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Portrait of the Marxist as a Young Hegelian: Lukács' *Theory of the Novel*

He was a sentimental man, and a dialectician.

German Romanticism drew a close connection between its theory of the novel and the concept of the Romantic, and rightly so, for the novel, like no other form, is the expression of a transcendental homelessness.¹

LUKÁCS' FAME came late. Although he wrote *The Theory of the Novel* in 1915, when he was thirty and aspiring to a professorship in philosophy at the University of Heidelberg, it was not until 1971, the year of his death in Budapest, that the book finally appeared in English. The news of his philosophical and critical talent did not arrive here, in fact, until the 1960s. René Wellek was one of the first to take notice, announcing in 1961 that Lukács' "brilliant studies" had made him "the most outstanding Marxist critic today"; Harry Levin followed by singling out the *Theory of the Novel* as "the most penetrating essay that ever addressed itself to that elusive subject";² and there soon followed a host of other enthusiastic critics—Peter Demetz, George Steiner, Susan Sontag, George Lichtheim, and Fredric Jameson—practically all of them fastening on Lukács' early treatise on the novel as one of his major achievements.³ Even Lukács' arch-rival among fellow Marxists in Germany—Theodor Adorno—conceded that the early essay had erected "a lasting landmark in philosophical aesthetics."⁴

At the same time, however, Lukács' work has suffered the fate of most "classics": it has been more praised than read. The reasons for this are fairly obvious: there is, first of all, the problem of Lukács' enormous philosophical erudition (which proceeds on the simple assumption that one has read all of Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Weber, and others); and second, there is the problem of his heavily teutonic, abstract style. Both Peter Demetz and Paul de Man have conceded the difficulty of reading him—the *Theory*

of the Novel, as de Man puts it, is written "in a language that uses a pre-Hegelian terminology but a post-Nietzschean rhetoric, with a deliberate tendency to substitute general and abstract systems for concrete examples" (p. 52)—and even Thomas Mann, a lifelong supporter of Lukács, complained of the philosopher's "hair-raising abstractness."⁵

A further problem with Lukács' reception among literary critics both here and in England is that, even where Hegel and the Hegelian tradition *have* been received by English departments, it has been via Paris and the poststructuralists (Foucault and Derrida) rather than directly from Germany. Lukács, in other words, has largely been abandoned to social and political philosophers like Lichtheim, who have little to say about his literary criticism. In the following discussion I attempt to "background" Lukács for literary critics by placing him in the tradition of German idealist aesthetics to which he belongs, a tradition that starts with Winckelmann and continues on down through Adorno and Auerbach. Demetz has noted that Lukács "never left the territory of classical German aesthetics," that "in a certain sense he is the last Hegelian in the grand style" (p. 215); and de Man has also remarked that Lukács "can only be understood in the larger perspective of nineteenth and twentieth-century intellectual history," as "part of the heritage of romantic and idealist thought" (p. 52). It is against this larger background that I intend to measure him here. Not only should this make the *Theory of the Novel* more accessible, but it should also help illuminate important parts of the Hegelian tradition. My argument falls roughly into three parts: an exposition of Lukács' work; an account and critique of the German idealist tradition that lies behind it—with particular reference to Hegel; and finally, a look at more recent novel theory in the same tradition, specifically the work of Benjamin, Adorno, Goldmann, and Auerbach.

The *Theory of the Novel* bears the distinction of being Lukács' last major pre-Marxist work, a book, as he himself put it later, that saw him turning from the Kantianism and Platonism of his youth, *Soul and Form* (1910), and heading toward the riper Hegelianism and Hegelian Marxism of *History and Class Consciousness* (1923). Lukács actually wrote his treatise on the novel during 1914 and 1915 in Heidelberg, as the theoretical introduction to a larger study (a *Habilitationsschrift*) of Dostoevsky's novels. The outbreak of war, however, forced him to return to his native Budapest in 1915, and in 1916 he published the essay separately—as it now stands—in the *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*. In 1918 Lukács was turned down for a professorship in philosophy at the University of Heidelberg because of his Hungarian citizenship, and in the same year he joined the new Communist party in Budapest. From then until the 1930s, when Hitler drove him into exile in Moscow, he would write no more literary criticism, and thus the book on Dostoevsky never appeared, although notes for it were discovered posthumously, in 1973, in the famous "Heidelberg suitcase."⁶

Like all good neoidealists in the German tradition, Lukács begins his definition of the novel by measuring it against the Greek ideal: the Homeric epic. The novel, accordingly, is a "godless" epic, a degenerate offspring of Homer's sublime art, a form of what the Germans call *gesunkenes Kulturgut* and the Russian Formalists the "rebarbarization" of a genre. Lukács, of course, is following Hegel here. Hegel had defined the novel as a "bourgeois," or middle-class, epic, a narrative shorn not only of its gods and its hexameters but also of its upper-class heroes. In place of Achilles and Agamemnon we have Clarissa, the goodly Parson Adams, and Wilhelm Meister, and instead of magnificent palaces and battlefields we encounter only dusty roads and sordid wayside taverns.⁷ Lukács, however, in keeping with the theological, Dostoevskian strain of his study, is less "Marxist" here than Hegel, for he defines the novel, not in class terms, but in religious ones, as the epic of an age of "absolute sinfulness," the chronicle of a world in which the gods are dead (*Theory*, pp. 88, 152).⁸ Whereas in the *Odyssey* "a god always plots the hero's paths and always walks

ahead of him" (*Theory*, p. 86), in the modern novel we encounter a weary lot of romantic wanderers, solitary adventurers, and lonely quester-heroes.

In the first half of his essay, Lukács is largely concerned with exploring the contrasts between the epic mind of Homer's world and the narrative mind of his own time, a task he carries out with all the passion of a philosopher who feels, at thirty, that he is a latecomer to the world, an epigone. Homer's world, as we learn in the opening sentence of the study, was a sort of earthly paradise or golden age, what the German romantics had called a *heile Welt*: "Happy were the ages when the starry sky was the map of all possible paths—ages whose paths were illuminated by the light of the stars. Everything in such ages was new and yet familiar. . . . The world was vast and yet like a home" (p. 29). The sentence actually reaches back beyond the romantics to Winkelmann's famous *Thoughts on Imitation* (1755), the work that launched romantic Hellenism in Germany ("the tyranny of Greece over Germany," as E. M. Butler has called it) and that influenced Goethe, Hegel, and countless others. Using a terminology derived from Kant and Schlegel,⁹ Lukács informs us that the problem is that ancient society was integrated and "bounded," whereas modern society is unbounded and infinitely problematic. In Kantian terms, the ancient "noumenal" world has fallen and disintegrated into scattered "phenomena," resulting in the entrapment of the modern novelistic hero in a form of Kantian subjectivity: "Kant's starry firmament [the noumenal world] now shines only in the dark night of pure cognition, and lights no longer the solitary wanderer's path; to be a man in the new world [of phenomena] is to be a solitary" (p. 36). Lukács is stating here a romantic theory of consciousness: the farther we travel from the unselfconsciousness of the Greeks, the more we suffer from the burden of consciousness itself, and the novel hero becomes emblematic of this suffering.

The second half of Lukács' study is dedicated to a meditation on the historical journey of the novelistic mind. Starting with Hegel's distinction between "mind" and "world" (from the section in the *Aesthetics* on *Don Quixote* [p. 591]), as well as Max Weber's notion of the "ideal type,"

Lukács proceeds to argue that the novel has progressed from a concern, in Cervantes, for “world” and outer event (picaresque adventures) to an intense preoccupation, in Flaubert and other moderns, with “mind,” consciousness, and sensibility (e.g., in Flaubert’s *Sentimental Education*). The mind or “soul” of the hero expands from a “narrow” one into a “broad” one, and thus the movement culminates in the melancholy withdrawal of the protagonist into the totally inner realms of the aesthetic imagination and self-absorbed contemplation. (Huysmans’ *A rebours* and Rilke’s *Malte* would be examples here, as well as the early short stories of Mann, with their lonely artist-heroes.) Beginning as a picaro, the novelistic hero thus ends up an artist, or at least a hero of consciousness. The journey involved is what Hegel describes as “the inwardness of Spirit withdrawing into its own domain” (p. 594)¹⁰ or what Erich Heller has analyzed as “the artist’s journey to the interior” of the self—resulting in “the disinherited mind.” At the mid-point of this historical trip—whose ends Lukács designates as “abstract idealism” (Cervantes) and “disillusioned romanticism” (Flaubert)—he places *Wilhelm Meister*, whose hero sallies forth, an abstract idealist, to found a national theater, only to end up, a disillusioned romantic, marrying into society. Hegel had said much the same when he pointed out that the hero of the German bildungsroman “may have quarrelled with the world” but in the end “becomes as good a Philistine as all the rest” (p. 593).

It is important to stress here, however, that Lukács laments this “inward journey” of the novel, thus flying in the face of much of German idealism, with its generally positive valorization of inwardness. Hegel, for instance, as much as he admired Greek art, anticipated a time when literature would become so inner and self-conscious that it would actually be absorbed into philosophy, in an act of self-transcendence (something already transpiring among those hermeneuts and deconstructors who would totally absorb literature into their own philosophical texts). Goethe as well, in spite of his deep aversion to metaphysics, fully recognized that the novel was a “subjective” epic, one defined by the narrator’s subjective style, voice, and consciousness. Furthermore, the German ro-

manics, particularly Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, envisioned the novel as a form of grand *Märchen*, a sort of encyclopedic fairy tale that would absorb all corners of modern reality in its “pan-poetism.” Schopenhauer’s statement is the most explicit of all: the novel, he says, would be the “higher and nobler, the more inner and less outer life it depicted.” When we get to the twentieth century, actual novelistic practice in Germany corroborates these theoretical pronouncements: Thomas Mann, Hermann Broch, Herman Hesse, and Robert Musil have all created monumental novels of inwardness, which are scarcely to be found in such abundance in other traditions.¹¹

Lukács, however, whose sympathies were still very much with the nineteenth century, deplors this modern journey to the interior. In a highly romantic view of our collective history he states that the route of epic narrative leads from paradise, our true home (Homer), along a “via dolorosa” to the “melancholy of the adult state” (the novel). Moreover, in the process the gods of Mount Olympus are replaced by the inner demons of the modern psyche (Lukács’ term “demonic” is used in Goethe’s sense) (pp. 85–92). The view is one that Lukács would never abandon, in spite of shifting philosophical sympathies. In an essay on realism in 1909, for instance, he had warned of the “morbidly intense inwardness of today’s writers,” with their “wish to trace every mood to its innermost roots in the soul” (*Soul*, p. 74), and later, in his Marxist works of the 1930s, he would again sound the clarion call against modern inwardness, this time against Flaubert and certain German authors, writing after the failed revolutions of 1848 and what he called the “burial of the old Germany.” The obsession with “objectivity”—at first Platonic, later Hegelian, and ultimately Marxist—continues to haunt him, just as does the eternal dream-ideal of Homeric Greece.

Lukács has, in fact, been subjected to rather rigorous critiques on such matters, especially from Marxists. One of the most penetrating of these comes from Ferenc Feher, a member of the so-called Budapest School of Marxists that has grown up around Lukács. In an acute essay, Feher has sought to correct some of the weaknesses of Lukács’ study by pointing out that the antimodernism and “transcendental homesick-

ness" for the gods of Greece are actually forms of false consciousness, promoted by that grand opium of the intellectuals, German idealism.¹² Following Marx, Feher points out that the revolution against divine authority was actually the first step toward liberating man and revealing to him the countless possibilities for self-transformation, possibilities never even dreamt of in the philosophies of a Hector or an Achilles. As Marx stated, with reference to his favorite hero, Prometheus, the first revolt was directed "against all gods in heaven and earth who did not recognize man's self-consciousness as the highest divinity." Feher also demystifies Lukács' sentimental view of the early Greek *Gemeinschaft* (community) by pointing out that this society was based not only on a slave economy but also on a rigid, elitist, and hierarchical set of social values. Furthermore (as even Hegel had understood, in contrast to Lukács), epic heroes like Achilles were mere stereotypes, acting out divinely preordained roles in an unchanging society. In a word, the modern novel, far from representing the "melancholy of the adult state," portrays the true *humanization* of man, of his society, and of his institutions. In place of Olympus there is the secular will of a Robinson Crusoe, crafting his own tools as well as his fate, and what the novel had lost in classical sublimity it had gained in concrete emancipation, above all in its newly found sense of time and history. For, as Feher points out, it is our common mortality that unveils for us the major political and ethical dimension of life. The timeless world of Lukács' Hector and Odysseus exists totally apart from this historical reality.

Despite its romantic myths, however, the *Theory of the Novel* makes at least three instructive and interesting points about the development of the modern novel. First, Lukács remarks that the novel is generally constructed along the lines of a biography and/or quest-myth (pp. 60, 77). Moreover, the hero, unlike his ancestors in medieval romance, who ultimately arrive at the castle of the holy grail, is doomed to a never-ending quest, one much akin to that of life itself (here one thinks of Kafka's *Castle*, which appeared a decade later). Although Lukács is obviously basing these notions on the German bildungsroman (the open ending of *Wilhelm Meister*) and the mythic quest *Märchen* of the German romantics (Nov-

alis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, with its circuitous, Platonic journey), the insight is useful; it is supported, furthermore, by Northrop Frye and other modern critics who see most of Western literature resting on a fundamental "quest-myth." Second, Lukács is also much interested in the phenomenon of romantic irony in the modern novel, much like his forerunners Friedrich Schlegel and K. W. F. Solger. Although in his earlier *Soul and Form* (1910), perhaps still under the influence of Kierkegaard and possibly Hegel, he had come down rather hard on Laurence Sterne's use of romantic irony, Lukács is here favorably disposed toward it, primarily as a counterbalance to the increasing subjectivity of the genre. The romantically ironic narrator, in other words, with his omniscience, omnipotence, and fond detachment from his heroes, tends to function as a sort of substitute for the lost god-world of the Homeric epic. The overall effect, as Lukács puts it, is one of an attempt at "self-abolition of subjectivity" (p. 74), and he welcomes it.

A third aspect of the modern novel, beyond its biographical pattern and its concern with irony, is its obsession with the problem of time, a dimension Lukács explores with a good deal of ingenuity. Much like Auerbach in *Mimesis*, Lukács contrasts the time problems of modern literature with the timeless world of the Greeks: "Homer's heroes do not experience time," he explains, for they are virtually "changeless. . . . Nestor is always old, Helen beautiful, and Agamemnon mighty. . . . What they experience has the blissful, time-removed quality of the world of the gods" (pp. 121–22). Beginning with *Don Quixote*, however, time begins to creep into the novel, and with such perseverance that by the time of Flaubert's *Sentimental Education* (1869) it constitutes (in terms of both personal and historical time) a major force in the genre—except, in Lukács' view, in the novels of Tolstoy, where time departs from the novel once more in favor of a new epic "timelessness." Lukács characterizes Flaubert's use of time, in fact, by contrasting it to time in Tolstoy. Following Bergson's insights into the importance of memory for our time sense ("duration"), he suggests that in Flaubert there is a multilayered, "lyric" sense of time and memory,¹³ whereas in Tolstoy there is only a straightforward, epic-

dramatic sense of experience. The distinction, in effect, is very close to that in Auerbach between a multilayered “background” consciousness in the Old Testament and a “foreground” consciousness in the Homeric epic (see pp. 31–32 below). In Flaubert and other modern novelists, according to Lukács, a sense of temporal “flow” is created out of the chaos and fragments of reality by the act of remembering (pp. 124–25). Memory, in the very midst of its sad task of contemplating what is constantly vanishing from us forever (the happiest time in *Sentimental Education* is the *recollected* moment of standing on the threshold of a village brothel—on the threshold of life), also manages to assemble, preserve, and unify these scattered moments. The unity is totally inner and retrospective, to be sure, existing only in the mind and memory of the hero, but this lends such novels what Lukács calls their “lyrical” quality (“lyrical” here having the sense of the German word *Erlebnislyrik*, the poetry of subjective moments) (pp. 126–27). With these formulations Lukács is anticipating a major theory of the modern novel, namely Ralph Freedman’s *The Lyrical Novel* (1963). For what Freedman defines, in Virginia Woolf and others, as “lyrical” form is precisely what Lukács is describing when he points out that in Flaubert the epic event has become the “vehicle and symbol of unbounded feeling” on the part of the narrator and that the *soul itself*, with all of its longings, has become the real hero of the book (pp. 52–54). Four years earlier Lukács had defined this genre specifically as the “lyrical novel” and had given as examples *La vita nuova* and *Werther* (both mentioned by Freedman as well), pointing out that in them “the hero is just one soul and the action merely the longing of that soul” (*Soul*, p. 104; see also p. 82).

Lukács’ discussion of “lyric” time in Flaubert is not all that easy to follow, however. Paul de Man, for example, complains that Lukács, after writing an elegy to the organic unity of the epic, cleverly smuggles this back into the novel again under the guise of a unified sense of *time* (p. 58). I would not agree, however, and would argue that Lukács is simply asserting, in true Bergsonian fashion, that *recollected* time in Flaubert carries the *illusion* of the unity of *recollected* experience. The technique of *representing* it in the novel, however, is necessarily one of

fragmentation, juxtaposition, and discontinuity: “characters appear,” as Lukács states, “who have no apparent meaning, establish relations with one another, break them off, disappear again,” and so forth, but the effect on the reader is one of having participated in a lived experience—“the *semblance* of an organic entity” (*Theory*, p. 125). Lukács’ point is that in the lyrical novel the technique of juxtaposition (“the separate fragments of reality lie before us”) is very different from the immediate *impact* of the narrative, for contemplation of the broken reality somehow creates in the reader “a source from which the fullness of life seems to flow” (*Theory*, pp. 124–27). The notion is profoundly Hegelian: our past life, fragmented and embedded in Otherness, can become part of us again only if we contemplate its process and its history.

Lukács’ second type of time—that of unmediated, epic-dramatic “experience”—is easier to grasp: in contrast to lyric memory, this type is one-dimensional and totally “foregrounded” in the narrative present. In Tolstoy, for instance, “the past either does not exist or is completely present,” as Lukács puts it (*Theory*, p. 126). We think here immediately of Auerbach’s analysis of “foregrounded” time in Homer—as in the description of the scar that Odysseus had received in his youth. Moreover, whereas *time* is central in the lyrical novel of Flaubert, *space* becomes central in the epic (much as in drama) (*Theory*, p. 122).¹⁴ Tolstoy’s epic-dramatic novels focus, not on “absences,” “failures,” or “refusals” of time, as in Flaubert (*Theory*, p. 126), but rather on great dramatic moments, generally conceived of as tragic moments of death or near death. At such moments, as in the epiphany of Prince Andrew on the field at Austerlitz, the hero catches a sudden glimpse of the essence of life and finds that “his whole previous existence vanishes into nothingness in the face of the experience” (p. 149). Here again Lukács is quoting from *Soul and Form*, where he had emphasized that dramatic tragedy “is the form of the high points of existence” and that the “psychology of tragedy is a science of death-moments” (pp. 159, 161). Yet in Tolstoy these moments generally lead not into death but rather back into life and thus remain lost moments, isolated from the everyday social world. None of

these moments can embody the real *durée* that lies at the heart of the lyrical novel (*Theory*, p. 151).

It would be easy to argue that Lukács, in certain respects, is wrong in his assessment of time in literature. Classical tragedy, for example, was very much concerned with the question of time (as opposed to its genuine lack of importance in the Homeric epic), and Lukács' conflation of dramatic and epic time is frequently confusing, if not wrongheaded. Yet it should be pointed out that such misconceptions are often due to the heavy influence on him of the triadic historical schemes of German idealism: ancient time (be it Homer's or Sophocles') was unified; modern time is inner, multilayered, "lyric," and fragmented; and future time, in a sort of *ricorso*, will be unified once again, on a higher level. Lukács implies, accordingly, that there can exist only two paths that will lead us out of our modern obsession with time, inwardness, and lyrical reflexivity: either a return to Homeric narration, as in the novels of Tolstoy, or a radical leap into a form of millennial consciousness, as in the novels of Dostoevsky.¹⁵ Only when we realize this can we grasp Lukács' sudden proclamations, on the last page of his study, that Dostoevsky had "nothing to do with European Romanticism," that he "did not write novels" at all, and that he "belonged to a new world." Lukács' entire discussion of time, in other words—with its anxieties about modernism and its positing of a future utopian time—is very much part of the tradition of secularized theological history that we find in Lessing, Schiller, Hölderlin, and the German romantics (as well as in the chiliastic thinking of Lukács' contemporaries, the German expressionists, including his friend Ernst Bloch in *The Spirit of Utopia* [1918]). In fact, just two years before he began the *Theory of the Novel*, Lukács himself had written a Dostoevskian piece of fiction, an imaginary dialogue in an apocalyptic vein called "The Poor in Spirit" (1912). In this, through the voice of an expressionist poet, he had castigated the modern world in Manichaean fashion and then allowed his hero to commit suicide—with his Bible opened to Revelations iii.16, in which the Angel rebukes those who burn neither hot nor cold. When Lukács invokes Dostoevsky in his treatise as the forerunner of a "world to come," it is obviously

under the sign of this same Angel, who also tells us of an age to come in which "there shall be time no longer." With this notion, we are back with Lessing, Schiller, and other idealists of the eighteenth century.

Up until now I have ignored Lukács' considerable debt to Hegel in all of this, but I think it is time to explore some of the affinities so that we can see just how firmly Lukács is anchored in the German idealist tradition (to the ideological despair of such Marxists as Brecht, as well as to the epistemological despair of a number of Anglo-American empiricists).¹⁶ Behind Hegel himself, of course, stand Winckelmann, Lessing, Schiller, Goethe, Kant, Schlegel, Hölderlin, and others,¹⁷ but in this context I think we are justified in concentrating on Hegel, for more than anyone else he functioned as supreme codifier and mediator of this tradition. The first point to make is that Lukács' lifelong image of ancient Athens as an ideal society is taken directly from Hegel's *Aesthetics* (1820),¹⁸ a work that has exerted an enormous influence on the German mind from Marx on down through Benjamin, Adorno, and Auerbach. The sections of the *Aesthetics* on Greek society are so important, in fact, that they are worth quoting at length. According to Hegel, Homeric man felt at home in the world and enjoyed a true village sense of being and belonging—not only to the community but also to external objects around him. As proof, Hegel cites Homer's "numerous descriptions of external things," pointing out that Homer dwells less on natural scenes (as found in the modern novel) than on descriptions of such objects as "a staff, sceptre, bed, weapons, robes, door-posts, or even the hinges of a door." Although such things are of indifferent interest to our world, Homer "lingers over their description because all these objects ranked alike, and were valued as something in which man could take pride . . . because he had not been diverted into a purely intellectual sphere. Slaughtering oxen and preparing them for food, pouring wine, etc. is an occupation of the heroes themselves, for its own sake . . . just as in our time farmers, for example, talk at great length and in great detail about external things, or as our horsemen can expatiate on their stables and steeds, boots and spurs" (pp. 1054–55).

Lukács remains faithful to this Hegelian vi-

sion throughout his career, with the important difference that Hegel's "classicism" becomes Lukács' "realism" (a tactic employed by Auerbach as well, as we shall see). In 1909, for example, in one of his earliest essays on realism, he singles out the nineteenth-century writer Theodor Storm for his depictions of "simple rooms stuffed full of objects inherited from grandparents or even more remote ancestors," which come alive "in a rainbow of a thousand colors in the eye of the native, to whom every cupboard has many stories to tell about what it has seen and heard" (*Soul*, p. 64). In 1936, during his Marxist period, Lukács can write the same thing about Tolstoy's realism, stating that he is a "true-born son of Homer," portraying a rich "totality of objects"; and similarly, in 1963, he singles out Solzhenitsyn for his realism of "Homeric breadth" and his Tolstoyan "totality of objects."¹⁹

Hegel also provided Lukács with some keen (proto-Marxist) insights into the reasons why this early Greek state of affairs could have existed at all: it was primarily due to the specific type of economy involved. Homeric man's unalienated, unmediated relationship to things resulted largely from his preindustrial modes of production. His food and drink, for example—honey, milk, and wine—were simple to prepare, Hegel points out, in contrast to our present-day "coffee and brandy, which conjure up at once the thousand intermediaries which their preparation requires." The ancients "killed and roasted their own food; they broke in their own horses; and they made the utensils they needed: ploughs, shields, helmets, breastplates, swords, and spears were all their own work, or they were at least familiar with their manufacture." Thus, "Agamemnon's sceptre was a family staff, hewn by an ancestor to be inherited by his descendants; Odysseus carpentered his huge marriage bed himself"; and even the famous shield of Achilles, Hegel concludes, is "forged" by Hephaestus in front of our eyes (p. 261). Nowadays, however, as Hegel observes, "the production of goods is so split up by factories and workshops that we come to regard material goods and all the various steps in their production as something quite beneath us" (p. 1054). Lukács, in his later Marxist writings, picks up these suggestions, adding to them Lessing's insight into the dynamic nature of nar-

ative and Engels' comments on Balzac's realism, and comes up with his central distinction between true epic "narration" (Balzac's living portrayals of Paris) and shallow surface "description" or "reportage" (Zola's and naturalism's catalogs of dead furniture).²⁰

Behind the Hegelian and Lukácsian image of Greece there lies, of course, a romantic and sentimental myth—that of the pastoral or golden age of arts and crafts. Lukács himself noted this in 1909 (although he would later conveniently forget the point), asserting that, because of their "nostalgia for craftsmanship," the romantics viewed the Middle Ages as a "golden age" (*Soul*, p. 62). This nostalgia, he stated, constituted the "Rousseauism of the artistic consciousness . . . a longing for that thing most opposite to ourselves: that great holy simplicity" which emerges from "the birthpangs of an ever-growing awareness" (p. 55). Two aspects of this nostalgic myth had been particularly important to the German tradition, from the idealists down to the neo-Marxists: first, Hegel's notion that the Homeric epic portrayed and somehow embodied a "totality of objects" (p. 1077) and, second, the romantic notion that there existed, once upon a time, an "organic unity" of being. Both terms apply, somewhat confusingly, to society as well as to works of art. In the *Theory of the Novel*, for instance, we learn, again and again, that, "as for the community, it is an organic—and therefore intrinsically meaningful—concrete totality" and that Homer "sings of the blessedly existent totality of life" (pp. 58, 67). As Lukács himself pointed out in an early essay, the notion behind this myth is Platonic. It assumes that the world, when it was first made, was a "totality" on a mystical order, one in which men "could find their other half in every tree and flower; each encounter in their lives became a wedding." Life at this time was a "symphony which rang out from the totality of people and events as though every separate thing were an element of the whole" (*Soul*, pp. 65, 92). In fact, the concept of "totality" in Lukács, despite its later Marxist overtones, derives philosophically from the romantic belief—active in Hegel, Hölderlin, and Schelling—in the existence of an ultimate unity or mystical *en kai pan* ("one and all").²¹

The hidden dangers of an ideology and/or

aesthetic of "organicism" and "totality" are several. For one thing, the metaphysical "homesickness" for the "closed" society of the original Greeks, their "circle whose closed nature was the transcendental essence of their life" (*Theory*, pp. 33, 61), comes uncomfortably close to Karl Popper's use of the term "closed society" to designate a totalitarian ideology. By this I mean not merely that ancient Greece was a slaveholding, imperialist society—a fact willfully overlooked by German idealism—but that in a deeper sense an organicist ideology tends to go hand in hand with retrograde political yearnings—with, for instance, what Peter Gay has termed the "hunger for wholeness" in the Weimar Republic, which later led to Nazism. Adorno has complained along these lines not only of Lukács' sentimentalized concept of *Volk* or *Gemeinschaft* but also of the social Darwinism inherent in his obsession with decadence—both points of view being shared by the Nazis as well. As Adorno points out, the term "organicism" has "long since passed into the service of the ideologies of Irrationalism," and Lukács' rear-guard attempts at reconstructing an authentic epic consciousness embody, ironically, that very "regression of the European mind" which he is so at odds to combat.²²

The most radical critique of organicism—one that could easily be leveled against Lukács—has undoubtedly come from Derrida, who has argued at length and persuasively that much of Western metaphysics is based on a sheer fiction—the nostalgia for some sort of lost unity or ideal form of consciousness. In Derrida's eyes, all metaphors of totality, organicism, Being, and so on, are delusive myths; the hard truth is that the only reality is the reality of their indefinite deferment and unavailability—what Derrida calls "writing." Paul de Man, as already mentioned, has followed up this insight and criticized Lukács for his use of the term "organic," and Terry Eagleton has indicted Lukács' entire metaphysic of "wholeness," or organic totality, by placing it in the same camp with the views of D. H. Lawrence. Equally obsessed with a romantic anticapitalism, Lawrence composed powerful critiques of modern industrial society and possessed a "deep-seated commitment to an organic order—variously located in Italy, New Mexico, preindustrial England and, metaphori-

cally, in the novel-form itself."²³ Lukács locates the order elsewhere—in Homeric Greece, in Balzac's progressive, bourgeois Europe before 1848, or in Tolstoy's or Dostoevsky's Russia—but the idea is the same. Despite the ideological differences, the visionary landscapes of both thinkers are remarkably similar (and should be studied further; Lukács, of course, despised Lawrence).

Among Lukács' successors in the Hegelian tradition four in particular stand out, despite their individual differences: Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Lucien Goldmann, and Erich Auerbach. Benjamin's major essay on the novel is entitled "The Storyteller" (1936). Ostensibly reflections on the nineteenth-century Russian writer Nicolai Leskov, the study actually constitutes a short romantic hymn to the anonymous village storyteller of yore (as opposed to the alienated novelist of modern times). If this sounds vaguely reminiscent of Lukács, it is, for Benjamin not only pays open homage to the *Theory of the Novel* but also cites with particularly warm approval Lukács' special notion of the novel as "a form of transcendental homelessness." Moreover, he also furnishes, as "perfect examples" of the novel, none other than *Don Quixote*, *Wilhelm Meister*, and *Sentimental Education*! In fact, he even quotes from Leskov as if he were trying to imitate the opening of the *Theory of the Novel*: once upon a time, according to Leskov, "the stones in the womb of the earth and the planets at celestial heights were still concerned with the fate of men, but today both the heavens and the earth have grown indifferent; their time for speaking with men is past." Where Lukács had pointed to Homer as the ultimate source of epic realism, Benjamin points to the epic tales of the Middle Ages, but the result is the same: a romanticization of agrarian, artisan culture. Again and again in the essay, for instance, Benjamin emphasizes the similarity between a storyteller and a craftsman: "A great storyteller will always be rooted in the people, primarily in a milieu of craftsmen," he states. And again: "if peasants and seamen were the past masters of storytelling, the medieval artisan class was its university." Moreover: "in genuine storytelling the hand supports what is expressed with its gestures. . . . Traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the hand-

prints of the potter cling to the clay vessel.”

It is impossible for me to reconstruct Benjamin's entire argument here (he was fond of recalling that there were forty-nine levels of meaning in every passage of the Torah, and his own writings compete in complexity), but I think it is possible to single out at least four major points (only the last of which really moves beyond Lukács). First, the rise of the modern novel reflects the demise of the ancient “tribe” or “community” and the concomitant rise of middle-class solitude. Second, the modern novel furnishes sheer “information” (Lukács' naturalistic reportage) to be consumed rather than wisdom or counsel to be remembered. To the modern reader, for instance, “an attic fire in the Latin Quarter is more important than a revolution in Madrid.” Third, the novel is totally confined to local, historical time rather than being “embedded in the great inscrutable course of the world” (be this natural *or* eschatological). The true tale is thus anchored in what “Schiller called the epoch of naïve poetry.” And last of all, the novel, unlike earlier tales, “hygienically” and systemically represses death. Benjamin, much like the romantic Rilke, longs for those ancient times when “dying was a public process in the life of the individual and a most exemplary one; think of the medieval pictures,” he writes, “in which the deathbed has turned into a throne toward which the people press through the wide-open doors of the death house. . . . Death used to appear,” he concludes, “with the same regularity as the Reaper does in the processions that pass around the cathedral clock at noon.”

It should be added, however, that although Benjamin's essay mirrors much of Lukács (not only the *Theory of the Novel* but also the essay “Narrate or Describe?”), Benjamin was not nearly so hostile to modernism as was Lukács. For in the same year—1936—he also wrote his much celebrated essay on filmmaking and photography: “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” In this study, without totally abandoning a romantic nostalgia for what he called the magical cult “aura” of medieval religious art, he genuinely and enthusiastically supported a Brechtian commitment to a “technically reproducible art” for the masses. Yet on the whole, and in particular in his major

essay on the novel, Benjamin's sympathies were—like those of Lukács—very much with pre-industrial culture.²⁴

When we come to Adorno, we enter upon even more ambivalent, more complex ground than with Benjamin. Along with Marcuse, Fromm, and Horkheimer, Adorno was a member of the prestigious Frankfurt School for Social Research, a group that notoriously feuded with Lukács although they ultimately derived from the same German idealist tradition.²⁵ Adorno's philosophical elusiveness is notorious: on the one hand, like both Benjamin and Brecht, he was of a younger generation than Lukács and (perhaps partly for this reason) did not yearn for a return to nineteenth-century literature. In fact, he saw quite plainly that “the meaningful times for whose return the early Lukács yearned, possessed as much alienation . . . as the bourgeois age,” adding, perceptively, that “only as lost conditions do they become glamorous.” “The cult of communal epochs,” he summed up, “arose in the age of individual disintegration.” To avoid such romantic traps himself, Adorno took refuge in the philosophical stoicism of what he called “negative” dialectics (what Lukács sardonically referred to in the *Theory of the Novel* [p. 22] as “Grand Hotel Abyss”), by which he meant a dialectics devoid of any Hegelian optimism about attaining syntheses. Much like a character from one of his favorite Beckett plays, Adorno invoked Brecht's “bad old days” (against Lukács' good old ones), not for the sake of Brecht's bright Marxist future, but, much more darkly, for the sake of what Adorno called “the non-existent alternative.”²⁶

Yet, despite his studied pessimism and “negation” of all romanticisms, Adorno did not entirely escape Lukács' version of the Hegelian dialectic, with its positive valorization of the past. For in several of Adorno's writings there are strong traces of a Lukácsian nostalgia for a nonindustrial, nonalienated age—most notably in *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (1947) but also in his important essay on the novel: “Narrative Perspective in the Contemporary Novel” (1954). By “contemporary” novel Adorno actually meant the novels of Proust, Gide, Joyce, and Kafka, and by “perspective” he was referring primarily to the intolerably subjective narrative stance of these

writers. Thus he did Lukács and Hegel one better by finding modern novels not just “godless” and “middle-class” but also “negative” epics, ones in which the heroes, as well as the most ordinary, everyday characters, have been “liquidated” by excessive *Reflexion*. The narrative perspective had become so intensely subjective, in fact (we think of Proust’s private remembrances, Joyce’s interior monologues, Kafka’s narrated monologues), that the novel, in Adorno’s eyes, had “capitulated” to reality by abolishing aesthetic distance entirely (a finer version of Lukács’ and Benjamin’s modern “reportage” swallowing old-time “narration”). The novel’s subject matter, accordingly, had become a negative world in which “alienation” transmogrifies all human qualities into what is simply more “lubricating oil for the smooth performance of the social machinery.” One does not have to be a close reader to get the point here: unalienated man for Adorno obviously inhabits a preindustrial, agrarian culture. Thus, despite his infinite adeptness at navigating between philosophical extremes, Adorno’s underlying pessimism about modernism—which begins for him with the Enlightenment—puts him in virtually the same camp as Lukács and Benjamin, although without their eschatological frameworks.²⁷

Lucien Goldmann, after writing an appreciation of Lukács’ *Soul and Form* in 1950, devoted an entire essay to the *Theory of the Novel* in 1962 (see n. 3). In this, his main intent is to interpret Lukács the Hegelian Idealist as a thinly disguised allegory of what is really Lukács the Marxist Materialist. In ideological terms, the effort is obviously misguided, but it does demonstrate how close the *structure* of Lukács’ Hegelianism was to that of his later Marxism. Goldmann starts off with the materialist assumption that art, as part of the superstructure, reflects the economic substructure of society, and he concentrates above all on the problematic modern hero. Whereas Lukács viewed the hero’s quest as a search for the lost world of Homeric totality, Goldmann reads it as an economic allegory, one in which modern “exchange value” is questing for original “use value”—a process that reflects (as a “homology”) the nostalgia of our market economy for the original barter system described by Marx. What Adorno and Benjamin

characterized as general middle-class solitude becomes in Goldmann the radical solitude of private enterprise; furthermore, the cult of objects in the modern novel (particularly in the *nouveau roman*) corresponds to the fetishism of commodities under capitalism. The problem with this simple equation and one-to-one mapping, however, is that it cannot possibly incorporate phenomena as complex and overdetermined as art and economy. (Why was medieval nominalism, for instance, not a result of capitalism too?) In the end, Goldmann’s structuralism is most fruitful in uncovering the deep continuities in Lukács’ own problematic quest: between the image of the alienated hero in the *Theory of the Novel* and, for instance, the concept of the alienated “collective hero” of *History and Class Consciousness* (1923)—the proletariat. These structures *are* comparable (although not their content), and each tells us something about the other (just as the religious millennialism of the *Theory of the Novel* tells us something about Lukács’ later conversion to the political and social millennialism of Lenin).

The last theorist I should like to mention is Erich Auerbach, whose study of realism in Western literature, *Mimesis*, originally appeared in 1946. Paul de Man claims that Auerbach’s study “is grounded in a more traditional view of history” than is that of Lukács (p. 53), and probably most critics would agree with him. Yet I would argue here that a more detailed look at Auerbach reveals close affinities with the same Hegelian tradition that informs so much of the *Theory of the Novel*. In his famous first chapter, “The Scar of Odysseus,” Auerbach sketches what amounts to a phenomenology of the Homeric mind, and the outline should by now be familiar. Homer’s narrative, states Auerbach, portrays ahistorical “being,” focusing on a total “foregrounding” of objects (as opposed to Old Testament narrative, which features “becoming” and “background”). Lukács, however, has already told us that Homer’s heroes “do not experience time” (*Theory*, pp. 121, 127), and Hegel, that Homer “cleaves fast to the external world” (p. 1083). Auerbach also points out that Homeric epithets speak of “a need for an externalization of phenomena in terms perceptible to the senses.”²⁸ But again Hegel was there before him: Homer’s epithets, Hegel tells us,

“seize and place before us an essential quality of the particular in its concrete appearance” (p. 1003). Again and again we discover that Auerbach’s remarks on Homeric “realism” are essentially those of Hegel on Homer’s “classicism.” Consider, for example, the following comment by Auerbach: for the Homeric heroes, “delight in physical existence is everything, and their highest aim is to make that delight perceptible to us. Between battles and passions, adventures and perils, they show us hunts, banquets, palaces and shepherds’ cots, athletic contests, and washing days—in order that we may see the heroes in their ordinary life . . . enjoying their savory present, a present which sends strong roots down into . . . daily life” (p. 10). We need merely glance at Hegel’s own commentary on Homer (see pp. 27–28 above) to spot the striking similarities.

Similarly, Auerbach has basically borrowed Hegel’s formal definition of classicism (as a mixture of the lofty with the lowly, of spirit with matter) for his own definition of realism, which—referring to levels both rhetorical and social—he simply terms “the mixed style.” To take just one example: Shakespeare’s works, Hegel argues, are characterized by a dynamic juxtaposition of kings and clowns, the sublime and the everyday: “alongside the loftiest regions there are fools, louts, taverns, carters, chamber-pots, and fleas, just as, in the case of the birth of Christ and the Adoration, there are oxen and asses, manger and straw” (p. 594). Auerbach comes up with essentially the same commentary: Shakespeare, for him, embodies “a mixture of the sublime with the low” that is “rooted in popular tradition and indeed first of all in the cosmic drama of the story of Christ” (pp. 284, 490). Yet where Hegel notes a profound tension and even disparity in Shakespeare (as well as in the Gospels) between the high and the low (as opposed to their unity in the Homeric epic), Auerbach hymns only their “realistic unity.” Indeed, because of this refusal to distinguish between differing historical modes of realism, Auerbach often must go to extreme lengths to demonstrate that all, in the end, is “unified.” Even the *Divine Comedy*, for instance, becomes “realistic,” via the strategy of figural interpretation (whereby a *previous* reality is invoked to

anchor the work—“Dante as Poet of the *Earthly World*,” as he put it in his book title of 1929).

When de Man states that Auerbach takes a more “traditional” view of history than does Lukács, he means, I assume, that Auerbach appears to jettison historical schemes altogether in his quest to uncover a continuous “realism” throughout three thousand years of Western literary history. Yet a closer look tells us slightly otherwise. As René Wellek has remarked, Auerbach’s realism is indeed non-Hegelian, even ahistorical, in its stress on the constant truths of everyday life, and he calls this side of Auerbach “existential.” Yet he also shrewdly points out that there is in Auerbach’s realism a genuine tension, if not outright contradiction, between this existential side and what he calls Auerbach’s “Hegelian historicism.”²⁹ I would agree with Wellek and would argue that it is precisely this Hegelian dimension that brings Auerbach *closer* to Lukács’ type of historicism.

This can be seen most readily in the way all three historians approach the problem of the “end” of realism. Hegel, as we know, attributed the passing of classical Greek realism to the rise of Christianity, in particular to the profound inwardness of the Gospels. Lukács located the downfall in the inwardness of Flaubert. And Auerbach? For him, the date merely shifts even closer to the present day—to 1927, to be exact, and the inwardness of Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*: Woolf’s novels, Auerbach informs us, display a “fragmentation of exterior action” and a hopeless dissolving of reality “into multiple and multivalent reflections of consciousness” (pp. 487–88). Whereas Hegel had *welcomed* this inward turn of consciousness as part of the course of history, Auerbach clearly bemoans this journey to the interior, as the veritable downfall of the West: for him, Woolf mirrors, quite simply, “the decline of our world” (p. 487). With these words, however, we are straight back with Lukács and the apocalyptic close of the *Theory of the Novel*. Auerbach’s view of history may *seem* to be more traditional than that of Lukács, but when analyzed more closely, it reveals the same eschatological structure of idealism that is so much more evident in Lukács’ treatise.

It is time for summing up. Lukács, as a thor-

oughgoing Hegelian idealist, may err in the *Theory of the Novel* in the direction of what I would call "surplus metaphysics," but he still ranks, together with Benjamin, Adorno, and Auerbach, as one of our major critics and theoreticians in the German idealist tradition. Perhaps one of the best ways to assess his achievement is to refer to Isaiah Berlin's famous study of Tolstoy, *The Hedgehog and the Fox*, in which he sets up a typology whereby the hedgehog "knows one big thing" and the fox "knows many things." Tolstoy himself, as Berlin points out, was obviously a fox, but a fox who constantly strove (and failed) to become a hedgehog—particularly in the chapters on the philosophy of history in *War and Peace*. Lukács, by contrast, like so many other thinkers in the Hegelian tradition, was the complete hedgehog—yet a hedgehog who tried, again and again, and without success, to become a political fox (cf. his would-be conversion to Marxism-Leninism in 1918). Whereas Tolstoy's genius lay in fastening on the infinite variety of the world and perceiving how "each given object is uniquely different from all others," Lukács' talents lay in the opposite direction: he had the ability, which Tolstoy constantly longed for but never acquired, of relating everything in the

world to a central, all-embracing system, to a "universal explanatory principle," in Berlin's words, one that could perceive, "in the apparent variety of the bits and pieces which compose the furniture of the world," a deep and underlying unity.³⁰

The universal principles of Lukács and the unique visions of Tolstoy would never meet, but, much as in the classical myth of Platonic longing in the *Symposium*, the two halves, in their own ways, attempted to reach out toward each other (Lukács actually wrote one of his finest essays on Tolstoy), and the two were, ultimately, complementary. "No love will ever make one out of two" (*Soul*, pp. 92–93), as Lukács once commented, meditating on the myth of the two halves in the *Symposium*, but the longing itself, I would add, is the necessary and healthy sign. Lukács' own position, with all its strengths and weaknesses, is best characterized as just such a Socratic "philosophy of longing": "He was a sentimental man, and a dialectician"—and so he was.

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Notes

¹ The first quotation, which refers, in context, to Socrates, is from Georg Lukács, *Soul and Form* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974), p. 93. The second quotation is from Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971), p. 41.

² Wellek, *Concepts of Criticism* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), p. 348, and Levin, "Toward a Sociology of the Novel," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 26 (1965), 150.

³ The most important studies of Lukács' literary criticism that have appeared so far are: Peter Demetz, *Marx, Engels, and the Poets* (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 220–27; George Steiner, *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), pp. 325–40; Lucien Goldmann, "Introduction aux premiers écrits de Georges Lukács," *Temps modernes*, 195 (1962), 254–80; Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 51–59; Günter Rohrmoser, "Literatur und Gesellschaft," in *Deutsche Romantheorien*, ed. R. Grimm (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1968), pp. 396–

411; Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation* (New York: Dell, 1969), pp. 82–92; Manfred Durzak, "Der moderne Roman: Bemerkungen zu G. L.'s *Theorie des Romans*," *Basis*, 1 (1970), 26–48; George Lichteim, *George Lukács* (New York: Viking, 1970); E. Bahr and R. Kunzer, *Georg Lukács* (New York: Ungar, 1972); Fritz Raddatz, *Georg Lukács* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1972); Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 160–206; Graham Good, "Lukács' *Theory of the Novel*," *Novel*, 6 (Winter 1973), 175–85; J. Matzner, ed., *Lehrstück Lukács* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974); Bela Kiralyfalvi, *The Aesthetics of György Lukács* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1975); Agnes Heller et al., *Die Seele und das Leben: Studien zum frühen Lukács* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977); Sung-Wan Ban, *Das Verhältnis der Ästhetik Georg Lukács' zur deutschen Klassik und zu Thomas Mann* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1977).

⁴ Adorno, "Erpresste Versöhnung," in *Noten zur Literatur*, II (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1961), 152.

⁵ Thomas Mann, "Brief an Dr. Seipel," *Gesammelte Werke*, XI (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1960), 782. Mann's

interest in Lukács (who was ten years younger) was particularly strong in Mann's earlier years: important parts of *Death in Venice* (1912) are taken from a chapter on platonic love ("Longing and Form") in *Soul and Form* (1911); Mann's chapter on "Bürgerlichkeit" in *The Reflections of an Unpolitical Man* (1918) opens with praise for Lukács' essay "The Bourgeois Way of Life and Art for Art's Sake" in *Soul and Form*; between 1913 and 1922 Mann visited Lukács' parents in Budapest several times; in 1922, in Vienna, he met Lukács for the first and last time; in the *Magic Mountain* (1924) he painted a (distorted) portrait of Lukács in the figure of Naphta, a fanatical Communist and Jesuit Jew, whose ideas on the coming "Kingdom of God" closely resemble those of Lukács in his 1912 essay "Von der Armut am Geiste" (trans. as "On Poverty of Spirit," in *The Philosophical Forum*, 3 [1972], 371–85); and in 1929 in an open letter to the Austrian chancellor, Dr. Seipel, Mann pleaded successfully for Lukács' political asylum in Vienna (Lukács was to leave for Moscow the following year).

⁶ See Ferenc Feher, "The Last Phase of Romantic Anti-Capitalism: Lukács' Response to the War," *New German Critique*, 10 (Winter 1977), 141–43.

⁷ On this general point see G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), p. 1092. Hegel, incidentally, was not the first to use the term *bürgerliche Epopöe* (which Knox translates as "popular epic"); J. C. Wezel had used it in 1780 to define the genre of the novel in the introduction to his own *Hermann und Ulrike*. And Fielding, of course, had defined the novel as a "comic," or lower-class, epic in his 1742 preface to *Joseph Andrews*.

⁸ The concept of "absolute sinfulness" Lukács borrows from Fichte's *Characteristics of the Present Age* (1806), although it also ties in with his earlier interest in Kierkegaard.

⁹ On Kant's and Schlegel's terminology for differentiating the ancients from the moderns (Schiller's "naïve" and "sentimental"), see Arthur Lovejoy, *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1948), Chs. ix–xi.

¹⁰ Erich Kahler made use of this insight of Hegel's in *The Inward Turn of Narrative* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), and I have done so in my article "The Picaro's Journey to the Confessional: The Changing Image of the Hero in the German Bildungsroman," *PMLA*, 89 (1974), 980–92. The journey from epic to novelistic consciousness in general is also traced by Marthe Robert in *The Old and the New: From Don Quixote to Kafka* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1977); she does not, however, refer to the Hegelian-Lukácsian tradition.

¹¹ See Goethe's "Maximen und Reflexionen," No. 938. Goethe, of course, is referring to the author, whereas Lukács is referring to the hero, but the notion of an informing (subjective) *consciousness* in the novel is central to both. For Lukács on the "pan-poetism" of the Romantics, see *Soul and Form*, p. 48. For Schopenhauer, see *Essays and Aphorisms* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1970), p. 165. For Mann's view, see his still

untranslated essay "Die Kunst des Romans" (1940; in *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. x [Frankfurt: Fischer, 1960]), which draws liberally (without saying so) on the Hegelian-Lukácsian tradition by pointing out that the novel is postepic, prosaic, ironic, bourgeois, and so forth. Mann's description of the modern novel as "creative consciousness," however, is taken from Merezhkovsky.

¹² For the points made in this paragraph see Ferenc Feher, "Is the Novel Problematic? A Contribution to the Theory of the Novel," *Telos*, 15 (1973), 47–74. On the Budapest School, see Lukács himself in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 June 1971.

¹³ As Lukács points out in his 1962 preface to *Theory of the Novel*, the subjective sense of memory in Flaubert is close to that of Proust (p. 14). I am indebted to both Marianne Hirsch and Michael Ryan for helping me rethink and reformulate Lukács' complex ideas on time here.

¹⁴ See Lukács' similar comments on the collapse of time in the drama in *Soul and Form*, pp. 158–59.

¹⁵ These two paths have since been explored by Thomas Mann, in his essay "Goethe and Tolstoy" (1922; in *Essays of Three Decades* [New York: Knopf, 1947]), in which he plays off the spiritualists Dostoevsky and Schiller against the sensualists Tolstoy and Goethe; and by George Steiner, whose *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky* (1959) is openly indebted to Lukács' *Theory of the Novel*.

¹⁶ See, for a recent example, Laurence Lerner's "The Triumph of Scylla: Lukács' Theory of Realism," *Encounter*, 49 (Aug. 1977), 36–49, esp. p. 49.

¹⁷ On the German idealist tradition, see Wimsatt and Brooks's *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (New York: Vintage-Random, 1967), Ch. xvii, and Lovejoy, Chs. ix–xi.

¹⁸ The *Aesthetics* was first published posthumously, in 1835, but it was originally delivered as a series of lectures in Berlin in 1820.

¹⁹ See Lukács, *Studies in European Realism* (New York: Grosset, 1964), p. 153; *Solzhenitsyn* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971), pp. 20–21. De Man, for some reason, informs us that Lukács' "insistence on the need for totality" is a "definitely *post-Hegelian* element" (p. 54; italics mine). In actuality, the will to *Ganzheit*, or "totality," together with its privileging of the symbol, plays a major role in the aesthetics of the *Goethezeit* and actually *culminates* in Hegel. Benjamin, for example, in his *Origin of German Tragic Drama* (London: New Left Books, 1977, p. 186 et passim), mounts his theory of allegory and the luminous fragment as a sort of dialectical counterpart to this dominant notion of the symbol and the organic whole in German idealist aesthetics. Moreover, Lukács himself openly admits to taking the term "totality" from Hegel (*Studies*, p. 151). For more on Lukács' concept of totality, which is central to any understanding of his aesthetics, see G. H. R. Parkinson, ed., *Georg Lukács* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), pp. 147–72; Lucien Goldmann, *Lukács and Heidegger* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 40–52; Kiralyfalvi, pp. 84–88; and

Martin Jay, "The Concept of Totality in Lukács and Adorno," *Telos*, 32 (1977), 117–37.

²⁰ See "Erzählen oder beschreiben?" (1936)—trans. as "Narrate or Describe?"—in Lukács, *Writer and Critic* (London: Merlin, 1970). For Lukács' comments on Lessing, see *Studies*, p. 152; for Engels' comments on Balzac, see his letter to Margaret Harkness in 1888, published in Marx and Engels, *On Literature and Art*, ed. L. Baxandall and S. Morawski (St. Louis: Telos, 1973), pp. 114–16.

²¹ See Lukács' comments on the Romantics' use of this term (*Soul*, p. 48).

²² See Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 44, and *Noten zur Literatur*, II, 178. It should be noted, however, that the problem of a nostalgia for an unmediated, organic mode of existence is an enormously complicated one and obviously transcends Nazism. As René Wellek has reminded us, it derives ultimately from Plato and Aristotle and carries on down through Schiller, Hegel, and Marx to T. S. Eliot's "dissociation of sensibility," Heidegger's "Being," and to the agrarianism of the Southern New Critics (Wellek, "The New Criticism: Pro and Contra," *Critical Inquiry*, 4 [1978], 616–17). See also Jeffrey L. Sammons, *Literary Sociology and Practical Criticism* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 57–63. The problematic notion can also be found, in different forms, in Barthes and Foucault.

²³ Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology* (London: New Left Books, 1976), p. 157.

²⁴ For both essays by Benjamin—the one on Leskov and the other on "The Work of Art"—see his *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 1968), pp. 83–111, 217–53.

²⁵ On the Frankfurt School, see Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923–1950* (Boston: Little, 1973).

²⁶ See *Negative Dialectics* (New York: Seabury, 1973), p. 191, and *Minima Moralia* (London: New Left Books, 1974), p. 245. I am very grateful to Michael Jones for alerting me to these particular passages in Adorno. For two excellent studies of Adorno's complex aesthetics, see Fritz Raddatz, "Der hölzerne Eisenring: Die moderne Literatur zwischen zweierlei Ästhetik: Lukács und Adorno," *Merkur*, 31 (1977), 28–44, and Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute* (New York: Free Press-Macmillan, 1977), esp. Ch. iii, "Dialectics without Identity."

²⁷ For Adorno's essay see *Noten zur Literatur*, I (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1958), 61–72.

²⁸ Auerbach, *Mimesis* (New York: Anchor-Double-day, 1957), pp. 3–4.

²⁹ See Wellek, *Concepts*, p. 236, as well as his "Auerbach's Special Realism," *Kenyon Review*, 16 (1954), 299–307.

³⁰ *The Hedgehog and the Fox* (New York: Simon, 1953), pp. 1, 36–37.