

GYÖRGY LUKÁCS

SOUL & FORM

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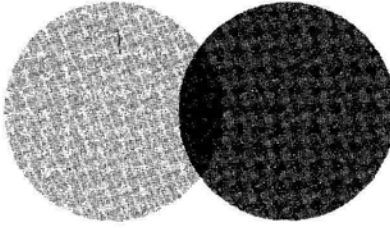
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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

Judith Butler



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AFTERWORD

The Legacy of Form

Katie Terezakis

My role can be summed up thus: to trace the direction of theoretical work for those who come after me. If I have succeeded in discovering the right method, then I may say that I lived well, that it was worth living.

GYÖRGY LUKÁCS

Lukács's earliest essays are charged with irony, hyperaware of their own formative activity. The irony is matched by Lukács's regard for the works he treats; Lukács exhibits such willingness to be moved by his subjects and to elaborate on his amazement that we too feel startled to attention. Not simply because the essays are sophisticated beyond the probable scope of an author less than twenty-five-years of age or in view of Lukács's resourcefulness in taking a set of literary works into philosophical custody. Rather, what is initially startling about the works first collected as *A lélek és a formák* is the way that, even as they unwittingly articulate the advance from Lukács's Kantian considerations to his later Marxist standpoint, and even at their points of outward vacillation, these short studies record Lukács's voice, naming-into-being the character of the critic and philosopher, or the reborn critical philosopher, who he determines himself here to be. These are the essays Lucien Goldmann was to associate with a "tragic Kantianism"; studying in Berlin both just before and as he is writing several of the essays, Lukács is indeed steeped in the Kantianism of the day.¹ Yet where some have found an unequivocal rejection of the Kantian partition of

concepts and objects, or an uncoordinated reliance on Kant, later to burgeon into Lukács's full-blown critique of Kantian epistemology, the watchful reader finds Lukács appropriating aesthetic judgment, in its most faithfully Kantian commission, for application not to the formlessness of raw nature, but to a vague and raging social world. Later, needless to say, Lukács will rely more emphatically on Hegel.² But before he comes to appreciate the inner workings of Hegelian Spirit, we now learn, Lukács is immersed in an aesthetics of form. From the inaugural moment of his work, Lukács's fundamental concern is with the dynamic relations between cognitive concepts that together undertake things unmanageable and unknowable, lending these wild objects their own relative unity, and therein achieving a form with which we can cope.

Soul and Form poses a transcendental question, just as the Heidelberg *Aesthetics* was later to do.³ As Judith Butler points out in her introduction to this volume, Lukács is pursuing the conditions under which forms emerge, and looking to works to reveal the way they still bear the conditions of their emergence. Lukács's concern with "conditions of possibility" is not merely quasi-transcendental. To be sure, he is appropriating the Kantian aesthetic judgment of nature for a judgment to be made, in and through artworks, of otherwise insurmountable social matters. And in fact, Lukács neither overtly thematizes Kantian philosophy here nor lays a well-lit path leading back to Kant's third *Critique*. Yet it is the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* that galvanizes these essays: Lukács has discovered that "form" is the answer to his transcendental question, and that the power of form to schematize into a meaningful whole, succeeds, in artworks, via the program Kant renders for a *Reflexionsbegriff* geared toward unifying cognitive powers. For all their expressive endeavoring, each of these essays, in staging its awareness of form, celebrates the securing for cognition of an otherwise unapproachable ambiguity. While "Socrates' life rings with the sound of the deepest, most hidden longings," Plato gives it form in an "attempt to comprehend the nature of longing and to capture it in concepts." Whereas "German longing" is said to be "so strong . . . that it destroys all form," Charles-Louis Philippe appears here because, in his work "longing truly dissolves itself in form"; Philippe gets the better of formless sentimentality by conceiving for it a "sentimental form."

In a sense, then, Lukács inherits the spirit of the German Romantic tradition that pins its hopes on reading the Kantian notion of nature as a social sign to be experienced not merely in the judgment of its beauty or sublimity,

but in the beauty or sublimity of artworks. For Lukács, reason itself, in aesthetic judgment, is still involved in what Rodolphe Gasché has called the “para-epistemological task” of anchoring cognition in the face of the unknown, but what is crucial for Lukács is not a hidden intuition of nature’s form or totality, but the graphic presentation of a form of life, demanding to be made explicit in a given artwork, before dispersing again into the life that demands it.⁴ Lukácsian form follows the protocol of Kantian form, but where, in Kant, our pleasure in aesthetic judgment results from finding nature amenable to our cognitive powers, Lukács is surveying the orienting composure with which we may grasp our relationship to a modern society otherwise too massive to confront. It is the legacy of this approach to form—the approach that grafts onto the apparent formlessness of modern society the Kantian approach to the formlessness of nature and that introduces artworks as those forms that secure the possible comprehension of formlessness—which proceeds out of *Soul and Form*, by both renowned and uncharted routes, to link a diverse group of theoretical and artistic approaches concerned with communicative forms as strategies for orientation, critique, and resistance.

FROM FORM TO TOTALITY

In Lukács’s own works, the notion of form as presented in these early essays becomes, in turns, “rationality,” “unity,” and the “whole,” all of which coalesce in the scheme-work of “totality.” Lukács continues to see works as responses to questions posed by their times; moreover, as Martin Jay emphasizes, while *Soul and Form* presents antinomies (system and life, form and fullness, conventional ethics and authentic existence) whose resolution is sought, but not achieved, Lukács never ceases to acknowledge, in Jay’s words, that “normative totalization can . . . only come at the cost of life, never in accord with it.”⁵ Lukácsian totality involves no claim about an uncorrupted rationality or reality buried underneath experiences.⁶ In keeping with its Kantian heritage, totality is an arrangement made to accommodate cognition, aware that any final synthesis of lived experience and its formal expression may be incessantly disrupted by life’s demands. So in Lukács’s subsequent work totality plays, in part, a regulative role, postulated in order to coordinate the world into a decipherable whole. Yet whereas the concept of totality might allow for analysis of the “antinomies of bourgeois thought,” Lukács also finds that the promise of totality becomes the unsettled, perpetually frustrated desire of the modern novel. If, in *Soul and Form*, Lukács

seems to oscillate between the prerogatives of form, even while appreciating form's cognitive reach, then by *The Theory of the Novel* this oscillation itself has become a principle: while the novel expresses a lack of dynamic integration in the lives and works of human beings, the selfsame novel repeats this disparity in its very structure.⁷

As the task of form comes to be that of totality in Lukács's own thinking, it splits into a double image. On the one hand, in a modern situation characterized by fragmentation and fetishism, the category of totality becomes a methodological strategy we impose; with it, we create the space and the directive for the resistance of ideology. Where knowledge itself or the contemporary "form of objectivity" is ideologically laden, the category of totality directs us to appreciate the historical roots of contemporary epistemic, economic, and social forms. Totality, in other words, guides a genealogical inquiry that links our contemporary forms of objectivity, or ways of knowing, with a particular and changeable episode. Discovering ourselves as historically determined, namely by social forms and activities, we find that we can determine our own ongoing transformation. In revealing social relationships *as* reified, the category of totality, juxtaposed with the given form of objectivity, allows us to revitalize their dynamic association. Lukács's initial thought about the command of form, then, is soon after divided into the problematic form of objectivity and the methodological postulate of totality.⁸

Modern artistic forms endeavor to organize the stuff of life into a meaningful interpretation of the world, but they cannot put an end to alienation or deliver individuals from it. Lukács continues to reconsider—sometimes from mutually opposed perspectives—the consequence of an artwork's capacity to convey merely the appearance of resolution and, with that virtual achievement, the possible role of artistic forms in creating a life free of estrangement. Conversely, the conception of form presented in *Soul and Form* also comes to be the petrified, lifeless mechanism of a mode of being associated with inauthentic "ordinary life." Though soul uniquely creates form, form may become an alien externality, divorced from real innovation and detrimental to it. In Lukács's most negative assessments of the modern novel, as in his infamous condemnation of works by Joyce or Kafka, his central concern is with the way works formally reproduce, rather than revolutionize, the isolating disengagement of ordinary life, their insurgent intentions notwithstanding.⁹

Drawing from these dual images of form, Lukács's Budapest school students go on to elaborate the way that aesthetic theory, a product of alienated society, may yet function as an independent philosophical discipline.¹⁰ Lukács, too, is powerfully aware of the significance, for his standing as a critical philosopher, of his own modern ("bourgeois") investigative context. Once more, the category of totality, née form, guides his examination of the conditions for the social contradictions he identifies, as well as his own methodological approach to them. As Steven Vogel shows, Lukács and Adorno meet and part ways on this point, for while both criticize "a reductionist *Verstand* . . . for its failure to comprehend the complexity and contradictory character of the whole and the role of internal relations in constituting it," at the end of the day, Lukács alone remains optimistic about the power of dialectical thought to grasp these complex internal relations as a totality.¹¹

In regard to the possibility of grasping and communicating the conceptual scheme-work of totality or unity, Jürgen Habermas introduces his key notion of a "form of understanding" [*Verständigungsform*] in a deliberate "analogy" to Lukács's "forms of objectivity."¹² Habermas argues that the paradigm shift to his theory of communication acknowledges the structural violence that distorts intersubjective communication. But he claims that in the face of the disintegration of objective reason, Lukács's more traditional notion of subjectivity provides no support for a reflective subject or class capable of establishing unity.¹³

In response, Ágnes Heller charges that the Habermasian paradigm gives up the sensuous, needing, feeling human being of such central concern to Marx.¹⁴ Stripped of his creaturelike aspects and possessing a personality structure composed of "cognition, language, and interaction," or based on rational communication, Habermas's addressee is universalized reason. Yet in giving up Marx's account of human motivation, suffering, and need, Habermas also sacrifices an explanation of the motivation for distorting communication in the first place, likewise the motivation for rectifying that distortion. Habermas knows that human emancipation depends upon collective action in the interests of the dominated (or in the interests of all); he also knows, with Marx and against historical Marxism, that supplying an organization theory for political action would be both patronizing and ultimately obstructive of democratic progress. Nonetheless, Heller goes on to argue, consensus is the telos of the Habermasian process of enlightenment, and precisely consensus on "the theoretically derivable interpretations" of a set

of interests (using the language of Habermas's *Theory and Practice*). Habermas, in other words, claims the universal applicability of his paradigm and asserts that emancipatory interest as such is theoretically imputed. An entailment of Habermas's position is the belief that in the collective consciousness, the reasonable realization should prevail that, in Heller's words, the interests of "one particular social group are identical with emancipatory interest as such." Therefore, Heller shows, despite Habermas's outward rejection of Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness*, he shares its central proposal: in order to achieve consensus, the universal good of human emancipation must be inherent in the interests of one particular social group, a group that remains able to recognize and communicate those interests. Consensus is the shared awareness that affirms and undertakes self-determining action. "There are political differences between Lukács's and Habermas's theories," she concludes, "but no important theoretical ones." According to the leading theorist of the Budapest School, the Habermasian theory of communication and the Lukácsian notion of imputed consciousness share a fundamental theoretical standpoint, and for both, that standpoint hinges on the relative possibility of grasping and communicating totality.

TOTALITY AND EXPERIENCE

Fredric Jameson contends that Lukács's conversion to Marxism is best understood as part of the organic development of a distinct set of concerns that never stops animating his thinking. Jameson goes so far as to pose, against the standard reading of Lukács's repeated "self-betrayals" or dogmatic apologetics, the possibility that all of Lukács's "successive positions [may prove] to be a progressive exploration and enlargement of a single complex of problems."¹⁵ Lukács is concerned with social totality, presented in "human terms" from beginning to end; Marxism steps in, for Lukács, when he realizes how Marx's construal of socioeconomic interrelationships entails the repossession of human historical- and species-being. Jameson gives Lukács credit for doing in philosophy what Marx did in economics: aiming his critique not at the details of the theories and works he treats, but at a radical reformulation of the model within which they must be interpreted.¹⁶ So we misunderstand Lukács if we assume that he ever sought works (whether polemically or approvingly) to fit the theory dictated by the party he served; on the contrary, Lukács became a communist "precisely because the problems

of narration . . . required a Marxist framework to be thought to their logical conclusion.¹⁷ Lukács is concerned with dynamic relationships; that these may be misappropriated in a static, disengaged way by any work or theory failing to come to terms with totality becomes his definitive problem. As with the forms that gave expression to Socratic and then German longing in *Soul and Form*, in the narrative of totality we apprehend not only the interdependencies of our lives and labors, but among them, the associations of our own diagnostic position. Jameson sees a clear link between Lukács's early handling of literary form and later application of totality in the phenomenon of narrative, because, he contends, narrative's primary activity is to weave dialectical relations into a temporal whole, thereby providing an experience of integration impossible in both ordinary life and systematic philosophy. Jameson's own defense of "narrative as a socially symbolic act" (the subtitle of his book on the topic) begins with this insight.¹⁸

In "The Moment and Form," Lukács identifies in Beer-Hofmann's poetry "a deep, religious sense" of the interconnection of all things. "The sense that I can do nothing without striking a thousand resonances . . . so that each action of mine . . . is the consequence of many thousands of waves which have met in me and will flow from me to others." Herein Lukács locates the most severe function of form: to take the reader to the "abyss of silence," to the "great moment" in which he must be struck, like the motionless Socrates, before the inarticulate richness of life and the soundless void of the form through which we may interface with it. Form brings us, perhaps only momentarily, a surge of appreciation for the accomplishment of form, which fails to yolk the meaningless splendor of Being, and in failing, wrests from it a record of its own attempt. Lukács is riveted, in the *Soul and Form* essays, by an almost inexpressible esteem for two human traits above all: honesty and courage—and in most of the cases he explores there is no real difference between them. Form may be valueless, but honesty and courage are required to forge it thus; to work alone, heating and pounding it into the casting from which any further signature of its maker will disappear. Form allows for truth-telling, and the truth for which we require such courage is that we are making our truth, which we trace in the contours of form and extend universally. Beer-Hofmann fights the "most heroic battle for form," refusing to compromise his technique of great moments, and Kierkegaard commits with "splendidly heroic" (if self-deluded) intensity to the inner honesty of his "gesture" of earthly renunciation. Likewise, Novalis becomes

the only true poet of the Jena circle, for his great deed was the life into which he seamlessly—that is, intensely but untragically—poeticized the deaths that besieged him. In one way or another, these essays converge around the possibility of looking at life veraciously; Lukács's author-heroes may suffer anguish, their hearts may be broken, but they hold themselves together, each committed to truthful judgment of the world they bear. What grips Lukács is the way that for each, form is both the achievement and the condition of renewed courage and honesty. Form is how each writer copes with the world and, again, form is how they tender their coping to us.

The coping mechanism in form is what Jameson associates with “concreteness in art”; it is what allows us to access the “deep, religious sense” of the interconnection of all, solely in human terms. Modern works make visible, in artistic creation, that which has been projected onto religion and can only be recuperated philosophically. When Beer-Hofmann's or Kierkegaard's or Novalis's religious yearning is suggested in form, or presented as a new way of presenting, the character of religious yearning itself is placed in an immanent force field and declared a matter of historical development. If the modern artist can merely present the longing for interconnection, not interconnection as such, then this only intensifies the courage necessary for honest depiction. Lukács's appreciation of the forms constructed to convey “great moments” entails the self-critique of aesthetic culture as historically and ideologically laden. Yet where the religious longing of his authors can only be recorded in form, remaining empty, the turn to analyze forms themselves, as unities accommodating dynamic relationships, delivers on a certain experience of totality. When Lukács speaks of the “redeeming power” of form, it must be appreciated in this critical, even ironic sense. This is what the suicidal son of “On Poverty of Spirit” misses when he tells the surviving narrator: “Work grows out of life, but it outgrows life; it has its origin among things human, but is itself nonhuman—indeed, it is counterhuman.” These are the words of one who fails to manage, who proves unable to use the work or the form to depict a great deed that remains a *doing*, as when Martha, the narrator, succeeds at recreating their dialogue, and Lukács at creating it.

If form is that by which the apparently accidental is made necessary, that gathering into a unity before which we must be struck silent, astonished by the interconnections of what we use, say, know, and ignore, of our everydayness and the index of its deepest tendencies, then the recognition of form is always a matter of self-discovery. Form is not just personal or individual; nor is it, as Lukács writes in “The Metaphysics of Tragedy,” “a question of

epistemology (as it is in philosophy), but of the painfully and immediately experienced reality of the great moments.” It is in these, Lukács confides, that we encounter “the pure experience of self.” The “great deed” gives form to the “great moment,” and its fundamental activity, to borrow Ágnes Heller’s phrase, is an act of “self-choice.” The central concept of self-choice is just one of several themes Lukács shares in common with Existentialism; for now it is enough to mark the way that Lukácsian form matures into the notion of totality not only as a methodological parameter, but as an achievement of self. In this respect, Lukács’s conversion to Marxism and tenacious support of the party should be seen as his own great deed—or at the least, Lukács’s description of great deeds and moments must be understood as his assessment of his choice and subsequent fidelity to it. Following the great moment of recognition in which Lukács’s view of interpersonal misunderstanding must have sharpened into his systemic discernment of alienation, a philosophy of totality and of praxis became necessary for him. Aesthetic theorizing may have taken Lukács up his Mount Moriah, but a deeply ethical concern already inspires his aesthetic investigations and plainly extends from them to his embrace of Marx.¹⁹

TACTICS AND CRITICS

I have already mentioned Jameson’s identification of Lukács’s “basic strategy” of focusing on art in its gradual dissociation from religion and its attempt to defend its own sovereignty: the strategy of following art’s genealogical heritage and the context of its advance to the present moment. This strategy is meant to reframe our grasp of our own times as ideologically laden; “the notion of historical evolution is thus essentially a *form* or pretext for a new politicization of our thinking.”²⁰ The responsibility of the critic, namely to interpret works, entails proffering an experience of adaptation and transmutation; aesthetic interpretation “locates” art, now to paraphrase Heller and Fehér, and this location is also a diagram of the position of the thinker vis-à-vis society.²¹ Jameson, as well as the thinkers of the Budapest School, takes the historical character of artworks to be the channel for taking on the difficulties of the present; indeed, they also share the more robust position that philosophical interpretation is necessary for and constitutive of artworks. As such, they side with Lukács over “impressionist criticism,” single-work-centered “art criticism,” and “bifurcation in evaluation,” which reject the association of distinct works with totality and the “lifeless abstractions” of philosophical evaluation.²² Heller and Fehér identify Theodor Adorno,

particularly in his musical writings, as the savviest and most potent representative of the bifurcation position, for despite the depth of his appreciation of philosophical culture and his own rootedness in philosophical values, Adorno's claim is that the New Music, in its "rootlessness," must be judged strictly on its own terms, regardless of the "whole" function of art or the tyranny of philosophical concepts.

When the young Lukács identifies form as the commandeering of an idea, or the answer to a timely question, his implicit position is that his own critical analysis is necessary to evaluate form, that is, to draw out its suggestions and the values they convey, no less than its fitness for conveying them. Later, Jameson notices, Lukács tends to associate "realism" with works that transmit their own interpretation, works that are both themselves and commentaries on themselves (an aspiration the Jena Romantics associate with the "romantic" or "ironic" work). Jameson takes it that these two modes—work and interpretation—are in any event now divided; he takes it that the literary fact, along with the heap of isolated details of our social reality, today "cries out for interpretation, for decipherment, for diagnosis." And informed by Lukács as he is, Jameson also realizes that contemporary philosophy and political science have grown too weak for the task. Thus, Jameson's vision of literary criticism and his wide-ranging summons to its practice is of unmistakably Lukácsian heritage: the critic must interpret the fragments of a totality his times have lost the ability to see; to wit, the critic must compare seemingly objective forms to history and must evaluate the present by taking on the cultural products still saturated with but oblivious to their derivation.

To the extent that this is its directive, Lukács is the spirit haunting the whole domain of literary criticism. Without plain reference to Lukács, Kenneth Burke uses the active, didactic nature of proverbs—the form he associates with realism—to anchor an analysis of literature per se, proposing that even the most complex works of art be considered "proverbs writ large."²³ In the *Philosophy of Literary Form and Language as Symbolic Action*, Burke proposes that an array of literary forms, like their proverbial models, be investigated as tactical schemes prepared for deploying viable responses to indefinite, potentially hostile situations. Just as Lukács utilizes the Kantian aesthetics of form for application to uncontainable social states, Burke proposes that we understand works as strategies, specifically in the military sense. Words are "designed to organize and command the army of one's thoughts and images, and to so organize them that one 'imposes upon the

enemy the time and place and conditions for fighting preferred by oneself.”²⁴ This maneuvering *is* the artform. When a work of art has named strategically some arrangement or the conditions under which it is experienced, it offers us concurrently the *attitude* with which the arrangement ought to be met. In the most complex or unfamiliar situations, situations for which we have not yet developed an appropriate vocabulary, artworks create for us an “informal dictionary,” communicative of the bearing to be assumed in conversing through them. Burke calls “sociological criticism” or the “sociological approach” that scholarly undertaking which should aim to codify various aesthetic strategies and their associated styles. The sociological approach reads the “symbolic action” of any linguistic or artistic achievement as most accessible structurally by reference to its function; form is pragmatic in that it conveys how a work was designed to do something specific, and insofar as it secures and communicates the general attitude—itsself an implicit totality—that recipients can share. Thus a work’s formal coordination is interdependent with its emotional adaptations; Burke calls the emotional and technical maneuvers of the artwork “two aspects, we might say Spinozistically, [which] are but modes of the same substance.”²⁵ Soul, in other words, is readable and deployable definitively in form.

Now to paraphrase Jameson, genuine criticism intends to be diagnostic, not merely descriptive. Literary criticism is instigated with a dialectical commitment; from the moment of its modern activation it is intended to take up where philosophy lies stalled on its own compartmentalization and professionalization. Whereas Habermas is concerned with recovering the critical subject able to analyze her own relationship to hegemonic discourses, Jameson finds that the Lukácsian, Marxist diagnosis of ideology already detects a “strategy of containment” that introduces controls against encountering the full consequence of any given explanatory structure (or form of “objectivity” or “understanding”). A strategy of containment conveys a false totality or an approach to form that remains caught at the surface phenomenon of parts, arranged into a digestible scheme. Like the “aestheticist” reading of Kant that remains bound to the question of how parts are made into an internally coherent whole, while suppressing the transcendental issue of how we form representations of unknown natural objects, the ideological strategy of containment and its specialized defenders evade the insight that was available in Kant all along: for even if form is intuitive, reflection upon it, or the ability to be critical, requires that form be

named, that a comportment toward it be developed, and that it be set upon contemporary discourses.²⁶ For Jameson, the idea of totality in Lukács and Marx, or for that matter, of the Hegelian dictum that “the true is the whole,” entails a method of disabusing people of their enchantment with, or unrealizing acceptance of, any ideology that contains within itself an apparently consistent overview of its elements, while pacifying the urge to question what it has excluded from explanation. On Jameson’s reading, deconstructive or poststructural attacks on “totalization” already exhibit this awareness, even if vaguely; approaches that emphasize Derridean difference or Deleuzian molecularity, for example, like their precursor in Adorno’s negative dialectic, are “second-degree critical philosophies” seeking to critique the repressive whole by inhabiting its structures and deconstructing themselves as its emissaries.²⁷ It is with this view of poststructural strategies in mind that Jameson goes on to elaborate the aforementioned means by which the concept of totality—absent but for its positing—can be employed as a means of narrative analysis.

Correspondingly, Martin Jay maintains that in *Soul and Form* Lukács refuses individual and psychologistic solutions to social fragmentation as much as he rejects any certain resolution of the antinomies and deficiencies of contemporary experience.²⁸ For Jay, the “tragedy of culture” is defined by the necessary noncoincidence of subjective and objective meaning; Jay finds that Lukács “hints at” but refuses to pursue the possible application of a new totality.²⁹ It is this “possible new totality” that later critical theorists associate with strategic positing and that Jameson in particular reads as, and develops into, a channel for analyzing narrative. At about the same time, Lukács’s Budapest School colleagues are developing an aesthetic theory likewise noticeably drawn from Lukács. For the Budapest School, as for critical theorists of the Frankfurt School, art creates human contact and constitutes an ideal or “forlorn” totality; the fundamental paradox of modern artworks entails their ability to conserve “species-values” in an alienated society while at the same time conveying a false feeling of connection, a false claim of unity, and hence the atomization of everyday life.³⁰ In another dimension of the same paradox, we know that artworks must be philosophically interpreted in a way that reveals their historicity; at the same time we hold that philosophical interpretation ought to reveal their essential validity, or their steadfast ability to bear messages and convey values. As such, “aesthetics as an independent philosophical discipline is the product of bourgeois society,” yet it comes into being with the discovery that modern bourgeois

society is inescapably fractious. Where art has established its sovereignty from religious jurisdiction, philosophical aesthetics, as interpretation and evaluation, has become constitutive of art; where aesthetics has become an autonomous philosophical initiative, it is also a derivative of bourgeois modernity, geared toward interpreting and evaluating its own genesis.

Heller and Fehér charge that attempts to solve this fundamental paradox—between art's intersubjectivity, communicability, and public significance, on the one hand, and the need to use art for cathartic experiences, given the emptiness and alienation of real intersubjective, communicative, and public life—are at the root of most all philosophical aesthetics excepting Kant's. So in any case, the role of the critic, whether we call her a critical philosopher or an aesthetic or literary critic, is scored into the impossible tensions of modern bourgeois society. Yet what shifts into gear, in the work of Lukács and his descendants, is the realization that while the antinomies of modern bourgeois culture cannot be reconciled or transcended, the critic can contextualize them as strategic, guerrilla answers, capable of rallying defiant thoughts and feelings in part by exposing what is weak in a dominant ideology's most formidable lines.

Aesthetic criticism as a genre belongs to modern public life, which means both that artworks will be utilized in attempts to constitute and sanction values and that they will be interpreted as the screens on which the residue of contemporary life should leave its mark. Yet whereas the Adornian critic will struggle, however futilely, to illuminate works in a clearing freed of any totalizing framework, the Lukácsian critic, in attempting to reveal her own course of reception, her own experiences and the attitude that they are generally valid as judgments, endeavors instead to create a public.³¹ Where modern societies tend to preclude thriving communities and to allow artists to touch recipients only through market mechanisms, the critic must sustain a public without conceding that the antinomic character of modern public life has been overcome; indeed, the Lukácsian critic speaks to a public *about* the failures of public life and the impotence of aesthetic criticism in addressing them.

On these grounds, György Márkus, another member of the Budapest School, argues that all of Lukács's aesthetic works, whatever their oft-cited differences, are devoted to solving one and only one problem: the problem of the possibility of culture.³² Márkus tells us that culture was the single thought of Lukács's life, his highest value and most relentless interest. In Lukács's 1913 "Aesthetic Culture," Márkus finds culture in an intermediary

position between form and totality, “unifying all of life’s phenomena” and allowing for a meaningful unity; in *The Theory of the Novel* he finds this same aspiration for an authentic culture in which “vague longing [is] given form.” From the beginning, Márkus maintains, the question of culture meant for Lukács the question of the possibility of an integrated life. The role of critic into which Lukács cast himself entails the responsibility to diagnose the “crisis of culture,” without retreating into easy resolution or homogenization, but it also entails prescribing a way through the crisis.

The critic’s ordnance of choice is the essay, a form designed to mediate between art and philosophy. The essay conveys its author’s experience of life, not his dissolution of its riddles; it invites the reader to share an experience and, in the course of that experience, it expresses a stance toward the scenes it recreates. At times, the essay (especially the Lukácsian essay) may break into polemic and counterpolemic, becoming its own interlocutor; Márkus argues that Lukács’s experiments with mutually contradictory theses and self-critique (he shows that Lukács wrote “The Metaphysics of Tragedy” alongside “Aesthetic Culture,” which avidly criticizes it) must be understood as trials carried out on structural elements of the essay form itself. It is therefore no accident, Márkus continues, that several of the works most crucial for coming to terms with Lukács’s philosophy are actually dialogues—Lukács’s version of the essayistic form pushed to its own structural extremes.³³

Márkus’s identification of the problem of culture in Lukács helps to explain the recurrence of ever newer attempts to define “form” in his work, not only in *Soul and Form* but throughout his oeuvre. In trying to get down a binding delineation of form in some final or supplementary expression, Lukács may have been thinking through his own task as a critic—both reminding himself of his commitment and continuing to focus in on its scope. For indeed, following Márkus’s suggestion, we can make out the bolt of appraisal running through Lukács’s work, tracking the question of how souls can communicate without misunderstanding, how people can live free of alienation, and how from the flux and futility of everyday life, a form of universal, collective significance can materialize. If form makes works of art possible, then works of art, together with their philosophical critique, are the conditions of culture. Works and their cultures show that meaning is achievable; they enact meaningfulness in their striving for it; this is what Lukács calls the “redeeming power of form.” But the critic is also an advance guard, alert to the insidious and commonplace paths on which

forms may become reified and obstructive. Any form can be fetishized to the point of irrelevance and inauthenticity. The critic needs an existentialist's antennae, sensitive to the way that the irreducibly singular individual creates form. It is the particular, the exceptional, the wonder-struck soul who imbues form with value; as such, this individual provides the founding principle, Márkus writes, of every social institution and cultural form. Hence the critic's art must involve discerning, in a generally communicative form, the soul or personality developed to the utmost singularity and, only as such, transcendent of pure individuality. The critic discerns the aesthetic form of the singular soul; for what the genuine individual realizes, and continues to strive for, is his or her own incomparable personality. The "good news" brought by the critic is that such self-realization is possible for all.³⁴

Here again, Márkus's argument sheds some light on Lukács's self-understanding as a critic, for each of the figures he chooses to follow in *Soul and Form*, and to defend as realistically portrayed later in his career, are also models of souls who have abandoned every aspect of everyday life that was not authentically theirs—not created or claimed by them and expressive of their own being—yet who attain universality or a measure of enduring meaning in their works. These are Lukács's author-heroes.

Nevertheless, the idea that the critic's task is to distinguish and extend culture, even when this begins with a crisis of culture, need not follow from the "negativity" and "ambiguity" of Lukács's early philosophy. Lucien Goldmann returns persistently to Lukács's early essays and their "tragic" vision of the permanent absence of external meaning, along with the disturbances that same absence gives rise to within the soul who refuses to accept or deflect it. Yet following Goldmann's route through Lukács and back to Pascal, into the vacancy left by the *Deus Abscondus*, Maurice Blanchot finds in Lukács's affirmation of the "way through" the paradox between individual and universal—the way of culture—just another instance of a totalizing form involved in the business of expulsion and exclusion. Insofar as the telos of art is culture, Lukács must shun any art and experience that permanently resists cultural assimilation. It is for this reason, Blanchot argues, that Lukács comes to label as "reactionary" all art and literature that provokes his uneasiness. Lukács's anxiety duly results from his sense of such art's detachment from culture. This is not a matter of mere unfamiliarity with a new or foreign artform or of some more banal ethnocentrism. No, Blanchot clarifies, what Lukács and others like him "deny and (rightly) dread in artistic

experience is that which renders it foreign to all culture. There is an a-cultural part of literature and of art to which one does not accommodate oneself easily, or happily.”³⁵ Accordingly, while both Blanchot’s and Márkus’s views of Lukács locate him on an unbroken path from his early to later contributions to criticism, their evaluation of the responsibility of the critic, and of Lukács’s own execution of it, are poles apart. And again, the core of that divergence is the relative evaluation of the possible totality of culture, in its ability to unify without destroying, or at least to account for its own vain attempts.

THE PROBLEM OF STYLE AND THE EXISTENTIAL SELF

The “problem of style” waits at the periphery of any discussion of form, both as a matter of the expressive potential of new forms and, more restlessly, as the question of whether form is really anything more than a stylistic device, that is, an unnecessary rhetorical addition used to add affect to an idea or argument. Relatively recent efforts to fix on the problem of style, particularly in what has since come to be called French theory, deconstruct claims about the formal neutrality of various theoretical systems in terms of the issue of their presentation. Once again, Kant plays a kind of Janus-faced forefather to these interventions, insofar as he presents the critical project as an “architectonic” and “schematism” without style or literary merit and, at the same time, in that he raises the question of presentation, both as the issue of how best to present philosophy and as regards the conditions of *Darstellung* itself. Kant’s critical turn forever exchanges ontology for exposition; as such, it cannot but be concerned with the issue of how to do the exhibiting.

If we want to follow Goldmann in taking Lukács to embody the two dominant (and mutually exclusive) trends of philosophical modernity, this must be their shared origin. For both trends—dialectical philosophy and tragic philosophy—likewise turn away from ontology. And both modern philosophical trends go on to take what Heller and Fehér call a “holistic” stance, or the position that totality is a necessary positing, a task imposed upon us by the world. Further, both trends therefore support a philosophy of practice. Still, it is only in dialectical philosophy, which Lukács practiced something like half the time if we go along with Goldmann, that a belief in the real possibility of a concretely reconstructed future lives on. For Gold-

mann, this explains Lukács's "regression" to dogmatic realism, when his hope for the future, lifted and then dashed, undercut his otherwise active dialectical competency.³⁶

It is also Goldmann who first sheds light upon Lukács's commonalities with (French) Existentialism, not only in terms of the parallels between Lukács's concept of totality and Jean-Paul Sartre's paradigm of totalization, but also in diagnosing the way that a unique modern situation has dovetailed with our existential condition to create the ambiguous challenges now upon us—as well as an image of how they might be authentically addressed. For both Lukács and the Existentialists, the lack of support for vibrant personalities alongside practices of social solidarity constitutes the modern condition. For both, taking conscious responsibility for oneself and one's times within a given situation is our most critical act, an act characterized by all the intellectual and emotional intensity of a great moment.

Though they are questioned and widely criticized for not better defending the position, both Sartre and Lukács, in claiming that their positions are forms of humanism, claim for them an inseparable ethical component: in effect a recapitulation of the categorical imperative to act as if acting for all others. Authentic existence, for both Sartre and Lukács, entails candid confrontation with the tensions of one's circumstances, even while broadening one's decisions and actions into a rule. Both remain bound to this marriage of irreducible singularity and universalizing intersubjectivity.

In its "existential" bearing, Lukács's thinking also intensifies the problem of style. In "Platonism, Poetry, and Form," Lukács asks, "is style a matter of a person's whole life?" Yes, he finds, in giving style to one's life one also claims it and knows it; herewith, we make our contingencies into our necessities. "Every problematic human being," and by this Lukács means every interesting and creative human being, takes the path "from the accidental to the necessary." The choice and imposition of a style is a judgment of taste, and, as Heller reminds us when she revisits her erstwhile teacher's thinking: "The most irrefutable evidence of its being widened into a norm is the fact that every judgment of taste has to give an account of itself; it has to explain itself, its decisions, its reasons for these decisions."³⁷ This readiness to give an account both temporally and intelligibly brings Lukács, as it later does Jameson, to the possibilities inherent in narrative. The potency of narrative in bringing together a form of speech with individual agency is discerned as well by Judith Butler in the aptly titled *Giving an Account of Oneself*:

Giving an account thus takes a narrative form, which not only relies upon the ability to relay a set of sequential events . . . but draws upon narrative voice and authority. . . . The narrative does not emerge after the fact of causal agency but constitutes the prerequisite condition for any account of moral agency we might give. In this sense, narrative capacity constitutes a precondition for giving an account of oneself and assuming responsibility for one's actions through that means.³⁸

Butler's formulation takes note of the temporal and intentional complex implicit in narration and account-giving, helping to emphasize how the framing of a report becomes essential to being an agent.

For Lukács, as we have seen, the exemplary model of narrative is the essay form, which allows its narrator to share her processing of experience and theory. The essay is also a judgment, as Lukács writes in "On the Nature and Form of the Essay," a judgment "always before its system, and what is essential is not the verdict but the process of judging." So the young Lukács would agree with Blanchot, not only in underscoring the difference between a shared process of judging and a totalizing cultural product, but even in calling out the Jena Romantics, in particular Schlegel, as examples of those who miss the brass ring and doom themselves to vain repetition. For Lukács, the problem of style is defined by the fact that it should respond to an ambiguity that it can never resolve, one that it undertakes as a matter of the agent's very "soul." As the discomfited interlocutors of "Richness, Chaos, and Form" struggle to name, style is something like "humour" in the "old sense" of Ben Jonson and Laurence Sterne; a spinning top or a "center around which everything is grouped."

Yet whereas Heller's later theory of personality begins to work through some of the vagueness inherent in the problem of style in its relation to the existential character, or the self-creating self, the aesthetic problem of style or form seems to have annealed into modern criticism's Sisyphean rock. As late-modern critique has given way to postmodern play, and theoretical instruments designed for unbiased analysis and evaluation have been shown to exhibit an array of styles and tonalities in spite of themselves, the revolutionary potential ascribed to an encounter with the historicity of forms has become inverted: where once insight into contemporary ideologies was to be gained through their genealogical analysis, now it is the overt historicity of all texts and forms that invites us to entertain, inhabit, and discard them

at will. Finished with metanarratives, we like most to tell the story of how we came to be finished with metanarratives. The legacy of Lukácsian form, in this context, is but one more artifact in a formless stream of creative and interpretative possibilities.

But perhaps here, too, Lukács's experiences, conveyed in the forms he constructed for the task, can be instructive. As far as Lukács was concerned, Plato is the greatest essayist who ever lived or wrote. Plato's genius was to give form to the Socratic myth as a means to express Plato's own existential questions, as Lukács has it. Plato's dialogues pose Plato's questions, unresolved, not to us, but for us, insofar as we realize that they are our questions too. Plato manages a form in which, for every interlocutor who concedes a "yes, certainly" to Socrates, there are innumerable readers who will concede nothing of the sort, and who would reform the entire exchange, if they could.

How can we come to know something of the ever-shifting world through a shape of its appearance? How is a culture that sustains individual thriving possible? How to disrupt unquestioning conformism without substituting one enchanting authority figure for another? Clearly, Lukács realized that Plato's questions were his questions too. Those who share them may be dissatisfied with Lukács's amplification of them, no less than with rival or subsequent attempts by modern artists and thinkers, but this should clarify for us the particular sense in which we have become postmodern. Ferenc Fehér's assessment of the status of postmodernity is indispensable in this clarification: "Postmodernity is the private, collective time and space, within the wider time and space of modernity, delineated by those who have problems with or queries addressed to modernity."³⁹ In other words, postmodernism need not be understood as an epoch or set of techniques; it is an ongoing critical project geared toward confronting a multitude of practices and discourses, including those of modernity, with the most relevant discoveries of modernity. Fehér himself takes modernity's most vital discovery to be human contingency, and he sees Stirner's "Ego," Marx's "accidental being," and Lukács's "problematic individual" as different expressions of the same awareness of contingency. But in just this regard, Fehér can also show where some assessments of the nature of postmodernity go astray: for in conflating the regulative, dialectical notion of totality or holism with the idea of a grand narrative toward which we have become incredulous, some theorists would place us after the long story, in the transcendent ringside position from which we can pick and choose from whatever remains within it. In this alleged

emancipation of aesthetics, Fehér sees the same danger Lukács faced, with only limited success. A “zealot of the aesthetic,” Lukács found it nearly impossible to admit, “even to himself, that his aesthetic humanism was a flight from the contradictions of the world.”⁴⁰ This criticism of Fehér’s is decidedly Lukácsian, and if it is to be instructive, then it belongs together with the accompanying Lukácsian insight that whatever the trends and contradictions of any given historical or ideological moment, only what has been articulated in the light of a working vision of totality can be philosophically confronted and politically engaged.

NOTES

PREFACE

1. See also the sources and references immediately following chapter 10.
2. A version of this essay is included in Arpad Kadarkay, ed., *The Lukacs Reader* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1995), pp. 146–59.
3. Judith Marcus and Tarr Zoltan, *Georg Lukacs: Theory, Culture, and Politics* (Transaction, 1989), pp. 215–16.

INTRODUCTION

1. For an excellent account of this tension in Lukács's treatment of literary form, see J. M. Bernstein, *The Philosophy of the Novel: Lukács, Marxism and the Dialectics of Form* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).
2. See György Márkus, "Life and the Soul: The Young Lukács and the Problem of Culture," in Ágnes Heller, ed., *Lukács Reappraised* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).
3. Theodor Adorno, "Notes on Kafka," in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Boston: MIT Press, 1981).

3. THE FOUNDERING OF FORM AGAINST LIFE

1. Karoline Schelling (1763–1809), an active participant in the German Romantic movement, was married for some years to Wilhelm Schlegel, Friedrich's elder brother.—*Trans.*
2. Heinrich Suso or Seuse (1300–1366), German mystic.—*Trans.*

4. ON THE ROMANTIC PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

The epigraph can be rendered as "The life of a truly canonical person must be symbolic throughout."—*Trans.*

1. See chapter 3, n. 1.—*Trans.*

7. LONGING AND FORM

Translation of the epigraph reads: "And now that it hath pleased her to deny me this, Love, my Master, of his great goodness, hath placed all my beatitude there where my hope will not fail me."—Eds.

1. "Love . . . is everything one doesn't have."—Eds.
2. "Love is when you sit down together on Sunday evening and that is all you need."—Eds.
3. "Those who suffer have a need to be right."—Eds.
4. "You don't have enough courage to deserve happiness: weep and die!"—Eds.
5. "I know . . . that it is not you, Raphaël, that Marie loves, not you, Marie, that Raphaël loves; but you love some part of yourselves, though I know not which, the best and deepest part, which is reflected in the other and multiplies its image. For love is expanse and multiplication."—Eds.
6. "Ah, there was more to the world than just you, after all."—Eds.
7. "In those words which praise my lady"—Eds.
8. "One who does not know how to make use of happiness."—Eds.
9. "Illnesses are the poor man's voyages."—Eds.
10. "At that time . . . one was a warrior. Today, it is a time of life."—Eds.
11. "It is nothing, Lord. The hunger of the tiger is like the hunger of the lamb. You have given us food. I think that this tiger is good because he loves his mate and his children and because he loves living. But why must the hunger of the tiger bring blood, when the hunger of the lamb is so gentle?"—Eds.
12. "One does not cast a woman aside because she has the pox."—Eds.

ON POVERTY OF SPIRIT

"Armut am Geiste: Ein Gespräch und ein Brief" was originally written in German, but the first version to be published was translated into Hungarian by Béla Balázs: "A Lelki szegénységéről: Egy levél és egy párbeszéd," *A Szellem* 1, no. 2 (1911): 202–14. That Hungarian translation is included more recently in György Lukács, *Ifjúkori Művek, 1902–1918*, ed. Arpad Timar (Magvető, 1977), pp. 537–51. The original German version then appeared in *Neue Blätter* 2, nos. 5–6 (1912): 67–92. Finally, the English translation of that original German text that is reprinted here appeared first in the *Philosophical Forum* 3, nos. 3–4 (1972): 371–85. A different English translation was included in Arpad Kadarkay, ed., *The Lukacs Reader* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1995), pp. 42–56.

1. "Perhaps I would have the good fortune to assemble a volume or rather a series of notes, altogether spiritual and philosophical and written in the shadows of thought."—Eds.

AFTERWORD

The epigraph by Lukács is from a 1970 interview with Béla Hegyin, later published in *A dialogues sodrában* (Budapest: Magvető, 1978), translated by Ernest Joós and reprinted in Joós's *Lukács's Last Autocriticism: The Ontology* (New Jersey: Humanities, 1983), "Appendix I," 125.

1. For a chronology of Lukács's early travels and writings, see the footnotes to György Márkus's "Life and the Soul: The Young Lukács and the Problem of Culture," in Ágnes Heller and Ferenc Fehér, eds., *Reconstructing Aesthetics: Writings of the Budapest School* (New York: Blackwell, 1986). Leszek Kolakowski also mentions the connection Goldmann makes between Lukács's early essays and his form of "tragic Kantianism." See Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism* (New York: Norton, 2005).

2. Fredric Jameson argues that Lukács's early thinking both on literary form and on social isolation creates the necessary condition for his reformulation of the Marxist treatment of totality and alienation. Jameson associates this readiness with Lukács's utilization of Hegel, in particular with a dynamic understanding of dialectics and the role of Absolute Spirit, which Jameson then disentangles from Adornian complaints over "identity theory." I will briefly take up Jameson's defense of Lukács in what follows. Jameson develops his position in *Marxism and Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971); *Aesthetics and Politics* (New York: Verso, 1977, 2007); and *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981). This same theme is also tackled in J. M. Bernstein's *The Philosophy of the Novel: Lukács, Marxism, and the Dialectics of Form* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). Bernstein's book is invaluable as a study of the achievements of and tensions within *The Theory of the Novel* as well as of the consequence of that work. Having now mentioned it, it is worth acknowledging that inasmuch as I am concerned here with tracing a trajectory delimited by the concern with form raised by Lukács in 1910, I will be bracketing out the vast majority of assessments of Lukács's thought that begin with or largely revolve around his contributions as a Marxist critic. My more reserved proposal is to construct a basic sketch of how and why Lukács's initial notion of form yields the more familiar concepts of totality, holism, and the strategies of narrative, and how it helps to illuminate them.

3. With the question "Works of art exist; how are they possible?" Lukács famously organizes his Heidelberg Aesthetics (1916–1918). György Márkus points out this same transcendental continuity in "Life and the Soul."

4. Rodolphe Gasché's elucidation of the "para-epistemic accomplishment" of securing "cognition in general" can be found in *The Idea of Form: Rethinking Kant's Aesthetics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

5. Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 86–87.

6. As Jay also notes in *Marxism and Totality*, in his 1967 preface to *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács himself acknowledges that the renewal of the concept of “totality” is one of the book’s paramount achievements. Even Leszek Kołakowski, otherwise condemning Lukács, is quick to acknowledge that Lukács’s standing as a philosopher, as opposed to a mere critic, stems from his endeavor to relate all details to the category of totality. See Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*. In terms of philosophical examination of the shifting concept of form as it develops throughout Lukács’s work, but especially in *The Theory of the Novel* and in relation to his thinking about utopia, see Bernstein’s *The Philosophy of the Novel*. Bernstein treats the dialectic between form-giving and mimetic activity in the novel and analyzes the nature of “rule-governed” activities related to the novel as a genre, as regards the novel’s temporality and in terms of the novel’s interpretation.

7. Ferenc Fehér’s analysis of this “problematic” is instructive. See “Is the Novel Problematic?” in Heller and Fehér, *Reconstructing Aesthetics*.

8. Axel Hometa’s *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea* (with Judith Butler, Raymond Geuss and Jonathan Lear) ed. Martin Jay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) provides an examination of and dialogue concerning Lukács’s later notion of reification.

9. *The Theory of the Novel* has been studied widely and criticized forcefully, not least by Lukács himself, who charges that it is a reactionary and mystically motivated work. Nevertheless, its guiding question (as to how literary form articulates its own historical circumstance, a situation then interpretable from its very structure) continues to steer Lukács’s thought. Again, Bernstein’s *The Philosophy of the Novel* is most effective in tracing that articulation in *The Theory of the Novel* itself.

10. See, e.g., Heller and Fehér, *Reconstructing Aesthetics*.

11. Steven Vogel, *Against Nature: The Concept of Nature in Critical Theory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996). The quote comes from pp. 191–192, 31n.

12. In Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2: *Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon, 1987). See chapter 6.2, “The Uncoupling of System and Lifeworld.”

13. See too Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1: *Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, pp. 354–386.

14. Ágnes Heller, “Habermas and Marxism,” in Ágnes Heller and Ferenc Fehér, eds., *The Grandeur and Twilight of Radical Universalism* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1991).

15. Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 163. Lee Congdon makes essentially the same point in “The Unexpected Revolutionary: Lukács’s Road to Marx,” *Survey* 20 (1974): 76–205.

16. Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, pp. 182–183.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

18. Following the basic contours of *Soul and Form*, I am ignoring Lukács's later distinction between narrative and narration, particularly as he makes it in *The Theory of the Novel*. Given the nature of Lukács's (self-)criticisms, adherence to that distinction here would, I believe, needlessly complicate the lineage I mean merely to point out.

19. Ágnes Heller examines Lukács's ethics and its intrinsic relationship to his aesthetics in "Jenseits der Pflicht: Das Paradigmatische der Ethik der deutschen Klassik im oeuvre von Georg Lukács," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, no. 106 (1973).

20. Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, p. xvi.

21. Heller and Fehér, *Reconstructing Aesthetics*, p. 5.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

23. Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973 [1941]), p. 296.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 298.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 92. There is a connection between the relationship between emotion and the formal structure of a linguistic act in Burke, and that same link as it has been explored more recently and with different empirical methods by Steven Pinker. While exploration of the connection between both approaches would push beyond the scope possible here, the interested reader might pursue it with reference to Steven Pinker, *The Stuff of Thought: Language as a Window Into Human Nature* (New York: Penguin, 2007); see especially chapter 7: "Seven Words You Can't Say on Television."

26. For an instructive elaboration of how Kant's understanding of form remains thoroughly transcendental, and how this fact is neglected in recent aestheticist or formalistic readings of Kant, as well as by those interpretations that siphon from Kantian aesthetics for the sole purpose of stressing Kantian morality, see both Gasché's *The Idea of Form* and, as also cited by Gasché, Robert B. Pippin's "The Significance of Taste: Kant, Aesthetics, and Reflective Judgment," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34, no. 4 (1996): 549–69.

27. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, pp. 50–53.

28. Jay, *Marxism and Totality*, pp. 86–90.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

30. See Heller and Fehér, *Reconstructing Aesthetics*, especially chapter 1, "The Necessity and the Irreformability of Aesthetics."

31. I am recapitulating, here, the argument of Heller and Fehér, *ibid.*, pp. 17–18.

32. This claim and Márkus's subsequent argument, as reviewed here, are taken from his "Life and the Soul," pp. 1–26.

33. The particular dialogues Márkus distinguishes as most crucial to understanding Lukács's philosophy are "Richness, Chaos, and Form: A Dialogue Concerning Laurence Sterne" and "On Poverty of Spirit."

34. Compare Lukács's own formulation in "On the Nature and Form of the Essay": "The critic is the one who glimpses destiny in forms . . . whose most profound experience is the soul-content which forms indirectly and unconsciously conceal within themselves."

35. Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. 98, 241, 346.

36. Heller and Fehér elaborate on Goldman's recuperation of Lukács in several chapters devoted to their association in *The Grandeur and Twilight of Radical Universalism*, a study upon which I rely here. With less detail and less charity, Kolakowski also discusses the relationship in *Main Currents of Marxism*. For the primary presentations of his own position, see Lucien Goldman's *Immanuel Kant* (New York: New Left, 1971); *The Hidden God: A Study of Tragic Vision in the Pensees of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976); and *Cultural Creation in Modern Society*, trans. Bart Grahl (New York: Telos, 1976).

37. Heller and Fehér, *Reconstructing Aesthetics*, p. 15.

38. Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), p. 12.

39. Heller and Fehér, *The Grandeur and Twilight of Radical Universalism*, p. 537.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 544.

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