Part I

"To Supervise the Existence of Reason"

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Introduction: Language, Science, and Reason

Abstract: *The book is a collection of essays published in different times but treating interconnected topics. Such are Georg Lukács's conception of language, his philosophy of science, and his theory of literary history and of cinematic art.*

This introductive chapter is intended to outline the historical and political background of Lukács's oeuvre, and to show the connecting threads between the above mentioned themes. Particular emphasis is placed on the unity of the philosopher's thought (in spite of the spectacular volte-faces during his career), which is due to his commitment to a renewed and original form of rationalism.

The chapter also contains the anticipation of an argument, presented in detail in the later chapters, according to which the choice of rationalism is in itself rational, that is, it has a foundation and it can be based on good reasons.

Keywords: foundation; language; rationalism; reason; science

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György (Georg) Lukács (1885–1971) was without doubt one of the most important Marxist thinkers and communist intellectuals of the 20th century. His views on philosophy, aesthetics and literary criticism exerted an immeasurable influence on several generations of left-wing (and not just left-wing) intellectuals in Europe. The philosopher, who came from an upper-class bourgeois family in Austro-Hungary, was producing controversial and much-debated essays and theoretical works on fiction and drama in the spirit of the Kantian-Hegelian tradition even prior to World War I. In 1918, he became a committed Marxist and joined the Communist Party of Hungary, subsequently playing a role in the Hungarian proletarian dictatorship of 1919. After the collapse of the short-lived regime, he lived in Vienna, in Berlin and—from 1933 until 1945—in Moscow, assuming a variably active role (in the literary and political fields) in the work of the communist parties of Hungary, the Soviet Union and Germany. During his Moscow years, he became politically marginalized but in the shadow of the fascist threat he reluctantly agreed to a compromise with Stalinism. In 1945, he returned to Budapest where his participation in Imre Nagy's government at the time of the 1956 revolution was to be his final political role.

Appraisals of his philosophical, aesthetic and literary critical work have always tended towards two extremes—not least because of their political context.

On the one hand, it is a fact that his works found a broad and very positive reception. Thanks to the impact on the revolutionary movement of his 1923 book *History and Class Consciousness*, with its philosophical content and political message, Lukács became known as one of the founders of Western Marxism and its principal representative; and this is still how he is seen today. Yet, despite his political reversals and his compromise with Stalinism, his later works still met with great interest, albeit they were subjected to increasing criticism. In the decades after World War II and especially in the 1960s, he became a guiding figure to those Eastern European intellectuals who were committed to the democratization of socialism and the renewal of Marxism—those who believed in a "renaissance of Marxism." For posterity he left a work—*Demokratisierung heute und morgen*—that seems to be a kind of political testament. Containing his political notes on socialism and democracy, it was published some years after his death, by which time many of its ideas had been surpassed. (Lukács 1985)

On the other hand, it is also true that Lukács was sharply criticized by some in Hungary already at the start of his career and before his "conversion" to Marxism. For instance, a leading Hungarian poet and essayist,

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Mihály Babits, claimed Lukács's book on modern drama (Lukács ~~1978~~ ; first published in Hungarian in 1911)[1] was "nebulous." Babits's main accusation was that Lukács was essentially an epigone of German lofty philosophizing. The philosopher's later works—the *Destruction of Reason, The Specificity of the Aesthetic* and *The Ontology of Social Being*—also met with a mixed reception. His attempt to found the ontology of social being was considered by most, including his own disciples, to have been a failure. For example, shortly before his death, prominent members of the "Budapest School" (all of them his previous followers: Ferenc Fehér, Ágnes Heller, György Márkus, Mihály Vajda) had addressed to him an extensive critical comment on the unfinished *Ontology of Social Being*. Their article appeared in the leading Hungarian philosophical journal (*Magyar Filozófiai Szemle—Hungarian Philosophical Review*), and some years later had been republished in English in a volume dedicated to the reappraisal of Lukács's philosophy (Fehér et al. 1983). The notes made by the authors express a profound disagreement with most of the theoretical statements of Lukács. (They reject, among many other things, his interpretation of the fundamental category of "genericness" or "species being" and his distinction between "genericness-in-itself" and "genericness-for-itself" Fehér et al. 1983: 151)

The centenary of Lukács's birth in 1985 saw various commemorative events, conferences and publications, but interest in Lukács was already diminishing. This was at the beginning of the Gorbachev era, the outcome of which would soon demonstrate the impossibility of maintaining, reforming and democratizing the socio-political system whose greatest philosophical representative had been Lukács.

This raises the question of what a philosopher of the bygone communist era can say to today's reader. Has not the radical change in the historical situation invalidated the legacy of this thinker who placed his entire theoretical work in the service of a political movement, the communist party, and its anti-capitalist struggle?

There is a plausible answer to this question. In terms of the reception of Lukács's oeuvre, the impact of the changed historical situation has not been solely negative. On the contrary, recent political shifts have allowed us to read Lukács's works in a new light, thereby discovering things that were previously hidden. Something similar has happened to many great philosophers of the past.

Yet, leaving all this aside, is it true that the collapse of communism necessarily rendered Lukács's teachings obsolete? And is there really no

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place for the kind of alternative critical thought that the Lukacsian variant of Marxism represents? The disappointments and failures of the transition in Eastern Europe and capitalism's current crisis suggest the very opposite. In a world seemingly lacking a practical alternative to capitalism, it is more important than ever for us to be able to imagine at least the possibility of an alternative. Indeed, as one of Lukács's own students, István Mészáros, recently emphasized with great force, the future of humanity depends on our ability to imagine and realize an alternative world (Mészáros 1995).

One should add that our present crisis is also a crisis of reason. In all fields of culture, politics and international relations—and, indeed, in everyday life—we are witnessing the advance of irrational beliefs and the aggressive attacks of forces hostile to reason and democracy. We face a situation in which the values of rationality need to be strengthened, just as Lukács in his day considered the defence of such values to be one of his major tasks.

Lukács did not define himself as a "rationalist" thinker. Here I am not referring to the tendency of the young Lukács to sympathize, on occasion, with the irrational and even the mystical. Rather I wish to draw attention to the evident fact that in his Marxist period Lukács preferred the label "dialectic materialism" and applied this to himself. Even so, in view of the manner in which he opposed irrationalist (or what he considered to be irrationalist) philosophical tradition or how he discussed the problem of science, we necessarily see in him a modern representative of a certain kind of rationalism.

The studies in this volume address in various forms what we may call Lukács's "rationalism." This definition in part indicates the direction of the Lukács interpretation ascribed to here and in part it characterizes the volume from a thematic viewpoint.

In thematic terms, I should like to note the following.

The single chapters discuss issues that are rarely addressed in connection with Lukács. Indeed, to my knowledge, several of the questions have never been raised before, despite the otherwise broad reception and impact of the philosopher's works. Such questions are: Does Lukács have a rationally reconstructable and "original" philosophy of language? Does he have a philosophy of science that is comparable with 20th-century conceptions of scientific knowledge? We find in the Lukácsian oeuvre an abundance of texts that can be used to answer all such questions. Even so, we know little about what the author of these texts really thought about language and science. Similarly, we have scant knowledge of Lukács's early work on literary theory and literary history; this area, too, is treated in the volume. Perhaps

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the situation is as it is because of the political conditionality of his work. For his audience, the militant communist was of interest first and foremost as a philosopher of politics and culture (and, of course, as a theoretician of Marxist aesthetics).

The chapters of the first part of this volume give affirmative answers to the aforementioned questions. Lukács did not cultivate the philosophy of language and science as a *discipline* or as some academically institutionalized branch of philosophy; nor did he even use these terms. More importantly, for him language—and science too—represented a *philosophical problem*. In order to investigate the nature of language and scientific knowledge he set out criteria that lay outside the purview of scientists operating under the auspices of the academic division of labor.

This is well illustrated by a seemingly incidental footnote in *History and Class Consciousness*, which is nevertheless illustrative of Lukács's exceptional intuition. In the footnote, the philosopher lays the foundations for a complete research program, based on some interesting observations made by Marx. The goal of the program would be to investigate in a systematic manner the interaction between language and society, departing from the hypothesis that the structures of reification also penetrate language. This is a most radical interpretation of the social nature of language, for it implies the following: language is a social phenomenon not only in the general sense of it being a means for contact among people, but also in the specific sense that the given social relations (e.g., production and commodity relations) are inherently present in the linguistic forms themselves—in, for instance, the semantic structure of expressions. In other words, social relations are not simply "reflected" in language; rather, they shape and determine its essential structures. In the passages quoted by Lukács, Marx refers to certain linguistic phenomena as "products of the bourgeoisie," thereby clearly indicating that language has a class nature.

Lukács does no more than mention the possibility of philological research from a historical materialist viewpoint. Even so, we have every reason to suppose that he considered it possible to extend the reification theory expounded in *History and Class Consciousness* to linguistic phenomena. That is to say, the theory of reification has logical space for a general theory of language that would embody a systematic discussion of linguistic reification and linguistic alienation. Evidently, a central element of this theory would be the idea that language is determined by class, or, to be more precise, the teaching that the class structure of society is assimilated into linguistic forms.

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After *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács went no further along this route. In his later works, he dealt in far greater detail and more exhaustively with the language problem, doing so, however, on completely different foundations. A reason for this may have been that during the rule of the Soviet version of Marxism, thinking about language was excessively influenced by the dispute over whether or not language should be considered one of the phenomena of superstructure. On one side of the argument were followers of the Georgian linguist Marr, who were convinced of language being an element of superstructure. On the other side was Stalin, who interfered in the linguistic debate and who adamantly denied the possibility of social relations influencing language in any way. (Stalin cut the Gordian knot when he stated that language "is neither 'base' nor 'superstructure.'") In his late major work on aesthetics, *The Specificity of Aesthetic*, Lukács himself went as far as to explain, in a naturalist fashion and based on Pavlovian physiological theory, that language is a second signal system (while also cautiously criticizing Pavlov for having ignored the role of work). In doing so, he abandoned the productive interpretation of the social nature of language, which he had proposed in *History and Class Consciousness*. Of course, this tied in with his renunciation of all concepts presented in his earlier great work.

His final position was that the genesis and fundamental structure of language must be derived from labor. Based on this, as part of the social ontological concept laid out in his last work, he outlined a kind of ontological theory of language. He was working on this theory during the 1960s, that is to say, at a time when analytical linguistic philosophy—including ordinary language philosophy—was at its heyday. In Chapter 2, I seek to show that the Lukácsian concept represents—at least in its fundamentals—a serious alternative to the analytical approach to the language issue.

The aforementioned chapter is transversal in the sense that it presents the changes in Lukács's ideas on the given problem, doing so in a manner that spans the various periods of his oeuvre. The same also applies to the chapter that analyzes Lukács's ideas on philosophy of science as presented in *History and Class Consciousness* and the late work *The Specificity of the Aesthetic*. Significant differences can be observed between the two sets of ideas; unsurprisingly it seems that these differences are systematically linked with the manner in which—largely for historical reasons and shaped by political developments in the Soviet Union—Lukács's views on Marxism and materialistic dialectics changed.

Strictly in terms of the philosophy of science, this change should not be regarded either as a positive development or as a negative reversal. The

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analyses on scientific knowledge in *History and Class Consciousness* or in *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* are, in themselves, both interesting and original. Meanwhile, in historical terms, they are both characteristic and symptomatic.

The philosophy of science in the earlier work, similar to the references made to the class determination of language, is based on the theory of reification. This brings us to the fact that for Lukács the theory of science is first and foremost *critique of science.* And the manner in which he analyzes the effect of the structure of reification on the consciousness of classes indicates such central elements of his critique of science as, for example, the epistemological and methodological contrast between the natural sciences and the social sciences, the structural link between the natural sciences, capitalism and bourgeois class consciousness, or a definition of historical knowledge as self-knowledge. The mere listing of these various factors shows that the Lukácsian critique of science was first and foremost a *critique of positivism* with roots going back to the pre-Marxian period of his work, to the German historicist, neo-Kantian, and Hegelian tradition.

Here it is worth giving special mention to the scientific-theoretical dualism that is expressed in the juxtaposing of the natural sciences with the social sciences (e.g., with history). This is linked to the author's subsequent condemnation—under the influence of dialectic materialism—of *History and Class Consciousness*, which was motivated by the fact that the book limits the validity of dialectics to society. Correct and truly scientific historical knowledge must be dialectic, for it removes itself from the rule (or control) of the scientific cognitive model, the extension of which to society is simply the projection of the structures of reification onto bourgeois consciousness. It is the inspection of the structure of reification that makes possible scientific knowledge of the whole of society, which, however, requires that we take the position of the class consciousness of the proletariat. This knowledge is also the self-knowledge of the proletariat. This kind of class determination of the nature and structure of knowledge renders recognition of some kind of proletarian science inevitable.

After the consolidation of Soviet Marxism, a dogmatic belief—from the second half of the 1920s and into the 1930s—was that Marxist philosophy consisted of two parts: dialectic materialism and historical materialism. It was believed that the former described the general laws of objective reality (the "dialectics of nature"), while the latter applied these laws to special areas of society. It is understandable that the concept of *History and Class Consciousness* cannot be inserted into this formula in any manner. In *The*

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Specificity of the Aesthetic Lukács accepted the framework provided by dialectic and historical materialism, seeking to give structure to his work by means of a division into a general dialectic materialist part and a special historical materialist part. Of this, only the first part was completed, which explains the forms of consciousness, including the aesthetic form of consciousness, based on reflection theory.

From a general philosophical perspective, the work bears many features of the dogmatism of Soviet Marxism. The same features are present—sometimes merely as annoying stylistic elements and sometimes at the level of content—in works by Lukács dating from the Moscow period and from the 1950s and 1960s. They are particularly apparent in *The Destruction of Reason*, which the philosopher published in the 1950s. In terms of their general philosophical foundations, therefore, the two works are closely linked. Typical of both is the subordination of the philosophical message to forceful political assumptions and objectives. The question is, to what extent does this influence today's readers' judgment of Lukács's scientific, aesthetic and philosophical-historical arguments.

At any rate, *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* contains many beneficial innovations. These include the successful elaboration of a theory of everyday consciousness and the associated conceptual framework, which aid Lukács as he returns to the task of exploring the characteristics of scientific knowledge. In doing so, he focuses on the notion of de-*anthropomorphization*.

The introduction of this new concept signifies the formulation from an original viewpoint of the requirement for objectivity in science, including the seemingly paradoxical motif that if this demand can be realized in the social and human sciences, then the latter must be just as de-anthropomorphized as the former; that is to say, they too must disregard the fact that the subject of their investigation is a human phenomenon. In this way Lukács abandons scientific-theoretical dualism (and thus also the idea of a "proletarian" science) and accepts the program of a single unified science.

Among the few commentators giving attention to Lukács's scientific philosophical reflections, none, it seems, has ventured to claim that a coherent theory might be reconstructed from these reflections and that this theory might have a place and significance in the 20th-century history of the philosophy of science. For instance, in Andrew Arató's view, Lukács failed to give an acceptable answer to the problem of science, and so we should be mistaken to look for a consistent and all-embracing critique of modern science and scientific philosophy in *History and Class Consciousness* (Arató; Braines 1979). I think that, indeed, it is impossible to

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say that we find as an acceptable answer to the problem of science in *History and Class Consciousness*, for—as was mentioned above—even if we look at other works by the author we do not find a definitive answer. Even so, in my view, the philosophy and the critique of science found in the analyses of the young Lukács have substantial philosophical-historical significance, as well as being interesting for their own sake. His theory occupies a very special place within the typology of views on the nature of scientific knowledge. The application of messianistic revolutionary Marxism to science as a form of consciousness established—in his case—an original and potent variant of anti-positivism, a variant that preceded by several decades of subsequent developments in philosophy of science. We should bear in mind that philosophy of science (which one might say with some irony owes its existence to the *reifying* tendency of the specialization also affecting philosophy) was a nascent field of study when Lukács wrote *History and Class Consciousness*. At the time, the neo-positivist movement that brought philosophy of science into being as a special discipline was still in its infancy, having recently been established by a group of philosophers belonging to the Vienna Circle (born just in 1922).

There is no doubt that Lukács painted a picture of science that was wholly different from the ideas of these philosophers and which anticipated the approach that became typical in the post-neo-positivist period, as expressed in the works of such thinkers as Kuhn, Popper, Feyerabend, and Lakatos. It suffices to recall Lukács's firm rejection of the kind of fact-fetishism represented by the positivism of his era with its idolizing of isolated facts unrelated to theory. A similar anti-empirical view was formed subsequently in the supposition concerning the theory-ladenness of facts and in the denial of a "theory-independent" empirical basis and of a neutral language of observation.

Of course, we are not talking about a direct link, but rather of a relationship within a far broader tradition. Still, we may also assume a direct link, because Lakatos had been a student of Lukács in 1945 (indeed, one of his first pupils after his return in Hungary). Although we know little of substance about the relationship between the two men, there can be no doubt that the dialecticism imbibed from his master exerted a lasting effect on Lakatos's thinking, and this is not even to mention the fact that his writings contain terms and concepts borrowed from Lukács. Perhaps the impact of such factors explains why, in the debate on scientific progress, Lakatos joined the critics of Kuhn. While he accused Kuhn, the theoretician of scientific revolutions, of irrationalism, he considered

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it important to emphasize that an acceptance of the rational nature of scientific progress affects our most fundamental intellectual, political and moral values. (Lakatos ~~1978~~: 9)

From the outset Lukács employed a nuanced notion of rationality.

On the one hand, he considered capitalism to be the mother of both rationalism and irrationalism. Based on the theory of reification, he concluded that the partially rational nature of the various subsystems of capitalism (e.g., industrial production, bureaucracy, and specialized areas of science) inevitably come into conflict with the irrationality of the system as a whole. This remained throughout as a constant thought in his work, forming a bridge between the essays in *History and Class Consciousness* and the very different historical analyses contained in *The Destruction of Reason*. In the latter work, Lukács argues in a similar manner that the lack of transparency and "objective irrationality" of the social whole collide with the rationality of the separate systems of production and social organization and with the rationality of the now indispensable scientific research. The opaqueness of the global system of society and of the historical processes shaping it, gives rise to the objective impression that our life and history are unknowable and subject to blind forces.

On the other hand, however, the partial systems emerging on the basis of their own logic are themselves fragile and limited. This means they can easily turn into their opposites and may also serve as fertile ground for ever-renewable irrational philosophies.

One should emphasize that *The Destruction of Reason*, a controversial late work, brought change both in Lukács's own oeuvre and in Stalinism. Soviet Marxism, having been influenced by Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, considered the struggle between materialism and idealism to be its main organizing principle. In line with this, Lukács also thought in terms of a sharp dividing line between idealism and materialism. In contrast—as Alasdair Macintyre has demonstrated—it is extremely important that *The Destruction of Reason* is based on the antagonism between the rational and the irrational. Indeed, as MacIntyre remarked, before the war Lukács writes in terms of the crude dichotomy between idealism and materialism; "in the *Destruction of Reason* he turned instead to the conflict between reason and unreason and tried to use this as an analytical tool" (MacIntyre ~~1971~~: 63).

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The question is: does this have such great significance if those are right who believe that from Lukács's perspective "all idealisms and all phenomenalisms are irrationalist" (Hodges 1970: 87)? This is an exaggerated opinion and easy to refute. It suffices to remind ourselves of the extent to which Lukács was

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reliant on German idealism and turned out to be a direct follower of Hegel on many issues. The best thing we can do, however, is to quote the following statement from *The Destruction of Reason*:

> to side either with or against reason decides at the same time the character of a philosophy as such and its role in social developments." (Lukács 1980: 5)

Here it is worth drawing an analogy between Lukács and another great critic of irrationalism, Karl Popper, who was at odds with the Hungarian philosopher on virtually every other issue. Popper declared:

> The conflict between rationalism and irrationalism has become the most important intellectual, and perhaps even moral, issue of our time." (Popper 1962: II. 224)

Thus the two thinkers concurred on the fundamental philosophical problem of the era in which they were living, and they wrote the two most important manifestos against irrationalism: *The Destruction of Reason* and *The Open Society and Its Enemies*.

It is difficult today to imagine—but in the light of what has been said it is no coincidence—that the publication of Lukács's book in Budapest in 1954 brought intellectual liberation to many. (Significantly, during these years—1953–1955—the first government of Imre Nagy held office. Its program was to "adjust" the catastrophic policies of the earlier Hungarian leadership.) If we accept that reason is indeed the fundamental problem of philosophy and that, as Habermas has shown, the currents of post-metaphysical and post-Hegelian philosophy are moving towards a meeting point in the theory of rationality (Habermas 1984),[2] then Lukács's altered course is, in terms of its implications, even more significant than it appears, for Lukács in effect freed the characterization of the history of philosophy of an entire historical period from the explanatory categories of Stalinism, thereby bringing upon himself the accusation of heresy and revisionism.

Despite all this, the book is of bad reputation, and not without reason. Lukács evaluated the whole of bourgeois philosophy after Schelling as having been on the wrong side in the struggle between rationalism and irrationalism. In the course of its history, it had contributed to the destruction of the values of reason and rationality and, finally, to the victory of fascist ideology and fascism. Thus, fascist ideology had been a direct consequence of the entire prior development of bourgeois philosophy.[3]

Of course, this was impossible to prove. At the same time, no one can deny the role of irrationalist philosophical currents in preparing the way for

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fascism, and so Lukács, in his own time, was right to consider the disclosure of this role as a primary *philosophical* task. In view of the lessons of history, he also rightly thought that it was the duty of philosophers "to supervise the existence and evolution of reason" (Lukács 1980: 91). Thus, in my view, *The Destruction of Reason* is defensible, despite all the legitimate criticism. I set out my arguments in Chapter 4 of the book.

Lukács is right that irrationalism as a response to rationalism is a modern phenomenon, for whose emergence and development there are well-founded social and philosophical-historical explanations. Since it has a history, it cannot be regarded as an extra-historical and perpetual choice. As is common knowledge, Popper held this latter view, and so, in this chapter, I compare and contrast the Popperian and Lukacsian characterizations of irrationalism as well as the theories of the two thinkers on the possibility of laying the foundation of rationalism and irrationalism. The raising of this problem also renders necessary the analysis of what Donald Davidson has called "the paradox of irrationality," whereby the real problem is "how can we explain, or even tolerate as possible, irrational thoughts, actions, or emotions" (Davidson 2004c: 170).

It seems, however, that we may also speak of "the paradox of *irrationalism*." In essence, this is the lesson of *The Destruction of Reason*, which describes irrationalism as the consequence of an irrational and paradox choice. According to the Popperian criteria of foundation, therefore, irrationalism cannot be founded. Lukács is right: the choice of irrationalism is to be explained causally—and not with motives with which rational choices can be explained.

Still, Lukács is also wrong on one point. He derives the choice of rationalism (like that of irrationalism) from social conditions alone, thus from the class situation of the philosophers—which is to say he gives it a causal explanation. Whereas in refutation of Popper's claim one can show that rational arguments cannot be made in support of irrationalism but can be employed in support of rationalism, it is possible to counter Lukács's argument by pointing out that an acceptance of rationalism may not only be due to causal factors, since reasons (i.e., evidences and the requirements of logical consistency) may also play a role. Evidently, this requires a separate argument, the elaboration of which was a specific aim in this chapter.

The three chapters of the second part of the volume are dedicated to questions of literary history, aesthetics and film theory that are seemingly rather distant from the themes of the previous chapters. Even so, there is a link. Indeed, by examining Lukács's concept of literary history we once

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again place the focus on a theoretical problem of a scholarly field, namely literary history writing. In one of his early writings—an article published in 1910 that remains inaccessible to international readers (Lukács 1977b)—Lukács gave a very clear appraisal of several issues concerning the purpose of literary history, its theoretical foundations and methodology. Here, in a departure from the premises of neo-Kantian value philosophy, he pointed out—he was the first to do so—the problematic nature of the notion of the historicity of value, which inevitably poses the question of how it is possible that value might have a history. The root of the problem lies in the fact that according to his theory a work of art becomes what it is through the act of its evaluation. That is to say, in its very *being* it is constituted as a value. As a solution to the question, Lukács defines the study of literary history as a synthesis of sociology and aesthetics, which requires him to at least give an outline of the program for studying the interaction between sociology and aesthetics.

In my view, as I seek to prove in the chapter, this early article by Lukács may be read—in view of its logic, ideation and reasoning strategy—as the first germ of the philosopher's subsequent concept of "potential consciousness."

In the chapter I go on to address a late essay by Lukács ("The Revision of Hungarian Literary History") that is also devoted to theoretical problems of literary history and which was written at the beginning of the ascendancy of dogmatic Marxism in Hungary (1948) and is thus highly politicized. I add that in the same year Lukács held another lecture on the same subject, which was subsequently published as a separate brochure (Lukács 1948). The placing of these early and late writings side by side provides an opportunity for comparison which, in the peculiar field of the methodology of literary history, throws into sharp relief the shifts in Lukács's thinking. And if we disregard the terminology and direct political content of the latter essay, then we may observe a surprising continuity behind the changes.

Of course, it is difficult to distinguish articles on literary history from literary criticism. Without a doubt Lukács's work in the literary field is dominated by criticism, but all his critical writings clearly reflect both the preferences stemming from his theory of aesthetics as well as his concept of literary history, which is discussed in the chapter. At the same time, the most obvious sign of a continuity connecting the various periods of Lukács's work is his literary taste, which remained unchanged throughout his life. He always directed his attention to the canonized authors of world literature, in particular to the great realists of the 19th century, in whom he saw the protagonists of "art's struggle for freedom" and the

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principal and interrelated actors of an ideal progression of historical development. In doing so, he provided proof of his "anti-modernism," a most memorable manifestation of which was his article "The Rise and Fall of Expressionism" (Lukács 1971c), which gave rise to the expressionism debate and was sharply criticized by Brecht and Bloch, among others.

In this book, I do not address the Realism–Modernism controversy, a recurring topic of debate concerning Lukács, as my primary interest is to show how the theory of art's struggle for freedom helped him analyze and interpret the classics of world literature. It was almost inevitable that I should choose Goethe as an example, to whom Lukács devoted his most profound studies. In the literature on Goethe and Dante, we often find examples of comparisons being made between *The Divine Comedy* and *Faust*. Although such comparisons always yield questionable results, it seemed natural for me to explore what kind of impression Lukács formed of Dante and then to compare this with his picture of Goethe, which was, of course, far more elaborate. While he never dealt in detail with Dante, his notes on *The Divine Comedy* reveal a surprisingly profound knowledge of the poem and have proved inspirational to several major Dante researchers. All of this forms a part of the unknown side of Lukács's literary historical work—as do his studies on the Hungarian 19th-century dramatist Imre Madách, author of *The Tragedy of Man*, whose works Lukács analyzed throughout his life, for the first time in his 1911 book on drama. Lukács's studies on Madách gave rise to substantial controversy in his native land. Today, however, they are interesting because they shine light on the criteria he applied when analyzing *Faust*.

The following aesthetic and historical-philosophical chapter analyses the critiques of Benedetto Croce authored by the young Lukács and by his friend at the time Lajos Fülep: critiques that express the fundamental direction of the later development of their ideas on art and history. As in previous chapters, my hope is to assist readers in discovering unknown aspects of the Lukacsian oeuvre.

Finally, it seems useful to publish a paper co-authored with Judit Bárdos, the aim of which is similar to analyzing a rarely addressed topic. The subject matter is Lukács's concept of film art, which forms an integral part of his general aesthetic theory. Here I express thanks to Judit Bárdos for consenting to the essay's inclusion in the volume.

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Notes

1 György Lukács, *A modern dráma fejlődésének története* [History of the Development of Modern Drama] (Budapest: 1911): 111.

2 „Man kann sogar sagen, dass das philosophische Denken dem Reflexivwerden der im Erkennen, im Sprechen und Handeln verkörperten Vernunft entspringt. Das philosophische Grundthema ist Vernunft." „Wenn es richtig ist, dass die Philosophie in ihren nachmetaphysischen, posthegelschen Strömungen auf den Konvergenzpunkt einer der *Theorie der Rationalität* zustrebt, wie kann dann aber die Soziologie Zuständigkeiten für die Rationalitätsproblematik geltend machen?" (Habermas 1985: 16).

3 Here it is worth noting that the pre-history and development of fascist ideology had been of concern to Lukács since 1933. In the 1930s and 1940s, he wrote two books that remained in manuscript form on the subject and which are antecedents of *The Destruction of Reason*. The two books were finally published in 1982 under the auspices of the Lukács Archive, Budapest: Georg Lukács, *Wie ist Deutschland zum Zentrum der reaktionären Ideologie geworden?* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982) and Georg Lukács, *Wie ist die faschistische Philosophie in Deutschland entstanden?* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982). The publisher of both works was László Sziklai.

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Labor and Language: Lukács's Ideas on Language

Abstract: *It may well be argued that the problem of language was for Lukács a* philosophical *problem, even if he never approached the philosophy of language from a scholarly perspective. In fact, already in* History and Class Consciousness *he called attention to Marx's remarks about the effects of reification upon language. Then in his late works, in* The Specificity of the Aesthetic*, and especially in the* Ontology of Social Being*, he presented different, more systematic approaches to the problem of language. In the* Ontology *he provided an ontological theory of language, as "the organ and medium of the continuity of social being," a theory which here is reconstructed in detail.*

Keywords: first and second signal system; labor; medium of the continuity of social being; reification; ~~sociality~~ of language

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Some of the most influential currents of Western philosophy cherished for decades the illusion that the problems of man manifested in the unanswerable metaphysical questions originate in language. The strongest trend of the philosophy of this century owes its existence to that illusion, since the recognition of the cause of the trouble was followed in due course by the discovery of the remedy: the analysis of language. The neo-positivists, who carried out the "linguistic turn" of philosophy, were imbued with the reforming spirit of enlightenment: they firmly believed that the recognition of a few simple truths and, equivalently, a reform of language would put human minds right. When the illusions had melted away, which was largely due to Wittgenstein's profound and severe criticism, more realistic conceptions emerged. The analytical philosophers following Wittgenstein accepted and examined language in its real nature, in its normal and ordinary use. Even if they abandoned reforming language, this lofty dream of a logically transparent and crystal-clear ideal language, they did not cease to regard philosophy as therapeutic: the analysis of words was to become the main method of discussing the traditional problems of philosophy and their only form of solution was sought in reducing those problems to rules of the use of words.

AQ: that originated in language?

However, ontological or metaphysical problems do not wither away if pushed aside as pseudo-problems. If philosophy is to fulfill its legacy, it is also bound to say something about man and the world he lives in.

This realization is reflected also by the metaphysical turn that occurred in analytical philosophy, as for instance Michael Dummett, one of the advocates of this turn, has expressed on several occasions. He says in the introduction of his *The Logical basis of Metaphysics:*

> The layman expects philosophers to answer deep questions of great import for an understanding of the world [...]. And the layman is quite right: if philosophy does not aim at answering such questions it is worth nothing. (Dummett 1991: 1)

But the necessity of ontological investigations had always been evident to Marxist thinkers, like Georg Lukács, since they could not otherwise endeavor to elaborate and profess ideas as means for the practical transformation of the world. This is why the traditional "great metaphysical systems" were able to survive after the semicentennial domination of neo-positivism and

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ordinary language philosophy. At the same time, it is not by pure incident that linguistic reflections assumed such an important place in Heidegger's monumental ontological construction, one of the most impressive efforts of the 20th century. Heidegger's word-analyses are well known; almost reminiscent of the procedures of analytical philosophy, they are invoked to shed light upon one or another philosophical problem. However, with him language appears in another meaning as well: not only and not in the first place as a medium of analysis but also and in the first place as something given for our being, as an ontological category.

Therefore, it is not quite unfounded to say that there are two major trends in the 20th century: the analytics of language (the neo-positivists, Wittgenstein, ordinary language philosophers) and the hermeneutics of language (Heidegger and phenomenology on the one hand, and the French School represented by Ricoeur, Foucault and Lacan, on the other).

It is natural to ask the question whether the problem of language had any place in the Marxist tradition. This is equivalent to the question whether the problem of language represented a *philosophical* problem for Marxism, and if so where its place is to be sought within the system of questions raised by Marxism.

Lukács gives us a partial answer to these questions. And if we now focus our attention on Lukács, then it is worth considering another division in 20th-century philosophical thinking. Márkus György, a prominent member of Lukács's circle of pupils (the "Budapest school"), distinguished two great philosophical paradigms: the "paradigm of production" and the "paradigm of language." Whereas according to the former the paradigm of social objectivations is material production, the latter regards language and linguistic communication "as the universal paradigm of all forms of human intercourse and human objectivations" (Márkus 1986: 3). Of course, from our perspective, the difference between these two paradigms is not that one of them has a place for language while the other has none, but that one describes language and linguistic communication as part of, and modeled on, other forms of activity, while the other considers language and linguistic communication to be the basis, or norm, of other forms of intercourse and other activities. Clearly, in this division, we must regard Lukács as an exponent of the production paradigm. It is to be expected, therefore, that inasmuch as we are able to identify a linguistic philosophical concept in his oeuvre, it will fit into the production paradigm.

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Lukács was perhaps the first to notice (though in the form of parenthetical notes only) that the first question can be answered in the affirmative through a close reading of Marx's works. Even if he never speaks of the philosophy of language in his extensive *oeuvre*, nor does he of course elaborate as a watertight discipline some philosophy of language, Lukács does discuss language in a *philosophical manner*. Therefore it is worthwhile to ponder what kind of answers Lukács has to offer to the above questions. In the present chapter I wish to contribute to the reconstruction of the theoretical considerations of language implicit in Lukács's investigations.

When examining the various forms of appearance of reification in his *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács quotes a passage from *German ideology* in which Marx states that private property *alienates* not only the individuality of men, but also of things, and refers to Marx's subsequent remarks: "Marx goes on to make a number of very fine observations about the effects of reification upon language. A philological study from the standpoint of historical materialism could profitably begin here" (Lukács 1971b: 209).

In the passage referred to, Marx analyzes the meaning of certain words and shows that these words are used in both "mercantile" and "individual" senses: for instance, "*propriété*," "*Eigentum*" and "*Eigenschaft*"; "*property*," "*Eigentum*" and "*Eigentümlichkeit*"; "*valeur*," "*value*," "*Wert*" etc. It is not useless to quote Marx's general comment to the examples just cited:

> For the bourgeois it is all the easier to prove ont he basis of his language the identity of commercial and individual, or even universal, human relations, as this language itself is a product of the bourgeoisie, and therefore both in actuality and in language the relations of buying and selling have been made the basis of all others. For example, *propriété*—property /*Eigentum*/ and characteristic feature /*Eigenschaft*/: property—possession /*Eigentum*/ and pecularity /*Eigentümlichkeit*/,: „*eigen*" /„one's one"/—in the commercial and in the individual sense: *valeur*, value, Wert,: commerce, *Verkehr*,: *échange*, *exchange*, *Austausch*, etc., all of which are used both for commercial relations and for characteristic features and mutual relations of individuals as such. In the other modern languages this is equally the case. (Marx 1998: 248)[1]

Lukács's interpretation is precise: Marx indeed says that the structures of reification penetrate into language too, they extend to linguistic structures as well. What is more, he concludes that this language is a bourgeois language, it is "the product of the bourgeoisie." This remark contains the outlines of a

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critique of language of a radically new type as against the rationalist conceptions of the Modern Age, which weighed the advantages and "imperfections" of language from the point of view of universal rationality. He does not hesitate to say that *class relations* and *class ideologies* are anchored in language and in the manner of language use. If we wish to provide a grammatical interpretation for his examples, it is easy to see that they will be semantic; they can be translated into our present concepts in the following way: social relations and ideologies are manifested in the form of special semantic subcodes on the level of the formal organization of language as well.

All that is a further actualization of Marx's conceptions as regards the inherently social nature of language. The problem of the social nature of language is not exhausted in that it "only arises from the need, the necessity of intercourse with other men" (Marx 1998: 49).[2] That is, it constitutes not only one aspect of the social nature of man in general, but it also includes the above connections, the intrusion of the historically concrete social structures and ideologies into the formal characteristics of language. And this has a decisive effect on consciousness, because consciousness is intimately linked to language. For this reason "consciousness is from the beginning a social product" (Marx 1998: 49), and there cannot be such a thing as "pure consciousness" (like the Kantian "reine Vernunft"), the reality of which was expressly denied by some great critiques of Kant, like Hamann and Herder, who had already pointed out the intrinsic relationship between language and consciousness. At this point it is worth reading Marx further:

> Only now, after having considered four moments, four aspects of primary historical relations, do we find that man also possesses "consciousness." But even from the outset this is not "pure" consciousness. The 'mind' is from the outset afflicted with the curse of being 'burdened' with matter, which here makes its appearance in the form of agitated layers of air, sounds, in short, of language. Language is as old as consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity of intercourse with other men. (Marx 1998: 49)

The bourgeois can "prove from his language" the identity of "mercantile" and "general human aspects," he can claim that the properties of the bourgeois individual are the human properties in general, because the ideology declaring this came to form, as it were, part of the linguistic code, and the linguistic code itself makes one accept the conceptual schemes anchored in it with a spontaneous naturalness. If it is added to the above that, as Marx emphasized, "ideas do not exist separately from language" (Marx 1973: 163) and that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" (Marx 1998: 67),[3] then it is not without foundation that we attribute to Marx

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the view that the intellectual power of the ruling class constitutes linguistic power as well. This is the logical place for a critique of language and a philosophical analysis of language within Marxism. A criticism of ideologies necessarily involves a linguistic demystification based upon the comprehension of the connections between ideologies and language.

When Lukács took heed of these ideas of Marx's, he proceeded to formulate a highly important scientific program—well ahead of his time. The problems quoted have in the meantime been incorporated into the objectives of different disciplines concerned with language (semiotics, socio-linguistics, etc.), but what is called by Lukács "a philological analysis in the manner of a historical materialism," and what ought to be understood as the historical investigation of the relationship between the dominant ideas of the various ages and their linguistic expression, has never been fully elaborated in the frameworks of Marxism.

3

It is easily discernible that there is a more or less elaborate conception of language contributing to the theoretical foundations of Lukács's *Aesthetics*, and by virtue of its very role it claims to be more general and to grasp comprehensive tendencies of human language. At the same time, this conception reflects a radical change in Lukács's scientific and philosophical orientation.

It is an accident of history that the statements concerning language in Marxist philosophy were for decades influenced predominantly by a single discipline: Pavlovian physiology and psychology. This inevitably involved theoretical dogmatism (even if the rigid application of certain concepts in Pavlov had not by itself brought along naturalistic traits into the interpretation of linguistic phenomena), since the one-sided orientation to reflex theory excluded not only a generalization of the achievements of the other relevant disciplines, such as linguistics, but also an investigation into the logico-conceptual facet of the problem of language. Even Lukács could not help conforming to the contemporary situation of Marxism. That is why the conception of language in his *Aesthetics* displays as one of its most substantial constituents of Pavlov's doctrine (which was developed by him into an original hypothesis of the intermediate "1' signal system").

The unwary observer may have the impression that insofar as Lukács relies exclusively upon a single physiological doctrine while discussing the problem of language he comes to be opposed to not only his previous

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conception of the social nature of language but also to the whole of his philosophical and aesthetic ideas, in whose core lies Marx's conception of the socio-historical nature of man. This is far from the truth as is best shown by the fact that although Lukács accepts without reservation Pavlov's theory, he at the very outset subjects to criticism the tendency to examine the problems of the second signal system as abstracted from the wider implications of social practice and to take it as the basis of the interpretation of language.

In doing so, it was obvious for Lukács to refer to Engels, who is known to have attributed a special role to labor in his explanation for the ape becoming man and for the emergence of language. It is worth quoting the following from Engels:

> [...] the development of labour necessarily helped to bring the members of society closer together by increasing cases of mutual support and joint activity, and by making clear the advantage of this joint activity to each individual. In short, men in the making arrived at the point where they had something to say to each other. Necessity created the organ; the undeveloped larynx of the ape was slowly but surely transformed by modulation to produce constantly more developed modulation, and the organs of the mouth gradually learned to pronounce one articulate sound after another. (Engels 1934)

Let us highlight two facets appearing in the paragraph: (i) labor is a jointly undertaken activity which has a socializing effect that results in people having "something to say" to each other; (ii) necessity created the vocal organ. The first facet implies a reference to the division of labor (although Engels does not use this word), while the second clearly contains a functionalist explanatory principle. (For our purposes, it is of course irrelevant which mechanism Engels thought had given rise to the vocal organ.) Both the argument concerning a link between labor, the division of labor and language and the functionalist explanation referring to a specific necessity have distinguished theoretical historical roots, and these will be worth returning to later on.

But first let us see how Lukács plays the Engels card against Pavlov:

> Pavlov's statements must of course be always understood and interpreted in the sense of dialectical materialism. For however essential Pavlov's second signal system may be from the point of view of discriminating between man and animal, its true sense, and its highly fruitful significance will be manifest only if, like Engels, we sufficiently stress the simultaneous rise of labor and language, their objective inseparability. Man's having something to say, a fact which is beyond the sphere of the animal kingdom, originates directly in labor and unfolds—directly or indirectly, and later through a good deal of mediation—in correspondence with the development of labor.[4]

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From a critical point of view even more unambiguous is the remark which demurs against the confusion of psychic phenomena in man and animal (in fact, image and concept in animals):

> Our objection, or rather, our supplementary proposal can be summarized as follows: Pavlov is in the right when stating that the second signal system and actual thought in terms of concepts are inseparably interrelated, upon which all scientific thought is based. But he does not even hint at the interrelation of the second signal system, speech, and labor. Pavlov is never concerned with historical and genetic questions. He is content to state the interrelation of the development of man and speech. [...] The lack of the genetic link between labor and speech, since it is a very important interrelation, blurs to some extent the fact that the second signal system is a special human manner of apprehension and expression.[5]

The objection is all the more legitimate since by exploring the mechanism of reflex activity Pavlov not only endeavors to explain the physiological components of speech and thought, but he also believes to have grasped their specific essence. Lukács, contrarily, points out that for explaining the nature of language and thought it must be taken into account that they are the interiorizations of the specific human activity that constitutes their basis both in a historico-genetic and in a structural sense.

We cannot ignore the degree of ambiguity in Lukács's position. At times he speaks of "the simultaneous rise of labor and language," while at others he claims that language arises directly from labor and emerges in tandem with the development of labor. This latter claim (like Engels' own hypothesis) could only be verified in the light of a detailed evolutionary mechanism. All of this does not alter the fact that an investigation of language as a form of activity that is part of labor, has illuminative power. Today, it is easy to see this, as several theories put forward in recent decades point in a similar direction. This does not mean that we should conflate the different approaches and the various terms they use: labor, labor process, "teleological positing," intentionality, and intentional action. (Of course, we are thinking here of those theories that give priority to the communicative function of language, such as the theory of linguistic action or the theory of communicative action. Of less salience are theories giving primary emphasis to the role of language in the expression of thought, such as the Chomskyan philosophy of language.)

Lukács's critique of Pavlov can be seen as a first tentative formulation of his later theory of language, according to which language and labor are categories of the same ontological level inasmuch as they bridge natural and

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social being: "Just like labor, language also represents a leap from natural to social being." In the light of this we need a new kind of linguistics "that would take as its object of research or methodological guide the really existing connections between labor and speech," and therefore, "could broaden and deepen our knowledge of the ~~historival~~ process of this leap." (Lukács 1978: 3, 102)

AQ: historical?

AQ: 1978 a,b?

In accordance with this view, when describing the essential features of language (as well as when discussing the aesthetic sphere as a whole), Lukács makes use of the principle that a phenomenon can be understood in its entire depth only if we consider the genesis and the tendencies of development of the totality to which the phenomenon in question specifically belongs. That is why there are numerous references to ethnography on the pages devoted to the discussion of the essential features of language. The remarks on "primitive languages" are intended to illustrate the idea that the property that, according to Lukács, counts as the essential feature of language and which is some kind of "twofold motion," that is, "overcoming the limits of the actual immediacy by means of generalization and the retransformation of the result thus achieved into a new, more comprehensive immediacy of higher power and better differentiation,"[6] is at the same time the law of real history, of the real development of language. Thus the problem which submerged with Pavlov onto a mere physiological level ascends into historical dimensions, notwithstanding the fact that the data Lukács cites from Lévy-Bruhl and others can hardly be interpreted unambiguously. "If we observe the language of a primitive people chosen at discretion, we shall realise that their derivation of words is incomparably closer to perception and farther from concept than ours,"[7] states Lukács on the assumption that primitive languages are capable of naming sensually concrete objects only and have no means to express the concept of genus. Now the considerations that start out from the assumption that primitive languages have no concepts for genus ascribe an exaggerated significance to a single aspect of language. To put it more exactly, they compare "civilized" and "primitive" languages from a single aspect: on the basis of lexical characteristics. It is doubtful whether this leads to a correct typology. Incidentally, considerations like the ones mentioned above served for Lévy-Bruhl as arguments for the justification of the existence of some "pre-logical" primitive mentality, which, as it were, should correspond to an infantile level of thought. This conception queries the universality of the basic course of human thought (prevalent even among the various kinds of the concrete socio-historical characteristics) and, in the last analysis, the uniformity of the human species, which contributed greatly to the legitimate criticism of

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structural and functional ethnology[8] in this connection. As regards our basic problem it is, however, far more important to note that the facts described by Lévy-Bruhl do not constitute conclusive evidence. Boas was already able to demonstrate that the examples used to illustrate that the "concrete" nature of the "primitive languages" radically different from European languages are not generally valid: there exist primitive languages which, in spite of our scientific superstitions, abound in abstract terms which are also used as expressions of concepts for genus (Boas 1911: 657).

This may well raise doubt as to the well-foundedness of some of the theoretical statements on language in *Aesthetics* but it does not exert a fatal effect on the evaluation of the substantial part of Lukács's position, nor does it hinder, in some degree, the acknowledgment of the concrete linguistic relevance of these very statements.

In sum, Lukács regards it as the general trend in the development of language that "linguistic forms reflecting concrete objects gradually disappear from language and are replaced by much more general common nouns." He continues to say that from this it does not follow that "language loses the ability to concretely designate every concrete object," since "in our relation to the world sentences acquire an increasing significance" [. . .] "the complicated syntactic relations of the words determine their senses more and more in the concrete contexts of their application," and "by virtue of the relations of the words arranged in sentences more and more sophisticated linguistic devices come into being for the purpose of demonstrating concrete objective relations."[9] Minimally one of the presuppositions of these statements is false, viz., that at the earlier stages of language development, thus in primitive languages, sentences had less significance and they turned into being a more and more essential element of linguistic activity "as it were" simultaneously with the eclipse of the words having concrete meaning.

Another point on which one must disagree with Lukács is that the ability to concretely designate objects was previously based on the semantic properties of words (on the concrete perceptual nature of their meaning). Leibniz—whom, incidentally, Lukács himself cites—demonstrated (in his polemic with Locke) that words can *a priori* be nothing but general. General terms are not incidental facts of language or facts occurring merely at certain stages of historical development. As Leibniz puts it, they "do not merely improve languages but are required for their essential structure." It is thus, *logically*, impossible for words taken in themselves to relate to individuals. In Leibniz's parlance "particular things" can be spoken of on this level only if "*species* (logically) *infimae*" are understood by them (Leibniz 1996: 276).

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At the same time, it should be made clear that sentence construction is an essential property of linguistic activity. According to the standard conception, accepted by almost all authoritative linguists, the fundamental unity of language is the sentence, that is, men speak in sentences at whatever stage of linguistic development.

Still, the main problem is clearly Lukács's view of the development of language, which Ferenc Fehér, one of the philosopher's closest pupils, put down to the "overall tendency of evolutionism." Fehér severely criticizes his master and shows that the application of the general scheme of evolutionism to language is unacceptable to all linguistic and psychological theories that are perceived as relevant (Fehér 1983: 104). Indeed, there is general agreement today that a concept of development extendable to language does not exist, as there is no criterion that could be used to distinguish between existing and known dead languages in terms of their "level of development."

We should note that Lukács is not completely consistent when committing himself to a kind of "linguistic evolutionism," for he evidently did not think that concepts of development were valid in every field. We are quite aware that he accepted, for instance, Marx's "Homer paradox," namely that the classical works do not constitute a developmental sequence and that, on the contrary, such peaks of world literature as the Homerian epics arose in the earliest stages of social development and could not have arisen in any other period.

Let us return to the issue of the extent to which the presence of complex syntactic structures realized in sentences is a part of each phase of the development of language. It seems we may say that—granting that language has a general trend of development at all—this comes to the fore not in the increase of the *significance* of sentences but in the *increasing complication of sentence structure.* Lukács's statements quoted above can be accepted only if this is meant by them. All that is, however, is a psychological rather than a linguistic problem.

Despite their problematic nature, in a roundabout way, Lukács's statements are meaningful and that is why they do have scientific relevance. Note that what Lukács tackles is the problem of reference and singular description. In this connection he attains, with the informal means of philosophical analysis, the same results which can be achieved through a logical and grammatical analysis of linguistic structures. In his view, reference (the function of designating concrete objects) is not a separate relationship between the sign and the signified but a function of the relations within the sentence. Although expressions are *a priori* in general, individual objects can be

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grasped by linguistic means, which are provided for by syntax: among the conditions of singular description we find rules which are clearly syntactic. To put it more generally: the relationship of concrete reality and language is not only a semantic but also a syntactic problem. "Only an advanced syntax can designate individuality by means of the linguistic reproduction of ostension,"[10] claims Lukács in the chapter on reproduction of his *Ontology of Social Being*.

It is trivial, though perhaps not needless, to recall that the theory of language in *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* is related to the theory of everyday thinking. Lukács himself calls attention to the inherent relationship between the two problems: "The peculiarities of everyday thinking could perhaps be expressed most successfully if speech were subjected to a thorough analysis from this specific angle."[11] The central core of the problems of *Aesthetics* is thus occupied by ordinary language and this is an important fact. If a philosophy of language is viable at all it can set its foot at nothing but ordinary language, for—as is shown by Lukács himself—the sign systems carrying higher mental objectivizations emerge from the tendencies extant in ordinary language; similarly, these higher mental objectivizations are themselves built upon the general foundation of everyday life and everyday thinking in order to constantly enrich this foundation with their results.

If by abstraction we consider solely the topic we touched upon here, placing ordinary language in such a central position may relate Lukács's theory of language to ordinary language philosophy, even if otherwise Lukács is strongly opposed to the views of the neo-positivist and analytical philosophers on the objectives and the very nature of philosophical research. Notwithstanding their methodological position, according to which important logical distinctions can be discovered by exploring the rules of the use of our linguistic tools, and by doing this we may get closer to understanding the conceptual frames determining thought, would have certainly deserved more attention from the part of a thinker who was investigating the structures of everyday thought.

We should add, by the way, that Lukács not only rejected the views and methods of the analytical philosophers but also was rather perplexed by them. We see this in his chapter on Wittgenstein in *The Onthology of Social Being*. Here Lukács interprets several enigmatic sentences in *Tractatus* as "an involuntary excursion into the field of onthology" (Lukács 1976: I. 73), merely acknowledging that, in terms of the present social condition, Wittgenstein does express something important and contradictory, namely the thinking and sentiments of those who, faced with the general manipulated nature

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of life, are incapable of anything but an inevitably impotent protest—the silence of Wittgenstein (Lukács 1976: I. 75).

It is worth paying heed to a few points within Lukács's description of ordinary language, especially to the dialectical contradiction which, according to *Aesthetics*, is the central organizing principle of the problems arising here. One of the aspects of this contradiction is that language is the substantial property of the mind ("the practical mind itself"), as regards its functioning, the movement of its structures, it is unconscious. This point is expressed by Lukács in another way: by means of the category of "mediation," but owing precisely to this category he goes beyond a simple description of the paradox in question: "people necessarily relate to speech immediately, though as regards its nature it is a system of more and more complicated mediations."[12] Through such an application of the category of mediation the problem of language is placed in the light of the comprehensive properties of human life activity. According to this, any new achievement involves a higher complication of determinations and a further articulation of the social conditions of life, and at the same time it becomes a "natural," spontaneously manifest element of activity and thought extremely simplifying the relations of people to the world and one another. It is here that the source of the further aspects of the dialectical contradiction stressed by Lukács lies: it is the spontaneous naturalness of language that makes available all that is not immediately given to us, and the very same spontaneous availability hampers the "unbiased take-in" of the world. This last remark refers to a problem which is not examined by Lukács in detail, but to which he undoubtedly ascribes due significance. It can be summarized as follows: the structures of language influence the course of cognition in a definite direction. Another momentum or rather consequence of the same contradiction are the two contrary tendencies influencing the whole dynamics of ordinary language, which are called by Lukács, in a metaphorical phrase, though rather accurately, "the tendencies towards rigidity and plasticity."

Mentioning these two tendencies uncovers a comprehensive set of problems that belong to the sphere of various disciplines and delineate the core of a philosophical theory of language. The following question arises at this point: insofar as thought indeed presupposes language and insofar as the structures of the different human languages indeed determine thought, how is the universality of cognition possible? In answering the question much can be gained from a study of linguistic productivity. Lukács is not concerned with the linguistic or technical side of the question but it amounts to no exaggeration to say that the significance of the conception

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of language in *Aesthetics* consists in stressing the tendencies mentioned above. And grasping these tendencies fixes a tie between the problems of ordinary language, on the one hand, and those of the sign systems carrying higher objectivizations: scientific and artistic language, on the other. It is to be expected on the basis of the discussion outlined in the foregoing that a number of important categories in Lukács's *Aesthetics* are connected to considerations of the theory of language and that—conversely—certain categories will induce questions concerning the theory of language. For example, this is the case with the differentiation between the "*whole man*" and the "*whole of man*" ("Das Menschenganze") or with the interpretation of "unconscious." However, within the problems of the theory of language in *Aesthetics*, the central place is undoubtedly occupied by the hypothesis of the "first and second signal system."

Incidentally, judging from the viewpoint of psychology the hypothesis is rather doubtful. Thus, the only sensible question to ask is what problems the introduction of the concept of the first and second signal system would have been evoked to solve and whether the phenomena Lukács wishes to account for by means of this concept are indeed important from the point of view of our general problem of language. In this case, Lukács's hypothesis must by all means be regarded as a basis for discussion and a conception worthy of further contemplation even if otherwise it ought to be discarded as a scientific explanation. It is reasonable to assume that later on Lukács himself considered his ideas about the first and second signal system in a similar way. In the chapter on reproduction in the *Ontology of Social Being* we find the following: "Subtlety increases in speech and in listening, and in my Aesthetics I called it the sphere of the knowledge of man (the correct knowledge of the individual partner) and I used the expression 1' signal system to denote its organ."[13] Thus not even Lukács claims that this concept describes some kind of psychic reality, rather he holds it to be the name of a problem, a metaphorical circumlocution of a set of phenomena.

AQ: co[illegible] as

AQ: okay

Paradoxically, as early as in *Aesthetics* the hypothesis of the "1' signal system" is expounded in a way which goes beyond a simple elaboration of Pavlov's doctrines.

Moreover, though Lukács modestly speaks of a "supplementary proposal," he clearly starts from the recognition of the weakness of the explanatory power of Pavlov's reflex theory with respect to the phenomena he was mainly interested in. For the division according to the paired categories of the first and the second signal systems cannot comprise

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the totality of specific human utterances. According to the logic of this division, any response that cannot at all or can only defectively be verbalized counts as a simple conditioned reflex; consequently, the specific human nature of the specific psychic quality inherent in these responses will become inapprehensible. The fact that the "1' signal system" is created to fill in that blank space is best evidenced by Lukács's lucid critical comments, one of which will be quoted below. Pavlov recounts a case of aphasia, a patient who completely lost his ability to speak after a fit of epilepsy but could make himself understood by means of drawings. Pavlov judges the case to be an example of a possible separation of the first signal system from the second. The assessment shows that Pavlov considers non-verbal messages as the operation of the first signal system. He seems to assume also that the second signal system is simply added to the first in man, that is, he does not look upon the two planes of signals as an organic whole within which the lower plane is rendered under the higher one and undergoes a substantial structural change compared to the reflex activity in animals. Lukács unequivocally asserts the doubtfulness of this view: "The drawing of an object—in contradiction to Pavlov—can in no wise be conceived as conditioned reflex. If the word 'tree' must be interpreted as a signal of signals, then the tree drawn in the same manner contains the generalizing apprehension of the tree immediately perceived which in its immediacy elicits unconditioned or conditioned reflexes."[14]

It should be clear from the examples that Lukács's hypothesis had a number of justifiable motives and the considerations underlying it have contributed to an overall specification of the problem of language. This specification takes into account not only a few conspicuous forms of linguistic activity but is based on a comprehensive view of the relevant phenomena. Today, however, these phenomena can be accounted for far more successfully by means of the conceptual apparatus of linguistics (for instance, by demonstrating the coding of paralinguistic elements), the devices of communication theory, psycho- and socio-linguistics, or the creation of a general semiotic framework.

While analyzing the dialectics of the conscious and unconscious, Lukács points out that in the dynamic structure of ordinary language the most general characteristics of human practice and social development are expressed (Lukács 1963: 61). In this respect language is not only a system of signs, an external mediator of internal psychic contents but is the category of practice in a definite sense.

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4

Marxist works on language, in general, have not raised the question to what extent this influences the formal representation of language. With no respect to whether and what extent Lukács's analyses can be made to correspond to the formal models of language, the theoretical connection between language and practice marks the point which separates a Marxist conception of language from the traditional positions. This is where *Ontology of Social Being* takes up the thread of analysis:

> Such an analysis of the continuity of social being will necessarily lead us to language as an important complex developed within this complex of social being.[15]

Thus, the problem of language is raised by the analysis of social being itself, and language as such must be construed as a complex within social being, one connected to the sphere of social existence. This gives rise to the most general definition of language:

> Language is the organ and medium of the continuity realized in social being.[16]

However simple and self-evident this definition may be, assuming its central position in the theory sheds new light upon the whole problem of language. For the tradition of linguistics and philosophy has placed the definition of language as the instrument of thought and communication in the center. This definition, no doubt, is correct, though it needs further elaboration since it does not contain, not even in an abstract manner, references to social needs developed through history which language must in the first place satisfy. Now, in Lukács's opinion, every kind of explanation for language presupposes—in accordance with the "paradigm of production"—the knowledge of these needs, which emerged from the most general structure of social being. Logically, the category of reproduction allows for a detailed account of these problems.

Such a change in the logic of the question has the consequence that the theory of the nature and genesis of language must form a unified theory at least on the most general level, and this must be thought of as a general semiotic framework which provides an outlook on the problems of animal communication alongside with human communication.

What was said in the foregoing also makes it possible for the significance of the relationship of labor and language to be presented in a more comprehensive way. Labor is not only the driving force of the genesis of language

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but also the explanatory principle for the structural characteristics of language. In other words, what should be noted in Lukács's work is not simply that the historical occurrence of labor accounts for the historical occurrence of language but that the structures of language continually embed into the structural relations of the labor process. Note in this connection Lukács's remark that the tendency towards "species being" ("Gattungswesen"), which objectively emerges from the structure of labor, "develops further" in language. That is, since "the most ordinary words express the generality of the object, the genus or the species, and not the individual instance, [...] the objective intention of language is directed *ab ovo* to the regularity of the subject, to the objectivity of the object designated by it."[17] Incidentally, it is worth noticing that contrary to some of his earlier remarks Lukács regards the striving for generality and the objectivity of the object as an *ab ovo* tendency of language. That "it is linguistically impossible to find a word that defines unambiguously the individuality of some object"[18] is tantamount to saying that it is a *logical* property of language independent of factual and historical circumstances. According to Leibniz's account, individuality can be approached but cannot be attained through the most concrete possible designation of the species. Thus particularity will serve as the special sphere of the linguistic expression endeavoring to grasp individuality. As has been shown, the act of referring, in which concrete objects are referred to and which involves the application of proper names or singular descriptions, is a function not of the concreteness of meanings but of "advanced syntax."

AQ: was elision th in the original as well?

The connection of the structural characteristics of language and the basic structure of labor-activity is with Lukács not equivalent to stating some kind of isomorphic correspondence. Besides the structural interrelations shown in this context, Lukács also stresses the autonomy of language, which is expressed (in the phraseology of his categories) by stating the essential difference between labor and language with respect to the orientation towards "species being" as well as establishing the relationship of the individual and the general. The basis of the necessary generality of language is the fact that prior to any act of cognition, labor is itself an objective process of generalization. In labor, however, whatever is merely particular is eliminated so that the "objectively optimal," the "species being" should have preference, whereas, according to the above, language must have the tendency toward individualization besides (and on the strength of) generalization. Moreover, "the more the original community of purely particular individuals changes to a community of personalities, the more linguistic expression must tend to individualize."[19]

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When commenting on this statement, we can call attention to an interesting methodological principle. Lukács clarifies the logical properties of language, such as the ability to express the general and the individual, starting from the social relations of people and their communities, thus he is not content to emphasize merely cognitive aspects. Another point of importance as regards the problem touched upon here is that the structural determination of language by labor, on the one hand, and the autonomy of the logical structure of language, on the other, can be understood from the teleology of labor.

Yet this is not tantamount to explaining the nature and genesis of language on the basis of a general teleological world view. All that is at stake here is merely that the objective teleological structure inherent in labor, which is also the basis of all subjective teleology, creates for men the possibility and the necessity of "having to say something to each other."

Incidentally, one should note that when addressing the connection between language and labor, Lukács does not concern himself with theoretical historical questions (other than, of course, his inevitable citing of Engels' hypothesis). Here it is nevertheless worth pointing out the strength of the tradition says that language is first and foremost an activity (or, as Humboldt said, *energeia* rather than *ergon*) and, as such, can be linked with labor or more precisely with work activities that use tools. The main elements of this view can already be found in Plato's *Cratylus* where Socrates, in the debate on the natural or arbitrary character of names, cites two arguments that are of particular interest to us. The first we can call an argument rooted in the *actional nature* of speech, while the second we may call an argument drawn from the *instrumental* nature of naming. The former implies that "speech and naming are a kind of action," whereby we cannot act how we wish, because the actions "have a special nature of their own." The second argument is based on the idea that "a name is an instrument," like the awl or the shuttle, and that the naming of things, like the use of instruments and tools, has a correct or "natural" mode or fashion (Plato 2008: 387 c-d). The argument reflects recognition that speech and the proper use of a given tool are activities requiring the same logic, which, together with the immanently associated aims, are equally defined by objective and valid norms. (It is almost self-evident that we should compare the quoted Platonic passage with the words of Wittgenstein: "Think of the tools in a tool-box: there is a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screw-driver, a rule, a glue-pot, glue, nails and screws. The functions of words are as diverse as the functions of these objects." (Wittgenstein 1978: 7e, §11)).

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Among further examples—which can be listed right up until the 20th century—the most important is without doubt the Hegelian concept relating to the structural homology of logical inference and labor. The importance of the concept stems in part from the historical significance of its own and in part from its extraordinary effect on Lukács's thinking. One need only recall the insight that the same process of externalization is underway in language as in labor:

> The speaking mouth, the working hand, and, if you like, the legs are too the organs of performance and actualization which have within them the action *qua* action, or the inner as such. But the externality which the inner obtains through them is the action as a reality separated from the individual. Speech and work are outer expressions in which the individual no longer keeps and possesses himself within himself, but lets the inner get completely outside of him. (Hegel 1977: 187)

As an example from the twentieth century one might cite Erns Cassirer's conception that the features of occupational or professional languages also tell us something of the origins of the language, as the inevitable link of expert languages with the division of activities illustrates the general embeddedness of language in action (Cassirer 1923: 255).

The most interesting example, however, is to be found in Dante, who gave, in his *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, a strikingly original interpretation of the myth of the Tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues. Whereas before the fall of the tower the people doing the various tasks had all spoken one language and had worked well together, after its collapse languages emerged according to the various occupations.

> Only each group that had been working on one particular task kept one and the same language: for example, one for all the architects, one for all the stone-movers; for all the stone-cutters; and so on with every trade. And now as many languages separated the human race as there were different kinds of work. (Dante 1996: I. vii. 53)

Thus, it is beyond doubt that Dante explained the plurality of languages in terms of the division of labor.

Since this explanation had no antecedents at the theoretical level, we may suppose that the poet based it on his own life experiences, for he lived in a world where the general cultural and linguistic effects of the nascent capitalist division of labor could already be felt. The translators of an earlier German version of the work refer to this when commenting on the place in question: "During the period, a Florentine would not have been surprised

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by Dante's idea that the languages of the nations could be traced back to the various artisan guilds" (Dante 1925: n. 5. 87). Another excellent commentator on Dante showed how in Florence it was easy to recognize the differences of dialect and the links between the types of work performed in the various guilds (Dante 1979: n. 5. 61.).

Since work is a jointly undertaken activity requiring coordination at group level, the notions of labor and the division of labor are inseparable. Any teleological act that can be said to be complete or accomplished is, indirectly or directly, a chain of multiple individual acts.

Just as division of labor is inbuilt into the very structure of working activity (that is, in the case of humans the division of the activity is not genetically fixed), so are the realization of singular teleological relations and the articulation of the global objective of the total activity on group level all along interrelated. ~~This is how disintegrates the property of all animal species, namely, the property that the individual members of a species all "know" the same, or, in Lukács's words, the reproduction of the species takes place within a world "known" in the same way.~~

AQ: unclear. Words missing?

5

Social reproduction is subject to quite different laws. Individuals do not "know the same things": their knowledge and experience is highly differentiated and depends on their place in the spontaneous or institutional division of labor. This is the point where we can make a connection to Lukács and extend the inquiry he launched to a study of those functions and phenomena that are peculiar to language, such as meaning, understanding, communicability, and expressibility.

There are several theories that one may not only link with the Lukácsian concept of language but also use to supplement or develop it. The most important of these theories are Hilary Putnam's hypothesis on the division of linguistic labor (Putnam ~~1975~~) and the Marxist semiotic conception of Ferruccio Rossi-Landi, which interprets linguistic reality in terms of material production and consumption, social and individual work, capital and exchange, commodities and money, or reification and alienation (Rossi-Landi 1968; Rossi-Landi 1975).

AQ: 1975 a,b?

Putnam introduces the term division of linguistic labor as a means of responding to the question of the relationship between linguistic meaning and our knowledge of the world.

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This question has been a recurrent topic of the mentalist concepts of meaning since the 17th century. Can we assume that the meaning of a word is the speaker's experience or knowledge about the thing the word signifies? As is known, this was Locke's theory. He supposed that the word 'gold' has different meanings (stands for a different "idea") for those for whom gold is defined as a bright and heavy substance, for those who regard it a yellow moldable material and for those for whom it is a tensile substance. From this hypothesis follows that, as a word has different meanings for different speakers, we do not understand each other. So should not we think instead that the meaning of a word is *the complete concept* of a thing, which is the same for all speakers who otherwise have different experiences? Consequently, the meaning of a word would include bits of information that the single speakers do not have concerning the thing they are speaking about. As is also known, this is Leibniz's theory. Though this suggests that it can be easily the case that we do not understand even ourselves, Leibniz's intention is farther reaching than that of Locke's. And when Putnam examines the concept of the division of linguistic labor he follows an intuition very similar to Leibniz's idea. According to him the meaning of 'gold' also includes what the speaker does not know about 'gold', but someone else, experts for example, might know about it.

His conception is to be understood as follows.

It is the division of linguistic labor that makes mutual understanding possible despite the differences in our knowledge about and experience of things. For the knowledge presupposed by language is possessed *collectively* by the members of a society. Even if we know the objects from diverse aspects and in different depths, it is sufficient to identify our culture's important objects by the help of words and to know the rules of using them. Only experts need to understand the complete meaning of words. And the ideal experts, whose competence represents the sum of the individual competencies, are entrusted with the knowledge of the totality of the linguistic system.

This conception presupposes that division of linguistic labor is one of the forms of division of labor in general (or, as Putnam puts is, forms of "mundane division of labor engender a division of linguistic labor"; Putnam ~~1975 : 144–145~~). So not only the general attributes of work ("live", "stored-up", "energeia" and "ergon") can be applied to the language but also the concept of the division of labor that renders communication possible.

AQ: 1975 a,b?

The division of linguistic labor was introduced into the philosophy of language by Putnam as a socio-linguistic hypothesis. The novelty of the

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hypothesis was not the discovery that the knowledge and the use of language have a structure similar to the division of labor. It is original because of the observation that the division of labor is the essential nature of language. As Putnam says:

> The features that are generally thought to be present in connection with a general name—necessary and sufficient conditions for membership in the extension, ways of recognizing if something is in the extension ("criteria"), etc.—are all present in the linguistic community *considered as a collective body*; but that collective body divides the "labor" of knowing and employing these various parts of the "meaning" of "gold". (Putnam ~~1975~~: ~~145~~)

Since the members of the linguistic community, considered as a collective body, do not possess the language separately, they are compelled to cooperate. Later on this thought has been reformulated by Putnam clearly and explicitly:

> There is a *division of linguistic labor*. Language is a form of cooperative activity, not an essentially individualistic activity. Part of what is wrong with the Aristotelian picture is that it suggests that everything that is necessary for the use of language is stored in each individual mind; but no actual language works that way. (Putnam 2001: 25)

Putnam's formulations can be generalized thus:

> (T1) division of linguistic labor prevails in every linguistic community and there are terms the application rules of which are known only by few experts, and thus these terms can only be used by others due to the cooperation with these experts.

The proposition states that the social aspect is not just necessary or derivative but the essential feature of language. Language can only be possessed collectively by agents engaged in collective work with shared tasks, tools and specialized knowledge.

It is easy to see that Lukács expounded the same theory concerning the social character of language. I believe that Lukács would have accepted Putnam's famous externality thesis too, according to which "meanings are not in the head." This is but a the stronger way of stating that meanings are not identical with the individuals' ideas about things, and that the utterer's psychological condition does not define what she "means."

One might ask whether the concept of "division of linguistic labor" is really more than a metaphor, or a "picturesque term," as Michael

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Dummett once suggested. I am sure that for Putnam it is much more. Its weight is shown by its constant recurrence in Putnam's thought and the philosopher's continuous efforts aimed at rephrasing and polishing the theory relating to it.

Putnam suggests that relying on the concept of division of linguistic labor marks the division between the traditional philosophies of language and the more appropriate conceptions recognizing that language is predetermined by world and society.

> Ignoring the division of linguistic labor is ignoring the social dimenson of cognition; ignoring what we have called the *indexicality* of most words is ignoring the contribution of environment. Traditional philosophy of language, like much traditional philosophy, leaves out other people and the world; a better philosophy and a better science of language must encompass both.[20] (Putnam ~~1975~~ 1; ~~193~~ 1)

Putnam thus calls for such a materialist philosophy that recognizes the social dimension of language and its ontological dependence on the world. It should be noted, however, that from a Lukácsian and Marxist point of view his conception has a serious defect, because it does not take into account the problem of *production* and the distinction between *technical* and *social* division of labor. Therefore, proposition (T1) must be transformed and completed in the following way:

> (T1') *Technical* division of labor is the feature of every single linguistic community, for the linguistic agents' knowledge of producing and using the linguistic tools (terms) are possessed only by few agents. Other members of the community acquire this knowledge only in cooperation with such agents.

This amendment integrates the notion of "production" into (T1), and shows that Putnam applies exclusively *one* kind of division of labor (though historically a universal kind) to language.

It was Rossi-Landi who, going beyond this, created a semiotic theory relying upon the principles specified in (T1'). To this can be added the following theses:

> (T2) Technical division of labor, which is the feature of every linguistic community, usually has the form of social division of labor. This is to say that speakers' (the linguistic agents') place in the division of (linguistic) labor is determined by the structure of class stratification of the society.

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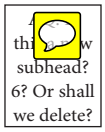

(T3) Due to the social division of labor prevalent in numerous linguistic communities, only few speakers can define, monopolize and control the knowledge necessary for the production and application of linguistic tools (terms).

(T1'), (T2) and (T3) sufficiently describe Rossi-Landi's linguistic theory only if we postulate the homology of material and linguistic production too. Without further analysis I just want to note that the three theorems presuppose the homology of linguistic and material division of labor. Without accepting that linguistic agency is articulated by material production, the discourse about linguistic labor and division of linguistic labor will be purely metaphorical.

The significance of taking into account the social aspect of the division of linguistic labor besides the technical aspects is that it highlights the core concept of Rossi-Landi's philosophy of language—the foundations of the critic of linguistic alienation and exploitation.

This critic can be considered as a continuation of the Marxian–Lukácsian analyses of the effects of reification upon language, the theoretical and practical importance of which has not faded to this very day. Debunking linguistic alienation and exploitation, that is critic of language, has at the same time always been the critique of society and ideology, or expression of critical thinking, at least. Now would be time to revive this tradition. According to Rossi-Landi's theory it is easy to see that information society entails not only the promise of more democracy but also the threat of linguistic alienation. The threat of division of linguistic labor turning into social division of labor, and the danger that exclusive groups appropriate the control over the tools and content of communication, or the right of defining linguistic meanings, subsist as before.

Returning to the division of labor, or—in more general terms—to the phenomenon of interrelated teleological acts, it must be remarked that the ultimate and global objective of all collective activity can be attained only through the conscious or unconscious interaction of the individuals. That is precisely what is caught in another definition-like statement of Lukács:

> Originally language is a social means to cause certain teleological settings ("teleologische Setzungen") whose aim is to induce other people to execute certain teleological settings.[21]

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Recall that it does not follow from Lukács's thesis that teleology becomes absolute, or its significance is exaggerated in an idealist manner. For his statements do not include the claim that language as the product of the teleology of labor and as the means of the execution of the teleology of labor is in any sense a result of *conscious* creation and a prior setting of objectives. As was shown above, the whole of Lukács's explanation of language is footed on different grounds. The most important of its moral is the necessity to understand language as a category of being before any interpretation of it as a category of social and individual consciousness. Even if Lukács's analyses do not offer concrete means to describe the formal characteristics of language and even if some of the details of his theory may well be criticized in the light of anthropology and formal theories of language, the above statement can be overlooked by none who intend to find a place for the issue of language among the problems which can be seen as important parts of the legacy of Marxism.

Notes

1 "Der Bourgeois hat es um so leichter, aus seiner Sprache die Identität merkantilischer und individueller oder auch allgemein menschlicher Beziehungen zu beweisen, als diese Sprache selbst ein Produkt der Bourgeoisie ist und daher wie in der Wirklichkeit, so in der Sprache die Verhältnisse des Schachers zur Grundlage aller andern gemacht worden sind" (Marx-Engels 1974: 123).

2 "die Sprache entsteht, wie das Bewußtsein, erst aus dem Bedürfnis, der Notdurft des Verkehrs mit anderen Menschen" (Marx-Engels 1974: 43).

3 "Die Gedanken der herrschenden Klasse sind in jeder Epoche die herrschenden Gedanken" (Marx-Engels 1974: 94).

4 "Freilich müssen die Feststellungen Pawlows stets im Sinne des dialektischen Materialismus aufgefasst und ausgelegt werden. Denn so fundamental dessen zweites Signalsystem der Sprache für diese Abgrenzung zwischen Mensch und Tier sein mag, seinen wirklichen Sinn und seine ausgiebige Fruchtbarkeit erhält es erst, wenn, wie bei Engels, auf das simultane Entstehen, auf die sachliche Untrennbarkeit von Arbeit und Sprache das nötige Gewicht gelegt wird. Dass der Mensch 'etwas zu sagen' hat, was jenseits des Gebiets des Tierischen liegt, entstammt direkt der Arbeit und entfaltet sich—direkt und indirekt, später oft durch sehr viele Vermittlungen—in Zusammenhang mit der Entwicklung der Arbeit" (Lukács 1963: 38). All translations from Lukács 1963 are mine.

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5 Kurz zusammengefasst lässt sich unser Einwand, besser gesagt unser Ergänzungsvorschlag, so formulieren: Pawlow statuiert richtig den unlösbaren Zusammenhang zwischen Signalsystem 2 und Denken im eigentlichen, begrifflichen Sinne als Grundlage eines jeden wissenschaftlichen Denkens. Es fehlt jedoch bei ihm jede Andeutung darüber, dass das Signalsystem 2, die Sprache, mit der Arbeit zusammenhängt. Freilich geht Pawlow nirgends auf Fragen historisch-genetischer Art ein. Er begnügt sich damit, die Tatsache des Zusammenhangs zwischen Auftreten des Menschen und der Sprache festzustellen. [. . .] Das Fehlen der genetischen Verbindung zwischen Arbeit und Sprache bringt jedoch bei der Wichtigkeit dieses Zusammenhangs in die Bestimmung des Signalsystems 2 als spezifisch menschliche Auffassungs- und Ausdrucksweise eine gewisse Verschwommenheit hinein" (Lukács 1963: 21).

6 "das durch Verallgemeinerung erreichte Überwinden der Schranken der jeweiligen Unmittelbarkeit und das Rückverwandeln des so Erreichten in eine neue Unmittelbarkeit höherer Potenz" (Lukács 1963: 88).

7 "Betrachtet man die Sprache eines beliebigen primitiven Volks, so sieht man, dass ihre Wortbildung unvergleichlich wahrnehmungsnäher, begriffsferner ist, als die unsere" (Lukács 1963 : 57).

8 Claude Lévi-Strauss: La Science du concret (In Lévi-Strauss 1962 : 4–47).

9 "…dass derartige, Konkretheiten wiederspiegelnde Sprachformen immer mehr aus der Sprache verschwinden, um den viel allgemeineren Gattungswörtern den Platz zu überlassen" (Lukács 1963: 88). "Muss aber dadurch die Fähigkeit der Sprache, jeden konkreten Gegenstand konkret zu bezeichnen, unmissverständlich zu machen, verloren gehen?" (Lukács 1963: 89). "Man vergesse aber nicht, dass in unserer sprachlichen Beziehung zur Wirklichkeit der Satz eine immer grössere Bedeutung erhält, dass komplizierte syntaktische Verbindungen der Worte immer stärker ihren Sinn im konkreten Anwendungszusammenhang bestimmt, dass sich immer verfeinerte Sprachmittel ausbilden, um konkrete Gegenstandsbeziehungen durch das Verhältnis der Worte zueinander im Satze sinnfällig zu machen" (Lukács 1963 : 89).

10 ~~The English translation~~ of the *Ontology of Social Being* ~~is not included in~~ this chapter. In quoting passages for this chapter I rely on the original German text (the not-dated manuscript of which is to be found in the Archiv Lukács Budapest), and on the Hungarian translation thereof. "Erst die entwickelte Syntax ist imstande, die Einzelheit in der sprachlichen Reproduktion des sinnlichen Hinweises zu bezeichnen." (Lukács [no date] *Zur Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins*. Reproduktion. Manuskript 87 (Lukács no date: 87; Lukács 1976: 195).

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11 "Vielleicht am plastischsten käme die Eigenart des Alltagsdenkens zum Ausdruck, wenn man die Sprache von diesem besonderen Standpunkt einer eingehenden Analyse unterworfen würde" (Lukács 1963: 57).

12 "…sie sich zur Sprache—obwohl diese ihrem Wesen nach ein System von immer komplizierteren Vermittlungen ist—notwendig unmittelbar verhalten" (Lukács 1963: 59).

13 "Es entsteht auch im Sprechen und Zuhören eine zunehmende Nuancierung, die ich in meiner Aesthetic als Gebiet der Menschenkenntnis (richtige Kenntnis des individuellen Partners) beschrieben und als deren Organ ich dort das Signalsystem 1' bezeichnet habe" (Lukács no date: 92).

14 "Das Zeichen eines Gegenstandes kann—im Gegensatz zu Pawlow—unter keinen Umständen als einfacher bedingter Reflex aufgefasst werden. Wenn das Wort Baum als Signal von Signalen ausgelegt werden muss, so enthält ein gezeichneter Baum ebenso eine verallgemeinernde Fassung des unmittelbar wahrgenommenen Baums, der in seiner Unmittelbarkeit einen unbedingten order bedingten Reflex auslöst" (Lukács 1963: 85).

15 "Diese Analyse der Kontinuität im gesellschaftlichen Sein führt notwendig zur Sprache als zu einem wichtigen Komplex innerhalb dieser Komplexität des gesellschaftlichen Seins" (Lukács no date 79; Lukács 1976: 190).

16 "Organ und Medium der Kontinuität im gesellschaftlichen Sein" (Lukács no date:80; Lukács 1976: 202).

17 "…jedes einfachste, alltäglichste Wort stets die Allgemeinheit des Gegenstandes ausdrückt, die Gattung, die Art, nicht das Einzelexemplar …"; "…ist in der Sprache von Anfang an eine objektive Intention auf die Gesetzmässigkeit des Subjekts, auf die Objektivität im von ihr bezeichneten Gegenstand wirksam" (Lukács no date: 87. Lukács: 1976: 390).

18 "[…] ja dass es sprachlich einfach unmöglich ist, für die Einzelheit irgendeines Gegenstandes ein dieses eindeutig bestimmendes Wort zu finden" (Lukács: 1976: 390).

19 "Je mehr sich die ursprüngliche Gemeinschaft aus bloss partikularen Einzelnen sich zu der von Individualitäten, von Persönlichkeiten entwickelt, desto mehr muss der sprachliche Ausdruck auch seinerseits auf Individualisierung gerichtet werden" (Lukács no date: 92).

~~20~~ ~~"Ignoring the division of linguistic labor is ignoring the social dimenson of cognition; ignoring what we have called the *indexicality* of most words is ignoring the contribution of environment. Traditional philosophy of language, like much traditional philosophy, leaves out other people and~~

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~~the world; a better philosophy and a better science of language must encompass both." I. m. Hilary Putnam, "The Meaning of 'Meaning' " 197.~~

21 "sie ist ursprünglich das gesellschaftliche Instrument, jene teleologischen Setzungen zur Geltung zu bringen, die das Ziel haben, andere Menschen zu bestimmten teleologischen Setzungen anzuleiten" (Lukács no date: 90).

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3
Lukács's Conception of Science

Abstract: *The chapter is divided into two parts which treat respectively two periods of the development of Lukács's thought on science: his earlier conception as is expounded in* History and Class Consciousness*, and the later one outlined in* The Specificity of Aesthetics*. Although the theory of science presented here is radically different from the theory we found in* History and Class Consciousness*, we can discern also a conservation and transformation of the contents of certain basic categories and thus a moment of continuity is preserved.*

Key words: anthropomorphism and des-anthropomorphism, bourgeois and proletarian science, critique of science, everyday life, theory of reflection, totality, unity of science

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3.1 Philosophy of science and its critique in *History and Class Consciousness*

1

In the main periods of his oeuvre, Georg Lukács dealt with the problem of science from various angles, formulating rather different ideas on the philosophy of science. As a first step, I shall attempt to reconstruct—or at least comment upon—the philosophy of science laid out in *History and Class Consciousness*. The question immediately arises: is it possible to identify in this book defined topics on the philosophy of science? Do we arrive at a relevant reading if we narrow the inquiry to a single topic despite the fact that a central category of the work is *totality?* Indeed, to a reading like this one might raise the objection that Lukács's primary interest was in the revolution, and this work of his is to be taken as documentary of his efforts to appropriate revolutionary Marxism—as he himself remarked later. It might be a vain attempt, then, to present Lukács in the guise of a philosopher of science.

The objection may be countered in various ways, of which let me mention only the most obvious. A perusal of Lukács's various essays in the volume is enough to reveal that he touches upon almost all the central problems of philosophy of science, problems that were rooted in the social and intellectual context of the day and that still occupy a prominent place after the "Kuhnian turn" in that branch of philosophy. Seen from the angle of the history of science, that period was characterized by a revolt against positivism, as today's post-Kuhnian tendencies are strongly anti-positivistic. *History and Class Consciousness* was also a product of that revolt against positivist philosophy of science, among other things. This is testified to by the fact that Lukács, like many of his contemporaries, held the positivist ideal of science to be identical with the idea of science. His criticism of positivism is thus significantly framed as the criticism of science. On the other hand, he also identifies the positivist ideal of science with bourgeois rationality. Consequently, his criticism of science and of positivism is transposed into the criticism of bourgeois reason. Again, this is well demonstrated by his reliance on the tradition of the *Geisteswissenschaften* and contemporary anti-positivist authors (most visibly on Max Weber) in criticizing bourgeois rationality and science.

The variety of themes related to philosophy of science in *History and Class Consciousness* is indeed remarkable: methodology of social science; the epistemological and methodological dualism of natural and social sciences; the problem of scientific facts; the relationship between science and society (the

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internal link between the structure of scientific knowledge and the fundamental traits of capitalism); the nature of historical knowledge, the relation of philosophy to the special social sciences; the nature of scientific laws; the relationship between empirical data and theory; and so on. To this list, far from being complete, one could add the problem of scientific rationality as well as the question whether the terms and concepts employed in the scientific description of facts ought to fall in with the subjective representations of those facts, that is, with the terms in which the producers of the facts interpret their situation, and within it, themselves. The metaphysical and historical philosophical thesis that historical knowledge is self-knowledge and that knowledge formed of an object changes the object itself can also be viewed as pertaining to the philosophy of science.

The logical domain of the answers to these questions is defined along the dimensions of appearance and reality, externality and internality, part and whole. To these can be added the dichotomy of statics and dynamics (factual and processual character). The answers Lukács gives along the different dimensions are consistent and, as a whole, form a coherent theory of science. In the first analysis, this theory simply appears to be anti-positivistic, for a number of Lukács's assertions (in proper logical reconstruction) are also found in the core of other anti-positivist philosophies of science, both traditional and modern. The kind of dualism that he embraces in firmly contrasting natural with social science is no less part of a more general anti-positivism than his negation of the isolated or theory-independent nature of facts. (Lukács's position concerning the relationship between empirical data and theory can be translated into the language of today's philosophy of science as denying the existence of an empirical basis independent of theory as well as the possibility of a neutral language of observation, and asserting the "theory-ladenness" of the empirical terms, etc.)

Apart from the commitment to revolutionary practice, the philosophy of science discernible in *History and Class Consciousness* is theoretically distinguished from other brands of anti-positivism by the use of the categories of reification, the identity of subject and object, and totality on the one hand, and on the other, especially by the way in which Lukács relates science to the structure of a given society and to a socially and historically distinguished point of view.

In what follows, I wish to take up a few problems that receive specific and original treatment in Lukács's work in contrast with mere anti-positivism. Along this line, I hope to highlight both the merits and the disadvantages of his philosophy of science.

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Some words, first of all, about the Lukácsian form of a dualistic philosophy of science. What his Eastern European critics took for the negation of natural dialectics in his work is in fact the manifestation of that dualism. Setting aside the question of the relationship between natural and social dialectics, let me point out now that Lukács asserts more than the mere autonomy of social scientific knowledge. He explicitly claims the autonomy of social science with regard to the model of natural science to be characteristic of proletarian science, ignoring thus the fact that he himself adopted the idea from bourgeois thinkers seeking independent grounds for social science. His stance is based on the assumption that natural science is intrinsically related to capitalism. From this, it immediately follows for him that it is a typically bourgeois attempt to extend the ideal of natural scientific knowledge to the study of society:

> When the ideal of scientific knowledge is applied to nature it simply furthers. the progress of science. But when it is applied to society it turns out to be an ideological weapon of the bourgeoisie. (Lukács 1971b: 10)

Thus, the emancipation of proletarian class consciousness presupposes the independence of societal knowledge from natural science.

It emerges by now that, as has been mentioned, Lukács necessarily regards positivism as the typical philosophy of capitalism. But what should the affinity between natural science and capitalism mean? For Lukács, it basically means that capitalism produces phenomena in reality in the same way as natural science produces its "pure" facts in the cognitive sphere. Both spheres resort to the method of isolating abstraction "when a phenomenon of the real world is placed (in thought or in reality) into an environment where its laws can be inspected without outside interference." Both areas are also characterized by "reducing the phenomena to their purely quantitative essence" (Lukács 1971b: 6).

Lukács's analysis seems to be correct; it essentially carries the insight that natural science represents a type of rationality that is the historical product of the capitalist organization of society. There remain, nevertheless, certain questions open in respect of the affinity between natural science and capitalism and the relationship between natural and social science.

Such questions are whether natural science depends on capitalism only for its origin or also as a precondition of its possibility. Therefore, if the facts of natural science are analogous to the facts of the social world of reification,

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does then the abolishment of reification not remove the grounds of the natural scientific attitude? Can natural scientific knowledge be adequate at all if it is itself the product of a particular, socially determined perspective? Or is it the case that the bourgeoisie is incapable only of comprehending its own social relationship while its particular class position and point of view enable it to develop adequate natural scientific methods?

Lukács does not raise such questions explicitly, but he seems to recognize the validity of natural science and uncritically endorses the generally accepted conception of its development. He writes,

> The methodology of the natural sciences which forms the methodological ideal of every fetishistic science and every kind of revisionism rejects the idea of contradiction and antagonism in its subject matter. If, despite this, contradictions spring up between particular theories, this only proves that our knowledge is as yet imperfect. Contradictions between theories show that these theories have reached their natural limits; they must therefore be transformed and subsumed under even wider theories in which the contradictions finally disappear. (Lukács 1971b: 10)

All this corresponds well to the traditional positivist conception, surviving almost up to our day, that the progress of science is a cumulative development that leads to more and more general theories, while earlier theories are incorporated as parts in the later ones. Lukács's strategy does not differ in this respect from that of such thinkers, active at the turn of the century as Rickert, Dilthey or Weber, who called for the independent grounding of the social, cultural or historical science without challenging the ~~received view~~ of natural scientific knowledge. However, contrary to the neo-Kantian and *geisteswissenschaftliche* approaches, Lukács seeks the specific difference of social scientific knowledge from natural science not in "individuating concept formation" or in understanding as opposed to explanation but in the fact that "in the case of social reality these contradictions are not a sign of the imperfect understanding of society: on the contrary, they belong *to the nature of reality itself and to the nature of capitalism*" (Lukács 1971b: 10).

AQ: word choice?

Let me summarize the main features of the dualistic philosophy of science that Lukács endorses. He holds that natural science, in spite of its fundamental affinity to capitalism, is a source of adequate knowledge. On the other hand, social science can have no claim to validity unless it transcends capitalism. To achieve this, it must part with the ideal of natural scientific knowledge, which is based on the structures of reification and which essentially cannot accommodate contradiction. The proper knowledge of

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the structure of society presupposes the unveiling of reification on which natural science is based and demands the acceptance of contradictions as real contradictions.

The way Lukács opposes natural to social science explains the fact that the real target of his radical criticism is social science conceived as dominated by the methodology of the natural sciences. We can only remark here that, according to his critique of science, the social precondition to statistical or other sorts of exactitude is "the fact that capitalist society is predisposed to harmonize with scientific method" (Lukács 1971b: 7). The striving for exactitude causes "science" to be ahistorical and, on the other hand, runs the risk that "it thereby takes its stand simply and dogmatically on the basis of capitalist society" (Lukács 1971b: 7). To make matters worse, science remains a captive of appearance, of "the form in which the phenomena are immediately given" (Lukács 1971b: 8). It is easily recognized that, from the epistemological point of view, the real target of this critique of science is first and foremost empiricism and that the conception Lukács ~~opposes~~ to bourgeois science is deeply anti-empiricistic. His critique finds its continuation in the anti-empiricism of later radical critics of scientific methodology. What Lukács did not realize was that a criticism of empiricism cannot be partial and restricted only to the social sciences. It is no accident that today's radical philosophies of science attack empiricism in its safest stronghold, natural science.

AQ: words missing? Unclear.

Here we should note, however, that the critique of science given in *History and Class Consciousness* is extraordinarily close to that appearing in another great work of the interwar period, namely *The Crisis of European Science and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Husserl 1970). Some—Mihály Vajda, for instance—have even stated that "the critiques of science in the two works are identical" (Vajda 1983: 109). Indeed, it is easy to draw parallels between many aspects of the analyses made by Lukács and Husserl. As Vajda shows, both Husserl and Lukács are of the view that "science is unable to assume the standpoint of the totality" (Vajda 1983: 109). Further, both philosophers vehemently criticize quantification methods and the associated mentality. In their view, the sciences have been taken over by a false rationalism. It is a one-sided, formal, objectivistic and naturalistic rationalism, the corollary of which is necessarily irrationalism: the irrationality of the whole.

The critique of science of both phenomenology and Lukácsian Marxism reveals this kind of *scientistic* worldview to be "false consciousness," which must be contrasted, in their view, with the positions of holism and totality as well as the denial of the dichotomous separation of science and philosophy (Husserl 1970: 12; Lukács 1971b: 203).

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There is, however, an essential difference between the two approaches in terms of which perspective—or whose perspective—is expected to reveal the false consciousness and how it can be made into a real and effective subject of criticism. For Lukács this is the proletariat, whereas for Husserl it is the perspective of "true philosophy." Of course, this is a great difference, but if we think about it for a moment we realize the gap is not unbridgeable. The perspective of the "true philosopher" means for Husserl the removal of the walls between science and philosophy and the abandonment of science's hostility toward philosophy. In other words, the required process is the same as that which we seen in Lukács performed by proletarian science as an expression of proletarian class consciousness. It too is inherently philosophical in nature.

Science's reconciliation with philosophy and autonomous social science freed from the prevailing scientific paradigm are two sides of the same coin. There is no doubt that both sides are among the most important principles set out in *History and Class Consciousness*.

AQ: via? Through?

As regards the claim of social science to autonomy, it does not imply that the extension of natural science ~~qua natural science~~ to the societal sphere is responsible for the distortion of social scientific knowledge. In other words, the fact that an ideal of science stems from natural science does not guarantee the applicability of that ideal even to natural science itself. A scientific ideal as a framework of general epistemological presuppositions is liable to criticism independently of its application in either the natural or the social sciences. If, for example, the ideal proves to thwart social science, this helps to identify it as untenable in general. In this respect, among others we may refer to Collingwood. He was right in maintaining that it is an epistemological model incompatible with the mere existence of history that places in the starting point of every cognitive situation the simultaneous presence of the subject and the object of cognition, observational descriptions and actual sense-data. That model taken from natural science indeed misrepresents natural science itself (see Collingwood 1946).

At any rate, Lukács's critique of science turns out to be justified in several respects. The 20th-century development of science has shown a tendency toward a greater and greater degree for research to be partitioned into isolated areas that can rarely, or often not at all, be seen to be interdependent. The drawbacks, such as the futility of segments deprived of their contexts, need not be detailed here. They are no less characteristic of natural science than of social science.

However, the conception of science traceable to *History and Class Consciousness* has also initiated a rather problematic tradition to Marxism.

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The dualistic philosophy of science analyzed above greatly contributed to establishing the view that the social sciences are of a merely ideological and class character while the natural sciences are free from any social or ideological determinants. (This kind of scientism became an element of Stalinism even though various branches of natural science were also labeled "bourgeois pseudo-science" in the Stalinist era.)

3

> It is not the primacy of economic motives in historical explanation that constitutes the decisive difference between Marxism and bourgeois thought, but the point of view of totality. (Lukács 1971b: 27)

This statement, which opens the essay on "The Marxism of Rosa Luxemburg" and became one of the targets of Lukács's later self-criticism, is one of the clues to *History and Class Consciousness*.

Within that work, the category of totality appears to have special functions. It serves as a basis of the theory of potential consciousness and of the thesis that the adequate knowledge of society is at the same time the self-knowledge of the proletariat. (On a more general level, this thesis entails that adequate knowledge is only possible as adequate self-knowledge: "For every piece of historical knowledge is an act of self-knowledge" (Lukács 1971b: 237). Only the proletariat ~~are~~ capable of this.) It is widely known that within these interrelations the category of totality is the main analytic tool applied to proletarian consciousness, this function of it having been studied by many, from Lucien Goldmann to István Hermann.[1] But the function it plays in the field of philosophy of science in the more specific sense has received less attention.

Speaking in terms of philosophy of science, we may say that the point of view of totality is first of all an expression of Lukács's anti-empiricism. The main function of that category in this area is to serve as the foundation of Lukács's idea of science. More precisely, he intends to infer from it the possibility of a social science that applies the methodology of natural science and thus is trapped within the limitations of mere facticity and reified appearance.

As latter-day methodological debates (like the so-called *Positivismusstreit*)[2] indicate, many authors doubt if the category of totality can be invested with some non-mystical, scientific sense. I myself would not go as far as that. Nowadays, when the hermeneutic approach is making its comeback, it is easier to argue that any empirical investigation can only take on significance within a wider context of sense. Conceiving any results of observation,

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measurement or experiments as data requires interpretation that is only possible through that wide context of sense. It remains a problem that it is very difficult to specify the conditions under which "totality" or the "wide context of sense" can become operational, that is, translated into practical procedures. *History and Class Consciousness* offers few guidelines in this direction. One rather finds in it problematic claims that, for the most part, were not confirmed by subsequent scientific developments.

One aspect of the problem of totality on the concrete methodological plane is involved in the relationships among the special social sciences and their interrelation with philosophy. About the latter interrelation, *History and Class Consciousness* pronounces the traditional view that the social and historical sciences, unlike the natural sciences, bear a specifically intimate relation to philosophy because societal and historical knowledge is philosophical by nature. As Lucien Goldmann puts it, for Lukács, historical knowledge and historical action can only be philosophical (Goldmann 1973: 68). But while Croce takes the postulated identity of history with philosophy as his point of departure, and more recently, Peter Winch has focused on the subject matter of sociology, both of them seeking to derive the inherent unity of philosophy and special social sciences, Lukács rather posits that unity as a mere requirement.

> Hence only by overcoming the—theoretical—duality of philosophy and special discipline, of methodology and factual knowledge can the way be found by which to annul the duality of thought and ~~being~~" (Lukács 1971b: 203). It must be noted that the unity is only required of proletarian science, for within the limits of bourgeois ~~thought" philosophy~~ stands in the same relation to the special sciences as they do with respect to empirical reality. (Lukács 1971b: 110)

A it quotes?

Applied to the interrelation among the special social sciences the principle of totality leads to the union, at least as a requirement, of the individual discipline and indivisible social science:

> "In the last analysis Marxism does not acknowledge the existence of independent sciences of law, economics or history etc.: there is nothing but a single, unified—dialectical and historical—science of the evolution of society as a totality," states Lukács. (Lukács 1971b: 28)

Even the recent tendencies calling for interdisciplinarity and scientific integration cannot deny the fact that no such unified science has been developed even in areas under predominant Marxist influence. The institutional segregation and the differentiation according to subject matter and method of the

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special disciplines seem in fact to be increasing. Needless to say, Lukács speaks of a "single unified" science "in the last analysis" only, and he recognizes the practical need for the "abstraction and isolation" of fields of research. Through his claim for unity he wants the abstraction and isolation of individual areas to be the means of knowing the whole and not to become ends in themselves. But he says little of how an integration of the sciences is supposed to take place concretely. Beside the crucial category of mediation and the general principle that the "totality of an object can only be posited if the positing subject is itself a totality" (Lukács 1971b: 28), many other conditions must be fulfilled in order for partial research results to make-up knowledge of the whole in a testable manner. For example, we must be able to connect the image of the totality as a theoretical construct to the individual part areas. Unless this is done, no partial result can become part of the whole and no empirical research can justify and serve as a foundation for our knowledge of the totality.

It can be objected here that Lukács wanted to fulfill precisely this task through the critical application, based on Marx, of the dialectic of "immediacy" and "mediation." For example, he succeeds in analyzing the bourgeois consciousness tied to the immediately given forms of objectivity as false consciousness, that is to say, as a necessary element, consequence, and functional precondition of social totality. Thus he can actually show a sphere of empirical phenomena to be part of the whole. This example illustrates, too, how the scientific explanation of empirical social phenomena can be based on totality. Our problem stems from something else, though it must be recognized that knowledge of the totality as well as the relationship found between totality and the partial areas in itself is in need of justification. Linking proletarian consciousness as a totality with society as a totality (unlike the connection between bourgeois consciousness and social totality) means linking two theoretical constructs together. Since both constructs are of the same origin, there is a risk that their relationship takes the form of *praestabilita harmonia*, that is, the class consciousness of the proletariat as coordinate consciousness must be considered as an *a priori* correct reflection of social totality. In that case, the truth of a scientific theory will depend on the extent to which it expresses the possible class consciousness of the proletariat. If the theory (in our case, historical materialism) is found to be a proper expression of proletarian class consciousness, then its truth will count as a priori truth, that is, the a priori correct theory of social totality. But in this way there will be no place left for justification or refutation. That this is a real risk can be judged from the way Lukács treats criticism of historical materialism coming from the sociology of knowledge. He merely

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declares, after all, that the truths of historical materialism "are truths within a particular social order and system of production," and, as such, "their claim to validity is absolute" (Lukács 1971b: 228).

Naturally, such difficulties do not only arise with regard to the Lukácsian principle of totality. (As is well known, for example, the problem of priority endangers Weber's ideal types too.) In fact, social science has found no final solution to these problems. Still, it must be acknowledged, and we have to emphasize this, that only in view of the whole, that is, of the social totality, is it possible for empirical research to attain significance. Under this aspect, Lukács's principle of totality vindicates the conviction that just as there is no revolutionary practice without the vanguard of theory, there is no scientific practice without wide-ranging theoretical foundations either.

Such an array of contradictory requirements will presumably force us to accept the following situation. Empirical research that is supposed to yield knowledge of the whole can focus only on temporally fixed states of affairs while social reality continually undergoes change. A mere summing up of state descriptions would never lead to a comprehension of the whole: totality would, as it were, escape us. If only for that reason, the comprehensive result expected of empirical research must be, so to say, preconceived (and also for the other, quite obvious reason that empirical research necessarily presupposes a prior point of view or conceptual framework). Part and whole, the empirical and the theoretical thus enter into a vicious circle.

Such a circularity appears inadmissible, however, only to formalistic thought. As a matter of fact, empirical research conducted in proper perspective may perform a twofold role. On the one hand, it may provide new factual knowledge and thus enrich our comprehensive knowledge of the whole, while, on the other hand, it may put our general presuppositions to test and rectify our preconception of the totality. It follows, then, that the empirical and the theoretical planes cannot be kept distinct, and the positivist concept of neutral empirical material is untenable. This nevertheless does not mean that the empirical is dissolved in the theoretical. The empirical retains its relative independence and its function of justifying or refuting theories.

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One further application of the principle of totality is for Lukács to determine the nature and possibility of historical knowledge. I should finally like to deal with that aspect of applying the totality principle.

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The ultimate totality that Lukács holds to determine the place, nature, and interrelation of every partial phenomenon is history itself. ~~To know that history is to grasp~~ it as a whole, "a unified process," with the help of "the dialectical view of totality" (Lukács 1971b: 12).

This is the point where another, crucial question arises relating to epistemology and scientific methodology: what is to be meant by history as a totality, and how is description of a part of history related to the description of the unified historical process? What Lukács means by the totality of history is definitely not universal history as opposed to the particular histories. Thus there is only one alternative left to our interpretation: that the totality is the whole of history including both the past and the future. History including the future is known to pose grave epistemological and logical problems, for the science of history or historiography devoted to the description and explanation of history is necessarily and inevitably the science of the past. The history of the future is not available for description; it is impossible to write a narrative of the future. That is to say, the whole of history is inaccessible to science (understood as *Fachwissenschaft*). There is a fundamental difference between reflection about past history and about the totality of history. The difference appears quite clear to Lukács:

> The opposition between the description of an aspect of history and the description of history as a unified process is not just a problem of scope, as in the distinction between particular and universal history. It is rather a conflict of method, of approach. (Lukács 1971b: 12)

What type of reflection is directed at the whole of the historical process? A plausible answer is that it is of the type characterizing philosophy of history. That is what analytical or critical philosophies have called substantive philosophy of history. It appears very likely that what Lukács had in mind, among others under Hegel's influence, was a substantive philosophy of history of some sort. Quite a few of his expressions would clearly support such a claim, for example, "It is precisely the whole of the historical process that constitutes the authentic historical reality" (Lukács 1971b: 152). It is true that Lukács attempts to contain "the authentic historical reality" transcending empirical history within the world of immanence: "The totality of history is itself a real historical power…which is not to be separated from the reality […] of the individual facts" (Lukács 1971b: 152). But in any case, the phenomena of history have to be integrated into that whole encompassing the future, too. And "that integration in the totality…does not merely affect

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our judgment of individual phenomena decisively. But also, as a result, the objective structure, the actual content of the *individual phenomena* is changed fundamentally" (Lukács 1971b: 152).

All this means, in short, that the nature and knowledge of the partial phenomena of history, the facts of the past and the present, depend on the future, without which the totality of history cannot be given. However paradoxical this conclusion may appear, it is expressive of an important aspect of the nature of historical knowledge. One necessary condition of the self-identity of a historical fact or event is the description that is given of it, and every definition must include a reference to the context, consequence, and so on of the event in question. At no point of time is it therefore possible to give a complete and final description of an individual fact. The present moment can always retroactively modify the context and thus the content and identity of any fact of the past. (The description "the 1905 revolution is a precedent to the Great October Revolution" has been valid for the 1905 revolution only since 1917). Historical knowledge is knowledge *post festum* and, taking the above logic seriously, we are compelled to recognize that no fact will attain its final form until the end of history, that is, until the totality of history becomes actual. From the epistemological point of view, the Hegelian notion of "the end of history" designates the unique point that makes the total knowledge of history possible.

The present is therefore always in need of the future dimension in order to provide the suitable context for knowing historical facts. That is the rational core of the historical epistemology of *History and Class Consciousness*. Naturally enough, this means that the totality in which we incorporate the partial phenomena of history is always virtual, not actual. It is just the theoretical construct that puts our investigations into perspective. Again, we cannot avoid the circularity of part and whole, empirical historical research and theoretical construction. But the totality that amounts to history encompassing the future is more here than the perspective of investigation: it is also the object of will. Thus we understand partial historical phenomena seen under the angle of a future we want; however, these phenomena can only yield scientific knowledge—strictly speaking—when they have happened, when they become past.

This is also a way of pronouncing the unity of practice and theory, together with that of history and philosophy, in order to render justice to the messianism of *History and Class Consciousness* within certain limits of rationality.

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3.2 The problem of science in *The Specificity of the Aesthetic*

1

"It was not our aim to elaborate, even in outline, the epistemology and methodology of scientific thought" (Lukács 1963: 199). This is what Lukács declares in *The Specificity of the Aesthetic*, refraining from any systematic exposition relating to the philosophy of science. In fact, though one may not be justified in considering Lukács a philosopher of science, his reluctance seems to be of hardly more than stylistic value. This is just one of the ways he wishes to express that, at the given moment, he cannot tackle the question in detail, or that his otherwise lengthy excursions on the topic are meant to be mere hints and his analyses have no claim to completeness.

In spite of such hints at restricting its scope *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* contains much more than a theory of aesthetic consciousness. It appears clear to any reader of that work that the author has in mind a general theory of reflection, within the framework of which "the specificity of the aesthetic" is defined in comparison and contrast to other forms of reflection such as everyday consciousness and science. Consequently, the "specificity" of science (or of the "scientific") is also part of the subject matter of Lukács's chef d'œuvre.

But we can say more than this. Writing about science Lukács raises problems which he repeatedly dealt with in earlier periods, most thoroughly in *History and Class Consciousness*. It may be useful to recall that *History and Class Consciousness* touched upon such central questions of the philosophy of science as the methodology of the social sciences, the epistemological and methodological dualism of the natural and the social sciences, the relations between science and society, philosophy and the special sciences, empirical material and theory etc. In addition, we find passages on the nature of historical knowledge and of scientific rationality as well as questions about the relationship between the subjective representations formed by those who participate in the occurrence of facts and scientific descriptions of those facts.

Compared to that substantial list the themes relevant to the philosophy of science examined in *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* appear on a more modest scale. But it is more important to notice that the answers given to the above list of questions in *History and Class Consciousness* form, as I tried to demonstrate in more detail in the preceding chapter, a coherent theory, one which is radically different from the theory expounded in the later work on aesthetics, also with considerable coherence. It must be noted that there

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is more than a simple difference between the two theories: we can discern a transformation of the contents and functions of certain basic categories and thus a moment of continuity is preserved with respect to the initial questions. It is not difficult to locate the axis of the transformation: clues will be found in the 1967 Preface to *History and Class Consciousness*. In an act of self-criticism, Lukács emphasizes there, among others, that the view expressed in *History and Class Consciousness* was strongly influenced by the absence of the category of labor (~~Lukács 1969~~: XVIII), and the rejection of the theory of reflection (~~Lukács 1969~~: XXV).

AQ: 1969 a,b?

AQ: 1969 a,b?

The Preface of 1967 was written in the period of the *Ontology of Social Being*, and Lukács's allusion to the crucial role of labor is obviously explained by that stage of his development. But many of his analyses contained already in *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* were based on the category of labor (we can think of the theory of everyday consciousness, the elaboration of Pavlov's theory of first and second signal system, or the comparison of the objectifications of labor and of science), so the fundamental difference between *History and Class Consciousness* and *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* no doubt stems first of all from the application of the theory of reflection.

2

Now, what does the difference between the two conceptions consist? How is the theory of science characterizing *History and Class Consciousness* later transformed?

If we survey the main theses of *History and Class Consciousness* in order to answer our questions it becomes clear that those theses are strongly characterized by the *criticism of science*. In this respect it has many points in common with post-Kuhnian sociologically biased theories of science.

Another important moment to note is Lukács's *epistemological and methodological dualism*, on which a few comments must be made right now. This dualism is closely linked to a conception of the relationship between science and society which considers *the independence of the social sciences from the methodological ideal of the natural sciences* to be a specific characteristic of proletarian science. Lukács is convinced that the features of natural science are connected to the capitalist structure of society, from which he logically concludes that those who adopt the model of the natural sciences in the social sciences remain captives of the capitalist phenomenal world.

His statement that "capitalist society is predisposed to harmonize with natural scientific method" (Lukács 1971b: 7) causes no problem to Lukács

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as regards the value of natural scientific knowledge. His dualism essentially means that while the application of the cognitive ideal of natural science to nature yields adequate knowledge, the same ideal will inevitably yield deformed knowledge when applied to the field of society. Any adequate knowledge of the society presupposes an *autonomous social science* which, as it stands out clearly to every reader of *History and Class Consciousness*, is only possible on the standpoint of the proletariat. It is also well known to readers of *History and Class Consciousness* that the adequate knowledge of society as a totality expresses the ~~possible~~ or imputed consciousness of the proletariat, therefore it is at the same time the *self-knowledge* of the proletariat. (That knowledge is self-knowledge, at least in the sphere of history and society, is claimed to be generally valid by Lukács at one point: "every piece of historical knowledge is an act of self-knowledge" (Lukács 1971b: 237)).

In a way, the same dualistic philosophy of science is expressed in the young Lukács's much discussed conception of *dialectic*, according to which he accepts social dialectic as a real characteristic of the historical process (here he emphasizes the categories of totality and contradiction), but he rejects the dialectic of nature. Also, when he refers to "*the point of view of totality*" instead of "the primacy of economic motives" as a distinctive feature of Marxism (Lukács 1971b: 28) he speaks of the societal sphere: totality, like contradiction, is a category of social being and social knowledge, and, as such, the methodological cornerstone of proletarian science. Among the various aspects or consequences of the application of the category of totality special attention is to be paid to the idea of a "*unified science*" which, naturally enough, is proposed with reference to the social sciences. For Marxism,

> there is nothing but a single, unified—dialectical and historical—science of the evolution of society as a totality. (Lukács 1971b: 28)

We have no place here to pass judgment on the conception summarized above in broad outline. Many questions are left open in it but, as demonstrated by recent discussions in the philosophy of science, it is no doubt a fruitful approach. For all his later autocritiques the older Lukács did not have a totally negative opinion of *History and Class Consciousness*. It may be though that Ernest Joós exaggerates in saying that Lukács is a "recidivist" who "retracts his errors only to confirm them in a different way" (Joós 1983: 13), but, nevertheless, the autocritiques are often concerned with only certain aspects of the revoked statements. It is said in the Preface to *My Road to Marx* ("Utam Marxhoz," a collection of Lukács's selected philosophical

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essays published in Budapest in 1971) that "some mistaken statements of this book were correct at the core" (Lukács 1971d: 22).[3]

Does this also apply to the statements related to the philosophy of science in *History and Class Consciousness*? We find a straightforward answer to this question next to the place quoted from the Preface to *My Road to Marx*. Lukács found the following "progressive tendency of anticipation" in 1969 in his early work conceiving of Marxism "exclusively as a theory about society":

> the dialectic of social development cannot be grounded scientifically with an approach which does not derive the highest level of development, i.e., social being, historically and ontologically from the philosophically necessarily simpler existential categories of natural being but, to the contrary, looks to the latter for a methodological model to establish the laws of the higher forms of being. (Lukács 1971d: 22)

That is to say, Lukács rejects once more the establishing of "the laws of the higher forms of being" on the basis of the "existential categories of natural being" or, put another way, the adoption of the methodological model of natural science. The quotation, of course, echoes the wording of the *Ontology of Social Being* and is not unconditionally valid for the work preceding it, *The Specificity of the Aesthetic*.

Indeed, *The Specificity of the Aesthetic*—at least at first sight—appears different on the relationship between natural and social science: it does not speak of *social science based on autonomous principles* of methodology and epistemology. It is also completely devoid of any *criticism of science*. These two missing moments, in whatever way we evaluate and interpret them, are closely interdependent.

3

First of all, let us see how the earlier *critique of science* is transformed and what we find in its place. *History and Class Consciousness* has been shown to take as its point of departure primarily the connection between science and a definite social structure (capitalism), which also means that it does not examine the structure and validity of scientific theories on the epistemological level, i.e., it does not approach them from the logical and empirical conditions of their justification. Here the adequacy (truth) of a theory is entirely determined by the standpoint defined by the given social structure. In a more pregnant formulation, the contents of a theory are not determined by its relation to the objective sphere (by the mode of reflection)

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but by the subjective side, the point of view necessarily defined by the social position. Capitalism ensures the bourgeoisie an unlimited, adequate grasp of nature but essentially deprives it of a proper view of the social reality. The bourgeois point of view thus yields an a priori false social science while the point of view of the proletariat goes with an a priori correct societal and self-knowledge. Such a critique of science does not relate to natural science: it is *ab ovo* directed at social science and, for that, bourgeois social science. All this implies quite difficult questions. If, for example, there is such an inherent relationship between natural science and capitalism, then how is adequate knowledge of nature possible in other social formations, if it is possible at all? If everything depends on the point of view, is it possible for adherents of different theories to engage in any discussion? Can the debates be settled according to some standard independent of the individual starting points? (These are more or less familiar questions. The first one gets no answer from the perspective of *History and Class Consciousness*, which is a major defect of the Lukácsian theory. The answer to the latter is that the competition and struggle of theories (and, ultimately, that of bourgeois and proletarian social science) does not come to an issue anyway according to epistemological criteria but depends on the outcome of the class struggle.)

In contrast to the critique of science in *History and Class Consciousness*, it is a *leitmotif* of *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* that science, owing to its essence and without restriction is of a *human* character, has a humanizing effect. Such statements are mostly connected with a concept which is one of the theoretical bases of *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* and which is entirely new compared to *History and Class Consciousness*: the concept of "*the desanthropomorphizing reflection of reality.*" This is, in short, the principle of "desanthropomorphism," which is "in its essence progressive and humane" (Lukács 1963: I. 197). At this point, the *critique of science* is replaced by the *defence of science* in general.

The introduction of the concept of desanthropomorphism into his theory of science is a concrete consequence of the fact that Lukács has adopted the theory of reflection. Within the framework of that theory, science is defined as a mode of reflection, as one of the necessary forms of the universal human capacity for reflection developing from labor, which has its stable structural characteristics independent of the given social structure or point of view—described by the concept of desanthropomorphism. To harmonize with this, Lukács lays no more stress on the analogy between the working of capitalism and procedures of natural science, and declares that "Greek philosophy [. . .] found the definite, though in its details frequently modified methodological model of the reflection of nature" (Lukács 1963: I. 146).

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It is remarkable and by no means an accident that the elements of a defence of science emerge precisely in connection with desanthropomorphism. The earlier postulated contrast between bourgeois and proletarian science is now replaced by the struggle between the general tendencies of anthropomorphism and desanthropomorphism. Within this opposition, scientific desanthropomorphism is made to appear as an absolutely positive principle while anthropomorphism sometimes intruding into science is presented as a force external, alien to science. The critique of science qua science can have simply no place. Lukács traces back modern critiques of science to the conceptual confusion which mistakes desanthropomorphism for dehumanization: "the resistance stemming from the world outlook against this principle of genuine science always focuses on the point that desanthropomorphism equals inhumanity" (Lukács 1963: I. 175).

"The less the ruling class is able to tolerate the true reflection of reality the more inhuman or anti-humanistic it describes science in its ideology" (Lukács 1963: I. 167). To counter such kinds of fake humanism he cannot but emphasize over and over again: "The transformation through thought and sentiment of the world viewed desanthropomorphically [...] does not mean the nihilistic or relativistic dehumanization of human reality" (Lukács 1963: I. 177). Genuine humanism, on the other hand, characterizes science for two reasons. Firstly because, from the objective side, the "desanthropomorphization of science" ensures man's mastery over the world of objects and, secondly because, from the subjective side, the same desanthropomorphization becomes a means to make men better and richer: "the scientific attitude" "leads to the more fruitful exploration of reality and thereby makes men richer, more complex and more humane than they could be otherwise" (Lukács 1963: I. 158).

Apart from stating the general characteristics of the scientific attitude and posture Lukács does not raise any concrete epistemological questions, therefore he makes no special mention of epistemological criticisms and doubts concerning scientific development. There may be a simple reason to explain that. He thinks that the epistemological criticism of the reliability, verifiability or justifiability of scientific knowledge, theories or hypotheses is simply beside the point in an age when "it is no longer possible to oppose a concrete, anthropomorphizing world outlook" to science (Lukács 1963: I. 167).

This is but dogmatic trust in science—as Lukács's critics may justly argue.

This trust is nurtured by—to use Ference Fehér's expression—"epistemological authoritarism" (Fehér 1983: 90), according to which there are no limits to what we can learn about the world, and by a version of

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rationalism that characterizes Lukács's later philosophy, attributing almost excessive power to reason. At the same time, Lukács's aforementioned claim that science, the ~~desanthropomorphic~~ reflection of reality, has no rivals today directly follows also from his historical philosophical conception based on universal progress, which is, by the way, the supreme test of science.

But however justified the criticisms of the Lukácsian conception of science may be, and however it may be true that Lukács is too much self-assured when ignoring the epistemological difficulties produced in the course of scientific development, his argument in defence of science no doubt conveys a positive message to us. The now so fashionable relativism, skepticism and methodological anarchism in philosophy of science correspond to trends which Lukács identified with great precision many years ago. We should be naive to think that the revival of those tendencies is only due to the epistemological problems which have surfaced in the debates over the commensurability of scientific theories, the possibility of distinguishing science from non-science etc. Much more is at stake: a struggle is going on for the scientific world outlook, not just as a consequence of such and such a turn in the philosophy of science but, as Lukács saw it rightly, as a permanent and necessary phenomenon of the social and intellectual development. Epistemological difficulties often serve only as *casus belli*.

4

It was mentioned earlier that the other "defect" of *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* is its abandoning the idea of *autonomous social science* or, in other words, rejecting the dualistic philosophy of science in *History and Class Consciousness*. In Lukács's later works, science is a unified and indivisible form of consciousness which applies the same principle, namely desanthropomorphism in reflecting both society and nature. This is a way of maintaining continuity—beyond the rupture—with the body of themes contained in *History and Class Consciousness*. Lukács never gave up the principle of totality, which implies for *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* that the requirement of "a single, unified science" earlier restricted to the social sciences has now to be extended over all science:

> in its tendency, ~~(…)~~ there is only one science, one approach from all sides to the uniform, objective world in itself. (Lukács 1963: I. 181)

Note that the requirement of "a single, unified science" is not only valid for Marxism now. It is formulated as a principle without restriction and, as

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such, becomes the criterion of all science. For, as opposed to art, the specific feature of the scientific is that the individual sciences and branches of science form a unity in spite of their relative differences, that is to say, they are united in one overall picture of the totality of reality. Lukács expresses this stating that, contrary to the aesthetic sphere where the individual works of art form a closed world and the homogeneous medium of the work represents "something unique and ultimate," "the homogeneous medium of scientific reflection (…) is uniform for every branch of science" (Lukács 1963: I. 181). In short, the totality of the sciences presupposes one single homogeneous medium.

All this amounts to the really basic *requirement of coherence* which states that the individual items of scientific knowledge must lend themselves to continuation, completion and criticism in the light of other items. No piece of scientific knowledge is self-sufficient, and each can have a claim to validity only as part of the whole system of knowledge. The "totality requirement of epistemology" concerns the sciences as a whole, not the individual sciences and especially not the particular scientific theories. At this point it is quite clear how the principle of totality characterizing an earlier period and the theory of reflection are linked together. The justification of the above mentioned requirement of coherence lies in the fact that the thing in itself—understood as the objective reality—is also a totality and thus, "from a strictly epistemological point of view," "only the 'totality for us' developed into a synthesis can count as the concrete antipole of the thing in itself" (Lukács 1963: I. 290).

Of course there are many arguments for the Lukácsian idea of a unified science. But is it not one of its consequences that the specificity of the social sciences is effaced? Some emphatic remarks by Lukács suggest an answer in the affirmative.

Lukács, whose last message was the social ontology and who was a powerful proponent of the point of view of praxis wrote in *The Specificity of* Aesthetic:

> The essential characteristic in common is that what is studied is always the objectiveness of reality existing independently of man; even if man himself is made the subject matter of biological or socio-historical investigation, the aim—in the final analysis—is to explore such objective 'Gegenstandlichkeiten' or processes. (Lukács 1963: I. 180)

In other words, the sciences of man also perform desanthropomorphizing reflection. It is not necessarily paradoxical to speak about

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desanthropomorphism in connection with the sciences of man but it is not unproblematic either. However, Lukács does not refer to any problem which he were to see at this point. He only says that the contradictory nature of social being "makes it difficult for bourgeois thought to apply the theory of desanthropomorphizing reflection concretely and fruitfully to the social sciences" (Lukács 1963: I. 199). Thus the social sciences have the only specific feature, not at all stemming from their subject matter, "that in bourgeois society the desanthropomorphizing methods can only be applied to the social sciences with restrictions" (Lukács 1963: I. 202).

Such a limited possibility for desanthropomorphism leaves only two ways open to bourgeois thought: either "the solidifying into lifeless formalism" of the socio-historical process or the "irrationalization" of the historical life (Lukács 1963: I. 200). Here Lukács is right, as it is testified to by the history of science. But is the range of the problems of the social sciences or the sciences of man exhausted by the impossibility of complete desanthropomorphization? Apart from this contingent determination external to science, is there not an aspect in the subject matter and goals of science itself which hinders the application of the desanthropomorphizing point of view in principle? It is quite interesting that Lukács mentions few examples from the social sciences. In fact he refers almost exclusively to economics as a standard example of the unifying process and desanthropomorphizing thought. It is clear that he did not fully carry out his investigations in this field. We must remember that, in The Specificity of the Aesthetic, Lukács separated dialectical from historical materialism, however much he emphasized their active interrelation, and then he never wrote what he meant to be the part of his work on historical materialism. No one knows which direction his theory of science would have taken in that unwritten part and, for example, what place he would have assigned to the hermeneutical methods of "understanding" which are difficult to bring under the category of desanthropomorphism.

5

From what Lukács in fact wrote we can infer that he could not see a difference between the subject matters of the natural and the social sciences that would define the structures of the two spheres of science. This is ultimately in accordance with his general philosophical point of departure, the interpretation of the material unity of the world in such a way that he does not

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approach the difference between the aesthetic and the scientific spheres from the object of reflection either: "If (…) we want to examine the differences between the reflections realized in everyday life, science and art we must constantly keep it in mind that all three forms represent the same reality" (Lukács 1963: I. 35). That is to say, Lukács would firmly reject the idea that adherents of the different scientific paradigms are not describing the same world, or "are not working in the same world" (Kuhn 1970: 150).

Naturally enough, it is a basic requirement for every kind of materialism to recognize that the world is not only of a material but also of a uniform character, and that it is ultimately one and the same for everyone irrespective of one's subjective relationship to it. This is, however, only a requirement in the final analysis, which cannot obscure the circumstance that the world as objectivity is not given by itself. Lukács, of course, in no way wishes to deny the active nature of reflection. But, nevertheless, throughout the elaboration of his theory or reflection he pays more attention to the *manner* of reflection (desanthropomorphism, anthropomorphism) than to its *object*. He does not expound the thesis that the active nature of reflection (in our case, of scientific knowledge) means more than the active construction of the image reflected. Science also creates the object of cognition,[4] this act being part of the constitution of the object, not just a mere objective precondition of the cognitive process. The different ways in which the particular sciences constitute their objects produce differences in the objects of reflection or knowledge. That is why one cannot stay with the statement that "the object of all reflection is this unique and uniform reality," and that everyday science, thinking, and art reflect the same contents (Lukács 1963: I. 35).

The main line of the reflection theory expounded in *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* is no doubt the opposition, or "precise separation of the objective and the subjective" (Lukács 1963: II. 278). In his overview of the history of science, too, Lukács finds the main tendency to be the progress of this separation. As we have seen, he extends the validity of all this to the social sciences as well. Thus "the identity of subject and object" claimed in *History and Class Consciousness* disappears. Scientific knowledge then cannot be interpreted as self-knowledge, for the social sciences have to face an object in itself through desanthropomorphization in the same way as the natural sciences.

But the concept of "knowledge as self-knowledge" does not disappear altogether: it is transformed and transposed to the sphere of artistic reflection. It is true that Lukács loosens the relation of "identical subject and object" in the

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aesthetic sphere, too, and expects mimesis to "reflect the reality independent of human consciousness," still it remains one of the principal messages of his work that "art is the most adequate mode of expression of the highest order of man's consciousness" (Lukács 1963: I. 616 f.). It is beyond the scope of the present analysis to deal with the intricate questions arising at this point. Even some problems which are more pertinent to the philosophy of science had to be omitted.

The few analyses which have nevertheless been presented seem to warrant the following conclusions. An immediate consequence of adopting the theory of reflection is Lukács's abandoning dualism in the philosophy of science. The idea of a unified science for *the whole of science* imposes the requirement of objectivity which the category of desanthropomorphism is designed to express. Consequently, the contrast between bourgeois and proletarian ideology and, in general, between the ideologies of the reactionary and the progressive classes does not appear within science but in the opposition of science to non-science, or desanthropomorphism and anthropomorphism. At the same time, the idea of a unified science is not cast in a form which would help to clarify the obviously specific features of the social sciences. The category of desanthropomorphism seems to be insufficient to settle that problem. Furthermore, it is an important point that social science and historical knowledge can no longer be conceived as self-knowledge—in the same way as the consciousness of the proletariat is no longer identical with the self-knowledge of the totality. The function of self-knowledge or self-consciousness is transferred to the arts but, even so, the subject is not a class but the whole of humankind.

The scientific, which corresponds to desanthropomorphism universally characterizing the whole of science, becomes a fundamental value in *The Specificity of the Aesthetic*. Contrary to all critiques of science, this gives rise to a pathetic defence of science. Apart from recommending to accept this pathos as a lasting element in the Lukácsian heritage, we must underline one thing: the defence of science and the scientific does not imply being uncritical. According to Lukács, desanthropomorphism must be extended to both the subject and the object. The desanthropomorphization of the subject is nothing but perpetual self-control and self-criticism. It is an attitude of the subject towards reality which permits him to practice "incessant control over his own outlook, ideas and concept formation" (Lukács 1963: I. 146).

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Notes

1 I refer above all to Goldmann's 1967–68 lectures on Lukács and Heidegger. See Goldmann 1977. See also Hermann1978.
2 Reference is made to the controversy that has raged in social scientific and philosophical circles in Germany since 1961. See Adorno et al. 1976; Kreckel 1984.
3 The preface to this volume (dated October 1969) is available only in Hungarian, and is not to be confused with the article "Mein Weg zu Marx" (appeared in *Internationale Literatur* in 1933) to which also a postscript was attached in 1957.
4 It suffices here to refer to one of these analyses: Louis Althusser has made a distinction between "real object" and "cognitive object" (Althusser and Balibar 1970: 41).

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4

Lukács's ~~Rationalism and~~ *The Destruction of Reason*

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Abstract: *The chapter is focused upon the reconstruction of Lukács's arguments against irrationalism. Lukács's explanation of irrationalism is mostly causal in the general sense that complex structures are caused and can be explained by other complex structures. In this sense a causal relationship can be discovered between capitalism and irrationalist philosophy.*

But if irrationalism is causally determined by societal structure, and other supra-rational factors, it is irrational to believe in irrationalism. Conversely, it is also true that accepting rationalism is rational. This is contrary to Popper's and Lukács's views alike. Against Popper's theory it implies that there are rational arguments for rationalism. In contrast to Lukács' theory it involves that there are not only causal factors, but reasons (such as evidences and the requirement of logical consistency) that support accepting rationalism. In the conclusion a detailed argument is presented in favor of the thesis that rationalism can be based rationally.

Keywords: fascism; irrationalism; paradox of irrationality; rationalism; reason

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After our investigation of the Lukácsian philosophy of science, let us now examine what constitutes Lukács's rationalism. In the following, I seek to answer this question by looking at Lukács's *The Destruction of Reason*, which contains, alongside an explanation for and critique of the origins of modern irrationalism, a monumental defense of rationalist philosophy. Of course, this work was written in the very middle of the Cold War; it was both a typical product of the Stalinist era and its greatest philosophical achievement. Today it, too, needs defending. In my view, the book can be defended in many respects. Indeed, it is not only defensible, but rather—both as the mirror of his age, and for the sake of its original message—it can be considered in many respects as living part of our culture. Paraphrasing the title of Benedetto Croce's famous book on Hegel (Croce 2006), it would be time now to weigh what is "living" and what is "dead" of Lukács's defence of reason.

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One could imagine an "external" or "historical," and an "internal" defence of *The Destruction of Reason*. "External" defence would mean taking into account the circumstances of its writing—the then fresh memories of fascism and World War II, and the political conditions of the early fifties. "Internal" defence would mean the positive assessment of the book's substantive thoughts and analyses; i.e. trying to prove that though the argumentation is often biased, many of its analyses and claims are valid beyond the context of those times.

It is inevitable that we have to search for the "living" elements of Lukács's defence of reason mostly on the level of details and concrete analyses. His general theory about the history of philosophy, as is presented in this book, should rather be labeled as the "dead" part of his work. The same applies to his interpretation of the history of "bourgeois" philosophy after Schelling. He tells a logically necessary, inversely teleological story of decline where all the successive elements seem to tend towards fascism. Irrationalism gaining strength generation by generation supersede reason and the values of rationalism. Fascist ideology appears to be the direct consequence of the development (or rather, the decline) of bourgeois philosophy.

Fortunately the one-sidedness of this general historical picture does not compromise the Lukácsian critique of most of the authors treated by him (like Schelling, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard or Nietzsche). In a specific sense it may even be true that "the one-sidedness of global interpretation of a given 'idea world' is highly legitimate in philosophy," as Ágnes Heller said (Heller 1983b: 181). But quite apart from this it must be stressed that Lukács never distorted the views of the classic philosophers whom he otherwise often attacked in a very harsh way.

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The overall picture I summed up above is not only theoretically problematic but also empirically unfeasible, since there is no factual justification for the supposedly overall and general irrationalism of modern philosophy. Lukács left out of consideration those important 20th century philosophers, who, like himself, were also ardent critics of irrationalism. He ignored that schools like the Vienna circle and the analytical philosophers were trying to apply the rational norms of modern science, technology and democracy in philosophy. And let us not forget that Lukács, in the spirit of the logics of 'either–or,' contrasted the irrationalism of bourgeois philosophy with soviet ideology, which he conceived as the only true trustee of the values of rationalism and rationality.

Nevertheless, it cannot be claimed unequivocally that whatever is enduring in Lukács's work belongs to certain minor details, while his general philosophical conception is completely outdated. As for *The Destruction of Reason* it is indisputable (and is echoed by many thinkers and writers from various intellectual traditions), that irrationalist philosophical currents had an important role to play in the emergence of fascism. The in-depth and detailed analysis of this role was and still is an important *philosophical* task. Even if there is no direct causal relation between fascism and the irrationalist tendencies starting from Schelling and Schopenhauer, even if it is nonsensical to blame Nietzsche for the barbarous nazi ideals, it is beyond question that nazism grew out of a culture saturated with irrationalism. This relationship, as all the explainable relationships in history, can only be determined retrospectively—as such a relationship in reality is established retrospectively only. As Susan Sontag puts it: "much of nineteenth-century German culture is, retroactively, haunted by Hitler" (Sontag 1991: 151). Actually, Lukács also often depicts irrationalism as part of the prelude to fascism—a *prerequisite*, but not its exclusive *cause*. His main thesis is that the influence irrationalism previously had in German culture (both high and mass) was conducive to the gaining ground of fascism. The thesis can be generalized: if high and mass cultures are soaked by irrationalist ideals, fascist-type movements have a broader latitude, and the possibility of a fascist-type seizure of power is higher. In this general form the thesis is feasible if we add that on the level of such an abstract historical generalization it makes more sense to speak about totalitarianism, or even totalitarianisms (in the plural) instead of fascism.

From the relationship outlined above it follows that attacks on reason—bone fide and mala fide alike—are dangerous. As Lukács puts it, it is the duty of the philosophers "to supervise the existence and evolution of reason" (Lukács 1980: 91). This is true, indeed. Actually, what Lukács teaches us here is a pretty banal truth.

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The antagonism of rationalism and irrationalism in the first half of the 20th century was the main watershed of different philosophical schools. As Popper stated, "the conflict between rationalism and irrationalism has become the most important intellectual, and perhaps even moral, issue of our time" (Popper 1962: II. 224). In the half century since the appearance of *The Destruction of Reason*, debates about the demarcation and delineation of rationalism and irrationalism, or rationality and irrationality has remained central in ethics, philosophy of science, philosophical psychology, rational choice and action theory, political philosophy and other philosophical disciplines. The problem is a complicated one, and there might not be an answer at all. And difficulties occur particularly in relation to irrationality, and not rationality. For it is easy to trace the presence of some element of rationality in any intentional act, but, paradoxically, the possibility of irrationality requires further explanation. According to Donald Davidson, the real problem is "how can we explain, or even tolerate as possible, irrational thoughts, actions, or emotions?" (Davidson ~~2004~~: 170). In this respect we should speak about the paradox of irrationality (Davidson ~~2004~~: 174).[1]

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If the existence of irrational acts and thoughts is paradoxical, then even more paradoxical is the philosophy denying the basic rational characteristics of human thinking, and claiming the main forces of human life are irrational. That is to say, irrationalism is a paradoxical doctrine. This, leaving aside all the political and ideological motives, confirms in itself Lukács's attack on irrationality.

But what is exactly the target of Lukács' attack? What does he consider the main traits of irrationalism? Unfortunately, in contrast to Popper, he has no brief and general definition neither of rationalism, nor of irrationalism. Popper's study on the history and political impacts of irrationalism is the obvious starting point of comparison, even if the two thinkers are on different political and ideological sides.

For a brief comparison it is worth remembering that irrationalism, writes Popper, is a doctrine about human nature, according to which "emotions and passions rather than reason are the mainsprings of human action" (Popper 1962: 233). Its other characteristics are traditionalism, tribalism and, primarily, historicism. Popper does not attempt to give a causal explanation of such a theory, since he is convinced that an explanation would only support irrationalism, for suggesting that thoughts may depend on circumstances external to the logical structure of arguments (like emotions, historical and social structures) in itself leads to irrationalism.

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Because of his objectives, Lukács analyzes irrationalism in relation to social problems, more specifically, and in relation to historical changes. He considers it a modern phenomenon that occur only within the horizon of advanced capitalism. The obvious objection that "irrationalistic" trends did occur in earlier periods in the history of philosophy can be refuted by arguing in the Lukácsian spirit that those tendencies were only precursors to *real* irrationalisms. Their difference can only be grasped in causal social terms, that is, by referring to the social problems in the background of the earlier forms of irrationalistic thinking and the full-fledged modern irrationalism. The latter is the product of a new era of social crisis. This new kind of crisis is different from earlier forms of social crises in the sense that it is not accompanied neither by the break-up of the civilizational foundations of society, nor the decline of technology and science. These disintegrations were experienced in early medieval times. But it might not be accurate to speak about a new period of crisis. It is the whole pattern of social development that changed substantially, and became more and more controversial and contradictory. Technical, scientific and social development involves the deterioration of values, increased exploitation and inhumanity. Increasing rationality on the level of partial subsystems brings along the irrationality of the system as a whole. The development of capitalism projects the end of capitalism: the progress that creates the existential foundation of bourgeoisie leads to its fall as a class. In this analysis, of course, it is easy to recognize Marx's and Engel's teaching on the nature and role of capitalism in the historical process.

Lukács's explanation, stemming from the Marxist analysis of capitalism, introduces new conceptual tools. The first is the notion of pessimism. The crisis of progress, and the feeling of this crisis leads to pessimism. This pessimism is deepened further by the anxiety of the bourgeoisie over its desperate historical fate. In this light irrationalist philosophy expresses that faith in progress and future is shaken among the intelligentia articulating the interests of the bourgeoisie.

The other conceptual tool is the notion of the opacity or non-transparency and "objective irrationality" of society as a whole, which is in contrast with the rationality of subsystems of production, social organization and the now indispensable scientific research. This ambiguity of historical progress and society as a whole seems to confirm that our lives and history are shaped by enigmatic and inaccessible blind forces. In this line of reasoning, the rationality of the subsystems strengthens irrationalism because it proves that rationalization of life leads to new and previously inexperienced problems that reason has no power to tackle.

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A third conceptual tool arise from the imperilment of the interest of bourgeoisie. Since the logic of capitalism jeopardizes the future of bourgeoisie, it is in the interest of this bourgeoisie to conceal this process and characterize the overall historical process as irrational.

These deductions are causal. They are causal not in the conventional sense that causality is a relation between events, but in the more general sense that complex structures are caused and can be explained by other complex structures. In our case a causal relationship can be discovered between capitalism as a global system and irrationalist philosophy as the expression of bourgeois worldview. In the language of Lukács's earlier philosophy, it is to say that the explanation for the emergence and dissemination of irrationalism is that it expresses the "imputed" or ~~"possible"~~ consciousness ("zugerechtnetes Bewusstsenin") of bourgeoisie. This is of course the terminology of *History and Class Consciousness*. Its utilizability suggests that there is a continuity between the explanatory patterns of *The Destruction of Reason* and *History and Class Consciousness.*

I deem Lukács's above recapitulated explanation of irrationalism as plausible, both in historical and substantive respect, for the periods taken into consideration, at least to the point that irrationalism is in fact the causal result of the crisis culminating in World War I, Bolshevik revolution and fascism. In this regard, Lukács's analysis of irrationalism, to say the least, is on a par with any other possible explanation of irrationalism.

From a *formal* point of view this explanation follows the very pattern that we generally use when accounting for irrational beliefs. The explanation of irrational beliefs, thoughts and acts are typically causal, but nothing more. We should here keep in mind the distinction of believing something on the basis of certain *reasons* (i.e. because of the consistency of our beliefs with other confirmed knowledge), and believing something on the basis of certain *causes* (i.e. because our beliefs are determined by factors, such as feelings and passions and the like that are outside the realm of thinking, consideration and reflection). More precisely, there is a difference in the *cause* of beliefs—it can either be a *reason*, or a *cause*, which is external to the content of the belief held. Typical examples for the latter are self-deception and wishful thinking, phenomena which are widely examined by psychoanalysts and rational choice theorists. This distinction solves the paradox of irrationality by elucidating how irrationality is possible.

The thesis above can be put like this: there are two ways of analyzing rational beliefs. We can examine their *rationale*, that is their epistemolgical grounds or *reason,* and their genesis or *cause*, seeking thereby a *causal*

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explanation for them. Whatever the basis of a rational belief (even the belief in *ratio*) is, we can argue for it, we can give reasons for it. We are rational if we accept a belief on the basis of rational arguments, namely because of recognizing reasons that justify them. In case of irrational beliefs these two distinct modes of analysis are not possible.

Lukács's reference to interests, specifically to the *class interests* of bourgeoisie has the same pattern as the explanations of self-deceit and wishful thinking. Interests (interests in general and class interest in the Marxist terminology alike) can explain irrational beliefs, held individually and collectively alike.

If irrationalism is causally determined by societal structure, class interest or other supra-rational factors, it is in itself irrational to believe in irrationalism. This banal but important conclusion saves us from a fallacy. From the assumption that to explain mental phenomena is to *rationalize* them, we might wrongly infer (as suggested often by psychoanalytical explanations) that mental phenomena, which are objects of the explanation, are rational only because they have explanation (because they are rationalized). The espousal of irrational beliefs might be in our interest, but this does not render these beliefs rational. Generally, their causal deductibility from the state of the factual world never renders them rational.

Lukács tries to give a summary characterization of irrationalism by pinpointing the crucial "decisive hallmarks" many times. It is worth quote the following:

> Its [irrationalism's] history therefore hinges on the development of science and philosophy, and it reacts to the new questions they pose by designating the mere problem as an answer and declaring the allegedly fundamental insolubility of the problem to be a higher form of comprehension. This styling of the declared insolubility as an answer, along with the claim that this evasion and side-stepping of the answer, this flight from it, contains a positive solution and 'true' achievement of reality is irrationalism's decisive hallmark. (Lukács 1980: 104)

Lukács here (and elsewhere too) attempts to give a historical but not a substantive description, though here he tries to approach the phenomenon not from the basis of social circumstances, but from the history of thinking. Let me emphasize two points. First, irrationalism, as defined above, hinges on the progress of science and philosophy—it is a reaction to the questions and problems brought up and left unresolved by science and philosophy. As Lukács puts it,

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> Irrationalism is merely a form of reaction (reaction in the double sense of the secondary and the retrograde) to the dialectical development of human thought. (Lukács 1980: 104)

Second, I would stress that irrationalism for Lukács is "evasion."

From the two points it is the moment of "evasion" which explains irrationalism substantively. It states that irrationalist philosophers refuse to answer the real problems, and from the very existence of these problems they infer that there is and there cannot be a rational answer for them. This Lukács considers the "decisive hallmark" from which he deduces further constitutive elements of irrationalism—intuitionalism, aristocratism, agnosticism and historicism. The latter he conceives a "decadent bourgeois theory which automatically interpreted the historical as 'singular', unique' and contradicting the concept of law, thus irrational by nature to a certain extent" (Lukács 1980: 125). He, in contrast to Popper, does not distinguish naturalist and anti-naturalist versions of historicism. This implies that he primarily considers those irrationalist who, by opposing nature and history, deny that in history there are either natural or specific historical laws.

Neither Popper, nor Lukács was right to assume that any kind of historicism is necessarily irrationalist. But as for the history of philosophy, Lukács rightly supposed that 19th and early 20th century "anti-naturalist" historicism was more prone to irrationalism, and that irrationalism is usually related to those theories that reject causal explanations in history, and instead propose empathy and identification with agents as the method of historical understanding.

While the concept of "evasion" in the definition above is the concentrate of the substantive traits of irrationalism, the moment of "reaction" brings us back to the realm of causal explanations and, strangely enough, implies that irrationalism does not have its own history. And, indeed, this is how Lukács consistently argues. He actually embraces a stronger version denying not only that irrationalism has its own history, but that irrationalism as such ~~can~~ have history at all:

AQ: cannot?

> irrationalism cannot possibly have a unified, coherent history like, for instance, materialism or dialectics. (Lukács 1980: 104)

This is absolutely in-line with his attempt to ~~originate the per definitionem modern phenomenon of irrationalism from Schelling's philosophy~~.

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From a purely historical standpoint this is the main difference between Popper's and Lukács's approach to the problem of irrationalism. As argued in *Open Society and Its Enemies*, irrationalism does have a "coherent and

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unified" history linking Plato to Freud through Marx. He views the history of irrationalism as "the perennial revolt against freedom and reason" (Popper 1962: II. VII).[2] Accordingly, irrationalism is a perennial option for human thinking. Contrary to this, Lukács says that "the general employment of this term [...] could rise to the false impression of a uniformly irrationalist line in the history of philosophy, such as modern irrationalism has actually tried to give" (Lukács 1980: 105), and argues that "a uniform term would easily blur the specific differences, and would modernize in an unacceptable way old intellectual tendencies that have little in common with those of the nineteenth century" (Lukács 1980: 105).

The reference to "modernization," that is actualization as the obvious sign of "ahistoricity," seems as if it was addressed directly to Popper. We can easily imagine a debate between Popper and Lukács. Though Lukács (and Marxist historiographers in general) can be condemned as Popper for ~~commetting~~ the fault of actualization, in the imagined debate about the history of irrationalism (whether it is perennial or a specifically modern phenomenon) Lukács is right. The timeless and perennial irrationalism construed by Popper can only be described by certain abstract characteristics, which makes it very hard to grasp its historical differences, and primarily the specificity of modern irrationalist attacks on rationalism. Although, we know that the same historical situation inspired both *Open Society and Its Enemies* and *The Destruction of Reason.*

AQ: committing?

In the history of philosophy there are recurrent efforts to superimpose publicly available knowledge with a mystical knowledge (e.g. revelation, mystical experience, initiation, intuition, etc.) that is inaccessible to argumentative reasoning and comprehensible only for few. The prevalence and recurrence of such efforts seem to confirm Popper's interpretation of irrationalism. But mysticism is not irrationalism, though irrationalism always has mystic elements. To put it another way, modern irrationalism can indeed be called mysticism. We can say that after the rise of scientific methods of cognition, it is irrational to adhere to mystical interpretations of knowledge. The survival of and the irrational adherence to this sort of mysticism is explained by the frustrating experience that in modern society, and, evidently, in modern science too, all problems solved inherently involve new problems. Motives and proofs coincide here: the aggregation of problems might be not only the *cause* of irrationalism but also the *proof* of the assumption that mystical knowledge is superior to the rational scientific principles of knowledge and social order; or at least that problems of life and knowledge cannot be solved by reason.

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This returns us to Lukács's thought that "the general form" of irrationalism is "evasion": evasion from the problems posed by scientific progress, or as he puts it elsewhere, "evading a decisive philosophical proposition, bound up in methodology with a world-view" (Lukács 1980: 104). In my exposition above I wanted to point out that irrationalist penchants can be explained by the notion of "evasion."

Lukács considers even Pascal a forerunner of irrationalism, and applies the term "evasion" in relation with his views too: "while seeing the problems, he made an about-turn precisely where his great contemporaries went on in the direction of a dialectic or at least endeavored to go on" (Lukács 1980: 115). In this characterization Pascal, "sees the problems," but turns away from the solution followed by many. Moreover, he foresees and predicts them:

> Pascal, therefore, saw both de-humanizing effects of the capitalist boom—then still occurring in the forms of feudal absolutism—and the necessary and progressive methodological consequences of the new natural sciences which were destroying the preceding world-picture's anthropomorphism, and of the new philosophy they engendered. (Lukács 1980: 104)

"Evasion" here does not preclude but presupposes problem sensitivity. In Lukács's portrayal big irrationalist thinkers do not evade problems. They do sense the answers too but evade accepting them because of their interest, social role and other reasons. Lukács acknowledges even Nietzsche's problem sensitivity: "He had a special sixth sense, an anticipatory sensitivity to what the parasitical intelligentsia would need in the imperialist age, what would inwardly move and disturb it, and what kind of answer would most appease it" (Lukács 1980: 315). Otherwise, it is problem sensitivity implied in "evasion" that makes sometimes irrationalist thinkers, including Nietzsche, so appealing for Lukács. Though he often criticizes Nietzsche harshly, sometimes he cannot but admit his admiration too.

Thus the assumption that Lukács takes a completely dim and negative view of irrationalism should slightly be modified. Conversely, it can also be stated that he does not find rationalism unproblematic. Many times he characterizes the relation of rationalism and irrationalism as if irrationalism was fostered by the weaknesses of rationalism. In other words, irrationalism is possible only thanks to the limitedness of every form of rationalism. And so, in general, every version of rationalism is limited, too, which construes the general model of rationality on the basis of certain criteria of rationality, ~~proper to concrete individual fields~~, of thought and action. That limitedness of rationality can lead to irrationalism, and so foster irrationalist worldviews,

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is illustrated by the above mentioned paradoxical relationship between the rationality of subsystems and the irrationality of the overall social structure.

Note that the above formula, which explains irrationalism with the limitedness of rationalism, and which is really a fundamental component of Lukács's thought, is interpreted by Ágnes Heller as a reduplication of philosophy:

> Lukács is compelled to duplicate philosophy's division into two. Side by side with the dichotomy of rationalism and irrationalism, identified with good and evil, a second dichotomy appears—the dichotomy of metaphysics and dialectics. In Lukács's opinion, the weakness of rationalism was to be found in its metaphysical methodology: had it proceeded in a dialectical manner, irrationalism would not have any field for argument. (Heller 1983b: 180)

I do not believe that there is something wrong with the introduction of the dichotomy of metaphysics and dialectics. Far from being an unnecessary reduplication of philosophy it offers a valid explanatory principle which allows us to understand the puzzling power of irrationalism and the asymmetrical relation of it with rationalism.

We should keep in mind that Lukács conceives the paradoxical relationship of rationalism and irrationalism, described above, as an antinomy related specifically to the bourgeois world, which can only be unveiled from the standpoint of the proletariat. The model of rationality available for bourgeois philosophy is purely technical and instrumental: it is the result of capitalist rationalization of economic and power relations on the one hand, and the scientific progress based on a one-sided model of natural sciences on the other. Rationalistic versions of "bourgeois philosophy" are stuck within the realms of analytical understanding. In Lukács's analysis this is also "evasion": refusing to overcome the limited rationality of "perception governed by understanding" with the help of the richer, more versatile, more general rationality of dialectic reason. Lukács, in his Hegelian language, formulates this in the following way:

> The central philosophical problem of irrationalism's entire later development, namely those questions with which irrationalism has been always connected philosophically [...] are the very questions resulting from the limitations and contradictions of thinking governed simply by understanding. If human thought detects in these limitations a problem to be solved and, as Hegel aptly states, 'the beginning and sign of rationality', i.e., of a higher knowledge, then the encounter with them can become the starting-point for the further development of thinking, for dialectics. Irrationalism, on the other hand [...]

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> stops at precisely this point, absolutizes the problem, hardens the limitations of perception governed by understanding into perceptional limitations as a whole, and indeed mysticizes into a 'supra-rational' answer the problem thus rendered artificially insoluble. (Lukács 1980: 97–98)

Today it cannot seriously be said that the weakness of rationalism, its stagnation on the level of "perception governed by understanding" stems from the structure of "bourgeois thinking" only, and that its limitedness can only be overcome with the help of proletarian worldview. Still, the relationship Lukács laid down does exist. Moreover, it keeps reproducing in various disciplines, e.g. the philosophy of science. This is illustrated by the debates about the nature, possibility and feasibility of scientific rationality both in positivist and post-positivist philosophy of science. Its typical course was, and still is, that proposals for the reconstruction of scientific method sooner or later prove inadequate and raise the necessity of choosing between rationalist and irrationalist alternatives. Whether to describe such situations in Lukács's Hegelian terminology, or in a post-modern language, is ~~only a matter of taste~~.

AQ: word choice?

The statement that rationalism is fostered by the weaknesses and limitations of irrationalism can be put into a simpler form by saying that irrationalism is the result of rationalism. This is not far from Popper's thesis, according to which the relationship of rationalism and irrationalism is asymmetric, since it is possible to argue rationally only for irrationalism but not for rationalism. Popper's train of thought starts from the definition that rationalism is the readiness to accept critical arguments. Resorting to rational claims in case of conflicts thus suppose the acceptance of an argumentative attitude that can not be argued for, and which is, in this regard, the result of an irrational decision. This leads to the paradox theorem that rationalism is a belief, i.e. the "irrational *faith in reason*" (Popper 1962: II. 231).

Therefore the distance between Lukács's and Popper's position is not as big as it might seem. Lukács would agree that rationalism is not opted for on the basis of rational deliberation, that is to say, there are no *reasons* for choosing rationalism. As one would expect, to the question why and on what bases rationalism (or irrationalism) is opted for, he answers "that the choice between *ratio* and *irratio* is never an 'immanent' philosophical question. It is not chiefly intellectual or philosophical considerations which decide a thinker's choice between the new and the old, but class situation and class allegiance" (Lukács 1980: 100). So far we have seen that irrationalism is the result of arbitrary decisions according to Popper, while for Lukács it is the

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result of causal determination. The basis of rationalism is irrational for both of them, even if Lukács would never admit this explicitly.

At some point I argued that it is itself irrational to believe in irrationalism. Conversely, we can add now, it is also true that accepting rationalism is rational. This, I must admit, is contrary to Popper's and Lukács's views alike. Against Popper's theory it implies that there are rational arguments for rationalism. In contrast to Lukács' theory it involves that there are not only causal factors but reasons (such as evidences and the requirement of logical consistency) that support accepting rationalism.

I believe that it is possible to demonstrate that there are such reasons indeed which could be called, in an unfashionable way, the "foundation of rationalism" (See Kelemen 1988). The following is to be proved. There are motives (evidences and true knowledge) such that if, in fact, we rely on them in committing ourselves to rationalism, then our choice is not irrational (neither in the sense of arbitrariness, nor in the sense of causal determination).

Such a motive may be the insight that rationality is grounded in history (moreover, in evolution) in the sense that rationalism is the product of history (and evolution). In this sense, opting for rationalism has the meaning of opting for man as a rational being shaped by history and evolution. Nevertheless, choosing irrationalism always remains an option. This means that we can deny human rationality, history and evolution.

Referring to history may trigger harsh criticism, since the statement about the irrationality of history is a blatant truism. But suggesting that history is irrational (or only arational as nature) is one thing, and suggesting that rationality is the result of history is another.

The former argument has nothing to do with the rationality or irrationality of history as such, for it does not presuppose the rationality of history, and does not tacitely exploit such a premise. On the other hand, it could easily be added that irrationalism manifesting itself in political power relations always proved to be, in accordance with the above definition of irrationalism, a radical denial of man as a rational being. This is the core argument of *The Destruction of Reason*, though in its biased analyses the irrationalism of soviet totalitarianism is completely ignored. But the statement about what irrationalism is proved to be in the light of history is exploited in my argument, since facts and ascriptions of meaning are two different things.

In addition to historical aspects, there is another reason for choosing rationalism. It is enough to refer to the fact mentioned above: since every intentional act has a rational element it is rather the possibility of irrational

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acts and thoughts that are to be explained. The identification of the paradox of irrationalism in itself justifies opting for rationalism.

Just to be on the safe side let us stress again what must be supported by reasons is not rationality but choosing rationalism. Rationalism as a philosophical position is of course a matter of choice, but rationality is not. Let me quote Davidson again: "Rationality is a condition of having thoughts at all," therefore "agents can't *decide* whether or not to accept the fundamental attributes of rationality" (Davidson 2004b: 196). In this light we can reach the same conclusion the previous argument lead to: irrationalism denies the rationality of man, and by this denies an elementary fact. Thus opting for irrationalism is irrational. In this regard, one can speak not only of the paradox of *irrationality*, but of *irrationalism*.

Lukács's story in *The Destruction of Reason* tells the same. Lukács considers choosing irrationality irrational and paradoxical. Such a choice, in contrast to rational choices, cannot be explained by reasons, but only by causes, as Lukács does.

Notes

1 The source of the paradox is that there is no *entirely* rational act or thought. Moravia mentions this intuition: „L'azione è una cosa razionale di per sé: quando agisci, anche quando sbagli, devi credere di fare la cosa giusta. [...] L'azione è consequenziale, razionale" (Moravia and Elkann 1990: 103). ~~Nota bene~~

2 ~~(~~Preface to the first edition, 1943~~)~~. See also Vol. II, 30.

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Part II

Problems of Literary History and Aesthetics

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5

Art's Struggle for Freedom: Lukács, the Literary Historian

Abstract: *Lukács began his career as a literary and theatre critic, and he responded throughout his life to developments in contemporary literature. Literature also forms much of the material he treats in his great aesthetic syntheses. He also had an interest in the theoretical and methodological issues of literary history writing.*

His work in this field is particularly closely tied to the language and literature of his native land. His critiques of the Hungarian literary works of his era and his writings on the classics of Hungarian literature are relatively unknown internationally, even though they form a significant part of his literary historical work.

A striking feature of Lukács's conception of literary history and his literary criticism is the intensity of his interest in the canonical works representing the classics of world literature.

Present chapter deals with Lukács's theory of the history of literature. Special attention is paid to his judgment on Dante, Goethe and Imre Madách, the Hungarian dramatist of the nineteenth century.

Keywords: Hungarian literature; literary criticism; literary genres; literary history; world literature

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1

Georg Lukács's writings on literature form a significant part of his oeuvre, which comprises several thousand pages. He began his career as a literary and theatre critic, and he responded throughout his life to developments in contemporary literature, producing studies on many classic authors of world literature. He also had an interest in the theoretical and methodological issues of literary history writing—and this is not even to mention his aesthetic syntheses (from his various periods) or the many articles he wrote on the history of aesthetics, where literature once again formed much of the material.

In consequence of all this, one cannot evaluate Lukács's oeuvre as a whole without describing his work as a literary critic and historian and asking how his ideas should be viewed in the light of recent developments in literary theory. For several reasons, this is a difficult undertaking. The differences between the various periods in Lukács's work—the young and the old Lukács, the Kantian, Hegelian and Marxist Lukács—may be too great for us to be able to answer the question in global terms. Moreover his work in this field is particularly closely tied to the language and literature of his native land. His critiques of the Hungarian literary works of his era and his writings on the classics of Hungarian literature (together with his much disputed value judgements of these works) are relatively unknown internationally, even though they form a significant part of his literary historical work.

Despite these difficulties, I think it is possible to draw a unified picture of Lukács, the literary historian. Behind the contrasting trends manifested in the various periods, which Lukács himself dwelt upon in his self-critiques in the field of philosophy and politics, we find a sufficient amount of continuity. For instance, a striking feature is the extent to which his aesthetical thinking focuses upon exemplary canonical works representing the high points of world literature. In this regard, Lukács shows a surprising consistency despite his dramatic ideological and political reversals. The same authors and works—as for example the Greek tragedies, Dante, Goethe, Balzac, Dostoevsky and Thomas Mann—mark the horizon of his aesthetic theoretical work, both in his early writings and in the late major work on aesthetics.

His critical and historical work covering the history of world literature (more precisely European literature) and aesthetic theories has two "points of crystallization": his preference for German classicism and 19th-century realism. Accordingly, as well as his *realism-centric view of art*, we may also speak of Lukács's "*classicism*."

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Both these preferences were strongly motivated by his general ideological, political and personal literary tastes, as well as by his antipathy for the capitalism and bourgeois values of his era. He had harbored this antipathy even before he became a Marxist. At the same time, his classicism and realism-centric ideas are also a manifestation of his rationalism. This was true long before he wrote, in defense of reason, *The Destruction of Reason*. As Ferenc Fehér has shown, Lukács's "theory of realism is to be understood in terms of his rationalism" (Fehér 1983: 94). Of course, regardless of his personal preferences, we know that there is a strong link between classicism and rationalism: indeed, in one or other form, rationalism influenced European classicism at each stage of its development. (Ferenc Fehér wrote that "every period in which European classicism has flourished has developed under the aegis of a particular type of rationalism" (Fehér 1983: 81))

In view of these two preferences, Lukács struggled to appreciate certain aspects of modern art and literature. Indeed, *anti-modernism* characterized his criticism of contemporary 20th-century literature. Beside several rather distorted value-judgments (such as his negative opinion of Kafka), this was exemplified in an article entitled "The Rise and Fall of Expressionism," published in *Internationale Literatur* (Moscow, 1934. See Lukács 1971c). The article provoked a hefty reaction from Brecht and Bloch in the subsequent expressionism debate. Evidently, the participants in that debate were driven more by political ideologies than by their aesthetic values, and so it is not fully clear to what extent we may pin the contents of the article on Lukács's aesthetical anti-modernism. He accused the expressionists (who were mostly on the political left) of bringing grist to the mill of fascism, regardless of their objective and subjective intentions. For their part, his opponents criticized both his use of the old bourgeois literature as an aesthetic standard and his opposition to revolutionary art.

Notwithstanding these and other political considerations, it is difficult to deny that Lukács thought in terms of a strict dichotomy between realism and anti-realism and regarded as decadent any literary or artistic movement in the 20th century which was, in his view, anti-realist. His artistic worldview had no room for the avant-garde. He considered only a few contemporary authors to be worthy of his recommendation: those, such as Thomas Mann and the Hungarian Tibor Déry, who preserved the ideological and aesthetic values of classical humanism and continued the tradition of the great realist novel.

Of course, we cannot say that Lukács's positive view of Thomas Mann's oeuvre was in itself a sign of his anti-modernism or literary conservatism.

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There were many reasons for the mutual attraction that existed between philosopher and writer. Even their personal relations (Thomas Mann's staying with Lukács's father in Budapest, the meeting in Vienna of the writer and the émigré philosopher, Lukács as the model for Naphta in the *Magic Mountain*) evolved beyond the limits of the private sphere, attaining the significance of a literary sociological fact (Marcus ~~1978~~). Their attraction to Weimar Classicism and the "age of Goethe" reflected their shared literary tastes; it is no coincidence that each of them wrote his own Goethe book: Thomas Mann (in addition to his Goethe essays) *Lotte in Weimar*, and Lukács *Goethe and His Age*.

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Returning to the problems of literary history in a narrower sense, we see quite clearly that Goethe was the Classicist author to whom Lukács devoted the greatest attention. His essays in the volume "Goethe and His Age" ("Goethe und seine Zeit") are considered classics. His conclusions and value-judgments about the *Divine Comedy* exhibit similar continuity and depth, although he never dealt with Dante systematically and so his comments on Dante's poetry—few in number but theoretically important—have been largely ignored. Another example is found in the field of Hungarian literary history. Concerning *The Tragedy of Man*, an important work by the classical 19th-century poet and dramatist Imre Madách, Lukács offered the same opinion in an early work on the history of drama published in 1911 as he did in a late essay on Madách published in 1955.

In what follows, I seek, by analyzing the three aforementioned examples, to add several features to the portrait of Georg Lukács, the literary historian.

2

By way of introduction, I note that the methodology and theory of literary history writing were always of interest to Lukács. This is not surprising since he was a thinker who examined every problem from a broad philosophical and aesthetical perspective. As examples, I cite an early writing and a late one: his 1910 essay on the theory of literary history ("Megjegyzések az irodalomtörténet elméletéhez" [Notes toward the theory of literary history]) and a paper entitled "A magyar irodalomtörténet revíziója" [The revision of Hungarian literary history], which he presented in 1948 on the occasion of the re-establishment of the Hungarian Literary History Society. The two texts are a world apart. The former defines—within a framework of a neo-Kantian theory concerning the relationship between facts and values—the study (science) of literary history as a synthesis of sociology and aesthetics,

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offering within this context an abstract conceptual analysis of the contact points (style, form and effect) between sociology and aesthetics. The latter, in contrast, is not only Marxist but also acutely politically motivated, which the occasion of the lecture also indicates. To speak in 1948 of a revision of Hungarian literary history was tantamount to announcing a radical and apparently dangerous shift in cultural policy. Nevertheless, in both writings we find questions that are interconnected and which make the texts interesting despite subsequent developments in aesthetic and critical thinking.

A fundamental conclusion of the young Lukács was that a work of art exists as a work of art by means of its evaluation. The evaluation is a fact-constituting enterprise, but it is not a fact constitution performed by an individual subject. For a work of art to exist as a work of art, it is sufficient that there be the possibility of performing the evaluative act or the possibility of verifying the fact constitution already performed. In other words, we must speak of a "potential evaluative act," which—one might add—is driven by the principle of form, because there is no literary phenomenon in the absence of form. This analysis is, I believe, the first germ of Lukács's later theory on class consciousness as a "potential consciousness."

Analyzing the notions of value, form and the effect elicited by form, Lukács introduces the figure of the "receiver," which he refers to here as the receiver of the effect. He underlines that the creator (writer or artist) and the receiver, the work and the audience, are connected by form, because it is form—rather than the vitality contained within the form—that is enduring and resists obsolescence. He cites as examples the *Divine Comedy*, the contents of which are not even "half understood," and *Hamlet*, whose readers in different periods "have envisaged the most utterly diverse things." These examples well illustrate the manner in which "great forms" provide ultimate models of human relations that become saturated with different content in each period. The "greater the form" (i.e. the greater the work), the more this is true.

> Lukács's proposition in general terms is the following:
>
> All truly great works of world literature, those surviving down the centuries, have always been interpreted differently over time. And this is precisely why they could survive, because all such works were capable of concentrating their contents in an ultimate connection to destiny, thereby ensuring that readers in every period perceive their own connection to destiny as the true content of the work. (Lukács 1977b: 413)

The proposition—with the cited examples—tells us two things in particular: first, that people living in different periods will saturate a literary work with

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different content. In other words, the work takes on a different meaning for them, and it is precisely this diversity of meaning that becomes the guarantee of a work's survival. Second, the proposition states that the value of a literary work lies in the various possibilities of its interpretation ("a truly great work of world literature" can be interpreted and understood in various ways). The first assertion can be understood as a descriptive definition of the "literary nature" of a work, while the second counts as a standard, or measure, for evaluating literary works. I hope that by slightly changing Lukács's phraseology I have not fallen into the error of excessive interpretation. It seems, namely, that Lukács—who later became a theoretician of closed forms and the sealed work of art, and in his studies on realism completely neglected the view point of reception, and "discarded the recipient" (Fehér 1983: 99)—was formulating in this early article a hypothesis similar to today's theories of open work ("opera aperta") and the principle of the infinity of interpretations. According to his understanding, this principle means that each work has endless number of interpretations, but this depends not only on the individual recipients involved but also on the conditions in the period determining their receptability. In other words, there are typical interpretations characteristic of particular historical periods.

In his later Marxist period, Lukács reformulated this view; he combined it with other propositions, while retaining the foundations. The idea of a revision of literary history itself implies interpretation and diverse evaluation—and it does so not just for certain works but for the whole literary historical process. In the paper mentioned above, Lukács rightly noted how the revisionist program announced by him was just one of many actual and potential revisions, for "a most superficial survey of Hungarian literary history also shows [...] that this development consists more or less of a chain of radical revisions" (Lukács 1970b: 492). Here Lukács derives the necessity of revision, that is, of reinterpretation and re-evaluation, from the incompleteness of the past and from the very nature of historical cognition; that is to say, from the fact that changes in the present cast new light on the past. Aspects of the past are now visible to us that were necessarily unknown to contemporaries. Further, although seeking to show the superiority of Marxism on every issue, even the Marxist Lukács shows no sign of believing that a work could ever have a single correct interpretation.

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For Lukács, one of the main questions of literary history writing concerned the theoretical basis for a periodization of the literary process. Do literary periods develop in consequence of an autonomous development, and can they be characterized using literature's own notions? Or should literary

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historical periods be distinguished as a function of the great historical periods and then characterized using notions that are external to literature? As far as the Marxist Lukács is concerned, who ascribed to the notion of the social determination of art, it is not surprising that he believed in a periodization based on "external factors." Alongside the literary historical process, he regarded the necessity of an external approach to be valid in the field of literary history writing, and in this respect he sometimes expressed himself bluntly. Of course, his life's work presents overall a rather more dialectical picture, for he basically solves the question by having the "external" and "internal" antagonisms dissolve themselves within the totality. In one of his final writings, which deals expressly with literary historical periodization, he recognizes the notion of "period" merely as a general societal category (Lukács 1970c: 632). In the end, his basic answer to the question is that literature is one aspect of an all-embracing historical shift and so—like art as a whole—it achieves its own autonomy as part of a permanent interaction. This idea was to receive its final form in *The Specificity of the Aesthetic,* where Lukács summarized the relationship between art, religion and tradition, and expounded his teaching on art's struggle for freedom.

3

For his great aesthetic syntheses, Lukács drew upon literary material from world literature as a whole, but he himself acknowledged that the 19th century was his particular fascination. His interest sprang not just from his education and upbringing, but was connected to his ideological choices. In the foreword to one of his latter collections, he wrote:

> This century, the century of Goethe and Heine, Balzac and Stendhal, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky—and not incidentally of Hegel and Marx—focused with unprecedented energy upon the decisive questions of man's becoming man and the external and internal problematic of this development. (Lukács 1969c: 6)

The proposition used here by Lukács to justify his attraction to the 19th century is itself one of the 19th-century ideas originating with Kant, Hegel and Marx. According to such ideas, history as a whole is none other than the self-realization of the spirit, man's becoming man, and the process whereby human capabilities are fulfilled. If this is so, then world literature as a whole must verify it, and the 19th century deserves special attention because its

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contribution in this regard was particularly significant. All great works in every period represent a stage in the process of man's becoming man—or of realizing his "species-being" [Gattungswesen], to use the term applied by Feuerbach, Marx and Lukács.

And, indeed, we know of works from other periods too that raise the question of man's destiny and essence from this same universal perspective. The *Divine Comedy* is just such a work. For Lukács—as for Schelling and Hegel—it was an inescapably positive example; Lukács's many allusions to Dante are indicative of this.

True, beyond such veiled references, Lukács rarely made truly analytical observations concerning Dante. In part this reflected the fact that he knew less about Italian literature than about the three great Western European literatures that formed the backbone of his education—German, English and French literature. Still, one should not forget that in 1911–12 (as it will be discussed more extensively in the next chapter) he spent almost a year in Florence as the guest of his close friend Lajos Fülep, an expert on Italian culture. At that time (between 1908 and 1916), Fülep was working on a book about Dante. He and Lukács were united by a shared interest in the philosophy of mind. Naturally enough, Lukács's picture of Dante came to resemble Fülep's closely—or at least Fülep's reading of the *Divine Comedy*.

Even so, the *Divine Comedy* was for Lukács not only a positive example but also a major challenge; the work became one of the great touchstones for his ideas about the relationship between religion, art and science and for his concept of art's struggle for freedom. According to this latter concept, the entire history of art is—together with the development of "species-being"—a struggle for aesthetic autonomy and liberation from a religious type of consciousness. And this struggle is part of the fight being waged for human emancipation and for the conquest of man's this-worldedness, mundane reality. It is no easy task to interpret within this framework the greatest poem of medieval Christian culture, whose subject is necessarily transcendent and in which poetic verse is inseparably linked with philosophical and religious teaching.

Moreover, the allegorical nature of the poem also conceals a challenge—and not just for Lukács. Drawing from the Goethean theory on allegory and symbol, modern aesthetic thinking has always considered the allegorical method as inferior to the symbolical. For Lukács "allegorisation as an aesthetic style" was so deeply problematical because—as he emphasized—"it rejects, in principle, mundanity, or this-worldedness, as an artistic world-view" (Lukács 1960b: 351) and so represents a fundamental obstacle to the emancipation of art.

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Regarding such ideas, the *Divine Comedy* can be cited as a blatant counterexample, one that belies allegory's negative appraisal. In this case, theory and example are juxtaposed—allegory's supposed hostility to art and the universally acclaimed greatness of Dante's poetry.

A radical solution to the problem was suggested by Benedetto Croce, who—for differing reasons—considered allegory to be in absolute opposition to poetry. Among Lukács's fellow philosophers, Croce was one of the greatest readers of Dante, influencing views on Dante in the 20th century. He argued that since allegory and poetry are mutually exclusive, Dante became a poet "in spite of himself." In his view, the undeniable poetic greatness of the *Divine Comedy* is limited to the songs that manifest the dramatic fate of the protagonists of the various episodes and which are free of allegory. In contrast, other components of the work, where allegory is present, lack all poetic quality and are irrelevant to today's readers. He includes among the latter the "structural" motifs of the work: for example, the narration of the hero's journey to the other world or the description of the cosmological and moral order of the afterlife.

For a thinker like Lukács, this path cannot be contemplated, because it leads to the disintegration of the work's totality; we lose the meaning and significance of Dante's worldview and of his vision of the destiny of man. If we heed Croce, we must place in parentheses as a "structural" unpoetical element—or actually dispose of—the whole of the work's notional (religious, philosophical and moral) content. Thus, those who maintain that the allegorical method is hostile to art but who seek to preserve the *Divine Comedy* in its entirety, must explain how one of the greatest poetic works of world literature is concurrently a high point of the allegorical mode of expression. How is the *Divine Comedy* possible*?*

According to Goethe and Hegel, the problem of allegory concerns the fact that within it are connected "outwardly" and "inorganically" artistic form and abstract conceptuality, the sensual phenomenon and the notion. In more general terms, it is the problem of how—and whether—it is possible to express in artistic form intellectual beliefs, philosophical, ethical and theological ideas, and all-embracing ideological teachings. Can ideas, philosophy or ideology, be transformed into poetry?

If our approach resembles that of Croce, this is not even a possibility: even Dante was unsuccessful. In contrast, for Lukács such a development is both possible and even desirable. Great poetry is always intellectual and thoughtful poetry. This was also the view of Lajos Fülep, from whom Lukács evidently learnt something about Dante. For Fülep, who was incidentally a

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bitter critic of Croce, the aesthetic problem concerned the manner in which "a worldview, and everything that went with it, could be transformed into the material of artistic form" (Fülep 1974c: 306). In Fülep's view, the *Divine Comedy* represented the highest-level solution to this problem; indeed, he argued that the piece "is the best example of a work of art in which the notional element and direct experience are merged into an organic whole" (Fülep 1974c: 249). I note at this point that Mihály Babits, the great poet and outstanding Hungarian translator of the *Divine Comedy* (with whom Lukács had a memorable debate concerning *The Soul and Forms*), argued similarly that philosophical thought and poetry are inseparable from one another in Dante's poem. Regarding the *Paradiso*, he wrote: "The highest zeniths of medieval philosophy are melded into a soaring poesis" (Babits no date: 249).

On this issue, Lukács appears to say no more than Fülep and Babits. In fact, however, he expresses himself more strongly. An example is the following comment from his late work on aesthetics: In vain has the development of human thought gone beyond Dante's world of thoughts, "it has not soared above its poetic strength, the poetic strength of human thought" (Lukács 1963: II. 154). This implies three major propositions, in addition to what has already been said: (a) In the course of its development, human thought goes beyond a given conceptual world; in other words, thoughts become obsolete due to development. Dante's conceptual world (including his general world-view, his cosmology, his scientific views, his ideas about history, and everything that can be placed among the substantial elements of his poem) is obsolete. (b) Thus—in view of the conceptual content included in it—the poem itself should be regarded as obsolete. It is a fact, however, that it has not become obsolete. (c) This is because Dante discovered and exploited a feature of human thought that deems thought *as* thought. This is none other than the poetic strength of thought, which, being independent of its concrete object and veracity, is not subject to the laws of development and resists obsolescence.

If this is a correct reconstruction of what Lukács wants to say, then we have to understand that here he is making the same logical distinction—between things that become obsolete and things that endure—as the one we know from his early writings on the history of literary theory. Obsolescence is a consequence of historical development, rendering inactual (irrelevant) any factuality and conceptual substance bound to a period. Lasting things are so, because they are not subject to historical change: they are *non-historical.* (The *validity of value* is not historical; this is why it is so difficult

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to answer the Hegelian question which asks how it is possible that things with value have a history.) But what exactly should we understand by "the poetic strength of human thought"? I think, in line with the logic of Lukács's reflections on the theory of literary history, this must be a formal quality. However, we can go no further than this for the time being.

All of this does not solve fully the problem of allegory. Allegory is clearly a feature of intellectual poetry, including transcendentalist poetry. Its function is to make philosophical, religious and moral teachings more accessible to the reader, to make it easier to understand things. Dante also believed this, using allegory intentionally for this purpose. (The many metatextual places in the *Divine Comedy* bear witness to this, not to mention his allegory theory, which he explicitly explains in his prose works.)

But Lukács is not satisfied with resolving the contradiction between the *Divine Comedy*'s poetic quality and its allegorical nature in terms of "the poetic quality of human thought." Thus, the two following paths remain open to him. The first is the historical relativization of allegory's role, that is, to accept that the use of allegory is correct only at certain stages of development. He referred explicitly to the possibility of exceptions: "So in literature only exceptional phenomena can be works of art of a similar high standard to that of the allegorical-deductive Byzantine mosaics" (Lukács 1960b: 351). The second path would be to show that the allegories of the *Divine Comedy* constitute a special type unique to Dante, which is not affected by general criticisms of allegory. Lukács signals he considers both routes possible.

Most importantly, despite all his reservations, he recognized the aesthetic category of allegory. "The problematic of allegory—he says in one place—is played off in the field of aesthetics" (Lukács 1963: II. 704). Thus, in spite of all the accompanying problems, he did not consider allegory from an aesthetic perspective as a "foreign entity," or as Croce referred to it, as an "allotric" element in works of art. Its relative raison d'être he explained as its ability to express certain ideologies:

> It is the aesthetic category of allegory—itself of course highly problematical—that can express artistically worldviews where the world has split into two in consequence of the transcendence of the essence and because a chasm has arisen between man and reality. (Lukács 1960b: 351)

In this way it became possible for a genuine work like the *Divine Comedy* to be based on allegory and, as Lukács said, without breaking away from the allegory prescribed theologically, to unravel the mundane features of its characters. But at this point, more is at stake than whether allegory may

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sometimes be justly applied, even resulting in exceptional cases in great works. If allegory is generally the expression of a splitting into two, then it has a special form, which not only *expresses* the chasm between man and reality but actually *bridges* it.

As a result of this train of thought, the individual steps of which were not expressed, Lukács was ready to accept the proposition of the special nature of the Dantean allegory. For he assigned to it a unique role in "art's struggle for freedom," and he could do this only within the framework of an interpretation that viewed Dante as "a poet of the secular world." Erich Auerbach entitled his renowned work on Dante with these words (Auerbach 1961). He is the only authority referred to by Lukács when he describes Dante's role in art's struggle for freedom. Specifically, he cites a place in Auerbach's essay "Farinata and Cavalcanti" where the German literary scholar introduces into critical literature the idea of the specific nature of Dantean allegory as well as the principle of figural interpretation. Figural interpretation—as applied by Auerbach—reveals a concrete linguistic-poetic mechanism in the *Divine Comedy* which renders the narration serving to describe the transcendent experience a means for describing life in the mundane world, and transforms the approach to life from the perspective of eternity into a realist portrayal of the temporal, historical world.

Lukács sees the final note to Auerbach's analyses in the fact that Dante's work realized—but through this realization also destroyed—the Christian-figural essence of man (Lukács 1963: II. 704).[1] In this sense, the specific Dantean allegory is the expression of what Lukács called elsewhere "the perfect immanence of transcendence" (Lukács 1971a: 33).

Through his analysis of the problem of the allegorical nature of the *Divine Comedy*, Lukács reached the conclusion that Dante had created a special type of allegory, one that was unique to him. This fact is inseparable from the *Divine Comedy*'s being an unprecedented and unique creative work—something that many have been repeating for centuries. These are big words, but they are empirically supported. This was first stated by Schelling in his epoch-making article on Dante (Schelling 1971b) in relation to the genre problems of the *Divine Comedy*. He showed that the *Divine Comedy*, being neither a drama, nor a poem, nor a novel, constitutes by itself a separate literary genre: type and specimen coincide in the work.

Lukács sought to illuminate in a historical philosophical manner the unprecedented and unique nature of the *Divine Comedy* from the genre perspective in his *Theory of the Novel*. In doing so, he appears to have found the key to solving the question. He explained the work's peculiarities from

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a world-historical perspective, arguing that they correspond structurally to an exceptional and transitional moment in the historical process. In his definition, the *Divine Comedy* "represents a historico-philosophical transition from the pure epic to the novel," the union of the conditions of the epic and the novel (Lukács 1971a: 42). The features of the epic are "the perfect immanent distancelessness and completeness" regarding its own world, and the epic independence of the organic parts. These qualities are present in the *Divine Comedy*, but its own totality is built systematically and architectonically rather than organically, transforming the separate epic sections into actual parts. In this way, the work becomes like a novel. Its figures are thus individuals; they are real personalities detached from the reality confronting them and opposing that reality. "Dante is the only great example in which wee clearly see the architectural conquering the organic," says Lukács using the above terminology (Lukács 1971a: 42).

This is the point where Lukács's analysis offers a good point of departure for contemporary interpretations of Dante. For instance, John Freccero recalls that according to Lukács Dante wrote the last epic and the first novel, so that both in the field of literary genres and in the history of Western culture he bridges the gap between medieval and modern world (Freccero 1986: 138). The American Dante scholar rightly notes that this proposition means not only that the *Divine Comedy* is *still* an epic and *already* a novel, but that it is *already* not an epic and *still* not a novel. There are further consequences of this, which require Dante's interpreters to add new aspects to Lukács's characterization of the *Divine Comedy*'s genre. We do not need to refer to such subsequent developments, as it was enough for us to show that Lukács's contribution to Dantean philology has proved both original and enriching.

4

Dante was aware of the unprecedented nature and uniqueness of the *Divine Comedy*; his intention had always been to compose an exceptional work. It is this demand that he announces when he refers to his work as "this sacred poem–this work so shared by heaven and by earth" ("'l poema sacro, al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra," *Paradiso*, 25, 2).[2]

Literary historians consider *Faust* to be—like the *Divine Comedy*—an exceptional piece. And Goethe—just like Dante—always intended to produce such an exceptional work. The German author uses the expression "incommensurable work." The same adjective is used by Lukács in his essay on *Faust*,

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an essay which Cesare Cases, the renowned scholar of German literature, regarded as a highpoint of literary historical criticism (Cases 1985: 125).

The most visible external sign of Goethean incommensurability—and of the singular nature of the *Divine Comedy*—is genre unclassifiability. *Faust* forces open the boundaries of epic and drama, but it cannot be said to be a totality of lyrical images. We may say that this was not so much a sign of exceptionality but the expression of the trend of an age, or more exactly the first appearance of a nascent trend. According to this view, Goethe's work points to the direction of subsequent developments whereby modern drama would adopt epic features and in general the old boundaries between genres would become relative. Lukács himself propounded that "this intertwinning and interpretation of the epic and dramatic principles is a general tendency of modern literature, which simply found in *Faust* its most succinct and paradoxical form" (Lukács 1968: 238). The work deserves the attribute of "incommensurability" for its innovative and pioneering nature and because it is an antecedent of subsequent developments—rather than because it is inimitable in an absolute sense. Lukács develops this point by arguing that *Faust* prepared at an intellectual and aesthetic level for the works of Walter Scott and Byron, Balzac and Stendhal. However, incommensurability has a more important meaning that this historical one, namely the meaning that comes from the deeper ideological content of the work. *Faust* is incommensurable in the same sense as the *Divine Comedy*.

That the two works cannot be classified in terms of genre is, however, the consequence of the novel intention of their writers, who wanted their works to express in artistic form something that is inaccessible to artistic expression; that is to say, it cannot be transformed, in a dramatic, epic or lyric interpretation, into the content of individual experience or intuition. The fact that Dante so often uses the *topos* of the "unspeakable" reflects his impossible ambition, his stubborn endeavor to grasp what is artistically inexpressible with the help of artistic expression. Likewise it is no coincidence that the final lines of *Faust* refer to the capturing of the indescribable ("Das Unbeschreibliche/Hier ist getan").

But the incommensurability of the *Divine Comedy* and of *Faust* means at a more profound level that material that seems to be *useless* for artistic purposes could be used by both authors to interpret in poetic form the life and destiny of the whole of humanity. As Lukács reminds us, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel recognized, merely on the basis of the *Faust* fragment of 1790, the exceptional character of Goethe's work as a piece of world literature. The opinion was shared, according to someone who later spoke to Goethe, by

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their students, who understood that "Faust is a representative of the whole of humanity." They were captivated by the fact that the tragedy that was being written manifested "the spirit of the whole of world history," giving a full and faithful picture of the life of all humanity and covering the past, present and future. They easily spotted *Faust*'s affinity with the *Divine Comedy*; they even referred to it as the *"divina Tragoedia"* (Lukács 1968: 173).

In this reading of the work we see the seed of Lukács's later interpretation of *Faust*, which he described as "the drama of the human species" (Lukács 1968: 175). The most obvious place in the text that can be used to verify this description is found in the *Faust* fragment:

> Whatever to all mankind is assured,
> I, in my inmost being, will enjoy and know,
> Seize with my soul the highest and most deep;
> Men's weal and woe upon my bosom heap;
> And thus this self of mine to all ~~ther~~ selves expanded,
> Like them I too at last be stranded.[3]

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"This self of mine to all their selves expanded" ("mein eigen Selbst zu ihrem Selbst erweitern"): this is the point where humanity is clearly manifested as a collective subject, which has an "ego" just as singular individuals do. The singular "ego" can be broadened into a general "ego," but it can also, in the reverse process, accept into itself the experiences of the general "ego." This picture has a medieval antecedent in Averroes's ideas about the potential intellect, which also had a substantial effect on Dante. The "I" and the "we" are interchangeable in several important places in the *Divine Comedy*—as are also the singular individual's "ego" and collective humanity's "ego" in the aforementioned quotation from *Faust*. Moreover the relationship between the "I" and the "we" is a condition for us viewing Dante, the protagonist in the *Divine Comedy*, as a representative of humanity—like we do Faust.[4]

In the light of these things, it is easy to see how ideas about the relationship between the individual and mankind connect Goethe's poetry with Hegel's philosophy—just as Dante's idea of the relationship between the "I" and the "we" can be linked with Averroes's philosophy.

It is thus understandable that Lukács reads *Faust* in the light of the *Phenomenology of Mind*, even considering the two works to be (mutually) corresponding in two different areas of intellectual pursuit. He emphasizes that "Goethe's *Faust* and Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* belong together as the greatest artistic and intellectual achievements of the classical period in Germany" (Lukács 1968: 176). In this vein he says that Faust's path is "the poetic *Phenomenology* of the human species" (Lukács 1968: 179).

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It should be noted that Lukács uses here the same words chosen by Fülep to describe the *Divine Comedy*: "the Commedia is the 'Phenomenology' of the lyrical spirit" (Fülep ~~1974~~, 249). No doubt Lukács borrowed the words and the comparison from Fülep. What is also certain is that in a historical sense these words applied to *Faust* more than they did to the *Divine Comedy*. But in a general typological sense, Fülep was also right. The works of both Dante and Goethe are comparable to the *Phenomenology of Mind* because they grasp the relationship between the individual and mankind in a similar manner, and because the protagonist in each undergoes a process of intellectual development whereby—albeit in a very different sense—they realize in themselves mankind's potential and go from damnation to salvation. Of course, only in Faust's case can one strictly say that he "took the phenomenological route" in a Hegelian sense.

But is this really so? Should *Faust* be read to such a degree through the Hegelian lens? The questions take us back to the century-old debate about whether Goethe's worldview, philosophy and theory of knowledge were actually closer to Kant than to Hegel. The view (propounded by, among others, Ernst Cassirer in his famous book on the Enlightenment) that Goethe connects in *Faust* above all with Kantian philosophy was strongly denied by Lukács. Indeed, he considered it "completely wrong" to read from *Faust* any essential connection between Goethe and Kant. On the contrary, he continuously noted how the moral content of Goethe's works—from *Werther* to *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust*—was at variance with Kantian ethics. Nor, however, did he claim that Goethe became over time a follower of Hegel. He could not have claimed this, for we know that Goethe worked on *Faust* throughout his life, starting at a young age. As Lukács himself says, *Faust* grew in tandem with Goethe's life and experiences. If there is a historical connection, in terms of effect, between the poet and the philosopher, it would seem rather to be the reverse. The young Hegel—like his revolutionary-minded contemporaries—was an enthusiastic reader of the *Faust Fragment* and fell under its spell. Meanwhile, influenced by *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, the mature Hegel's *Aesthetics*—as Lukács points out once again—places educating man for reality at the center of the theory of the novel. According to Lukács, Hegel's ideas about the theory of the novel refer clearly to *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and touch upon the core of Goethe's questions.

Lukács's position on these issues is that Goethe was sympathetic to the *whole* of the German philosophical movement throughout his long career, but had no wish to affiliate himself to any of the nascent systems:

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> Goethe, as he emphasised, never entirely associates himself with any one current of this philosophy, but he has a deep sympathy for young Schelling's attempt at his philosophy of nature and later his thinking shows far-reaching parallels with the objective dialectic of Hegel. (Lukács 1968: 172)

I think this is a key sentence for the *Faust* interpretation. A "Hegelian" Goethe would not really be important to Lukács. For him, what is far more interesting and of greater objective and necessary significance is that a *parallel can be drawn* between the thinking of the poet and the ideas of the philosopher. The accidental coincidence that *Faust* and the *Phenomenology of Mind* were published in the same year (the eventful year of 1808) strengthens symbolically this parallel.

In Lukács's analysis, *Faust* is comparable, in terms of basic ideas and structure, to the *Phenomenology of Mind*. The basic idea is not limited to Faust, in his individuality, representing mankind, in a similar manner to the protagonist Dante representing mankind. For, compared with the *Divine Comedy*, an essential difference in Goethe's work is that the relationship between the individual and the species is a fully historical one. According to the phenomenological scheme, the individual can connect with the species because the main stages of individual development coincide with the main stages of human development; in other words, the individual experiences world history in an abbreviated form. And in this way, human capabilities develop in him.

The structure of *Faust* reflects all of this in that Faust first appears in his singular particularity, but then, through his adventures, comes to experience various periods in world history. The periods selected are those that Goethe and his contemporaries regarded as particularly significant; they correspond to the logical junctures of history rather than actual historical progression. The two parts are linked together in such a manner (here we can glimpse a "phenomenological" feature) that the first part formulates direct and naïve historicity, while the second part expresses reflected historicism, or to use Lukács's memorable words, "a lived philosophy of history" (Lukács 1968: 183).

Lukács organizes his analysis around two dialectic problems—the dialectics of the individual and the species, or of good and bad. From the dialectics of the relationship between the individual and the species he derives the many characteristics of the act, such as the phantastic form, the ambiguous relationship between the tragic and non-tragic elements and the "phenomenological nature" of Faust and Marguerite's love-story. (The phenomenological peculiarity of the story comes from Faust's passing through all the stages of development of individual love, and in his relationship with

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Marguerite the whole story of human love is repeated.) His analysis of the dialectics of good and bad relates principally to his interpretation of the figure of Mephisto. At this point, Lukács seizes the opportunity to show the effect—on the concept of *Faust*—of ideas concerning the historical role of evil and ruse of reason.

The above summary shows that Lukács's *Faust*-interpretation basically concerns content. This conclusion contains two *repudiations*: first, it evidently does not depart from formal principles; second, it does not apply the patterns of deterministic Marxism, that is to say, it does not explain the work in terms of social causality. At the same time, *in a positive sense*, the content-based nature of the interpretation could mean that it explains the work in philosophical categories at several levels: it connects the meanings expressed in the work with Hegelian ideas, and it justifies this connection by applying its own Marxist conception of philosophy of history.

Lukács's evaluation principles rest upon the same content-based approach. *Faust*, on the basis of these principles, is considered one of the greatest works of world literature, because it expresses the world-historical path of the advance of the human essence, or that part of world history in which human essence is realized at the highest attainable level. This also means that *Faust*—just like the *Phenomenology of Mind*—represents the highest possible level of bourgeois ideology.

But we have not yet addressed the issues that are critical for any Faust-interpretation: how to grasp the relationship between the first and second parts of the work, how to appraise the two parts in comparison with each other, and how to evaluate the work as a whole, given that it comprises two heterogeneous parts. How does Lukács answer these questions?

Since he chose the phenomenological approach as the key to his interpretation, he cannot agree with those who consider the second part to be a complete mistake, for—as he indicates—this is the part where the destiny of the individual has to appear directly as an abbreviated version of humanity's development. Structurally, it is an indispensable component of the work. Moreover, the attribute "incommensurable" is far more applicable to this part than to the first part.

Even so, Lukács acknowledges the entirely problematic nature of the second part and its failure to exert the same emotional and experiential effect as the first part. This, he explains, was because Goethe did not always find the stylistic means needed for the realization of his plan. Often the connection between the collective and the individual's perspective is abstract and stiff and can only be established with the help of a decorative word-typization.

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Many times in the second part, the allegorical element becomes excessive. Let us state what Lukács fails to say openly: Goethe's poetic practice in the second part of *Faust* ironically contradicts his epoch-making theory of allegory and symbol.

Perhaps the main problem is that the difference between the two parts gradually becomes amplified into a difference between heterogeneous elements. The category of "tragedy" is clearly applicable to the first part; and this category is the one that Goethe wanted to characterize the whole work with. However, the work as a whole cannot be called a tragedy because—as Lukács shows—the path of mankind is not a tragic one, even if it leads across innumerable tragedies. Certainly, *Faust* as a whole reflects this truth. But precisely because it reflects this truth, the work disintegrates into a series of separate parts and tragedies.

5

Nineteenth-century Hungarian literature also produced a poem of universal significance, one that may be compared with *Faust*. The work in question is Imre Madách's *The Tragedy of Man*, which presents the history of humanity in dramatic form. Adam, the protagonist of the work, assumes various historical roles (Pharaoh, Miltiades, Tancred, Kepler, Danton, etc.), travelling through time to visit turning points in world history—from the ancient era of the pharaohs to the cooling of the earth in the future. On this journey, Adam is led by Lucifer, the embodiment of the evil forces shaping history, that is, the negative dialectic.

The Tragedy of Man is not one of the most famous works of world literature, but it certainly deserves world literary status and in Hungary it is a national classic. In view of its content and ambitious message, it perfectly meets the expectations that may be made of major works of world literature, based on Lukácsian aesthetics. It does so because it seeks to answer in artistic form the fundamental questions of the purpose and direction of human history. Lukács understandably turned to the work several times during his long career as a critic.

In the 1950s, reflecting Stalinist cultural policy, the authorities banned Madách's work: for many years, it could not be performed on the stage or republished. Many have accused Lukács of being responsible, because after his return from Moscow he became a leading intellectual authority in Hungary's Communist Party. In fact, however, he never assumed an official

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function within the party and had nothing to do with specific political and administrative decisions. Even so, in his writings at the time, he did express reservations about *The Tragedy of Man*, which must have carried some weight with party officials.

Should we see in Lukács's criticism a concession made to Stalinism? I do not believe the problem can be formulated using such clichés. In lieu of a detailed analysis, perhaps it is sufficient to note that Lukács's critical work was already remote from Stalinism as early as the 1930s, during his time in Moscow. "Whatever the literary critics may think and say" wrote Guido Oldrini, the fact that Goethe and Hegel were at the focus of Lukács's interest so decisively and for so long is "further irrefutable proof of the great distance that separated him as early as the 1930s—and even more so later on—from the official slogans of Stalinism" (Oldrini 2009: 185).

But we do not have to search so far. The ideas formulated in his critique of Madách reflect in themselves a very different mentality and culture. They remind us of what I noted in the introduction: the ideas at the foundation of his Madách critique are already present in his early writings, and they put forward the criteria seen in his later *Faust* analysis.

In the 1911 drama book, Lukács complains that in *The Tragedy of Man* "thought and sensualisation are artistically separate." The scenes are beautiful, but in terms of their relationship to ideas they are illustrative and allegorical (Lukács 1978: 585). Of course, whether Lukács was right or wrong about Madách is not the important thing here. What is crucial is the aspect, or consideration, upon which this judgement was based. It is easy to see that the mediating element he finds wanting between "thought" and "sensualisation" is one that would later become a basic category of his aesthetics: that is, *particularity.* Madách "over-generalises," says Lukács almost 50 years later, essentially repeating a view he expressed in his youth (Lukács 1970d: 570). His specific criticism relates to a whole aesthetic theory, and cannot be derived from the political circumstances of the moment. By this time, the theory underlying his judgement is evidently more elaborate than what he had argued in the drama book. Nevertheless it includes the same criteria of critical evaluation that he adhered to throughout his life—and which are clearly applied in his critique of the second part of *Faust*.

I should add that Lukács also reproaches Madách for the pessimistic tone of his work. In that era, criticism of this type may have seemed to be directly politically motivated. Even so, behind all this we may discover a more general criticism rooted in ideas. The reason for the Lukácsian criticism is

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that while Madách applied the Goethean-Hegelian world-historical terms, he did so almost in reverse: he failed to connect it with the idea of man's capacities being fulfilled by the species. Every scene in the drama ends in disappointment, and in moral terms the preceding story recommences in every scene. Among the work's structural principles there is the metaphor of Vico's recurring cycle. At the end of history (actually, before history even begins), Adam awakens from a bad dream to hear merely reassuring words from God. Unlike the protagonists in the *Divine Comedy* and *Faust*, he experiences no salvation.

Clearly, these great works of world literature are interpreted and analyzed by Lukács within a theoretical framework that includes a teleological image of the unity of the world-historical process, the universality of progress and the continuous development of the human essence—whereby the image is also projected into the future. Today such optimism has been severely shaken. But it is this image whose foundations were established by such great poets and thinkers of German classicism as Goethe and Hegel. With this I want to say that Lukács does not bring his interpretative conclusions into Goethe's text *from the outside*, because the meaning which he attributes to the text is already there. But I also want to say that there is an inevitable harmony between Lukács's interpretative categories and the categories defining the meaning of the Goethean text. One might say that Lukács has no choice but to show empathy with Goethe for structural reasons—even though, in the second part of *Faust*, he discovers the same errors of illustrative and allegorical portrayal and of generalization without particularity that he finds in *The Tragedy of Man*.

If, in the post-modern era, the Goethean-Hegelian image of uniform world history, universal progress and the human essence has been shattered, the question arises whether Lukács's analyses of the classical works of world literature are still valid. Are his conclusions about Dante and his reading of *Faust* instructive? And what should we think of his criticism of *The Tragedy of Man*? Changes in literary theory do not automatically invalidate the critical work of Lukács or any other author—or the works that are the object of their criticism. In the immanent- and reception-historical process, a connection forms between works and their relevant interpretations. Now Lukács's Hegelian-phenomenological reading forms a part of *Faust*'s reception history or "history of effects" (*Wirkungsgeschishte*), because the work illuminates layers of meaning that other interpretations have ignored.

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Notes

1 Lukács refers to the third, 1946 Berne edition of Auerbach 1946.
2 Allen Mandelbaum's translation. (Dante 1995)
3 George Madison Priest's translation. Goethe 1952
[Und was der ganzen Menschheit zugeteilt ist,
Will ich in meinem innern Selbst geniessen,
Mit meinem Geist das Höchst' und tiefste greifen,
Ihr Wohl und Weh auf meinen Busen haufen,
Und so mein eigen Selbst zu ihrem Selbst erweitern,
Und, wie sie selbst, am End' auch ich zerscheitern.]
(The First Part, Faust's Study)
4 For a more thorough analysis, see Kelemen (2009), Kelemen (2012).

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6

Lukács and Fülep: Two Hungarian Critics of Benedetto Croce

Abstract: *Lajos Fülep, an excellent but internationally less-known Hungarian Italianist and art critic, used to be a close friend of the young Lukács in the first and the second decade of the 20th century. They spent a year together in Florence (in 1911). Fülep elaborated an important critique of Croce's aesthetic ideas which he published in the journal "Szellem" ("Spirit") founded by him together with Lukács in Budapest. As is known, Lukács, later on, dedicated a review article to Croe's "Teoria e storia della storiografia" ("Theory and History of Historiography") in which he expounded an acute critique of the philosophy of history of the Italian philosopher. In this chapter the two criticisms are compared.*

Keywords: absolute spirit; historical knowledge; intuition; memory; objective spirit

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1

AQ:

Benedetto Croce, at the beginning of the 20th century, was one of the most read philosophers in the world. ~~If that meant to have had a deep intellectual impact – that's obviously another question~~. In what follows I would like to illustrate the diffusion of Croce's ideas in Hungary, which was a limited but at the same time relevant field of his international influence. The Hungarian reception of Croce's ideas was in fact important if we take into consideration that in Hungary, in the first decades of the 20th century, intellectuals like Georg Lukács, Karl Mannheim, Béla Balázs, Michael Polányi, Karl Polányi, Lajos Fülep, and others, had begun their career (all of them associated with each other and related to the progressive movements of the epoch). In what measure Croce's idealism and historicism have contributed to their spiritual formation?

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In the first half of the 20th century, Croce also in Hungary was considered as one the greatest Western philosophers. Just to mention some really important names in the Hungarian culture of the time, Bernát Alexander (the first relevant Hungarian translator and scholar of Kant), Attila József (one of the greatest Hungarian poets of the period, and a notable theoretician as well), and finally Georg Lukács and Lajos Fülep all reacted—positively or negatively—to Croce's ideas. Here we have to recall that the relevance of Attila József's fragmentary metaphysics was only recently revealed by some researches, which have illuminated also the fact that Attila József's poetics was strongly influenced by Croce's theory on intuition. Today it's absolutely clear that the relationship between Attila József's poetic metaphysics and Croce's aesthetics constitutes a remarkable element of Croce's presence in Hungary. It is also undisputed that Croce's influence on some Hungarian thinkers is part of the cultural history of Hungary. Here I will present two moments of Croce's influence in Hungary: first, I will analyze an author whose work was strongly determined by the knowledge, in his youth, of Croce's aesthetics (Lajos Fülep), then I will reconstruct the occasional—but even this way important—reaction of Georg Lukács to Croce's thought. Fülep and Lukács had a close professional relationship in a decisive period of their life, in the 1910s, in Florence (See Infranca 1993).

2

During his long stay in Florence Fülep had close contact with the circle of *Leonardo* and became a close friend of Giovanni Papini. Fülep was among

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the very few who have collaborated with Papini and Giovanni Amendola in the edition of *L'Anima*, one of the most influential Italian journals of the epoch. Fülep remembered the story of his friendship with Papini this way:

> I gave a kind of philosophical-aesthetic lecture in the Library, and because I could presume the familiarity of the public with Croce's aesthetics, I begun to criticize this theory. In that period the young people used to attack sistematically Croce's philosophy, so—with the exception of Croce's aesthetics—there was an expert for all fields. The lecture was really successful: especially the youth were pleased due to my criticism, which—as they believed—put an end to Croce's highly popular and deceptive philosophy. And—to my surprise—Papini expressed his compliments in a way he had never done before. (Fülep 1976b: 31)

What Fülep described as "a kind of philosophical-aesthetic lecture" in reality is a long philosophical essay entitled *La memoria nella creazione artistic* ["Memory in the artistic creation"], published in a short version in the *Bollettino della Biblioteca Filosofica* of Papini (Fülep 1911), then in Fülep's review, *A Szellem* [*The Spirit*], in March 1911. It can be added that the only two issues of this review include—among others—some papers and translations of Georg Lukács, Karl Mannheim, Béla Balázs, Sándor Hevesi and Béla Zalai. The library where Fülep gave his "kind of a philosophical-aesthetic lecture" is the Biblioteca Filosofica, where the discussions and the meetings of Papini's circle were taking place. The lecture's text was discussed by the circle with the participation of Amendola, Mario Calderoni, Papini and others, in a meeting which took place on March 11, 1911.

Fülep talks about Croce's "highly popular and deceptive philosophy," but this does not mean at all that the starting point of his reflections on art would not be the same as Croce. By explaining his theory, Fülep starts with the criticism of Crocean theory, not only because he could "presume the familiarity of the public with Croce's aesthetic,"[1] but first of all because Fülep's theory on the constitutive value of memory presumes logically the revision of the Crocean concept of intuition.

During his long life (he died in 1970, one year before Lukács's death) Fülep devoted himself mainly to studies on history of art. He never gave up on his plan to ~~elaborate a global and synthetic~~ philosophy of art. This theoretical work, which was supposed to be global (in the Lukácsian sense) and synthetical, was never written, but Fülep's researches in the field of history of art are obviously based on a mature and consistent theoretical conception (which can be reconstructed on the basis of his minor writings). Such a conception is directly linked to the above mentioned early writing. As a conclusion we can say that many aspects of Fülep's works would be incomprehensible

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without a reference to its relationship with Croce's aesthetics. That means that one of the two great aesthetic conceptions, elaborated in Hungary in the 20th century (and which are in some way *alternatives* to each other), follows the path of Croce.

3

Let's take a look now at Fülep's criticism of Croce. Fülep writes the following: "from his error of having identified—without any middle-term—the pure intuition with expression follow all the mistakes of Croce's aesthetic system" (Fülep 1974b: 612). It seems that the whole critique of Fülep is based on a unique Archimedean point. In fact, the Crocean thesis of the identity of intuition and expression is opposed to the fundamental thesis of Fülep, according to which

> it is not the intuition, but it's the memory, which is identical with the expression. From this follows the thesis: every expression is memory. (Fülep 1974b: 612)

If this last thesis would be true, obviously the whole Crocean system would collapse. ~~Nota bene ;~~ the debate between the two authors is not on the question if art would or would not correspond to expression, but on the following problem: which of the mental functions serves—as an expression—to art as a base? In this sense Fülep's aesthetics, like Croce's one, can be exclusively an aesthetics of expression, in opposition to the Lukácsian conception, elaborated in his *Heidelberg Aesthetics* (Lukács 1974a, Lukács 1974b).

After having formulated his main thesis, Fülep develops it in two directions: he tries to prove with demonstrative argumentations the identity of memory and expression, on the other hand he tries to reject, with confuting argumentations, the identity of intuition with expression. The demonstrative, as well as the confuting argumentations are formulated in a more or less psychological language, which undoubtedly reflects Fülep's conviction that in art theory some empirical-psychological facts can be used. Such a psychological reasoning (which, in this way, philosophically is not adequate) could have been easily rejected by Croce. But it's not necessary to go forward to the accusation of psycholgism: Fülep's analysis of the concept of intuition and of the relationship between intuition and memory demonstrates that his argumentation is valid from the logical-philosophical point of view also.

According to Fülep, intuition cannot be a pure form of theoretic activity, nor an ultimate (simple and non-analyzable) datum. Moreover, artwork

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cannot be a unique intuition: artwork necessarily is "a totality of intuitions, of feelings, a state of the soul, etc., i.e. a complexity" (Fülep 1974b: 618). If the artwork is a complexity, its constitutive elements have to be linked to each other by something: so—as we would say with a modern term—artwork has to have a structure (a structure which was excluded from the concept of artwork by Croce). As we are dealing with artworks, this connection cannot be of a conceptual or logical nature, and because we are dealing also with intuitions i.e. with mental phenomena, it cannot be of a *causal* nature either. After having excluded these possibilities, only *memory* remains at our disposal, because—beyond the logical and causal connections—there is simply no other way to connect organically the different intuitions. At this point appears *language* as a main factor, because "the expression or language has an exclusive relationship with these unified forms" (Fülep 1974b: 618). So we come back to the thesis: "every expression is memory."

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In opposition to Croce's thesis ("every intuition is expression") Fülep has a really efficient argumentation, demonstrating that such a thesis implies a logical contradiction due to the fact that the generic character of language is in contrast with the individual character of intuition ("to express something absolutely individual, language must deny its own nature" (Fülep 1974b: 631)). Fülep recalls our attention also to the obviously absurd consequence of Croce's thesis; if every intuition would be an expression, human communication would become impossible: "if language were simply the expression of intuition, there wouldn't be two people in the world who would be able to understand each other" (Fülep 1974b: 631). Taking in consideration all these, we don't need any further argument against another Crocean thesis, according to which intuition, and—as a consequence—the artwork itself, is simply the "well realised expression" ("l'espressione riuscita").

On the basis of these arguments—to which I have alluded only briefly—Fülep develops a really destructive critique and (at the same time) formulates an interesting thesis. As for the destructive critique, Croce is accused by Fülep of dilettantism:

> every aesthetic theory—like for example Croce's one—which denies the existence of these forms, and doesn't recognize the difference between painting, poetry, sculpture, etc., necessarily flows into dilettantism. (Fülep 1974b: 623)

And even if it's an exaggeration to accuse Croce of dilettantism, surely the stone comparison of an aesthetic theory is its capacity to give an account of the reality of the world of artworks, i.e. of the differences and specific characters of the different art genres (analogously to the stone comparison of any theory, verifiable

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by its capacity of giving an account of an already given reality). Crocean aesthetics cannot, and—first of all—doesn't want to, describe or explain these differences and specific characters, because it emphasizes programmatically their non-existence (in harmony to its main conceptual presumptions, i.e. to *intuition* and to the *simple expression of intuition*). Fülep's thesis is the following: "Croce's aesthetics is a belated epilogue of a movement which was flourishing thirty years ago, i.e. of impressionism" (Fülep 1974b: 623).

This is quite an adequate remark, which reveals the sharp-sighted mind of Fülep the theoretician, as well as the sensibility of Fülep the historian of art. Fülep's approach surely would deserve a greater attention by the part of Croce-scholars.

Anyway, a serious objection can be formulated against Fülep's criticism, as well as against his theoretic conception. By focusing on *memory*—instead of intuition—in the debates related to art, isn't Fülep making the usual mistake of substituting a partial and unilateral theory with another one? That's a good question, especially if we read considerations of the following type: "we don't remember what we see, but we see what we remember" (Fülep 1974b: 622). Like any audacious thesis, even this can be defended by claiming that it has a "rational knot" in the sense that it's a possible way to describe a certain state of things. The state of things which really subsists and of which we can say something here consists of the already universally recognized fact that previous experiences have an influence on immediate perception. But to carry out such a defensive strategy we would need an entire metaphysics, the main thesis of which was in fact formulated by Fülep but wasn't ever developed by him, ~~nor by others.~~ The main thesis is the following: "memory is a cat~~h~~egory of the spirit" (Fülep 1974b: 629). Such a metaphysical state of memory implies that "the *a priori* forms of intuition must be contained in memory, i.e. it is memory which brings these forms to the intuition" (Fülep 1974b: 627).

AQ: c… g…

Naturally it's not possible even to attempt here to delineate—on the basis of the above mentioned thesis (and instead of Fülep)—this absent metaphysics, nor to define a position (in the light of such a metaphysics) in connection to the debate of Fülep with Croce. It's sufficient to underline here that from the point of view of history of ideas, Fülep's criticism is important, and its consequences should have to be taken in consideration seriously by Croce-scholars.

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4

In 1915 Lukács published a recension on the German version (1915) of Croce's *Theory and History of Historiography* [*Teoria e storia della storiografia*]

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(Croce 1917) in the review *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Socialpolitik*. Besides this recension Lukács dedicated only a few pages to Croce. Lukács in his *The Destruction of Reason* characterized Croce as an irrationalist—but at the same time liberal and moderated—thinker of the "imperialist period." From the Crocean theory on historical knowledge Lukács points out, in a critical way, the thesis according to which history becomes art and identifies itself with intuition. Concerning the principle of the contemporaneousness of history, Lukács recognizes that this contains "a real dialectic problem":

> Here we have to note not only Croce's close affinity with Windelband's and Rickert's german philosophical trends, with its incipient irrationalization of history, but also the manner in which Croce dissolves a real dialectic problem, constituted by the fact that knowledge of the present (at its higher level, attained in a process of progress) gives the key of the knowledge of the less evolved degrees of the past, in an irrational subjectivity. (Lukács 1980: 19–20)

Toward Croce already the young Lukács has demonstrated a strongly critical attitude. In his above mentioned recension of 1915 Lukács observed that the Italian philosopher was unable to resolve the problem of the historical character of values, which is attributed by Lukács to a fatal confusion originated from the unification (or mixing) of the objective spirit with the absolute spirit. At the light of a detailed analysis, it would be easy to demonstrate that Lukács's criticism—with its obvious limits—is right. Its main limit is the following: the separation in itself of the absolute spirit from the objective spirit (a separation accepted by Lukács—here as a good ~~student~~ of Hegel—but rejected by Croce) gives only in a metaphorical sense a key to analyze the problem which rises from the tension between *value* (which can never be identical with the historical factuality) and *historicity* (which necessarily includes a value). Such a separation gives an adequate conceptual frame only if the same concept of the "spirit" allows to reflect and to express reality, the reality of human strengths which manifest themselves in their objectivations. So it's better to say that Croce is deprived even of the tool which can be offered by the Hegelian distinction between the absolute and the objective spirit. Moreover Croce did not realize the problematic character of the historicity of value. Lukács formulates this problem in connection with Croce, but also as his own problem on which he had previously written in his "Notes toward the theory of literary history" (Lukács 1977b). We can add to all these, that this problem, which was formulated clearly by the young Lukács, became still sharpened on the basis of the theoretical difficulties connected to the neo-Kantian value philosophy. But even this way this is still a substantial question, which can

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be traced back not exclusively to the inner difficulties of the philosophy of values ("Geltungsphilosophie") or to a particular conception on the relationship between the objective and the absolute spirit.

5

Leaving out of account the recension of 1915, i.e. the direct relationship of Lukács's thought with Croce's work, there are some further elements which connect the ideas of the two authors. Nicolas Tertulian recalled our attention to the fact that Lukács's and Croce's aesthetic theories have certain common features (in the case of Lukács Tertulian refers to the *Heidelberg Aesthetics* (Lukács 1974a, Lukács 1974b). These common features are the following: both authors intend to consolidate the autonomy of art, distinguishing it from the intellectual-logical sphere; both appreciate analogously *The Critique of Judgement* of Kant (besides accepting the Kantian way of formulating determinate philosophical problems, both accept also the *criteria* of Kant's critique); philosophical idealism helps both of them in the comprehension of aesthetic phenomena (due to the fact that this is the only field in which the identity of subject and object really exists); moreover, Lukács and Croce were—in the history of aesthetics—those authors who have formulated probably in a more clear way the contrast between the universality of the aesthetic form and the individuality of an artwork, and from this contrast follows, for Lukács, that the relationship between art and artwork cannot be conceived as a subordination. (For the above mentioned problem see Tertulian 1964).

Anyway we cannot leave out of account that some fundamental questions are resolved by the two philosophers in a radically different way. Lukács, who was a student of Lask and Rickert, is more coherent of Croce in making prevail the neo-Kantian starting point: the part of *Heidelberg Aesthetics* which deals with the problem of the "aesthetic positing" is, in the history of aesthetics, maybe the more consequent actuation of the Kantian position. At the same time, with his conception of the absolute originality of the "positing" of the different value-spheres, Lukács is able to establish the conditions of the autonomy of the aesthetic field in a more deep sense in comparison with Croce, who—due to his theoretic conception—is forced to interpret art as a form of knowledge. From this difference follows that the status of aesthetics is different in these two conceptions. For Croce aesthetics is a constitutive element of the philosophy of the spirit; for Lukács is a sphere of

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value which is absolutely autonomous, which cannot be reduced to nothing else, and ~~from which cannot be deduced anything else~~. Meanwhile Croce constitutes his own system on the basis of *intuition*—which is identified with expression—and Lukács questions the possibility of any attempt of this kind. We have to remember that Croce doesn't formulate at all the question related to the paradoxical character of the tools of expression, no matter the fact that a serious analysis of this problem would be a *sine qua non* condition for the aesthetics of expression.

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In the works of the young Lukács and in those of Croce there is another really important common feature, which already is a part of a common tradition: it is the—also analogous—conception of the relationship between philosophy and historical-social reflection. Croce gives an undoubtedly non-adequate definition of the nature of historical knowledge; it's even more problematic the way in which he separates knowledge of nature from the field of autonomous forms of knowledge, changing the legitimate critique of scientific positivism and the illegitimate conclusions derived from the contemporary crisis of science into a radically anti-scientific attitude. Moreover, the doubtful identification of philosophy with history implies two points of view (shared by the young Lukács, especially by the Lukács of *History and Class Consciousness*) which—after the collapse of philosophies of science of positivist style, and in the moment of the revival of the methodological debates related to the human and social sciences—deserve to be taken seriously in consideration.

The first point of view is the following: in opposition to positivist philosophy's position, historical knowledge is an autonomous form of knowledge, and—as a consequence—history and social sciences have a peculiar status and epistemological problems.

The second one is this: there is a close relationship between social science, history and philosophy. Put differently, historical-social knowledge is intrinsically of a philosophical nature.

As we have seen in the previous chapters as well, these considerations were destined to become, in different formulations, permanent motives of Lukács's thought.

Note

1 Fülep focuses on Croce (1902), the first ever chef d'eouvre on aesthetics published by Croce, usually referred to in English as *Aesthetic.*

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7

Lukács and the Art of Film: On a Chapter of his *The Specificity of the Aesthetic*[1]

Abstract: *Lukács's conception of film is analyzed here exclusively on basis of the chapter of* "The Specificity of the Aesthetic," *in which the philosopher endeavored to disentangle the aesthetic problems raised by cinematic art. Does film constitute an artistic form at all, and if it does, in which respect is it an art form? Lukács looked at the question in the framework in which Béla Balázs and Siegfried Kracauer examined it. He attempted to elaborate a proper film theory relying on the general categories of his* Aesthetic *like homogenous medium, double reflection, unity of atmosphere, ~~undefined~~ objectivity, and created immediacy. The fertility of these concepts is illustrated with numerous examples.*

Keywords: created immediacy; double reflection; homogenous medium; undefined ~~objectivity;~~ unity of atmosphere

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Many argue that a shortcoming of Georg Lukács's aesthetics derives from the lack of a proper analysis of film as an aesthetic phenomenon. Indeed, the problems of cinematic art pose many difficult questions and are the subject of ongoing discussions. Does film constitute an artistic form at all, and if it does, in which respect is it an art form?

Lukács himself did not discuss film art in detail. Apart from some sporadic remarks, brief essays and interviews, his theoretical and comprehensive discussion of the problem of film is limited to *The Specificity of the Aesthetic,* although it is worthy of note that in a youthful article (as early as in 1911!) he had already raised the question concerning a possible aesthetic approach to film (Lukács 1911).[2]

This chapter is an attempt to confirm that Lukács in *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* has indeed offered a proper starting point for the analysis of basic problems of film.[3] A further attempt will also be made to support the thesis that Lukács's aesthetic categories and the whole of his aesthetic theory altogether offer a proper theoretical framework for formulating and discussing basic problems of cinematic art.

As is well known, Lukács introduced the concept of "homogeneous medium" and its relation to everyday life when setting film art within the general framework of forms of consciousness. The concept of a homogenous medium serves as touchstone for distinguishing and characterizing various art forms. These two criteria form an organic unit: art is to be distinguished from everyday life whereby it develops a specific form of human experience within a homogenous medium (such as vision, audition, verbal language, etc.) as opposed to the heterogeneity of everyday life. Hence, the very problem here for Lukács (or the specific problem of the art of film in Lukács's approach) is to be found in the fact that these criteria cannot be applied to film art: film has not had a homogenous medium; cinematic art does not arise from the quotidian; on the contrary, it has just returned to everyday life.

How can we solve this contradiction? On which ground can we (or Lukács himself) consider film an artistic form of expression when basic categories of aesthetics cannot be introduced into the spheres of film?

Lukács himself, as a result of the dilemma discussed above, placed film into "marginal questions of aesthetic mimesis," discussing cinematic art only after music, architecture, applied arts and horticulture. And only "problems of pleasureableness" follow film in his ranking. However, the sequence within his book reflects a structural arrangement and not some sort of evaluation. *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* is, of course, an unfinished work. The existing first half of this text defined art, distinguished it

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from everyday life and other forms of expression (i.e., science, religion), and developed a general theoretical framework for artistic mimesis (drawing its examples mainly from the fields of literature and fine arts). Art forms based on *double reflection*, and among them not only film but also music and architecture, constitute marginal cases only in that respect as instances of *mimesis*.

How then, does Lukács analyze double reflection of film art? Not the aesthetic but merely the primary technological form of film is only a visual reflection of reality. First an image is formed reflecting reality in its authentic visible form and subsequently starts another process, the doubling of mimesis, its ~~extension~~ into aesthetic quality ~~and thereby the homogenous medium, artistic form of film is created.~~ To summerize Lukács's concept: authenticity is derived from the photographic base of film. Through a process of double reflection, film, while preserving authenticity of primary reflection, photography, forms reality in its unique way. It creates its own world. Film, due to its moving picture medium and strictly defined manifest positive character, on the one hand, does not abandon everyday life, the sphere of immediacy and objects; on the other hand, film art can transcend that immediacy of everyday life by mediating *unity of atmosphere (Stimmung)* in a quasi-unnoticed way through a second reflection; and can develop a second, created "immediacy," artistic composition, placing elements of the reflected factual life into new dimensions. Important aesthetic problems derive from this film-specific character of double reflection (namely, photographic authenticity constitutes a first reflection). Such a problem is, first of all, the tendency to diminish ~~*undefined*~~ objectivity, without doing away with it (because ~~*defined*~~ objectivity may be excessive: little is left to the imagination of an open-minded recipient, and too little remains unsaid and invisible). A second problem is the closeness to everyday life. Finally, a third one is a striving to minimize spiritual peaks.

AQ: meaning unclear. Words missing?

The first reflection in Lukács's concept is considered desantropomorphic, a mechanically photographed reality. This is the only point in his discussion which may obviously be refused today. Even a photographer is able to select the fragments of reality appearing in front of his/her camera by choosing direction, exposure, etc. Nor does a documentary filmmaker present "life itself as it is," a depiction of reality. Stills and scenes of feature films, on the other hand, are arranged just for the camera. A filmmaker has a specific creative vision and decides what the camera will focus on; a player consciously develops his/her role; both *details* and the *whole feature film* are consciously formed. (We should also note that Lukács is not the only film theorist to

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regard film as mediated reality. For instance, Siegfried Kracauer considers the essence of film to be its direct revelation of physical reality (Kracauer 1997).

However, the basic feature of Lukács's concept is not a disanthropomorphic character of primary reflection, but rather the element of this *double reflection* itself whereby this process has essentially determined specific characteristics and potentials of film art. Film editing, montage, is thus not only a technical necessity. *Takes* by themselves are determined by a creative preconception, an approach whose creative process will then be refined via editing (montage). Through film editing filmmakers further select from among scenes directed by them and acted by the players; they sometimes counter visual elements by introducing musical scores, sound effects, or by reinterpreting some parts. A complex *artistic composition* is formed in this way. Through the artistic experience of recipients that double character of creative process is reintegrated, for, Lukács emphasizes citing Walter Benjamin's seminal essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (Benjamin, 1936), the duality of filming and editing is always there.

Another basic feature of Lukács's concept discussed is that film is too *close to life*. The substance of film, audiovisual moving pictures, is a multifold substance which is not homogeneous and cannot be reduced from a sensual point of view; it reproduces visible and auditory forms of reality and is too near to everyday perception, heterogeneity of reality. In view of Lukács's concept each art form has its own homogeneous substance; fine art is a clear case of visibility, music is audibility itself, and literature has language as its homogeneous medium. They *recall* other spheres of perception in an indirect way; nevertheless they all create a level of condensation and concentration that exceeds everyday perception: *an intense totality*. Modes of creating space and time differ in various art forms (fine arts, being spatial, refer to actual time, while music, being temporal, refers to an actual or quasi-space), and the extent of ~~undefined~~ objectivity differs from art form to art form. When external factors are defined (fine arts), the internal ones will be undefined, unsaid; when, on the other hand, inner life of humankind is reflected (in music), then the external factors will be undefined. If nothing remains unsaid or undefined, that is, possessing an evocative power, the capacity for artistic impact has been terminated. This is why the very character of film, in that it is close to our everyday perception, poses an important aesthetic problem: film possesses the elements of visibility, audibility, verbal language, space and time, actual objects of everyday life and various manifestations of humankind's inner life—nevertheless, none of them appears in its

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totality. But some sort of abstraction necessary to artistic qualities is given: objects and people are presented not in their physical reality but in terms of reproductions, images. However, the photographic medium is to such an extent life-like, suggestive, as to create an illusion of identification. During the actual process of perception, the developing of distance on the part of the recipient is quite difficult, and can be reached only after seeing a film. Strengthening this process is a rather free wandering through time and the process whereby space is formed in front of our eyes—and even individually for each spectator: we approach or leave an object; we see it through the camera; distance and perspective are changing. As Béla Balázs puts it: our vision is directed by the filmmaker, with the result of not an actual public impact but rather a specific immediacy. Moving pictures themselves constitute abstraction and not immediate representation. It is still hard to create intensity, condensation, definite objectivity; to recall something, to refer to something beyond what can be seen directly on the screen or monitor, to create new systems of relation of phenomenon and substance; to create artistic *particularity* in film: an art so close to the ordinary and immediate, but so heterogeneous in its substance.

Lukács did not state that art cannot be created in film; rather, he emphasized how scarce such a case is and mainly that *atmosphere* was a mediating substance, the basic atmosphere of *a whole film*, the *created immediacy* developed through the second reflection hides artistic potential. In this he relied on Balázs, as Balázs's thoughts on the role of objects and acting in film were rather similar to his own. Moreover, he too thought of film as the folk art of the 20th century.

Béla Balázs was one of Lukács's spiritual companions from his youth; he later achieved a reputation as a film critic, film theoretician and screenwriter in Vienna and Berlin. In a major early work on film theory, *Visible Man*, published in 1924 (*Der sichtbare Mensch,* see Balázs, 2001), Balázs asserted that atmosphere was the most important aesthetic feature of film. Lukács, too, considered this atmosphere to be something of central importance in film art; however, he never analyzed it in detail. We consider this idea the most inspiring one of the chapter on film in his *The Specificity of the Aesthetic.*

How does Lukács interpret this category?

Everything depends on the atmospheric value, most of which is manifested visually but with some auditory elements. If, as a result of the work of the director and cameraman, atmospheric unity is achieved in aesthetical and historically significant films, then it will determine the cinematic techniques (tone, tempo and rhythm), the acting style, and the montage.

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And this unified atmosphere will guide the viewer's experience. This unifying principle can be—in Russian montage films, for instance—the mode of representing objects, the *pars pro toto* rule (the montage of the close-up of boots and of the long-shut of soldiers in the staircase scene of Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin)*, the portrayal of the crowd and the popular life in Italian neo-realism (in de Sica's *Bicycle Thieves)* and the suggestive presence of actors on the screen—determined by their physical features but also embodying a social type (the Garbo or Asta Nielsen phenomenon).

Thus, in Lukács's view, one of the most important actors was Chaplin, who created an emotional world closely resembling Kafka's and evoking a sense of horror and desperation both from within and—inseparably and concurrently—from without. The result was a kind of humor of world history, triumphing over terror and dismay and with a depth that enabled the esoteric to be transformed—in a popular fashion—into something exoterically effective.

This is a very original observation by Lukács. In film, the inner life remains undefined and is manifested as an external feature. Film not only displays and brings to life the external objective world; it also renders manifest the subjective aspects, those which are awakened in the actors by the outer world. In this way, it can represent the inner human world through the external material world.

The opportunities for depicting the inner world in film art are manifold and flexible. For instance, film can simultaneously demonstrate the dreamlike nature of a scene and the spiritual reality of the dream. But film can also—according to Lukács—give a feeling of reality and evidentiality to the most discursive fiction and fantasy. Since it can make anything believable and endow any object with reality, film has unlimited potential as a tool for portraying fiction. It can lead one toward everyday life and away from everyday life. And here too, the emotional range runs from a light and playful atmosphere to breathtakingly shocking horror. The boundary between closeness to life and authenticity on the one hand and stylization on the other is a relative one: the film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (by Robert Wiene) seems today to offer a distorted, misrepresented and stylized expressionistic pictorial world, but contemporaries considered it realistic. Here we are talking of the dreamlike phenomenon that even today we regard as a special feature of film, despite the closeness to life rooted in the photographer's milieu. Or, indeed, because of this closeness the inner pictures of our consciousness, even our nightmares, appear on the film screen as something real. The inner world is mediated by the external and specific film picture.

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In addition to the above thoughts (on the humor of world history and on dreams given a reality), Lukács's ideas on sound are also worth examining. These too are linked with humor.

Lukács wrote of the unity of atmosphere that is manifested by the visual but has some auditory elements. He argued that in sound movies the visual composition should be retained as the benchmark, even if a particular scene is primarily auditory. An excellent example of this is a scene from Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* where the musical dilettantism of the millionaire's wife is revealed, whose husband wishes to make her fashionable as a great singer. Here the humor stems not from the singer's botched job but rather from the look of despair on her teacher's face during the lessons, rehearsals and performance. If—says Lukács—we think in contrast of Beckmesser's purely musical comedy in Wagner's opera *The Master-Singers of Nuremberg*, then this unique feature of the film becomes evident to us.

While speech is the focus on stage, this is not so in film. Alongside noise and music, sound films include the spoken word, monologues, and dialogues—which in themselves represent just one of several elements of equal status, as determined by the visual and auditory atmosphere. The pure fact of a verbal utterance can be—by virtue of the atmosphere it creates—just as important as its content. By way of illustration, Lukács cites the great pacifist-humanist speech given by Charlie Chaplin at the conclusion of *The Great Dictator*. The sense of his words could be summed up more briefly, but the timing and the voice are determined by the underlying atmosphere of the whole film. This, Lukács stresses, is the human sounding of the nightmare we experienced in the war and in Hitlerism. In other words, the important thing in a film is not always *what* is said but *how* it is said, as well as the underlying emotional charge. Evidently, Lukács was touching upon one of the most essential principles of sound film dramaturgy.

Lukács expressed a similar view on the essence of the color film and the role played by colors in the atmospheric unity. He stressed that the decisive factor is whether the colors express the mood of the given moment, prepare the viewer for what is to follow, contribute to the atmospheric unity of the film as a whole, and merge in their integral unity with the other visual, auditory and content elements of the film. Here he cited one of the early color film masterpieces, *Henry V*, in which Laurence Olivier successfully assimilated a pictorial effect reminiscent of [the coloring of] Flemish painting into the late medieval atmosphere.

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To what extent, though, is Lukács's category of atmospheric unity applicable to modern film? Let us illustrate the usefulness of this category through some examples taken from the history of film after Lukács.

Obviously the level of abstraction and conventionalized quality shown by theater is beyond question in film art when, for instance, a "forest" is indicated or just painted as scenery. A forest—that is the actual trees themselves—must be show on the screen if images of a forest are to be developed in the viewer's mind. However, we consider this film art only when these trees and this forest represent and refer to something more than trees and forest themselves (such as the forest in Andrzej Wajda's *Birch Forest*, or Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*. *(Macbeth)*). Artistic abstraction, the extended and multifold meaning of motion picture images, may be reached through elaborating details and also through the very atmosphere of the *film as an organic unit*. Everything shown on the screen is something realistic, perceived immediately and directly, in visible and audible form: even images of a dream or flashbacks from the past are realistic. Not even the most abstract location, such as the fantasy landscapes of Andrei Tarkovsky's *Solaris or Stalker*, or a presentation of the inner life (Ingmar Bergman's *Cries and Whispers*) can be completely separated from the immediate objectivity, the visible elements. Beyond special effects through manipulation of color, exposure, the elaboration of visual details, the film in question as a unit radiates something more upon landscapes photographed and consequently the viewer, the audience will discover: we are now within the landscapes of imagination and inner spirit. Film art may overcome some difficulties derived from its specific substance: a composition may be integrated from various details which in turn will attribute new dimensions and aspects to these details themselves, or counteract them (this modern concept of *montage*, this contrapuntal character of filmic structure exceeds the traditional concept of montage inherent in direct changing parallel or contrapuntal meaning of sequences). An atmospheric unity may be formed which can, in turn, ensure the communication of something further, something undefined beyond reproducing visible and audible forms, as directly observed, of reality, and suggest interrelationships and inferred meanings. Within this ~~undefined~~ objectivity and quality a creative tension can be developed, because film art ultimately nevertheless homogenizes by developing itself as a *homogenous medium*, by the sensual *atmosphere* of human meanings in the world of the objects presented. This unity of atmosphere ensures some sort of separation from the visible as seen directly on the screen; effects an

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elevation, the formation of some rather abstract spiritual (emotional, cognitive) meanings; overcomes the difficulties inherent in the substance itself; all of which brings about the birth of some artistic experience of authenticity which may exceed the direct immediacy of moving pictures discussed above, or as defined by André Bazin, its irrationalistic power of persuasion. Hence, we have presented the theoretical significance of *atmospheric unity*. What, then, is the actual meaning of this concept?

Through this atmospheric unity, film art may include some facts of life in its presented world which are not included in the world of other art forms (or included but not in that way and not so directly): namely, the world of objects, things and human gestures.

Film art presents the world of things not by themselves but rather as *constituents of a human world*. Objects may take human faces; nature becomes landscape through filmic representation; something left behind by someone (a piece of clothing, a burning cigarette) may refer to its owner, an empty room may refer to its tenant—as was indicated, for example, by Béla Balázs in his *Visible Man*. Beyond the well-known examples offered by Béla Balázs and Siegfried Kracauer (motion pictures may show breath of wind via trembling leaves, tears in the corner of an eye, quiver of a hand, etc.) I would like to refer also to Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* in which we hear the monologue of Alma (Bibi Andersson) while we see *only* Liv Ullmann's face, her gaze, her trembling lips; and her silence, which attributes some additional meaning to this sequence and to the monologue. The eternal potential of verisimilitude may well be utilized in film art. An immediate presentation of external manifestations of an age as they are photographed in film also has its fascinating features: the way in which this art form catches the face of an age, outlook of its people, their preferred objects and belongings, images of streets, characteristic interiors, fashions; and beyond the world of material things also the characteristic human gestures, mimicry, behavior, the system of communication and meta-communication characteristic of a *specific age and national culture*. The visual humor of some pieces of the Czechoslovakian New Wave is peculiarly "Bohemian," such as objects not functioning or out of place; a hen preening on top of a car (Ivan Passer: *Intimate Light*); the excessive quantity of broken-down objects in the home of a hobbyist (Jiří Menzel: *Festival of February Fair-Maids*). Articulation, mimicry and gestures of players in the films of Akira Kurosawa or Kaneto Shindo are to such an extent "Japanese" that they sometimes surpass the power of understanding or insight of European audiences.

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The abstract qualities of an age can be preserved by music; its characteristic conflicts by drama; its everyday life through verbal language, literature. Only motion pictures, however, can directly register—audibility and visibility, and not through symbolic transformation—other important elements of an age: daily life, settings, the world of objects, characteristic faces, gestures, motion, style and atmosphere. Great potential for film art may be found in this quality. The *quotidian* represented in such a suggestive artistic power may overcome itself; it indeed communicates *history* itself, registering, photographing history as it is shown by human faces: this is the imprint of history in everyday life. Not only great historical events, rare moments, reversals of fortune, heroic deeds, or tragic downfalls constitute the history of mankind, but also the everyday life of people, their faces, their gestures, their material possessions. Film is capable of presenting this *everyday face* of history: people living in history and history in people.

Atmosphere—in the hands of able authors—may turn photographed images into artworks, building an organic own world on those images. The more a film is separated from its original realism, the more its chance of attaining aesthetic authenticity. Miklós Jancsó's *The Round-Up*, or Jerzy Kawalerowicz's *Mater Johanna* have created an emphasized contrasts of black and white and a conventionalized world of the imaginary in this way. *Color* has its artistic impact when it does not imitate the actual colors of the outside world in a naturalistic way, but rather when a system of color characteristic of the auteur is developed, and thus becomes an organic part of an atmospheric unity. It can also be employed to develop additional artistic impact (for instance, the feast scenes in Sergei M. Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* and the last minutes of Nikita Mikhalkov's *Five Evenings*). But it can also function as an all-encompassing determining factor: for example, the yellow smog, the industrial landscapes in Michelangelo Antonioni's *Red Desert*; or the basic red tonality in Ingmar Bergman's *Cries and Whispers*. Andrei Tarkovsky (*Andrei Rublev*) and Laurence Olivier (*Henry V*) have recalled the characteristic picturesque images of the ages presented. However, motion pictures demonstrating such atmospheric unity are not common. "Unity" for Lukács did not mean exclusion of any changes within one film or more atmospheric elements in the same film; he only criticized a major break within the world or style within one film (and there is such a break in his view in Vittorio De Sica's *Miracle in Milan* when it turns from the real to the fantasy). Nowadays we experience such abrupt breaks when directors increase authenticity of their feature films by employing original

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pieces of documentary films, despite the fact that *factual* authenticity has nothing to do with aesthetic authenticity, created inner world of artworks. In our view Alan Pakula's *Sophie's Choice*, with its reconstructed war pictures featuring the participation of the main characters, has achieved a greater harmonic unity than the traditional documentary excerpts of Auschwitz featured in many other films.

Atmosphere of a film is constructed through various sequences, various elements of the same scene, and within the same film this atmosphere may turn into another one without any major break. Atmospheric unity constitutes a *dynamic* term. A basic tone of grotesque is composed by alternating tragic and comic elements, although we can also find moments which are tragic and comic *at the same time*. A grotesque picture may be of summarizing a symbolic character (such as stamping the girl's bottom in Jiří Menzel's *Closely Watched Trains*; or the broken-winged, strange run of the main character down the hillside in Nikita Mikhalkov's *Etudes for Autopiano*); however, a film cannot maintain such a high level of abstraction and generalization. Films that present an abstract or conventionalized world (such as science fiction, or grotesque or satiric films) usually require a higher level of unity in style and atmosphere that other films nearer to everyday life, the narrative ones of a simple story.

Beyond an object-world it is human gesture that may determine basic atmosphere of motion pictures; this is also a source of artistic potential. A gesture also constitutes a fact of life, which when developed properly and assimilated into the organic world of art may become a fact of aesthetic quality. General features of society and specific characteristics of individuals may be integrated into direct actions or into unique ways of reaction and may appear in an immediate experience—this is gesture in a larger sense. Cinematographic art has its greatest potential in this respect. The essence of personality and the basic problems of one's life may manifest themselves when one's gestures, verbal communication, meta-communication and actual actions show continuous contradictions; we observe this in the behavior of the protagonists of Woody Allen and John Cassavetes; and we can experience their unique individuality and the social background of their conflicts through this very *divergency* in a way that could never be described through words. Another case is when the fate of a character is condensed into one single gesture when, for instance, Michel (Jean-Paul Belmondo) caresses his own lips with his thumb in Jean-Luc Godard's *A bout de souffle,* and this gesture is continuing in the final gesture of Patricia (Jean Seberg) at the end of the film. A similar example is Zbigniew Cybulski's pushing a glass of vodka on the counter in

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Andrzej Wajda's *Ashes and Diamonds,* or his moving with ease on a fast train, from one carriage onto the other, risking his life in Jerzy Kawalerowicz's *Night Train*. Obviously, when we separate a gesture characteristic of an actor, when we analyze the creative means of a player separately from our analysis of the object-world, we are simply succumbing to the constraints of analyzing artistic works, following the boundaries and shortcomings of this kind of analysis. These elements cannot be separated from each other within the *artworks* themselves: we cannot separate features, inner life of a character/actor, like Zbigniew Cybulski, from his gestures, his dark eyeglasses; nor can we separate the high level of moral resistance of the old woman (Lili Darvas) in Károly Makk's *Love* from her bonnet, eyeglasses, interior of her room, citations from Goethe, and her German accent. It is the *atmosphere* in its entirety that allows us to experience them, in that moment, in their immediate unity—but at the same time, they are not too strictly defined.

Beyond this enhanced meaning of faces of things and human gestures, their atmospheric radiation and further development in montage modern film art has developed its potential to bring out something more than immediately visible features. Skills repeated again and again, or the moving picture stopped (often at the end) can become of symbolic character, "elevating" levels of the film in question; such as the staring child in Nikita Mikhalkov's *Etudes for Autopiano* or a trolly running nowhere (in Nikita Mikhalkov's *Prisoner of Love*). Repetition in Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon* suggests various interpretations of the story told and of life itself: we can see the same events through the experiences of different people whereby the scenes are the same and only the interpretations, experiences differ. Through a lyric leading idea horses become of symbolic character in Zoltán Huszárik's *Elegy*. It is, in other cases, just a detailed, raw, prolonged elaboration of *one single picture* which emphasizes a metaphor; a picture more general in its artistic qualities than the one seen directly (Marco Ferreri: *La Grande Bouffe*). The *musical score* can also suggest something more general, some meaning not directly presented by moving pictures themselves: opera, for instance, as a substance in some Italian films (Federico Fellini's *And the Ship Sails On*, Bernardo Bertolucci's *Luna*). The musical score has a central role in Miklós Jancsó's film *Budapest*. Through the interrelated images of feasts and everyday life and music (Haydn, Bartók, Hungarian and Serbian folkmusic, popular songs by Joseph Kosma, choral works of Zoltán Kodály and a song of worker's movement) Miklós Jancsó has expressed the idea of national history and contemporary society, their meaning and the way in which they are the components of a national identity.

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Film art presents the visible and audible world; however, it suggests, condenses, abstracts more than that visible part: it creates tension, it internalizes, presents something hard to define conceptually, something beyond words to be experienced through its atmosphere. This, in our view, makes motion picture a basic relative of *music* (while not refuting the presence of some elements of literature, drama, epic poetry and the fine arts). We refer not merely to external characteristics such as the musical accompaniment to silent films. *Music* is the very art which is sensual, emotional and at the same time abstract; it is capable of transmitting spiritual and psychological messages and yet it expresses not only subjective inner qualities but also the universal, through this inner quality.

Efforts to depict more than just the representation of the object-world could be observed as early as with the authors of *silent film*: they made an attempt to present human beings' inner world. The acting of the leading character in Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Jeanne d'Arc* conveys certain features which accompany, interpret and make understandable both the internal and external events, such as trial itself, the arguments and attempts to persuade her, and her inner conflicts. The significance of atmosphere and music can also be manifested in subtitles, which may assume more than a purely informative function; calligraphic arrangement of lines (repeating, enhancing, increasing size of letters, etc.) have had their emotional impact and formed the rhythm of reception.

Dialogue in *sound film*, orally expressed ideas and words do not play as important a role as in drama, theater (where acting, scenery, spectacle music, etc. may indeed contribute to a complex impact; however, it is essentially the spoken text itself which constitutes the central expressions and impact). In film art, on the other hand, music, noise, sound track, and also their relation to the visual components (parallel, opposite, counterpoint) are at least as important as dialogue is. Content and meaning are composed only as a result of an *integration* of all of these elements and are not primarily a function of the dominant narrative or dialogue. Even if a dialogue or monologue has an increased contribution, the way in which the characters talk, their gestures, mimicry, intonation are at least as important as the pure content, information. Through gestures, metacommunication, the essence of personality and spirit are expressed in order to be directly experienced. It is not a conceptual meaning of speech which is a basic significance but rather the way in which it is integrated into the atmospheric unity of a film. Again, this feature makes film art a relative of music.

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Dialogue may be subordinated, and in some exceptional cases may even be abandoned. In Kaneto Shindo's *The Island* and in Ettore Scola's *The Ball* no words are spoken. Music and meta-communication, gestures and motion can tell everything and anything: the struggle for survival in *The Island* and some decades of world history, beyond some minor private drama of characters, can be seen from an unconventional point of view.

Dialogue may assume a function quite different from its original one. In Ingmar Bergman's *The Silence* the leading characters are in a country whose language they do not understand. They can communicate with each other (although they cannot understand one another); however, they cannot speak with the outside people such as the waiter, or the lover. ("How nice that you don't understand me." Anna says to her lover.) Dialogue hides ideas rather than expresses them. The very title, *The Silence*, also refers to this fact and not only to the silence of God. The strange, obscure language has a peculiar dramaturgic function in reference to Esther's profession as interpreter and her desperate attempts to discover the meanings of some of the words in that strange language.

Dialogue has a (non-cognitive) function differing from its original one and this has become a basic factor in this film. This ~~movie~~ appears throughout the whole film; the presence or absence of speech has its dominant position (and not ideas to be expressed through speaking). Some sort of conspiracy of silence and the termination of communication are also a starting point in Ingmar Bergman's *Persona*, including that of the motion picture and conflicts of the two leading actresses. A small child is taught to speak again in Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Mirror*, taking up a terminated dialogue in language again, just as he—as an adult—starts his self-analysis at the *very beginning* of the film.

AQ: Word choice?

Whereas dialogue is common to most films, the essence and contents of human relations may still be expressed in other ways, at least at climatic emotional and structural points. This culmination may manifest itself in the form of meeting bodies, in dancing or lovemaking. Beyond *The Ball* already mentioned we can also recall Carlos Saura's *Carmen* in this respect (the sensual, erotic attraction of a woman expressed through her body, movements, the aura vibrating around her, as well as dancing itself: all these factors stimulate the irresistable passion of man); and also dancing in Krzysztof Zanussi's *A Year of the Sun of Calm* where it is a culmination of love as well as a farewell of the leading characters, and this shot will then return as an image of memory before the woman's death some decades later. This love was born between people who could not understand each other's language

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but yet could still understand each other. And if there is an interpreter who understands both languages, he still will not understand them.

Any love story in film might be recalled as presenting examples of meeting bodies, such as the well-known scenes in Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima Mon Amour*. Nevertheless, an example more interesting than the common scenes of kisses or lovemaking is the emotional and artistic culmination of Ingmar Bergman's *Cries and Whispers*, when sisters who hate each other so intensely begin to caress each other as we hear a Bach suite. Not words, but rather bodies coming together, touching, and music combined can express how they have finally found each other.

Due to minor role of dialogue and the major one of music, and because of a certain lack of immediate presence of intellectuality, eroticism establishes the particular quality of atmospherical units in film art. In Lukács's view intellectual heights can hardly be achieved by film. The central category of atmospheric unit may explain that although intellectuality is still present in film art, it cannot be manifested in the way in which it is found in literature, but rather in another way—*through mediating atmosphere*. Pure conceptuality, manifested in a direct manner, intellectuality without meditation are alien to the art of film. (This is the conclusion of Siegfried Kracauer's theory of film.)

Lukács, on the other hand, has proposed that film has not found (until now) the proper way of presenting spirituality. To conquer intellectuality, to elaborate its own unique potential, is a historic process, a task for film. Eventually, I hope to suggest through our examples that modern film art has already demonstrated some achievements in this respect.

In film art itself, just as in music, the inner world of mankind manifests itself, although through showing and mediating the outside world. It might not be accidental (and even supports the affinity of film and music) that terms of musical theory seem to be the most adequate to present montage structures of modern film art. Sergei M. Eisenstein has written of the rhythmical montage, of the tonal montage, of overtones and counterpoint. An affinity of music and film has also been supported by the fact that music also constitutes a *double reflection* and its first level is not disanthropomorphic, either. An undefined intimacy expressed and felt through atmosphere has formed the basis of this affinity. It is our conviction that *atmosphere* has constituted a central term of film aesthetics. Extending the concept of Georg Lukács we may discover in atmospheric unity a functional analogy with the homogeneous medium characterizing other forms of art and expressions.

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Notes

1 This chapter was written in co-authorship with Judit Bárdos.
2 An enlarged version of this article was republished in 1913 (Lukács 1913).
3 There is little literature about this aspect of Lukács's aestetic, and few people appreciated his contribution to film theory. Among the few exceptions it is worth mentioning Levin (1987).

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