cit. p. 21

46 Ibid., pp. 21.

47 Karl Marx, who nevertheless praises Adam Smith's work as objective political economy, does note that the latter more or less assumed the breakup of peasant social relations, the division of labour in simple manufacture, but more important, the prior existence, the expropriation of the small land holder, his transformation into the labouring poor, as an accomplished fact. In this sense Smith is a bourgeois political economist, of bourgeois social structure, its formal definition is accepted. Smith's laws are then developed within this defined framework. Marx notes this throughout his Capital. Cf. Karl Marx. Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production, translated by Samuel Moore & Edward Aveling, edited by F. Engels, Volume I, Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, 1961, especially p.46 and p. 760, footnote 2.

48 Lukács Historical Novel, op. cit., p. 21.

49 Christopher Caudwell, Illusion And Reality, op. cit., pp.92-93.

50 Lukács, op. cit., p. 21.

51 Ibid., pp. 22-23.

52 Ibid., pp. 24-25.

53 Cf. Raymond Williams Culture And Society, 1780-1950, Penguin Books, 1961, pp. 86-88.

54 Quotation of Pushkin, cited in Lukács Historical Novel, op. cit., p. 31.

55 Ibid., p. 33.

56 For a succinct definition and interpretation of the semantic and methodological differences between comprehension and explanation in the context of a total structural epistemology see Lucien Goldmann's The Sociology of Literature: Status And Problems of Method, pp. 505-508, in International Social Science Journal, Volume XIX, 1967, pp 493-516. Also see, his Ideology And Writing, in London Times Literary Supplement, 28th September, 1967, pp. 903-905.

In summary Goldmann, who is the direct theoretical and methodological descendant of Lukácsian sociology of literature, suggests that comprehension constitutes taking account of the actual text, or a sufficiently large part of it. We add nothing to the text. Explanation involves interpreting the whole of the text under consideration, in terms of external factors, one of which is the philosophical. What we are explaining is the genesis of the structure which enables us to interpret the given text. These are distinct and different levels of operation for any given work under consideration.

<sup>57</sup>Christopher Caudwell Illusion And Reality, op. cit., pp.71-72. Poetry, younger, more primitive, more emotionally direct, is therefore in capitalist culture concerned with the emotions struck from the instincts -- like sparks from flint -- in the conditioning of instinctive responses by the relations of society. It expresses that part of the bourgeois illusion which sees the heart and the feelings of the individual man as the source of freedom, life and reality, because the freedom of society as a whole rests ultimately on the drive of those instincts whose struggle with nature has created society.

<sup>58</sup>Historical Novel, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., pp. 40-41.

<sup>60</sup>George Lukács, Studies In European Realism, op. cit., especially chapters 1, 2, and 7.

<sup>61</sup>Historical Novel, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., pp. 42-47.

<sup>63</sup>Some analysts of the formulations of Lukács and Goldmann have erroneously suggested that the notion of determinism in this context means that Lukács and Goldmann do not allow any autonomy to their characters, or that the authors who do so are realistic. But "determinism" is not used in the sense suggested by these critics. What both Lukács and Goldmann in their polemic against psycho-analytic interpretations of literature, suggest is that the genesis of the individual character, as of the concrete social individual in his actions, can only be understood with reference to the social-historical forces which exist. This is in relation to significant behavior. See for example the latest criticism of Miriam Glucksmann. A Hard Look At Lucien Goldmann, New Left Review, #56 July-August 1969, pp. 49-62, especially pp. 51-52.

<sup>64</sup>Historical Novel, op. cit. p. 124. See also Realism In Our Time, pp. 122-124.

<sup>65</sup>Georg Lukács Realism In Our Time, op. cit., pp. 122-23.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., pp.21-23.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., pp.60-61.

<sup>68</sup>Ian Watt The Rise Of The Novel, op. cit, pp. 19-23.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., pp. 61-62

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., pp. 81-82

## CHAPTER VI

## FROM THE HISTORICAL TO THE CONTEMPORARY NOVEL

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Before entering into a discussion of major implications of Lukács' theory of the historical novel for modern conceptions of the individual, I would like to present the basic threads of the argument so far. In chapter one I surveyed the background of Hegel's philosophy in the traditions of Greek thought. The question: what is the nature of reality?, and the Greek conception, under Plato, was shown to contain the elements of a later Hegelian concept "becoming". The Aristotelian conception of form, that is imitation, had its empirical referents in the historical and day to day actions of men, whether King's or beggars. Hegel's epistemological and philosophical systems which continue to exercise widespread influence in both Europe and North America, was shown also to have re-opened the whole question of the existential basis of art during the Enlightenment.

The real point of the above question for Hegel as for Marx was the relation between individual consciousness and social reality. Hegel propounded the dialectical method and thereby suggested two types of relations, the vertical historical process on the one hand, and the horizontal temporal process, on the other. In the first instance the picture drawn is a broad, panoramic movement through various historical epochs. In the second instance Hegel tends to concentrate on the specific

forms of law, religion, political systems and so on which correspond to particular stages in the process of self-consciousness.

In another chapter I discuss the ways in which Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels utilize aspects of Hegel's theories and transformed other aspects, mainly the dialectic. I discuss also the ways in which theorists like Marx and Dewey retained an essential aspect of Hegelianism, namely the notion that not only do types of artistic creation and their changes correspond to social structural changes, but also that the artistic creation of individuals have their basis in the larger philosophical and epistemological formulations of any given historical epoch. Marx's major contribution however was to seek an explanation for the relations of individual consciousness and social-historical reality not in the Hegelian "Geist", but in the particular social structural conditions of that historical epoch.

Georg Lukács reasserted the significance of the dialectic method, specifying its limitation to social as opposed to natural organic processes. I demonstrated two principal ideas at this point, first that historical facts were not ordered in some contingent manner, so that the dialectic is part of the historical process itself. Secondly that as social scientists we must consider the movement of economic and political categories, not just as facts, but as categories expressing "forms and conditions of existence". This type of analysis raises profound questions for sociology and the sociology of literature. It raises the problem of the connection between the intellectual

and structural processes of reality. Following from this Lukács argued that "social facts" cannot be proposed as immediate and given. This is the point of departure for Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, as it was also for Lukács' categories of totality.

These are vital categories for Lukács' analysis of literature and society, a problem closely linked to his formulations of individuals and classes in modern capitalist societies. This level of analysis distinguishes Lukács from the positivistic sociologists such as Weber on the one hand and the American sociologists of literature such as Duncan and Lowenthal as well as other Marxist critics such as Ralph Fox who adhered to dialectical materialism. [ Lukács expressed the epistemological formulation of totality as the consciousness of social classes on the one hand and the ideological expression in literature and art of the philosophical explanations of relative transformations of social structure on the other, as one variation of the concept of totality. And what I would term his sociological realism is the dialectical explanation of how some authors represent in their novels the class expressions and moods which partly generate but partly respond to the wider political and economic transformations which destroy old and herald new class relations and contradictions, and the manner in which these manifest themselves in individual behavior. Finally in the previous chapter I examined the most important theoretical explanations of literature and society developed by Lukács. His explanation of the historical novel, the most extensively discussed is suggested to be dialectically related

to previous forms of literary production, especially the drama and the epic. Though some of the more technical explanations about the theoretical structure of the historical novel are not without political bias.

Given Lukács' elaborate framework the question of the literary sociological conception of the individual and social reality appear to become lost. In this section I intend to approach these problems by way of an examination of Lukács' explanation of the change in writing to the novel. I shall also trace some of the contending explanations and their sociological relevance.

Georg Lukács has always claimed for his works a note of urgency which prevades the content of his discussions and which has become the source of bitter criticism by contemporary philosophers such as Sartre, Lichtheim and Henri Lefebvre.<sup>1</sup> Sartre responds to Lukács' attack on existentialism as the concrete approach to reality, Lichtheim attacks Lukács' assertion that 'socialist realism' is the only valid framework for an understanding of present day literary trends and the resulting contradictions in contemporary bourgeois society. Whereas Sartre's attack is epistemological and philosophical, Lichtheim attacks Lukács for sectarianism. It is undeniable that Lukács did after 1923 reject formally Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein, and moreover that most of his writings are manifestly political propaganda. The point of the argument here is that Lukács constructs a theoretical framework which provides one of the few sociological approaches to the epistemological analysis



of the relations between human consciousness, thought and reality as manifest in literature. When stripped of its propagandistic elements, this framework can primarily be criticized for its almost total rejection of large sections of the contemporary literature and its concern with a viable concept of the individual, in contemporary industrial society.

The most relevant part of Lukács framework, for the analysis in this section of the thesis is a summary of The Historical Novel. In this work, Lukács proposes the French Revolution as the economic and ideological foundation for the historical novel. The historical novel is the Lukácsian term for those works of literature appearing in the late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth centuries which were produced by bourgeois political and economic revolutions, but which nevertheless expressed opposition to the expanding cash nexus of social relations and the resulting bourgeois individualism in European society. Lukács may have termed the form historical for two reasons, first because this type of novel though in contrast to the eighteenth century romantic literature and its forerunners, nevertheless accepts their critical traditions; secondly because the writers of the historical novel would display in their writings a confrontation with the foremost ideological and philosophical explanations of the social life in those periods.

Lukács proposes the politically conservative Walter Scott as the leader of the historical novel school in Europe.<sup>2</sup> The process of development of this genre begins with Scott's

ideological belief that neither the declining feudal aristocracy nor the oppressed peasantry would win in the clash of forces present in English society in the eighteenth century. Rather it was the small, but growing bourgeoisie which would transform the political and economic structure of English society. Lukács' post facto analysis of this problem led him to explain the presence of the particular configuration of characters in Scott's novels in terms of Scott's acceptance of a middle path. But the process ended with the works of Tolstoy, (1828-1910) in which the novelist portrays the effects of rapidly industrializing society, the changing class relationships and decline of the peasantry. Once again the concern of this era of novelists is the problem of individual freedom, a dilemma which is partly a consequence of the increasing power of bourgeois modes of living and standards. But it is a dilemma which is broadened by Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and the later Thomas Mann to the proportions of a universal problem. Arnold Hauser like Lukács views this element as one of the strongest foundations of the contemporary novel, developed in the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Reiterating the line of analysis adopted by Lukács, Hauser suggests that the avowedly political content of the nineteenth and early twentieth century novels in England and Russia had their lofty traditions and ideals in the novels of Romanticism. So that despite differences in the works of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy and in their attitudes to the problem of individualism and freedom: "the problem itself was not new; it had always occupied the romantics and from 1830 onwards it had held a central place in political and philosophical

thought".<sup>4</sup> However in the work of the foremost novelists of the later half of the nineteenth century, the epistemological as well as the philosophical basis for the formulation of the problem changed. There was a gradual, but consistent shift from the writer's conception of society as a moral entity, to one of society as, a social structural set of components. At the same time, there was a change in expression of the problem of the individual as a free and creative entity as a basic pre-supposition of the romanticists, to one of the individual as determined by social structural forces. This changing conceptualisation reached a high point between idealistic romanticism on the one hand, and the individual as a conception of affective reality, of class society in the later period of industrial democracy on the other. This high point in conceptualisation is partly expressed in the works of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy.<sup>5</sup> This conceptualisation is the one to which most of Lukács' theories and empirical criticisms of literature and culture refer. It is to the representations of the individual's situation in class society that gave Lukács his cue for a radical literary criticism and a critique of society. That this cue also reinforced in Lukács philosophy the notion of action to change the condition of the individual is of no great importance here. That precisely this cue should paradoxically become the source of limitation for Lukács' theoretical development is of greater importance.<sup>6</sup>

Just as Lukács used his analysis of the origins and earlier development of bourgeois democratic industrialism to

formulate a theory of class consciousness of the proletariat, as what that class should think or feel. He developed a hypothesis of the individual in class society as to how the individual should think and act. In both cases the class interest was Lukács' point of departure. His theory of the historical novel had this same point of departure.

#### THE PROBLEM AFTER THE BOURGEOIS NOVEL

In an attempt at a more elaborate analysis of the Marxian dictum of class interests and action, Lukács provided the formal (so he thought) historical link between the original historical novel of the nineteenth century and various genres of the contemporary novel. At the same time Lukács also believed that he had discovered the key to an understanding of the underlying ideology which governs the writer's representation of the individual's situation, in the social reality of contemporary industrial society. The key of course was the concepts of concrete and abstract potentialities.<sup>7</sup>

Lukács by using the above two aspects of his explanation, held that writers developed representations of the individual and consciousness within the form of the "bourgeois realist novel", varieties of "modernism" and "socialist realism", the latter, still to be developed. Lukács argues that the reason for these categories of literary genres is simply that authors have been unable to penetrate the structures of "reification of contemporary bourgeois industrial society". This is a central

problem of modern society, whereby the "relationship between people takes on the character of relationships between things."<sup>8</sup> The following are brief definitions of the genres described by Lukács: the "bourgeois realist novel", is produced by a writer who ideologically sympathises with the middle classes. But the works produced are realist partly due to being in the tradition of the historical novel. The bourgeois realist novel presents a complete picture of the contradictions of bourgeois life, at a precise moment and stage of development of a society. Problems are presented, but left unanswered. The characters presented and the choices for action take place against the background of the overriding problems posed by the contradiction of a specific direction of capitalist social development.<sup>9</sup> Lukács regards the works of Thomas Mann as the best example of "bourgeois realism". Lukács remarks of Mann and the bourgeois realists as follows:

If these works are important it is almost always because they achieve a form which can render the conflicts of their times at their fullest range within the given historical reality. Yet these same conflicts pursued in terms of ideas, however fearlessly, can get not further than an honestly stated antithesis which often simply juxtaposes the "yes" and the "no" without connection.<sup>10</sup>

"Modernism" in contrast to bourgeois realism, is anti-realist. Lukács suggests that "modernist" writers have been unable to penetrate the structures of reification in contemporary industrial capitalist society. Despite their desires to criticize society as a totality, these writers are unable to

grasp the significance of capitalism's development as a stage in human history and are therefore unable to develop a weltanschauung which could grasp critically the particular historical contradictions of their own societies. The consequences of this position for the writer are that firstly in ontological terms, man is seen by them as solitary, a-social, and similar to Heidegger's man as "thrown-into-being". In short, the view is an a-historical one in which the author is unable to go beyond the confines of his own subjective experience. Secondly, the artistic representation of the individual is as a given with no "pre existent reality, beyond his own self." But the individual is also located in a timeless reality, a universal condition humaine. Lukács says of modernist literature:

Attenuation of reality and dissolution of personality are thus interdependent; the stronger the one, the stronger the other. Underlying both is the lack of a consistent view of human nature. Man is reduced to a sequence of unrelated experiential fragments: he is as inexplicable to others as to himself.<sup>11</sup>

The above Lukácsian argument is plausible if taken at face value, but since Lukács himself does not provide any discussion in his work on actual novelists - apart from one polemical discussion of lesser known German novelists -- his attacks appear exaggerated, even unfounded.<sup>12</sup> Socialist realism is defined, as the perspective of critical realism but one used "to describe the working of forces towards socialism from the inside". This Lukács describes as the situation whereby the contemporary novelist portrays human beings whose psycho-

logical make-up and efforts are directed toward building a socialist future. It is a future which is built on a Marxian analysis of the past, present and developing tendencies of industrial societies.<sup>13</sup> It is no wonder that Lukács critics often deem him a Marxist "hack". For this is one of the extremely weak aspects of Lukács' analysis, not because of his choice of doctrine as Lichteim suggests, but because of his treatment of socialism.

From the foregoing it appears that apart from Lukács' original insight into the role played by ideology in the formulation of literary themes and characterizations of individuals, little is offered by way of elaboration in his writings for the specific tenor and ideological themes about the individual in contemporary literature. It is possible to avoid Lukács' error of attacking Sartre and the existentialists and provide a critique of contemporary industrial society in relation to the arts, without rejecting the greater part of Lukács' formulations on the individual and social reality in literature. This will be the concern of the remainder of this discussion.

#### LITERARY PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL CHANGE:

##### MARCUSE'S ONE DIMENSIONAL SOCIETY

Herbert Marcuse has remarked in an analysis of the significance of traditional critical theory, in a contemporary industrial society, in which the totality of powers of technology, rising standards of living or its potential for the masses and

efficient institutions of social control; have altered the relationship of the individual to society. Marcuse has said:

The obscene merger of aesthetics and reality refutes the philosophies which oppose "poetic" imagination to empirical Reason. Technological progress is accompanied by a progressive rationalization and even realization of the imaginary. The arche types of horror as well as of joy, of war as well as of peace lose their catastrophic character. Their appearance in the daily life of the individuals is no longer that of irrational forces - their modern orators are elements of technological domination, and subject to it.<sup>14</sup>

The thesis of Marcuse's discussion in One Dimensional Man, bears direct relevance for the work of Lukács. The former suggests that the traditional categories of thought in nineteenth century critical theory, moulded a conception of the individual with needs and faculties in direct opposition to the interests of industrial capitalism. Individual freedom was in theory possible, but the society opposed this. The proletariat class was opposed by the nature of its interests to the class interests of the bourgeoisie. But both these interests and ideologies have been contained, in exchange for increasing material welfare. Thus the earlier Marxist critique of the contradictions of theory and practice are no longer tenable, in the framework of the traditional ideological categories. For both classes, and sets of individuals have submitted to the power of technology.<sup>15</sup>

Marcuse summarizes his arguments as follows:

There is only one dimension, and it is everywhere and in all forms. The achievements of progress defy ideological



indictment as well as justification; before their tribunal, the false consciousness of their rationality becomes true consciousness.

This absorption of ideology into reality does not, however, signify the "end of ideology". On the contrary in a specific sense advanced industrial culture is more ideological than its predecessor, inasmuch as the ideology is in the process of production itself. 16

The many epistemological implications of Marcuse's analysis are later discussed in terms of Marx's classical theory. The exploitation and status of the proletarian worker has been transformed and modified by machine technology and automation. His integration is less conspicuous. Consequently the nature of alienation has been transformed, from being a physical to a more mental state. The theoretical perspective for a critique of society, as modified by Lukács, therefore has to be revised. At the same time Lukács' conception of the consciousness of the proletariat also needs to be revised.

Lukács, starting from his postulate of the structure of reification in industrial societies, proceeded to develop his theory of the literary characters of the historical novel as possessing choices of action which were historically determined. That is to say, certain individuals appearing in a novel were realistically presented as having choices of actions, which became concrete potentialities, and part of the character's personality. Consciousness of the individual is both cause and effect, as is action. But basic to all this was the particular historical situation as it presented itself. An apriori assumption of this analysis was that the contradictions of

social life would manifest themselves in individual life situations to a sufficient extent. Moreover that these manifestations would take the form of social and economic disruptions, since the society's development under the capitalist impetus could not contain all the contradictory forces. But Marcuse's analysis denies this as a real problem in contemporary industrialism in either the West or the East. For both historical classes are integrated in the status quo and given the totalitarian nature of reification, the possibility for Lukács' type of action as a primary motive force in history no longer exists.<sup>17</sup> Marcuse states:

Hatred and frustration are deprived of their specific target, and the technological veil conceals the reproduction of inequality and enslavement.<sup>18</sup>

Marcuse uses a Hegelian brand of philosophic reasoning to argue against the materialistic metaphysic of the Marxists. The contention here is centered around the conception of reality. With the advancement of technological control over Nature, the continued application of scientific rationality meant an increasing positivistic conception and definition of reality. However, historical conditions determine that with the "completion of the technological reality", the pre-requisite exists "for the transcending of that technological reality."<sup>19</sup> Marcuse also uses the Hegelian notion of the primacy of the idea over the thing, to suggest that art is one of those realms which creates "another universe of thought and practice

against and within the existing one." But this universe (Lukács' abstract possibility) of illusion becomes the more real and rational the more irrational the society becomes, and this is the historical epoch which characterizes the contemporary society.

The rationality of art, its ability to "project" existence, to define yet unrealized possibilities could then be envisaged as validated by and functioning in the scientific-technological formation of the world. Rather than being the hand maiden of the established apparatus, beautifying its business and its misery, art would become a technique for destroying this business and this misery.<sup>20</sup>

Though Marcuse and Lukács tend to use a similar epistemological basis, they arrive at different conclusions on the status of modern art. Marcuse extends his analysis just at that point where Lukács ceased in his conception of the role of matter. For Lukács the aesthetic dimension is controlled even in advanced industrial societies by political ideology. For Marcuse, "the advancing one-dimensional (the technological sphere) society" alters the relation between the rational and the irrational and the realm of art becomes the dimension for transforming the quality of life, Marcuse summarizes his argument thus:

The real face of our time shows in Samuel Beckett's novels; its real history is written in Rolf Hochhut's play Der Stellvertreter. It is no longer imagination which speaks here, but Reason, in a reality which justifies everything and absolves everything -- except the sin against its spirit.<sup>21</sup>

Marcuse therefore sees the realm of art as containing the potential for change, and the art he is referring to is precisely that art, literature which Lukács deems unrealistic.

Part of the significance of Marcuse's analysis is brought to bear on the debate in sociology which centres around the mass-culture theorists. In so far as Marcuse focuses on the arts as one vehicle of alternate possibilities for the individual's expression of himself and for a different perspective on existence. The current debate in North America can be summarized as follows:

- 1) As industrialization and technological efficiency increases in scope, society becomes more dehumanized and mass-culture in the form of commercialized television, the paper-back and magazine revolution and so on become avenues for the sale and expression of mediocre, banal entertainment, information and image presentations. The consequence is further alienation from contemporary reality and art as escape.<sup>22</sup>

The opposing viewpoint suggests that:

- 2) There have always been elements of mass culture, from the time of Classical Greece, through the ages to the Reformation and so on. That simultaneously arts which have become classics were developing. Furthermore there is no direct or other correlation between mass culture and changes in the quality of life, for example crime

rates or banal perversions. Moreover this argument suggests that the tendency will increasingly be toward improving the quality of information and entertainment and democratizing formerly elitest tendencies in art.<sup>23</sup>

The first school can be loosely termed "conservative" and the second "liberal". Where the emphasis is on the integration of art and culture in the dimensions of technology and its logic of domination, the emphasis of the question is shifted to the tendency of equation of reality which we can identify with "irrational art." I use the term "irrational" to describe the long debate from Plato to Lukács and the present day, culminating with the subsuming of the Reason of Art under the Reason of Science. The basis of this debate was an ontological dichotomy between thought and being, ideal and real, which remained unresolved with the monopolization of physical science.<sup>24</sup> Marcuse suggests that in contemporary societies the tendencies exist for the Reason of Science to be transcended. With this epistemological base the problem of the modern novel and the array of situations and characters which are presented become theoretical "possibilities" is Marcuse's sense. That is to say, the element of protest is itself transcended. I have in mind the protest voiced by D.H. Lawrence's character Ursula in The Rainbow, where a personality is enriched yet limited by its contempt for bourgeois society and democracy.<sup>25</sup>

Why has assessment of later twentieth century novel writing been termed "the crisis of the modern novel"? What are the artistic theoretical and philosophical bases of these novels? What have been some of the changing relationships and conceptualizations of some of the leading contemporary novelists? The rest of this discussion turns to these questions in an attempt to trace some of the principal conceptual threads in the relation of the individual and social reality in literature.

The philosophical criticism which lies at the basis of the attacks on the modern novel can at best be expressed as that view which opposed the notion that man is primarily distinguished by his capacity for thought. The notion that culture, thought, art and ideas can be justified by themselves. The opposing concept of man and life in human society tends to attribute the particular subjectivity, individualism and concerns of the modern novel, part of what Gasset terms "the bigotry of culture", to this form of "intellectualism".<sup>26</sup> Gasset argues in his work Man And People that one characteristic of the Second World War era was that because thought and action were confused, a form of cultural bifurcation had developed in which some men had retreated into fantasy while others had gone into action, irrational action. Man had lost 'dramatic consciousness', had ceased to watch on himself.<sup>27</sup> There are many weaknesses in Gasset's position, the presupposition that some kind of stasis of consciousness and action is possible as a precondition of existence. His ignoring of the structural conditions, economic and political as giving rise to literary and military upheavals,

itself falls into the trap, which he criticizes, of placing thought above everything else. The point however is that viewpoints such as Gasset's were attempts to explain European man's condition in the early twentieth century, which can be borne out by diverse literary critics.

One of the few things that many contemporary critics seem to agree on is the urbanity of the novel in the first half of the twentieth century. Arnold Kettle argues:

It is generally assumed that the great complexity of modern life and the sense of flux and uncertainty of a revolutionary period make writing unusually difficult. Certainly the general condition of English culture in the last fifty years would seem at first glance to bear out this thesis.<sup>28</sup>

Kettle suggests that issues other than advancing capitalism, imperialism and wars, account for the extreme pessimism and narrowness of the English novel in the twentieth century. First the increasing separation between the "popular and the good novel", are partly consequences of middle class intellectual snobbery and the increasing commercialization of literature. Secondly, the atypical sensibility, encouraged by the growth of Freudian and Jungian psychology. Thirdly the inability of the best novelists of the period, Conrad, Lawrence, Joyce, for instance, to develop a philosophic and artistic vantage point, to subjugate the world.<sup>29</sup> Caudwell establishes forcefully the perspective from which he views the arts and society. For Caudwell, the bourgeois artist goes through certain stages

of growth and decline just as capitalism itself. He traces a movement of "art for art's" sake in the 1870's, through the Parnassians (a mainly French nineteenth century school, seeking objectivity and impartiality in art forms), to Symbolism, to Futurism, the unconsciousness notions of the Surrealists. This is the last school of bourgeois art and has many genres including its last trend, bourgeois anarchism. Caudwell, reflecting the political optimism of his age -- the growth and spread of the Communist Party in England and Europe, as the party of the proletariat -- felt that the literary perspective would become Communist. The membership in the Communist Party of Auden, Spender, Lewis and others, was enough to lend validity to his ideas. Thus Caudwell argues:

The same final movement of the bourgeois illusion is reflected in the growth of the Peoples Front, where all liberal elements ... put themselves under the leadership of the proletariat ... . In English poetry this is reflected in the fact that English poets ... change from a position near "surrealisme" into its opposite -- a communist revolutionary position... .30

Elsewhere Caudwell raises the same argument, with a different twist -- the problem of bourgeois culture, art and natural science as well as philosophy is that with the first and last subjects there is a contradiction between changing social conditions and outmoded forms of consciousness. The ineffectual unreal structures of individualism in the novel spring from an out-moded belief that man is naturally free. The



very development and disintegration of bourgeois culture clashes with the real social relations, to confuse the illusions of many novelists. Caudwell asserts:

Thus in art the tension between individualism and the increasing complexity and catastrophies of the artist's environment, between the free following of dream and the rude blows of anarchic reality, wakes the artist from his dream and forces him in spite of himself to look at the world, not merely as an artist, but also as a man, as a citizen, as a sociologist.<sup>31</sup>

From the above, we discern a disappointment among critics complaining against the social content of the modern novel. There are three aspects of this disappointment. First there is its conservative element, the "critics" are against the increasing destruction of the traditional Greco-Roman conception of temporal reality, the ordering of social reality in terms of beginnings, middle and end. Lukács for example retains this conception throughout his analysis of epic, drama and historical novel. Caudwell's and Kettle's criticisms about the twentieth century literary philosophies of individualism are at core oppositions to this destruction of conceptualisation. Secondly the modern novelist is criticized for his approach to contemporary society. The novelists Lawrence, Joyce and Woolf have been unable to link the changing nature of capitalism to the day to day existence of the working class masses, in a political fashion, that is a resolution of those contradictions. Thirdly the emphasis has been shifted from the novel, its concern with the realities of massive wars, economic slumps (1929

financial crash) and imperialism to more individual and private themes, sexuality, psychological trivia and so on. My concern shall not be to argue against these points separately, but rather to examine the ways in which the very concerns of the novelists developed into consistent themes in the novels of the 1940's to the 1960's. That they tend to express the principal problems, example alienation in modern society. But that the modes of expression have changed as well.

In terms of form and literary philosophy, impressionism is the fore-runner of the modern novel. Impression can be described as the artistic method which expresses the idea that being is motion, that experience of the world becomes experience of time. Though the style is more clearly distinguished in painting than in literature towards the end of the last century. One of the differences between impressionism and the contemporary literary style is that the latter does not assert that art must be passive and contemplative.<sup>32</sup> Impressionism is also a forerunner because it aims to transcend the practical positive life of technology by a life of the spirit.

Impressionistic conceptions of contemporary man vary -- although throughout the "school" there is a general revolt against the uniformity and predictability of bourgeois life -- from the individual nihilism of Baudelaire to the work of Chekov.<sup>33</sup> But the works of the impressionists and their successors are directly related to the literary motifs of later twentieth century novelists in so far as throughout the development a significant break with older representations

of the individual emerge. It is one in which there is a transformation of the individual's experience of himself and of nature, effected by a changing conception of consciousness of spatial and temporal relationships.<sup>34</sup>

It is not my intention in asserting the intense interest in phenomenology and its influence on the "individualism" and anti-historical materialism -- for example Bergson's conception of time on the impressionists -- to posit a sequential order of relationships between the changing social order, the changing phenomenology and philosophy and the new artistic genres. It is enough to show threads of connection between the three aspects, and to posit the continuing interest in Europe throughout the 1950's in existentialism and its relation to the novels of Satre and Camus among others.

Whereas some aspects of phenomenology pre-date the work of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the debates are around the conception of the temporal relation between being, consciousness and matter. From the time of Leibniz, it was asserted that consciousness does not remain in itself, spatially static as it were, but "reaches out beyond itself, beyond the given present to the not-given".<sup>35</sup> Lukács agreed with this position. What diverged from Lukács' findings and what influenced the later novelists and artists was the controversy around a subsequent position: that the direction of consciousness is not fixed in terms of meaning, but becomes a mere illusion. This has radical consequences for a Marxist metaphysic of the movement of concrete historical relations. The question

of the individuality of the self was raised to new proportions -- still not entirely resolved -- with Bergson's assertion that man's view of time should not be moulded on a fixed concept of being but rather the content of reality "should be determined according to the pure intuition of time."<sup>36</sup> In other words the unity and direction of consciousness and therefore of individual forms of consciousnesses in terms of action are not given, for example in knowledge of past experience alone. Nor is anticipation of the future in an ideal plan requisite for the individual organism. In man new forms of action arise, in new forms of temporal vision, in new relations i.e. perceptions, of man to nature and history as well as new relations to the present. This was the beginning of a more autonomous view of man as an individual in terms of the possibilities of his experience.

Impressionism drew much of its epistemological inspiration from the foregoing. This inspiration provided a source of articulation for social alienation which at that level of experience was mainly felt by a few intellectuals and artists, Van Gogh, Kandinsky, James Joyce, Heidegger and Satre, to name a few. Nevertheless it was a crisis of rationalism, of technological civilization and bureaucracy. This was a crisis of man, opposed to the traditional view of the Enlightenment. The onward march of technological civilization since the 1940's has rendered the questions more urgent and cracked the walls of positivism and rationalism within which a sociological conception of man was developing.<sup>37</sup> The novels

which form the empirical basis of Lukács theory conceived of an industrial society in which ideological integration existed, without the technological and administrative forces to achieve a totality such as appears to exist today. Individual situations and consciousnesses were rooted in class society, and expressed alienation differed in its artistic representation from today.

A sociological correspondence exists between existentialism as a philosophical explanation and the modern novel. They draw upon and tend to reinforce each other. Both have to develop explanations for the abstractness of modern life, for the mass media's creation of individual stereotypes and so on. Barrett discusses the growing influence of the existential perspective, as opposed to the view of man as an object of the concrete historical processes of development.<sup>38</sup> Barrett concludes that the problem is not so much one of novelists protesting about a world which has atomized a once free individual, but rather the increasing awareness that man has no fixed images. Barrett states:

I do not think we can find any comparably clear cut image of man amid the bewildering thicket of modern art. And this is not because we are too close to the period, as yet, to stand back and make such a selection. Rather the variety of images is too great and too contradictory to coalesce into any single shape or form. May the reason why modern art offers us no clear cut image of man not be ... that man is a creature who transcends any image because he has no fixed essence or nature, as a stone or a tree have?<sup>39</sup>

Barrett's statement refers to modern literature in contrast to Greek, Renaissance and past Enlightenment literature. But the

author involves himself in a contradiction. For if one agrees that the ontological problem of man's subjectivity vis a vis the external world and society is more acute in contemporary society, than at any other time in the past.<sup>40</sup> And that this problem is related to the specific nature of contemporary society -- Barrett cites the popularity of Beckett's Waiting For Godot and Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms -- then the assertion that the individual's identity is as old as man himself becomes meaningless.<sup>41</sup>

#### THE CONCEPT OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

The development from the historical to the contemporary novel signifies a partial transformation in the historical roles of the bourgeoisie and proletariat. The literary representations have tended to shift from characterization and analysis of individual human lives against a socio-economic class background to an examination of the psychological processes of the individual, in which the social structural causes of behaviour are not in focus. What Mann in Buddenbrooks and John Galsworthy in The Forsyte Saga, portrayed, the disintegration of the formerly dominant part played by rigid class situations in the character and fate of individuals, are no longer compelling novelistic themes. The relations like industrial society itself have become more complex.<sup>42</sup> Subjective individual processes are prominent because the forces which are the "locomotives of history", bureaucracy, monopolistic industrialism, militarism and so on, do not negate class relations, but are less easily

identifiable than the latter. This fact renders Weber's sociology important.<sup>43</sup>

The position of the modern novel can be summarized as follows:

It (the contemporary novel) is radically individual in its approach, since it addresses itself to one reader at a time, and it can make no assumptions about his beliefs or activities comparable with these which the early nineteenth century novel, addressed to a section of society could make.<sup>44</sup>

Comfort, along with Marcuse and Lukács, views contemporary society as essentially a disintegrating structure. But Comfort views the role of the novel differently. Its aim is to understand a new range of individual experiences, throughout this disintegration, and stir disquiet among novel readers. It is in this context that Camus' Mersault and Joyce's Bloom, became forces in fiction.<sup>45</sup> In this sense the new school of contemporary literature, including the works of Kafka and Joyce to Camus and Ralph Ellison, are artistic conceptions of the individual in modern society. The development of the film industry with its new techniques of visual presentations have played a major role in this development.<sup>46</sup>

If the disintegration of nineteenth century bourgeois life is characterized by the displacement of the Balzacian method in literary fiction, it is also noted to have given rise to impressionism and in the twentieth century the "stream of consciousness method", what Virginia Woolf called the "myriad

impressions" of individual consciousness and their relation to a particular social situation. This method is not entirely successful as is evidenced by the many criticisms of the works of Henry James, Woolf and D.H. Lawrence.<sup>47</sup> The controversy expands, with criticism of varied novelists up to the present time, to the evaluation of literature in terms of the "autonomy of form" and the "autonomy of self". The literary presupposition behind the first concept has to do with the re-assertion of mimesis -- the novel's function as imitation of life. This was re-formulated by Leavis among others. The assumptions behind the second concept has to do with the ordering of experience.<sup>48</sup> The modern novels such as Sartre's and Camus' are distinct also in their "destruction" of the nineteenth century notion of fictional character, and a reorganization of narrative, in terms of realistic internal development of character and experience. This is the re-constituted notion of totality. The implication of this is that autonomy of form - the relatively stable syntax of experience is in contradiction with the autonomy of self.<sup>49</sup> The autonomy of form, in terms of a traditional notion of how individual members of social class (in the Marxian sense) respond to a situation which is structured so as not to influence that character, is the real "bone of contention". However, the notion of autonomy of self which is patterned along the extremes of a "man as thrown into being", tend in fiction as in the humanities, to be a reification of the individual.<sup>50</sup> An expression of both these points of view



with respect to art seems to have been Malraux's position in the statement:

Our modern taste has become adjusted to a, so to speak, sectarian poetry, which adjusts its world to perspectives of the irrational and dream fantasies. And doubtless all true poetry is irrational in the sense that, for the established order of the relations between things, it substitutes a new system of relations.<sup>51</sup>

Malraux's analysis of art though not always clear in itself for a further understanding of the "metamorphosis" in art, expresses clearly the demands made on the "creative intellect" between the fantasies in art and the author's expression of human experience in his characters. Mailer states it thus:

I suppose that the virtue I should like most to achieve as a writer is to be genuinely disturbing ... . It is I believe, the highest function a writer may serve, to see life ... as others do not see it, or only partially see it ... .<sup>52</sup>

Two of Mailer's best works, The Naked and The Dead, and The Deer Park, achieve the author's aim, in so far as in both works the mixtures of the unrealities of characters and situations, within narrations of problems of war, human stress and the plastic world of entertainment and frustrations, produce human images ranging from the absurd to the pathetic. The class nature of the situations represented are not elaborated by the author, they are givens, the historical backgrounds do not dominate the characters lives either. Again the

consciousness of his characters are also not determined throughout narration, but partly follow from the story's development.

The contemporary, like some aspects of the historical novel lack heroes, this is true of Mailer. They seem to lack these in the contemporary novel because of their character's overriding concern with human consciousness and the contradictions of contemporary social life. But the nature of these contradictions are not solely political or class contradictions. They are the contradictions of human values i.e. bourgeois values and political life. These take the character of totalities.

An example of the contemporary novel which has utilized the technique of the "totality of the human character" is Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man. At the end of this long work, the character of main importance, Brother Booker T. Washington, summarizes his conception of himself in terms of his experiences as follows:

Well, I was and yet I was invisible, that was the fundamental contradiction. I was and yet I was unseen. It was frightening and as I sat there I sensed another frightening world of possibilities. For now I saw that I could agree with Jack without agreeing. And I could tell Harlem to have hope when there was no hope. Perhaps I could tell them to hope until I found the basis of something real, some firm ground for action that would lead them onto the plane of history. But until then I would have to move them without myself being moved... .53  
 [ Emphasis mine ]

Many aspects of this novel qualify it as a realist analysis of human consciousness, narrated in the first person.

Firstly, the author uses his principal character whose real name is never revealed, to carry and be moulded by the events in the novel. Booker T. Washington, from working class, peasant background, is defeated in his ambition to graduate through college, partly through ineptness, partly through the rigidity of a self-consciously authoritarian college head. Secondly the author reveals the main character's frustrations when confronted with the industrial and financial bureaucracies of New York. But the man's personal history also play a role in these confrontations. Thirdly, the reflections on these plus the personal beliefs of wanting to contribute to the "Negro cause", determine Washington's choice of a new identity. But influential too is the need to earn money. Fourthly the character's frustrations with the new paternalistic bureaucracy and its own contradictions on the one hand and the changing moods of the groups he wishes to influence, lead to concrete political failure but personal triumph -- Washington's decision to be a minor leader, a political role and his acceptance of the indifference of others to his whole self.

Given Ellison's perspective and style, the intense events of the world around the central characters, are interpreted differently by all. To those with power, for example Washington's employers, the events that they cannot control are failures. To Washington and the masses they are successes, for example the riots. Nevertheless the identity of each character varies, depending on his relation to those events, for example the Harlem riots, are significant for Washington's developing

awareness of his situation. But this individual process is possible by Washington's relation to others, and to the events. For Ellison then, contemporary life is tragic and comic. Liberation of the underprivileged is not solely dependent on class consciousness, for the events which control their lives as individuals are discovered swiftly and imperceptibly. Yet success is guaranteed neither by spontaneous mass action nor the politics of party organization. Washington's victory was his final recognition of this. Ellison's aim was not to provide answers to these contradictions. Rather it was to illustrate the invisible aspect of human individuality, from the perspective of other and from that of any one person.

Left alone, I lay fretting over my identity. I suspected that I was really playing a game with myself and that they were taking part. Actually they knew as well as I, and I for some reason preferred not to face it.<sup>54</sup>

## SUMMARY

In the foregoing we discussed both the development from the historical novel to the modern novel as well as the critical responses to these changes. The value of Lukács' role in literary sociology parallels Mannheim's work on the concept of relativism. For Lukács the concept of ideology and the meaning of ideology are a determining force in creative work. The strength of this and its weakness is the overriding importance of class relations in Lukács scheme. Marcuse's work in One Dimensional Man is a philosophical analysis of a debate around the trends of an increasing technological society and bureaucratization which essentially have reduced the once fundamental significance of class conflicts. But his book provides little concrete data on this assertion.<sup>55</sup> But Marcuse never states conclusively what is the nature of class society, class conflict and its implications for the development of class consciousness, through industrial struggles. For this was the concern of Lukács. Sedgwick argues that Marcuse's analysis derived an inadequate understanding of human "behavioural events".<sup>56</sup> In this chapter I suggest that many of Marcuse's ideas on social change in modern society do not preclude the continuation of class conflict and consciousness. However even before the Second World War the monotheism of a literary theory based on class consciousness began to be questioned. In Lukács theory the internal content and movement of events depended on both the author's philosophical and

ideological position and on the literary traditions existing in European society. But Lukács was unable to take seriously those works which shifted emphasis onto the human organism as an individual developing consciousness in terms of events transcending the immediacy of class interests. At that time also, the debate around impressionism allowed dismissal of early novels of Joyce and Lawrence, and Lukács wrongly saw these works as ideologically conservative. I have argued that these new novels were more concerned with aspects of human experience, individual consciousness which does not preclude awareness of the fate of others. Also that this method developed with the increase in psychological processes and existentialism. These were logical developments on the historical novel because the "middling hero" itself implies an attempt to reduce the distance between individuals and events.<sup>57</sup> And the same time the problem of consciousness is no less problematic -- excluding the Freudian unconscious. Social and economic contradictions in the wider society may manifest themselves in individual life situations, but these need not be perceived as class situations. In contemporary society the forces of technology, bureaucracy as well as atomic warfare and the control of the mass media have transformed the nature of class relations and consciousness.<sup>58</sup> Whereas many modern novels use art as escape many of the more contemporary novels such as Mailer's Naked And The Dead and Ellison's Invisible Man have moved toward a more intense illustration of alienation and consciousness. Such insights, partly aided by film techniques, have implied changes in

literary subject matter -- even in Mann's day -- and insights in social science. Contrary to Lukács' view the main tendencies have not been towards socialist realism, works such as the Pawnbroker, in which we see man as surviving in the face of threatening real events -- racial persecution -- without being able to rise above these events.<sup>59</sup> The similar trend in many novels since Kafka has confronted a conception of time and experience which Lukács seemed to be lamenting and this is their contribution to an understanding and conceptualization of social reality.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See: Jean-Paul Satre, Search For a Method, translated from the French and introduced by Hagel Barnes, Alfred A. Knopf. New York, 1967, Chapter I, pp. 20-22; George Lichteim The Concept of Ideology and Other Essays, Random House, New York, 1967, pp. 245-255.

<sup>2</sup>George Lichteim attacks Lukács on this point, Lichteim suggests that the main reason for Lukács' proposal of Walter Scott as the leader of the historical novel school of writing was that this choice coincides with his "popular front" political ideology of the 1937 to 1948 period, rather than being the result of serious empirical analysis of Scott's works. But Lichteim provides no serious analysis of this point. But in another German text on Walter Scott, Lukács provides a more convincing analysis of the historical novel, and so I am led to believe that much of the meaning Lukács meant was lost in the translation into English. See Georg Lukács Schriften Zur Literatursoziologie, Herman Luchterhand Verlag Ausgewählt und eingeleitet von Peter Ludz, 1961, p. 419 *passim*.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Hauser, The Social History of Art, Volume 4, Vintage Books, Alfred Knopf, Inc., Chapter 3, pp. 141-142.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>6</sup>Harold Rosenberg, "The Third Dimension of Georg Lukács", Dissent, Vol. II, No. 4, Autumn 1964, p. 407.

<sup>7</sup>These concepts were defined in the last section of the previous chapter.

<sup>8</sup>L. Stern "Georg Lukács: An Intellectual Portrait", Dissent, Vol. 2, No. 2, Spring, 1958, p. 169.

<sup>9</sup>See Georg Lukács, Essays on Thomas Mann, translated by Stanley Mitchell, (Merlin Press, London, 1964), pp. 13-15.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>11</sup>Op. cit Realism In Our Time, p. 27.



<sup>12</sup>Op. cit., Essays On Thomas Mann, pp.144-145. See also Georg Lukács, Nietzsche, Forerunner of Fascist Esthetics, International Literature, p. 72. But critics of Lukács have made similar criticisms of his polemical modernist versus socialist realism categories. See G. Lichteim, op. cit., p. 252 and H. Rosenberg, op. cit., pp. 408-411.

<sup>13</sup>Op. Cit, Realism In Our Time, pp. 94-96.

<sup>14</sup>See Herbert Marcuse, One Dimensional Man: Studies In the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society, Beacon Press, Boston, 1966, p. 248.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 2-6.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-31.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 230-231.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 239.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>22</sup>See Bernard Rosenberg & David Manning, Mass Culture: The Popular Arts In America, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1956, pp. 3-12.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-21.

<sup>24</sup>See Henri Frankfort et al. Before Philosophy: The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man, Pelican Books, 1949, pp. 11-15, Edgar Zilsel "The Development And Institutionalization of Science," American Journal Of Sociology, Volume 47, January 1943; H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, From Max Weber, op. cit., pp. 140-143.

<sup>25</sup>Arnold Kettle, An Introduction To The English Novel, Vol.II, Hutchinson and Co., London, 1953, pp. 123-131. See also Christopher Caudwell, Studies In A Dying Culture, The Bodley Head, London, 1938, pp. 44-72.

<sup>26</sup>See José Ortega Y Gasset, Man And People, by Willard R. Trask, Norton and Co., New York, 1957, pp. 30-31.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 28 and 32.

<sup>28</sup>Arnold Kettle, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 64-66.

<sup>30</sup>Illusion And Reality: A Study Of The Sources of Poetry, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>31</sup>See Christopher Caudwell Studies In A Dying Culture, op. cit, p. 55.

<sup>32</sup>Arnold Hauser, op. cit., p. 181. This author dates the beginning of impressionism at 1854. See also Gerhard Mauser Prophets Of Yesterday: Studies In European Culture 1890-1914, Macmillan Co., New York, 1961.

<sup>33</sup>Arnold Hauser, op. cit., pp. 191-193.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 220-224.

<sup>35</sup>See Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol.3, The Phenomenology of Knowledge, Yale University Press, 1957, p. 180.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 183-184.

<sup>37</sup>See Edward A. Tiryakian, Sociologism And Existentialism: Two Perspectives On The Individual And Society, Prentice Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1962, p. 6. See also Gerhard Masur op. cit. p. 84.

<sup>38</sup>I use the term existentialism, to include the generality of concern with man's existence as maker of his destiny and the view that man's existence precedes his essence in "future" terms. The attempt to grasp the image of a "whole man".

<sup>39</sup>William Barrett Irrational Man: A Study In Existential Philosophy, Anchor Books edition, 1962, p. 61.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 63 and pp. 268-270.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp.44-46 and p. 62, for reference to Beckett and Hemingway; See p. 271 for Barrett's circularity of analysis.

<sup>42</sup>Masur, op. cit, pp. 244-251.

<sup>43</sup>C. Wright Mills (editor) Images of Man: The Classic Tradition In Sociological Thinking, George Braziller, Inc., New York, 1960, p. 12.

<sup>44</sup>Alex Comfort, The Novel And Our Time, Pendejo Press, Vancouver, p. 15.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-21.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 33. See also Arnold Hauser, op. cit., pp. 246-249 and Christopher Caudwell, Illusion and Reality, op. cit., p.296.

<sup>47</sup>Arnold Kettle, op. cit., p. 102, F.R. Leavis, For Continuity, Folcroft Press Inc., 1933, pp. 118-123.

<sup>48</sup>John Goopé, Character And The Novel, New Left Review, #40, November/December, 1966, pp. 67-68.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., pp. 72-75.

<sup>50</sup>Cf. R.W.B. Lewis, Malraux: A Collection of Critical Essays, Prentice Hall, Inc., N.J., 1964, pp. 78-79.

<sup>51</sup>See André Malraux, The Psychology Of Art: Twilight Of The Absolute, translated by Stuart Gilbert, Pantheon Books, 1950, p. 31.

<sup>52</sup>Cf. Richard Foster, Norman Mailer, University of Minnesota Press, 1968, p. 40.

<sup>53</sup>Ralph Ellison Invisible Man, New American Library, 1947, p. 438.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>55</sup>Peter Sedgwick, "Natural Science And Human Theory: A Critique of Herbert Marcuse", Socialist Register, 1966, pp.167-168.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp. 168-169.

<sup>57</sup>See David Howard, John Lucas and John Goode, Tradition And Tolerance In Nineteenth Century Fiction: Critical Essays On Some English And American Novels, Routledge Kegan Paul, London, 1967, pp. 6-7.

<sup>58</sup>Ref. my discussion on p. 59.

<sup>59</sup>Ernest Becker Angel In Armour: A Post Freudian Perspective On The Nature Of Man, George Braziller, New York, pp. 75-98.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis the importance of a viable theory of the literary representation of social reality for sociological theory has been the main focus of analysis. In sociology the principal theoretical and methodological problems are of course the conceptual schemes which are used for an investigation of social reality. The problem then becomes the specificity, inter-relation and meaning of the abstractions which are presented.<sup>1</sup> In this connection a sociological analysis of art, specifically literature if analysed in a non-positivist manner, that is to say in the tradition of theorists such as Lukács, can provide greater insights into the relations among men as individuals, social phenomena and forms of consciousness. These are three of the basic elements of social reality.

In terms of a sociology of literature I have attempted to illustrate some of the main ways in which Georg Lukács' sociology of literature provides stimulating alternatives to the "reflection theory of literature" which is prominent in North American sociology. He does this by interpreting and criticizing literature on the basis of formulations of a philosophy of literary criticism and his sociological theories of the relations between form and content in literature.

The main conclusion then is that Lukács would object to any formal methodological inquiry into the nature of social reality and the relation of the individual to society which does not recognize two basic tenets. Firstly that social

reality must be investigated with the dialectic as a method, as expounded by Marx. Secondly historical facts which are the stuff of social and economic reality, are not ordered in some contingent fashion. In elaboration and examination of Lukács' position, I have reviewed the historical precedents in social philosophy concentrating on the Greek classical, Hegelian and Marxist theories of social reality as well as some of the principal modifications and opposition to the Lukácsian system. In this I have attempted to trace some of the relevant connections between these aspects of thought. My aim in this was to demonstrate the ways in which literature and literary criticism approach the problems of the relations between existence and forms of consciousness. I have attempted to illustrate and discuss the ways in which Lukács' thought provides a synthesis between these disparate elements of thought, and some of the limitations of Lukács' method.

I arrived at Lukács' formulation by positing the question: what is the specific interrelations of literature and society? During the course of investigation I examined the earliest formulations of this problem by the classical Greek philosophers, who posed the question in the form: what is the nature of reality? This formulation established the pattern for all subsequent examinations of the problem in European philosophy.

Historically then not only does much of Hegelian and post Hegelian thought have much of its roots in the Greek metaphysical system -- the notion that reality was essentially

spiritual but that the basic aspects of later aesthetics, which influenced the sociology of literature in American and European continental sociology, relate back to the Greeks. The ways in which the logic of the Greek (Plotinus) philosophies were organized is what differs. This is the significance of my assertion that the roots of the Hegelian dialectic can be traced to the work of Plotinus. What Hegel did was to argue first that absolute spirit of reality is a process which manifests itself in finite, that is individual minds. Secondly he argued that reality moves through stages of spatial, that is institutional and temporal historical movements.

There is further significance to Hegel's system for aesthetics. The early Greeks in answer to the question: what constitutes reality, answered that it was absolute beauty, form and so on. This equation of reality and beauty were not fully constituted as values, even with Plotinus' work. Therefore the original Aristotelian contention that poetry and works of art were mimesis was not greatly modified. Hegel by formulating the problem of consciousness as a social and historical problem, not only formulated a dialectical movement of consciousness and reality, but rendered the status of art and literature as a social process.

Hegel's philosophical formulations are the basis of two distinct but related sets of problems in sociological analysis. The first set of problems, what I would term the sociological articulation of the artistic process, another aspect is the sociology of knowledge aspect of the social

and artistic process. The second set of problems is the problem of the reality of creative literary representations and the sociological criteria for their evaluation, as well as the analysis of the social history of artistic forms. Much of the impetus for the examination of these two sets of problems arise out of Hegel's philosophy of history as a vertical dialectical movement of institutions and stages of consciousness toward the self-actualization of self-consciousness and the horizontal process whereby various institutional forms of social life correspond and reflect any given stage of historical development along the vertical plane.

A further development in my analysis was to investigate which aspect in the above two sets of problems were selected as relevant by the two schools of thought -- the Marxist -- Lukácsian and the pragmatist Dewey-Burke- with which this thesis is primarily concerned.<sup>2</sup> I will briefly adumbrate the selection and orientation of each of the two schools.

The pragmatist school of the sociology of literature concentrates analysis with a modified form of the horizontal aspect of Hegel's system. It is my contention that two things matter here, both however tend to spring from the reflection hypothesis of art and literature. Firstly, there is a concentration on the individual as a basic unit of analysis. Thus both Burke and Duncan assert that the individual adjusts to his environment, as a consequence of which human experience develops. Part of this is drawn from Dewey's notion that forms of art are really means of envisaging and presenting experienced

matter.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, there is Duncan's explicit methodology that literature is essentially therefore symbolic material.<sup>4</sup> The consequences of this orientation is sociological analysis of literature tends toward a selection of the articulation of the process but this is confused with the criteria of evaluation of literary representations. Here too we find that the problems of the analysis of art as an aspect of the sociology of knowledge and the evolution of literary forms are not of great concern.<sup>5</sup> In short there is a confusion of two distinct aspects of separate sets of problems. This is a summary way of refocusing on the main conclusion of Chapter Three, when I argue that the American school conceptualise art as "existensions of social reality." But this perspective holds the "reciprocity of perspectives" as the main condition of social reality.<sup>6</sup>

It is in the light of the foregoing conclusion that I shifted analysis to an examination of the "European school" of the sociology of literature. Here we find that apart from the well known inversion of the dialectic by Marx and Engels, there is a perspective which emphasizes the sociology of knowledge aspect of the problem. Although Marx and Engels tend to view literature and the arts as an aspect of the "superstructure" of social reality, their work on literature remained at a general level.

Lukács' formulation in History And Class Consciousness and his later writings on the sociology of literature reformulated the problem of human consciousness and at the same time attempted to explain the process of individual forms of consciousness in



their relation to material forms of life. In all this Lukács pre-empted the later discovery and publication of much of early Marx's writings as well as providing elements of thought for Mannheim's sociology of knowledge. Despite some of the more important criticisms which have been levelled against Lukács' work, they are worthy of serious sociological consideration. Firstly he goes beyond the formalistic interpretation of the relation between human forms of consciousness, the "facts" of existent social and economic life and the processes of literary representation. Lukács argues that these can only be studied as a totality, but to do this sociologists must penetrate dialectically the historical development of these forces. The dilemma of the artist or the sociologist is that the historical development of social forces, the analysis of these forces and their manifestation in existent reality have to cope with the ideological interpretation of all historical development. Lukács thereby criticized the formalistic functionalist sociology of literature on the one hand and the cataloguing of art history on the other. At the same time Lukács analysis in this connection provided a more adequate framework for the problem of sociological criteria for the evaluation of literary representations of social reality.

If an examination of the problem of the relations between the individual and society is done in terms of Lukács analysis, the literary representational aspect of this problem, Lukács' main guide becomes the historical peculiarity of this societal phenomenon.<sup>7</sup> But this is only one clue to the analysis

of the problem, the other being the philosophical and ideological perspective of the artist or sociologist. That is to say every historical event is rationalized or explained in partly philosophical and ideological terms, and the questioner can consciously select one or the other perspective. The class background of the artist or sociologist is then one variant among others and in terms of a conceptual representational scheme, the artist need not be blinded by the perspective of his own class or social group. Here then is the core of Lukács' definition of literary realism as well as the dynamics of consciousness of the observer. The bases for Mannheim's sociology of knowledge were indeed founded by Lukács. One further point is that Lukács also utilized Weber's concept of the "type" to provide the dynamics for an empirical analysis of literary content. This was his attempt to explain the internal individual interactions of literary characters in the works of nineteenth and twentieth century novels. Nevertheless there is a certain limitation and rigidity in Lukács sociological application of his theory and one which I have attempted to transcend by welding elements of later philosophical and literary analysis to aspects of the Lukácsian framework. One of the keys locating the weaknesses of Lukács' formulation is his use of literary types of characters beyond the historical moment for which they were developed. In Satre's terminology they take the status of an "eternal objectivity".<sup>8</sup> Satre seems to regard his major attack on Lukács as being the charge of "voluntarist idealism", but Satre's critique remains vague at this point.<sup>9</sup> I would suggest that

an extended footnote better summarizes Lukács' methodological problem than Satre's earlier brandishing of names. For the statement equally applies to some aspects of "pure existentialism".

When knowing is made apodictic, and when it is constituted against all possible questioning without ever defining its scope or its rights, then it is cut off from the world and becomes a formal system. When it is reduced to a pure psycho-physiological determination, it loses its primary quality, which is its relation to the object, in order to become itself a pure object of knowing ... . In the movement of Marxist "analyses" and especially in the process of totalization, just as in Marx's remarks on the practical aspect of truth and on the general relations of theory and praxis, it would be easy to discover the rudiments of a realistic epistemology which has never been developed. But what we can and ought to construct on the basis of these scattered observations is a theory which situates knowing in the world ... and which determines it in its negativity (that negativity which Stalinist dogmatism pushes to the absolute and which it transforms into a negation). Only then will it be understood that knowing is not a knowing of ideas but a practical knowing of things: then it will be possible to suppress the reflection as a useless and misleading intermediary.<sup>10</sup>

Within the context of the above statement it is possible to accept Lukács' formal development of his theory that the genres of literature transform with the development of capitalist society from the historical to the contemporary novel. His treatment of the characterizations of the individual and society is another matter. I have rejected his totalistic implications about "modernism" as being a manifestation of novelists' mystification by essentially conservative idealistic

explanations of a historically conditioned alienation. On the other hand I have suggested that by analysing the social-economic changes in social structure along lines broadly similar to Marcuse's, one need not take the position that either class conflicts have been negated in a political sense or that the novel in contemporary society represents man as escaping contemporary abstractness. I have also suggested that the experience of alienation has become more acute or at least the individual's experience of it is changing. Consequently such a theme can be traced in the contemporary novel. At the same time the concept of individual experience and consciousness is intertwined with group and class action but with different emphasis from the nineteenth century novel or even the novel of Mann's day. The debates around autonomy of self and the destruction of form in the novel can be located within a totality of a different sort. Some suggestions were in terms of the development of existential psychology and philosophy as well as the more abstract--spatial location-- problems of modern society, and the historical development of these problems.<sup>11</sup> In this sense the earlier Lukácsian notion of the novel needs to be revised from a critical realism which is historicist and projective in the Marxian sense, to a more illustrative, exploratory type of literature. But one that is not necessarily a-historical in its sociological and philosophical sense.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Percy S. Cohen, Modern Social Theory. Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., London, 1968, pp. 238-239.

<sup>2</sup>I refer here to the main discussion in Chapter 3 of the thesis, the American continental and European schools of the sociology of literature.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. John Dewey, Art As Experience, op. cit., p. 109.

<sup>4</sup>These conclusions are based on an attempt to analyse Duncan's theory of literature in terms of John Dewey's formulations.

<sup>5</sup>See my analysis in Chapter 3, with respect to Alphonse Silberman's criticism.

<sup>6</sup>See Philip Bosserman, Dialectical Sociology: An Analysis of the Sociology of Georges Gurvitch, Porter Sargent, Massachusetts, 1968, p. 238.

<sup>7</sup>See my section in Chapter 5 entitled the "Totality of philosophical and concrete existence: The relation of the novel and the French Revolution."

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Jean-Paul Satre, Search For a Method, and Hazel E. Barnes, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1967, pp. 23-34.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-28.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 33, footnote 9.

<sup>11</sup>A detailed analysis and criticism of Marcuse's ideas would be relevant here, particularly his notion of "possibilities" in contemporary art. These are however not germane to this thesis.

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