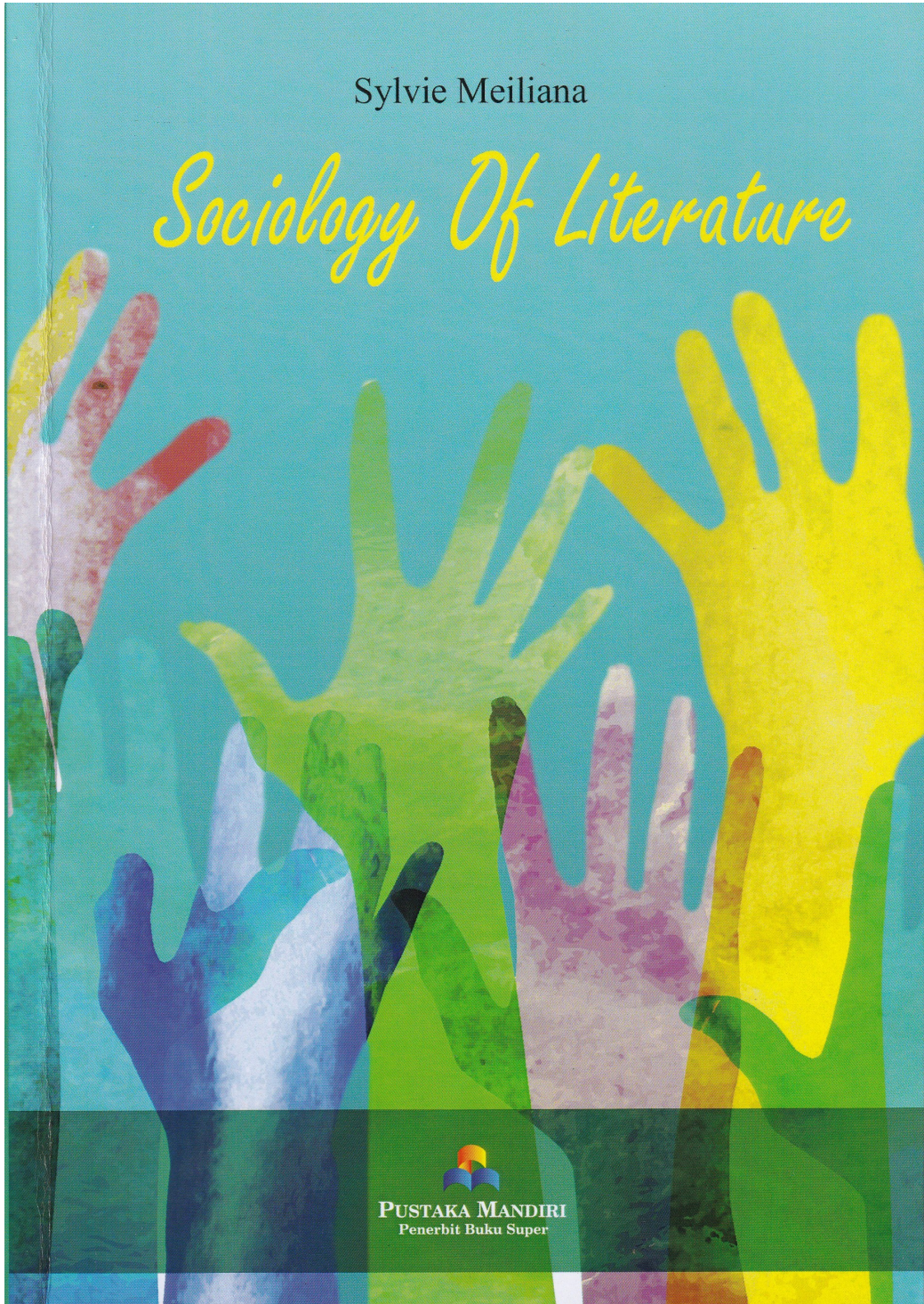


Sylvie Meiliana

Sociology Of Literature




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Sociology Of Literature

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Sylvie Meiliana

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PUSTAKA MANDIRI
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HAK CIPTA DILINDUNGI UNDANG-UNDANG

Isi buku ini, baik sebagian maupun seluruhnya,
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Isi buku di luar tanggung jawab penerbit.

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To the Student, this book is written for you and is based on the teaching and research experience of numerous researchers, writers, and critics. In today's global socially networked world, the topic is relevant than ever before. We hope that through this book, you will learn the role of literary work, especially related to sociology of literature and feminism. In this book, you will find applications of concepts that are relevant, current, and balanced.

To the instructor, this text is intended for a one-semester introductory course. Since current events influence our social perspectives and the field in general, so that students and instructors around the country can relate and engage in fruitful discussions.

Finally, I thank my spouse, Dr. Bena Yusuf Pelawi, M.Hum and my beloved sons, Rizky Yusviento Pelawi, S.E., M.BA, Jeffrey Bastanta Pelawi, S,T, and Juan Pratama Pelawi, S.T, M.Eng for their love and support during the writing and revision of this book.

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CHAPTER I

The Nature of Sociology of Literature

The sociology of literature is a specialized area of study which focuses its attention upon the relation between a literary work and the social structure in which it is created. It reveals that the existence of a literary creation has the determined social situations. As there is a reciprocal relationship between a literary phenomena and social structure, sociological study of literature proves very useful to understand the socioeconomic situations, political issues, the world view and creativity of the writers, the system of the social and political organizations, the relations between certain thoughts and cultural configurations in which they occur and determinants of a literary work.

The sociology of literature is an outcome of the complementary relationship between literature and society. Literature written in a certain period of time is directly connected with the norms, customs and traditions of the day. So, literary work is regarded as the segment of the society. However, the earlier critics analyzed literature only in the context of socio-cultural conditions of the day ignoring the author's worldview and ideology of the gatekeepers of literature. Ignoring these determinants of literature is like denying their role in the creation and success of literature. It is the sociology of literature that lays emphasis on the study of the social contexts and the social determinants of literature. Being a specialized area of literary study, it explains the relationship between a literary work and the social structure in which it is created; examines literature in cultural, economic and political context in which it is written or received; and explores the relationship between the artist and society. It also examines the sociology of the writer and analyses the conditions of creation and production of the book and of mass literature. So it is defined in Concise Oxford Dictionary as 'a branch of literary study that examines the relationship between literary works and their social context, including patterns of literacy, kinds of audience, modes of publications and dramatic presentation and social class positions of authors and

readers'. This definition emphasizes the role of the social context, sociology of the author and gatekeepers in the creation and success of a literary work.

As a social product, literature reflects human society and culture. So it is regarded as the mirror of the society. Both literary critics and sociologists agree that the sociological practice is essential to interpret literary works, but they differ in their theories and methods. The literary critics look at texts, writers and readers and speculate about creation, reception and interpretation of literature. Social scientists, on the other hand, discuss books and literary institutions and dwell upon production, distribution and consumption of cultural products. The focus of social scientist is mainly on organizations and markets, centralized and decentralized publishing, laws and censorship norms, strategies of diffusion and reading habit of particular social groups. The literary socialists and historians are concerned with the relationship between individual authors and the circumstances of social and cultural era in which they live and write. In this regard Terry Eagleton writes: "There are two main ways of in which an interest in the sociology of literature can be justified. The first form of justification is realist: literature is in fact deeply conditioned by its social context and any critical account of it, which omits this fact, is therefore automatically deficient. The second way is pragmatist: literature is in fact shaped by all kinds of factors and readable in all sorts of contexts, but highlighting its social determinants is useful and desirable from a particular standpoint" (469). The sociology of literature, thus, combines both the ways and studies literature in its totality. Along with the study of the subject matter, form, style and *rasa* and *bhava* (sentiment and emotional fervor), it studies the interaction between the author, reader, patron, publisher and distributor of literature.

The study of culture is an integrated part of the sociology of literature, so it is called as a subfield of cultural sociology. Sidney Finkelstein argues: "To understand literature, we must know not only individual works but also the cultural life of which they are part because a literary work of any writer is conditioned and shaped by that cultural life" (9).

The sociology of literature is not only an interdisciplinary but also a multidisciplinary endeavor. It studies the social, political, economic, and cultural institutions and explores the varied fields, people and their life and behaviour. So it is described as a collective action of the advances in cultural sociology, dialectical Marxism, reception theory, genetic structuralism and mass communication. Being a micro discipline, it concentrates on the several social factors which determine the creation and existence of literature. They also inspired writers to adopt particular themes and genres of writing and thus influence the development of a type of a literary interest among the readers. So it concentrates on the relationship between the writer and the social factors which determine the existence of literature. In short, the underlying idea of the sociology of literature is that the literary work is determined and shaped by surrounding, circumstances, dominant cultural values of the age, the world view of the writer, the ideology of the gatekeepers and the several social factors and institutions. In order to know its true nature, it is necessary to discuss the major areas and determinants of literary works.

The Social Referent or Context of Literature

The term 'social referent' was used for the first time by John Hall in his *The Sociology of Literature* (1979) as a reflector of social reality (32). According to him the detailed analysis of the text is essential for its generalization but this analysis should be done in the context of the entire social structure, so that one can specify the link between literature and society. Hall is of the opinion that the popularity of the text depends upon the close link between the text and context. As the New Criticism deliberately ignored this link, it became a challenge to the sociology of literature. In fact, social referent makes literature a social document and the study of such social referent is regarded as legitimate social evidence. It also serves as an aid in understanding both society and literature. Hall relates the importance of social referent to the sociology of the author. According to him "the sociology of the author is likely to be of great help in

understanding the relation of the particular texts and society . . . the discussion of the sociology of the author is of considerable help in explaining the change in the novel form from realism to modernism”(47). He further points out that the literary work is shaped by the dominant cultural values of the age. In fact, literature is the result of social action and in turn, gives rise to social actions. The action and reaction of this social action is studied in the sociology of literature. So the study of social referent is essential to understand literature. Along with the social referent, Hall discusses the role of the world view of the writer, the reading public, patron, critics, publishers, censors, distributors, and public libraries in the creation and success of literature.

The socio-cultural referent of the day plays an important role in the creation of the particular form of literature. In the words of Learner:

Every work is produced at a particular time and space ;in a particular society, whose beliefs, assumptions, problems, conflicts and habits set limit to what can and can't be expressed, and how it will be treated: that is the pressure of society stresses consensus, we shall look at the shared assumptions of the whole society, and say, this work is the product of eighteenth century England or the Greek city state; if it stresses conflict we shall look more at a particular group, sub-culture or social class, and say this work is the bourgeois, clerical or by a women (1).

As a social institution, literature represents social reality. It originates in close connection with particular social institutions. In fact, literature is not a part of social institution, it itself is a social institution. Like his works, the writer is also a part of society and he expresses his experiences and conceptions about life and society in his works. In the words of Wellek “the artist conveys truth and, necessarily, also historical and social truth. Works of art furnish documents because they are monuments (qtd. in Learner 95). He believes that literature is not only the reflection of the social process but also the very essence of the society.

CHAPTER II

Sociology of Literature

Constant endeavors to fathom a close relationship between society and literature have made it into the academic field. It is called the sociology of literature. It refers to and gets cushioned by two different academic disciplines — sociology and literary study. In short, sociology is an objective and scientific study of humans in society and the review of social institution and process. Literature, on the other hand, also deals with human beings in society with regard to their undertaking to adapt to and change society.

Sociology and literature, therefore, share the same issues. The novel, as one of the major genres in literature, can be regarded as an effort to recreate the social world; relations between human beings and their family, environment, politics, state and others. Their distinction: while sociology makes an objective analysis of society, literature penetrates into the surface of social structure and expresses human beings' ways of comprehending their society with their feeling.

Underpinned by scientific research, two or more sociologists will come up with similar findings after conducting research of a particular group of people. In contrast, two or more novelists are very likely to have different products owing to their diverse feelings in response to their environment, nature and state.

Some say sociology will replace literature due to its speedy development. It makes sense, since the sociology of literature runs slowly and appears a bit late compared to its counterparts such as the sociology of religion, education, politics and ideology.

Swingewood stated that a great number of sociology of literature writings was bad, unscientific and backward concerning the sociological viewpoint that exposed the baseless correlation between literary text and social history.

For literary critics, literature is a self-fulfilling activity, which should be viewed from its intrinsic structures, like metaphors, image constructions, rhythm, characterizations, plot dynamics and so on. External elements are additional but

play no role in providing an explanation. The textualists stand against the notion that extrinsic components help readers comprehend literary pieces.

Despite its inability to reveal the beauty of literature and the psychological tension of its fictional characters, sociology's contribution is to make a better and complete understanding of literature. Thanks to a sociological approach, we see that literature is a mirror of society — social structure, kin or class struggle.

Sociology, for example, helps readers understand that the national character sways literature, stemming from a reciprocal relationship between religion, politics and law. According to Swingewood, the novel can only develop in the countries putting a high value on women and paying greater attention to their personal lives. It grew in the United Kingdom given its great appreciation of women. On the opposite end of the scale, the novel did not grow in Italy because its people are quite libertine. Sociology of literature attempts to relate fictional characters' experience as well as the author's shaped situation and historical setting as the basis of a literary piece.

Sociology is instrumental in elucidating how each literary work is rooted in a certain social and geographical environment where it can perform specific functions and that there is no need for any judgment of value. That is why certain literary pieces may grow in one place but not elsewhere. Some factors such as climate, landscape, race, customs and politics contribute to the quality and growth of particular literary works.

However, stern opposition to the use of sociology in grasping literature has been widespread. Wellek and Warren wrote that the link between literature and society is narrow and external. Marxist critics try to judge the literary piece from ethical and political criteria, which basically are non-literary. Furthermore, they define the idea that literature should reflect its age and society as representing proletarian or the ideology of the author.

Daiches critically questioned the relationship between sociological data and literary critics. To him, the thought that good literature must play a social function is fallacious and exaggerating. Based on this debatable perspective, one may infer that *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, written by Harriet Beecher Stowe, is much

better than Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The former inspired many Americans to resist slavery in the 19th century, while the latter was regarded as having no meaningful social occurrences.

CHAPTER III

Theoretical Approaches

The major concern of the sociology of literature is the relationship between literature and society and this relationship has been conceived in different ways by the sociologists, historians and the literary critics. They discuss different theoretical approaches and methods of the sociology of literature. In his *The Sociology of Art and Literature* M.C. Albrecht points out that the sociology of literature encompasses a variety of viewpoints of the sociologists, historians and critics rather than a clearly defined subject matter or general theory. Their views about the sociology of literature have been manifested mainly in two ways. The first way is historical, the effort to describe historical trends in art or literature, to trace their growth, achievements and changes over time. The second way is an attempt to discover how the forms of art come into being and to account for their qualities and styles. It assumes the influence of the various conditioning factors on the world view of the writer and his works. For the better understanding of the theoretical approaches these ways are broadly divided into: the realist and pragmatist.

The first and the most common approach to the relation of literature and society is “the study of works of literature as social documents, as assumed picture of social reality” (Wellek & Warren:102). As a social document, literature can be made to yield the outlines of social history. This mirror image approach has a long and distinguished history. The critics like Madame de Stale, De Bonald, H. A. Taine, Richard Hoggard and the early Marxists advocated this documentary aspect of literature arguing that through the careful reading of any nation’s literature one can tell the identity of that nation. This approach states that literature is the direct reflection of various facets of social structure. The conception of literature as a mirror of the society provides a fairly accurate

picture of the increasing trends such as industrialization, marxism, capitalism, globalization, and commercialization. It also reflects values, the standards of behaviour, attitudes towards working and middle classes and aspirations of the people.

The second pragmatic approach to the sociology of literature deals with the relation of the individual authors to the socio-cultural circumstances of the era in which they live and write and the conditions of the creation and production of literature. It lays emphasis on the world view and creativity of the writers and the role of gatekeepers in the creation and success of literature. For instance, Robert Escarpit's *The Sociology of Literature* (1970) explains that the literary production and consumption affect the form and content of literary works. The social position and the role of the writers in the past were based upon the patronage and reward system. But this patronage system is now replaced by the publishers and distributors. The growth of the middle class readers has also shifted the writer's position from one of dependence to one of a profession. With the rise of the middle class reading public, lending libraries, cheap publishing and commercialization of literature, the writer's position in a mass society has become extremely important. The pragmatic approach of the sociology of literature studies all these factors. The works of the new generation of critics support this approach. Jane Ruth and Janet Wolff have discussed the approaches of the sociology of literature in five broad conceptions. It might be useful to look at these approaches to understand both society and literary works.

The sociologically aware study of literature

The preliminary step of interpreting a literary text as explained in *Sociology of Literature: Theoretical Approaches* by Jane Ruth and Janet Wolff is the sociologically aware study of literature (3). The major focus of this study is on social context of literature. The sociologists like Hoggard, Herder, Taine and Madam de Stale and the early Marxists discuss the social contexts such as race, milieu, and moment, base and superstructure to the study of literature. The development of sociological theory is not at issue

in this type of study. The findings and concepts of sociology are generally used for the study of literature. Bradbury's *The social context of literature* (1971) and Raymond William's *The Country and City* (1975) are the best examples of this approach.

The hermeneutics tradition is also seen as an example of the sociologically aware study of literature. To explain the nature of hermeneutics Janet Wolff states: "Hermeneutics is the study of understanding, especially the task of understanding texts" (19). The sociological study of literature presupposes an understanding and interpretation of the literature studied in the context of society. In order to study literary works in the theoretical approach of hermeneutics one has to undertake a survey of the selected authors and his social background, or a novel and its conditions of production and reception.

Gadamer, the founder of hermeneutics, explains hermeneutics as the basis for creative reexamination of literary interpretation theory. There are two theories of hermeneutic approach: The first theory is illustrated by the works of Palmer and of Gadmer and the second by the writings of Betty and of Hirsch. Gadmer's work explains that the subject and object of a literary text are historically situated and the meaning of a literary text is bound up with the socio-historical situation of its genesis. According to him the meaning of the text is not constant. The interpretation changes with the situation of society and period of the interpreter. So interpretation is always reinterpretation. However, the second theory of Betty and Hirsch explains the valid interpretation or sets limits to comprehension. According to them there can be determinate meaning-- the hermeneutic autonomy of text. These approaches emphasize on the socio-historical situations of the text (Wolff 18-29).

Literature as a Kind of Sociology

According to Jane Ruth and Janet Wolff literature has been used by some writers as a kind of sociology (3). Sociology is generally regarded as the

science of society. It studies social institutions scientifically. Literature also studies social institutions scientifically. So it is used as a kind of sociology. In this context Ruth and Wolff state: "Literature is seen as a source of data, often data of a type which would not otherwise be accessible to a sociologist, and as a carrier of crystallized values and attitudes, as well as information about institutions" (3). They further point out that Lewis Coser's collection of excerpts from novels in *sociology through literature* (1963) is the best example of this approach. This book of Lewis illustrates that the description of concepts like bureaucracy and deviance are only found in works of literature. The sociologists study these aspects of social life through literature. They get some hints from literary works to study the social life adequately. Like sociology, literature too is the study of social life. The fact is that we are likely to confirm the validity of literary evidence by sociological and historical facts. The best example of this view is Rockwell's 'Fact in Fiction' (1974). In short, both sociology and literature are not far apart as one might think. The only difference between them is that unlike sociology literature is concerned with generalized reality of society. The sociologists take this generalized reality as a source of data and transform it into a specific expression.

Social Genesis of Literature

The main theoretical problem at the centre of the sociology of literature is the social genesis of literature. The major question discussed here are: how does a literary work arise in society? The answer of this question is found in the works of Escarpit and Lucian Goldman who have studied social forces affecting literary production. Escarpit's works such as *The Book Revolution* (1960) and *The Sociology of Literature* (1970) analyse the conditions of production of the book and of mass literature where as Goldman articulates the social genesis of literature through structural concepts. In this regard Goldman states:

The essential relationship between art and social life doesn't reside in the content of a work of art offering a description of the events and

characteristics of that life. Rather, the relationship rests in the categories which organize both the day to day consciousness of a social group and the imaginary universe created by the writers” (151).

Goldman believes that the mental structure is the base of literary works, but this mental structure is not an individual but social phenomena. As this structure has its genesis in social action, it is not located in individual consciousness but in trans-individual subject i.e. non-conscious structure. While explaining Goldman’s concept of structure Jane Ruth quotes “Goldman maintained that the structure of the writing, painting, conceptual thought and so on of certain exceptional individuals might coincide with the mental structure corresponding to one of the transindividual subjects to whom they are linked” (152). The views of both Escarpit and Goldman clearly show that society is the base of all literary works. An individual’s thought or feeling can only be understood in the context of social forces and the structures of collective consciousness.

Literature as a Social Product and Social Force

The critics like Terry Eagleton conceive literature as both social product and social force. Literature is situated and limited by certain socio-historical forces and at the same time it involves in the process of social development. He explains this twofold nature of literature in his essay “Two Approaches in the Sociology of Literature”. In order to prove this Ruth and Wolff state:

On the micro-social level of the writer and the reader, the work of Walter Benjamin has emphasized the nature of writing as production, which is both socially and historically situated and limited, and at the same time capable of political education and social transformation (04).

It is also found that the writer as a social product is recognized both determined and determining. The Marxist approach shows that literature is both a social product and social force. The pragmatic approach believes the ideology of gatekeepers as the social force.

The final approach focuses on the ways in which literature may affect society and effect social change. This approach can be perceived as a social problem. For instance, the literary works concerning obscenity or pornography may affect society. However, Brecht sees it as a positive feature of literature that committed socialists must use to advantages (Ruth and Wolff 5)

The above mentioned approaches of the sociological study show that the sociology of literature is very essential for the analysis and interpretation of literature. In fact, these approaches and method are not developed in a single period. The several critics and social thinkers contributed intensely and seriously in the development of this theory. The theoretical premises of the sociology of literature from Madame de Stale to the modern sociologists and literary critics show that one cannot assess and analyse a literary work without the socio-cultural context, the sociology and psychology of the writer, and the social institutions and determinants of literature. Sociology of literature is, thus, a cluster of the currents of different ideologies. It shows that a literary work is not an individual but a collective phenomenon.

In a nutshell, sociology of literature studies the role of these aspects in the existence and success of a literary work. In order to know the sociology of Orwell's novels it is necessary to examine these aspects. The major objectives of the succeeding chapters of this research are to find out the role of the social aspects discussed in this chapter in shaping the ideology or worldview of George Orwell and the creation and success of his novels.

CHAPTER IV

The Relationship between Sociology and Literature

In most theories of the relationship of literature and society reflection, influence, and social control are implied. Literature is interpreted as reflecting norms and values, as revealing the ethos of culture, the processes of class struggle, and certain types of social "facts." "Influence" is not strictly the reverse of reflection, since social stability and cultural ideals are involved. Social control, however, articulates closely with one version of reflection, though to a limited extent in complex, dynamic societies.

Interest in the relationship between literature and society is hardly a new phenomenon. We still read and refer to the ancient Greeks in this regard. In *The Republic*, for example, Plato presages both Mme. de Staël's treatise of 1800, which was the first to discuss cross-national differences in literature, and later notions of literary reflection with his idea of imitation. What is new, however, is the relative legitimacy of the study of literature within the discipline of sociology. This is due both to the increasing interest in culture in sociology after years of marginalization (Calhoun 1989) and to the increasing influence of cultural studies on sociology and throughout the academy.

A broader interest in and acceptance of cultural sociology has meant that the types of research questions and methods common to sociological studies of literature are now more widely accepted within the field. Sociology has extended its methodological boundaries in response to both attacks on the dominance of positivism and the rising power of alternative stances suggested by postmodernism. At the same time, changes in the goals, and sometimes the methods, of studying literature sociologically have moved the area closer to what is still the mainstream of the discipline. Thus the sociology of literature has benefited from a twofold movement in which (1) sociology as a discipline has become more interested in and accepting of research questions pertaining to meaning (cf. Wuthnow 1987, however, for a particularly strong attack on meaning from within the culture camp) and employing qualitative methods; and

(2) the sociology of literature has evolved in the direction of more mainstream sociological areas through the merging of quantitative with qualitative methods and of empirical with hermeneutic research questions.

Traditional Approaches

As recently as 1993, Wendy Griswold maintained that the sociology of literature was a "nonfield" and "like an amoeba ... lack(ing) firm structure" (1993, p. 455). Certainly the sociology of literature has been a marginal area in the discipline of sociology. As such, it has generally failed to attract the kind of career-long commitments common to more central areas of the discipline. Many scholars writing on the sociology of literature see the area as a sideline and produce only a single book or article on the subject. This has exacerbated the lack of structure in the development of the field. Even so, it is surprising just how much sociological research has been done on literature and on literature's relationship to social patterns and processes.

Reflection Theory. Traditionally, the central perspective for sociologists studying literature has been the use of literature as information about society. To a much lesser degree, traditional work has focused on the effect of literature in shaping and creating social action. The former approach, the idea that literature can be "read" as information about social behavior and values, is generally referred to as reflection theory. Literary texts have been variously described as reflecting the "economics, family relationships, climate and landscapes, attitudes, morals, races, social classes, political events, wars, and religion" of the society that produced the texts (Albrecht 1954, p. 426). Most people are familiar with an at least implicit reflection perspective from journalistic social commentary. For instance, when Time magazine put the star of the television show *Ally McBeal* on its cover, asking "Is Feminism Dead?" (1998), it assumed that a television show could be read as information on Americans' values and understanding of feminism.

Unfortunately, "reflection" is a metaphor, not a theory. The basic idea behind reflection, that the social context of a cultural work affects the cultural

work, is obvious and fundamental to a sociological study of literature. But the metaphor of reflection is misleading. Reflection assumes a simple mimetic theory of literature in which literary works transparently and unproblematically document the social world for the reader. In fact, however, literature is a construct of language; its experience is symbolic and mediating rather than direct. Literary realism in particular "effaces its own status as a sign" (Eagleton 1983, p. 136; see also Candido (1995: 149) on the "liberty" of even naturalist authors). Literature draws on the social world, but it does so selectively, magnifying some aspects of reality, misspecifying others, and ignoring most (Desan et al. 1989). The reflection metaphor assumes a single and stable meaning for literary texts. Anyone who has ever argued about what a book "really" meant knows what researchers have worked hard to demonstrate—textual meaning is contingent, created by active readers with their own expectations and life experiences that act in concert with inherent textual features to produce variable meanings (Jauss 1982; Radway 1984; Griswold 1987).

Despite repeated demonstrations of reflection's myriad failings (e.g., Noble 1976; Griswold 1994; Corse 1997), the idea of literature as a mirror of society still seems a fundamental way of thinking about why sociologists—and indeed many other people as well—are interested in literature. A relatively crude reflection approach remains common for teaching sociology department courses on literature, and also in certain types of journal articles whose main interest is not the sociology of literature per se, but the illumination of some sociological theory or observation through literary "evidence" (e.g., Corbett's article (1994) advocating the use of novels featuring probation officers to teach courses on the sociology of occupations, or the continuing stream of articles examining gender portrayals in children's literature (e.g., Grauerholz and Pescosolido 1989). Convincing research arguing for literary evidence of social patterns now requires the careful specification of how and why certain social patterns are incorporated in literature while others are not (e.g., Lamont 1995), thorough attention to comparative data across either place or time (e.g., Long 1985), and a detailed

consideration of the processes that transform the social into the literary (e.g., Corse 1997).

Structural Reflection. A more sophisticated but still problematic type of reflection argues that it is the form or structure of literary works rather than their content that incorporates the social: "successful works ... are those in which the form exemplifies the nature of the social phenomenon that furnishes the matter of the fiction" (Candido 1995, p. xiii). The "humanist" Marxist Georg Lukacs is perhaps the seminal figure in the development of a Marxist literary sociology. Marxism is the only one of the three major strands of classical theory to have generated a significant body of work on literature. Lukacs (1971) argued that it is not the content of literary works but the categories of thought within them that reflect the author's social world.

Goldmann (1964, 1970), Lukacs's most prominent student and the one most influential for American sociology, proposed the concept of a homologous relationship between the inherent structure of literary works and the key structures of the social context of the author. Goldmann justified his focus on the canonical works he studied by arguing that lesser works fail to achieve the necessary clarity of structure that allows the sociologist to see the homologies present in works by, for example, Racine and Pascal (1964). In the 1960s Louis Althusser challenged the preeminence of Lukacs's tradition through, in part, his emphasis on the autonomy of literature. Thus Goldmann's work, though it was influential at the time of its publication, has been eclipsed as newer theories have made more problematic the notion that literature embodies a single meaning that is reducible to an expression of class consciousness.

The High Culture/Popular Culture Divide.

Traditionally in the United States sociologists have left the study of high culture to specialists in literature, art, and music. This attitude was partially a product of sociologists' discomfort with aesthetic evaluation. Popular culture, on the other hand, was seen as simply unworthy of attention or study. To the extent that sociologists did consider literature, they tended to focus on high-culture

literature, in part because of the largely Marxist orientation of many early sociologists of literature. Marxist thought defines literature as part of the ideological superstructure within which the literatures of elites are the ruling ideas since culture serves to legitimate the interests of the ruling class.

The tendency to concentrate on high-culture literature was intensified by the Frankfurt School, which understood "mass" culture as a destructive force, imposed on a passive audience by the machinery of a capitalist culture "industry" (e.g., Horkheimer and Adorno 1972). Lowenthal's (1968) analysis of popular magazine biography, for example, stressed the increasing focus on leisure-time consumption over production and on personality over business and political achievement, as the private lives of movie stars and sports figures came to dominate magazine biographies. This approach highlighted the passivity and docility of audiences, tying mass culture to the increasing apathy of the public. Thus this work saw literature both as a reflection of changing social patterns and as a force shaping those patterns. Although researchers now rarely use the term "mass" culture, the Frankfurt School's critique continues to inform much of current cultural sociology, although often it does so on an implicit level as researchers react either positively or negatively to this understanding of popular culture.

One response to the critique of mass culture was articulated by the scholars of the Birmingham School. This line of research shared earlier understandings of culture as a resource for the powerful, but focused in large part on the potential for active participation on the part of cultural receivers. Work in the Birmingham School tradition drew heavily on feminist approaches and demonstrated how "mass" audiences of popular cultural forms might engage in resistance, undermining earlier arguments of cultural hegemony and of passive cultural "dopes" (e.g., Hall et al. 1980; Hebdige 1979). This interest in resistance and the meaning-making activity of readers remains an important line of research, particularly for studies of popular culture (e.g., Radway 1984). The continued relevance of the distinction between high and popular culture, however, is now under debate, as some charge that the hierarchical dichotomy is

no longer the most powerful conceptualization of cultural differences (e.g., Crane 1992; DiMaggio 1987).

Sociology through Literature. A final type of traditional sociological interest in literature also stems from an implicit reflectionist approach. This type of work sees literature as exemplary of sociological concepts and theories or uses literature simply as a type of data like any other. While Coser's (1972) anthology exemplifies the former tradition, the recent ASA publication *Teaching Sociology with Fiction* demonstrates the persistence of the genre. Examples of the latter are altogether too numerous, including, for example, an article testing recent Afrocentric and feminist claims of differing epistemological stances across genders and races by coding differences in the grounding of knowledge in novels for adolescent readers (Clark and Morris 1995). Such work ignores ignoring the mediated nature of literary "reality." These discussions, although common, are not properly part of the sociology of literature.

Sociological Advances

The 1980s saw the institutionalization of sociological studies of cultural objects and processes as most prominently indicated by the establishment of the Culture Section of the American Sociological Association (ASA)—now one of the largest sections of the ASA with over one thousand members. This groundswell of interest in culture did not produce an equally large increase in interest in the sociology of literature, but it certainly created a more favorable climate for such work, as well as reenergizing research within the field.

Wendy Griswold is the key figure in the contemporary sociological study of literature in the United States. Her early research (1981, 1983, 1987) set the stage for a new synthesis that both takes seriously the issue of literary meaning and recognizes the importance of extratextual variables, while deploying the empirical data demanded by much of the discipline. By balancing these often-competing claims, Griswold allows for a study of literature that is sociological in the deepest sense of the word. Her concern for what she has called a "provisional, provincial positivism" (1990: 1580) has legitimated the sociology

of literature to other sociologists and has articulated to nonsociologists the unique power of literary sociology. By publishing repeatedly in *American Journal of Sociology* and in *American Sociological Review*, Griswold made the sociology of literature visible to an extent previously unknown.

Griswold's work (1981) began with a critique of reflection theory's exclusive focus on "deep" meaning, demonstrating the importance of production variables such as copyright legislation for explaining the diversity of books available in a market. A second project (1983, 1986) investigated the determinants of cultural revival, arguing that Elizabethan plays are revived most frequently when the social conditions of the day resonate with those the plays originally addressed. In 1987, Griswold published the results of a third project centrally located in the new reception of culture approach. This innovative work used published reviews as data on reception, thus allowing Griswold (1987) to address reception across time and across three very diverse audiences—an impossible strategy in the first instance and a prohibitively expensive strategy in the second when using interviews to gather data on audience interpretation. The 1990s saw Griswold (1992) beginning a large-scale project on the literary world of Nigeria, a project that returned Griswold to her initial interest in nationalism and literature among other concerns.

Griswold's impact on the sociology of literature has been powerful because she has systematically developed a methodological approach to studying literature and other cultural products and because her substantive research integrates a concern for meaning and the unique properties inherent in literary texts with an equal interest in social context, in the actors, institutions, and social behaviors surrounding texts.

Griswold's concern for the integration of literary content with social context is shared by many. Janet Wolff, although she works primarily in visual arts rather than literature, has repeatedly challenged sociological students of culture to take content and aesthetics seriously, allying these concerns with their traditional specialty in social context and history (e.g., 1992; see also Becker in Candido 1995, p. xi). Priscilla Parkhurst Clark/Ferguson (e.g., 1987) has written

extensively on the literary culture of France, combining a study of specific works and authors with detailed analyses of literary institutions and social processes, in addition to her normative writings on improving the sociology of literature (1982). Corse (1995, 1997) combines a detailed reading of three types of American and Canadian novels with a historical consideration of the two nations' canon development and a survey of the respective publishing industries to create a full picture of cross-national literary patterns and the explanation thereof. These works draw upon several important new approaches developed in the last twenty years.

The Production of Culture. The production of culture approach was the earliest of the new paradigms reinvigorating the study of culture in sociology. It stemmed from the growing interest of several prominent organizational sociologists in the sociology of culture (e.g., Hirsch 1972; Peterson 1976). These scholars made the now obvious insight that cultural objects are produced and distributed within a particular set of organizational and institutional arrangements, and that these arrangements mediate between author and audience and influence both the range of cultural products available and their content. Such arguments stand in stark contrast to earlier nonsociological conceptions of artistic production that featured artists as romantic loners and inspired geniuses with few ties to the social world. Art, in this view, is the product of a single artist and the content of artistic works and the range of works available are explained by individual artistic vision. Becker's influential *Art Worlds* (1982) effectively refuted such individualistic conceptions of cultural producers, at least in sociological research. Researchers in the production of culture tradition have showed conclusively that even the most antisocial artistic hermits work within an art world that provides the artistic conventions that allow readers to decode the work. Artists are free to modify or even reject these conventions, but the conventions are a crucial component of the work's context. Art worlds also provide the materials, support personnel, and payment systems artists rely upon to create their works.

The social organization of the literary world and the publishing industry became obvious focuses for sociological investigations, from the production-of-

culture approach. Walter W. Powell initiated a major research project with his dissertation, which was followed by his work on *Books: The Culture and Commerce of Publishing* (Coser et al. 1982) and *Getting into Print* (Powell 1985). This stream of research demonstrates how production variables, such as the degree of competition in the publishing industry, the web of social interactions underlying decisions about publication, and the fundamental embeddedness of publishing in particular historical and social circumstances, affect the diversity of books available to the public.

Peterson (1985) outlines six production factors constraining the publishing industry. Berezin (1991) demonstrates how the Italian fascist regime under Mussolini shaped the theatre through bureaucratic production. Long (1986) situates the concern with economic concentration in the publishing industry in a historical perspective, and argues that a simple relationship between concentration and "massification" is insufficient for understanding contemporary publishing. Similarly, although as part of larger projects, Radway (1984), Long (1985), and Corse (1997) analyze the publishing industry and its changes as a backdrop for an understanding of particular literary characteristics. Radway traces the rise of mass-market paperbacks and the marketing of formulaic fiction to help explain the success of the romance genre. Long acknowledges the importance of post World War II changes in the publishing houses and authorial demographics in her analysis of the changing visions of success enshrined in best-selling novels, although she grants primary explanatory power to changes in the broader social context. Corse provides a cross-national study of Canada and the United States, arguing that the publishing industry in the latter dominates the former because of market size and population density. Canada's publishing industry has become largely a distributive arm of the American publishing industry, despite governmental subsidies and other attempts to bolster Canadian publishing. The result is that American novels dominate the Canadian market (Corse 1997: 145-154).

One important focus of production approaches is gender. Tuchman (1989) analyzes the movement of male authors into the previously female-dominated

field of British novel publishing during the late 1800s as the field became increasingly remunerative. Rogers (1991), in her ambitious attempt at establishing a phenomenology of literary sociology, notes the gendered construction of both writers and readers. Rosengren's (1983) network analysis of authorial references in book reviewing demonstrates, among other suggestive findings, the persistence of the literary system's underrepresentation of female authors.

Reception Theory and the Focus on Audience. A second fundamental shift in the sociology of literature occurred as sociologists became familiar with the work of German reception theorists. Reception theory, and several other strains of similar work, shifted scholarly attention to the interaction of text and reader. The central figures in Germany in the late 1960s and 1970s were Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser. In *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (1982) Jauss presents his main argument: that literature can be understood only as a dialectical process of production and reception in which equal weight is given to the text and the reader. Iser's (1978) central focus is the act of reading itself.

Janice Radway's (1984) seminal *Reading the Romance* introduced reception theory with its central interest in audience interpretation to many American sociologists, as well as to many scholars in related fields. To those already familiar with the work of reception theorists, Radway's work powerfully demonstrated the potential of reception approaches for the sociology of literature. Radway's interviews with "ordinary" readers of genre romance novels (1984) uncovered multiple interpretations, instances of resistance, and fundamental insights into literary use and gender in a genre previously scorned as unworthy of serious scholarly attention.

Reception theory has generated a fruitful line of research in the sociology of literature. Long (1987) has examined women's reading groups and their acceptance or rejection of traditional cultural authority in the selection and interpretation of book choices. Howard and Allen (1990) compare the interpretations made by male and female readers of two short stories in an attempt to understand how gender affects reception. Although they find few interpretive differences based solely on gender, they find numerous differences based on "life

experience” and argue that gender affects interpretation indirectly through the “pervasive gender-markings of social context” (1990: 549). DeVault (1990) compares professional readings to her own reading of a Nadine Gordimer novel to demonstrate both the collective and the gendered nature of reception. Lichterman (1992) interviewed readers of self-help books to understand how such books are used as what he describes as a “thin culture” that helps readers with their personal lives without requiring any deep personal commitment to the book’s advice.

Griswold (1987) innovatively applied the reception perspective to a study of the cross-national range of published reviews of a single author, generating another fruitful line of research. Bayma and Fine (1996) analyze 1950s reviews of Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita* to demonstrate how cultural stereotypes of the time constructed reviewers’ understandings of the novel’s protagonist. Corse and Griffin (1997) analyze the history of reception of Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, analyzing the different positionings of the novel over time and detailing how various “interpretive strategies” available to critics construct the novel as more or less powerful.

Stratification. One final area of growth centers on the relationship between cultural products and stratification systems. Perhaps the central figure is Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1993), whose analyses of class-based differences in taste, concepts of cultural capital and habitus, and examination of the distinction between the fields of “restricted” and “large-scale” production have profoundly affected sociological thinking. Bourdieu (1984) has demonstrated how constructed differences in capacities for aesthetic judgment help reproduce the class structure. This fundamentally affects the conditions under which types of culture are produced, interpreted, and evaluated (1993). Bourdieu’s theoretical insights have inspired many researchers, although few work in literary sociology directly. For example, Corse (1997) examined the use of high-culture literature in elite programs of nation building, Halle (1992) investigated class variations in the display of artistic genres in the home, and DiMaggio and Mohr (1985) correlated cultural capital and marital selection. Cultural consumption and use are also stratified across categories other than class, for example, gender, race, and

ethnicity. These categories have received even less attention than class in the sociology of literature, although some work has been done in gender (e.g., Simonds and Rothman 1992; Wolff 1990; Radway 1984).

Bourdieu, among others, has also highlighted the need for sociological understanding of aesthetic evaluation as a social process and for a recognition of the contested nature of the cultural authority manifested in aesthetic judgments (e.g., DiMaggio 1991). Although this is not a new point (e.g., Noble 1976), sociology is finally coming to terms with literary evaluations and the codified hierarchy of value as objects of sociological attention (Lamont 1987; Corse and Griffin 1997; Corse 1997).

International Approaches. Obviously much of the material discussed so far is international, primarily European, in origin. European social theory has always been part of American sociology—the "fathers" of sociology are, after all, European—but there are cycles of more and less cross-fertilization. Historically, European sociologists certainly evinced greater interest in the sociology of literature than did their American counterparts; an example is the ongoing series of articles in *The British Journal of Sociology* debating the state of literary sociology (e.g., Noble 1976). The reasons for European sociology's greater interest in the sociology of literature are several: the relatively greater influence of Marxist and neo-Marxist traditions; methodological differences that legitimate qualitative and hermeneutic traditions; and the tighter link between sociology and the humanities compared to the "science-envy" and concomitant embrace of positivism characterizing much of American sociology.

These historical differences have at least residual remains. Marxist and hermeneutic approaches and methods more reminiscent of the humanities are still more prevalent in Europe. For example, there is greater acceptance of work looking at a single novel, an approach rarely seen in American sociology (e.g., Wahlforss's 1989 discussion of the success of a best-selling Finnish love story). Differences have decreased, however, primarily from the American embrace of European theories and methods rather than from the opposite movement.

One important group in the sociology of literature also proves a major exception to the historic differences in method between American and European sociologies of literature. The Marketing and Sociology of Books Group at Tilburg University in the Netherlands specializes in an institutional approach to understanding "the functioning of literary and cultural institutions ... and the various aspects of consumer behavior towards books and literary magazines" (Verdaasdonk and van Rees 1991, p. 421; see also, for example, Janssen 1997). The group includes Cees van Rees, editor of the journal *Poetics*, which lives up to its subtitle— *Journal of Empirical Research on Literature, the Media and the Arts*. The International Association for the Empirical Study of Literature (IGEL) sponsors an annual conference concentrating on such work (see Ibsch et al. 1995).

Broder Implications

The sociology of literature has implications for wider social issues. In the debate over the opening of the canon—the question of what should be considered "great literature" and therefore required in school—people on both sides assume that reading X is different in some important way than reading Y. If not, it wouldn't matter what was taught. Sociology of literature illuminates the process of canon formation helping to explain why certain books are canonized rather than others (Corse 1997; Corse and Griffin 1997); it sheds analytic light on processes of cultural authority detailing who gets cultural power and how (DiMaggio 1991); and it elucidates the meaning-making activities of readers, showing what different audiences draw from particular texts (Griswold 1987). Sociological studies can help explain why people read, what they make of their reading, and how reading affects their lives. The relevance of literary sociology to the canon debates and its foundational arguments regarding the importance of extraliterary processes and structures can be seen in the increasing interest scholars outside sociology are showing in sociological variables and studies of literature (e.g., Tompkins 1985; Lauter 1991).

Similarly, many of the same questions of interest to sociologists of literature inform debates on media effects, debates such as whether watching

cartoon violence causes children to act violently. This debate—and similar ones about the danger of rap music lyrics or the value of reading William Bennett's *Book of Virtues* rather than cyberpunk or social fears about Internet chat rooms—centers on the core question of what effect art and culture have on their audiences. Radway (1984), for example, asks whether reading romance novels teaches women to expect fulfillment only through patriarchal marriage—and demonstrates that the answer is a qualified yes. Corse (1997) argues that reading canonical novels is used to help construct national identities and feelings of solidarity among disparate readers. Griswold (1992) shows how the "village novel" establishes a powerful yet historically suspect sense of Nigerian identity. The question of the effect of reading—and the related question of literary use—is central to a complete sociology of literature. Although recent developments have moved us closer to answers, these are the key questions the sociology of literature needs to answer in the future.

CHAPTER V

The Sociology of Literature: Historical Development

The sociology of literature has long and distinguished history. The several critics and scholars from Plato down to the present have discussed the different theories and methods of sociological approach to literature. They believed in the simple conviction that literature is a social product, and thoughts and feelings found in literature are conditioned and shaped by the cultural life created by the society. The early critics did not doubt the reciprocal relationship between literature and society. Plato, who started the discussion of the relationship between literature and society, raised some questions about social implications of literature. However, his concern was primarily for social hygiene. He thought that poetry could make man sentimental and impair his reason. But Aristotle's answer to Plato's objections established the sound ground for the sociological approach to literature.

During the eighteenth century, it became more sound and powerful with the emergence of novel. Accepting de Boland's Maxim that literature is 'an expression of society' the modern social critics and novelists considered the novel as the realistic picture of the society. Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy also extended the fact that literature cannot be adequately understood without its cultural and social context. The romantic spirit of the nineteenth century rebelled against the classical aesthetics and paved a more favorable ground to sociological perception of literature. However, it was H. A. Taine who tried to systematize the sociological approach to literature in a scientific way. His History of English Literature (1886) is really the landmark in the history of the sociology of literature.

Karl Marx, Frederic Engels and their followers made the valuable contribution in sociological criticism. They looked at literature as economic infrastructure of society, and gave a new turn to sociology of literature. However, sociology of literature has gained its special place in the history of critical theory

in the late twentieth century in the hands of Lucien Goldman, Leo Lowenthal, Robert Escarpit, Alan Swingewood, Diana Laurensen, John Hall and the several social thinkers and critics. The survey of the literary study shows diverse views and theories of literature and its function in society. In order to understand the theoretical perspectives of the sociology of literature, it is necessary to see the historical development of literature through the contribution of the major social critics.

J. C. Herder (1744-1803): Jonathan Herder, a German philosopher and critic, is best known for his contribution to the philosophy of history and culture. In his *Idea for Philosophy of History for Mankind* (1791), he displays ambivalence towards the goals of rationalism and enlightenment. According to him man, as a creature among creatures, plays out his unique destiny in proportion to the 'force' or 'power' resulting from the interaction between individual, institution and environment. He believed that certain social and geographical environment, race and customs, and cultural and political conditions in particular areas are responsible for the emergence and development of literature. His writing is a challenge to the ideas of Immanuel Kant who argues that a sense of beauty could result only from a purely disinterested judgment. He believes in social structure as the base of literature. Kant gives importance to aesthetic qualities of literature whereas Herder gives importance to social aspects of literature. Alan Swingewood comments: "Herder argued that each work was rooted in a certain social and geographical environment where it performed specific functions and that there was no need for any judgment of value: everything is as it had to be" (26). In short, Herder's ideas about literature imply that there is the casual connection between literature and culture, race, customs and social institutions.

Madame de Stale (1766-1817): Madame de Stale, a French-Swiss writer and an early champion of women's rights, is considered as the first woman who contributed to infuse new ideas and methods into French literature. Like Herder, she relates literature to climate, geography and social institutions. She examines the influence of social and political institutions on literature.

James H. Bernet observes: The intellectual roots of the sociology of art are to be found in the number of the nineteenth century Europeans. Accounts of the beginning of the social interpretation of art invariably cite the writings of Madame de Stale, especially her *De la literature Considerée dans rapport avec les institutions sociale* (On Literature Considered in its Relations with Social Institutions). Published in 1800, this volume discusses the relation of race and climate to literary style and the effects of women and religion on art (621). According to M. C. Albrecht her book influenced the European writers to search for the relationships between art and society (ix). As a result the European scholars developed sociological approach much earlier than their counterparts in America.

Madame de Stale's concept of literature is somewhat broad. According to her, everything that involves the exercise of thought in writing is literature and it is characterized by climatic situations and national character. For example, the novel form does not get popularity in Italy because of its licentious nature and little respect for women. She believes that national character is the result of complex interactions between religious, legal and political institutions. In this context Swingewood writes: "Madame de Stale has an interesting observation here, arguing that the novel form could develop only in those societies where women's status was fairly high and when strong interest in the private life existed" (1972:27). Stale's works show positive sociological insight. Besides the awareness of the role of women, she grasps the importance of a strong middle class for the growth and development of literature. She thinks that both women and middle class produce virtue and liberty, the important pre-requisite of literature. To her literature is the expression of the national character which seems to mean simply 'the spirit of the time'. Her emphasis was mainly on climate and national character. Her ideas about the relation between literature and society are empirical. She wanted that literature should portray important changes in the social order, especially those that indicate movement toward the goals of liberty and justice. According to Barnett "She believed that the rising republican spirit in French politics should be reflected in literature by introducing the figures of

citizens and peasants into serious works, such as tragedies, rather than relegating them to comedies (621).

Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893): Hippolyte Taine, who for the first time tried to provide a systematic formula of 'race, milieu and moment' to comprehend and analyze literature in the context of sociology of literature, is regarded as the father of the sociology of literature. He attempted to interpret literature in a rigorously scientific way by the application of his famous formula of 'race, milieu and moment'. His *History of English Literature* (1871) contains an awareness of the basic problems which face any literary sociology. The book begins with the expression : "A literary work was no mere individual play of imagination, the isolated caprice of an excited brain, but a transcript of contemporary manners, a manifestation of a certain kind of mind"(Vol.I:1). Taine regards literature not as the expression of personality, as explained by the romanticists, but the collective expression of society embodying the spirit of the age and formative factors behind the emergence of this expression are 'race, milieu and moment'. The interaction of this triad produces a speculative mental structure which leads to the development of the 'general ideas which find expression in great art and literature. So Alan Swingewood states: "In the history of the sociology of literature Taine's is the first real theory, far more systematic than those of Madam de Stale and Herder, and constituting rather more than a collection of haphazard and random insight" (33). His method of studying the problems was naturalistic, empirical and rationalistic in its approach. His outlook to literature as the combination of 'race, milieu and moment' is systematic and scientific. He believes that literary works are the national monuments because they represent the consciousness of the society and the spirit of the age. In *History of English literature*, Taine remarks, "a work of art is determined by an aggregate which is the general state of mind and surrounding circumstances" (Vol. I: 30). Taine defines 'race' in terms of innate and hereditary characteristics and suggests that these characteristics are acquired from the soil, the food and the great events in the society. He calls these events as the original stock which the literature of the day faithfully reflects. By 'milieu' he means the totality of the surrounding, physical environment, social conditions,

climatic situations and the like. The next element 'moment' is defined in terms of spirit of the time. There are certain dominant intellectual ideas in each and every age and they are reflected in literary works of the day. For instance, classical spirit was dominant in the age of Dryden and Pope whereas the romantic spirit was dominant in the age of Wordsworth. Here the term 'moment' can also mean certain 'literary tradition' and the writers of the age make use of this literary tradition in their works. In order to explain Taine's concept of literature as a social document or national monument, Alan Swingewood says, "Taine wrote that a literary work was no mere individual play of imagination, the isolated caprice of excited brain, but a transcript of contemporary manners a manifestation of a certain kind of mind (32). While explaining Taine's views on the interaction of 'race, milieu and moment', Edward Henning quotes: A race is found which has received its character from the climate, the soil, the elements, and the great events which it underwent at its origin. This character has adapted it and reduced it to the cultivation of a certain spirit as well as to conception of a certain beauty. This is the national soil, very good for certain plants, but very bad for others, unable to bring to maturity the seeds of the neighboring country, but capable of giving its own exquisite sap and perfect efflorescence when the course of the centuries brings about the temperature which they need. Thus was born La Fontaine in France in the seventeenth century, Shakespeare in England Shakespeare in England during Renaissance, Goethe in the Germany of our day. For genius is nothing but a power developed and no power can develop completely, except in the country where it finds itself naturally and completely at home, where education nourishes it, where examples make it strong, where character sustains it, where the public challenges it (354). Taine categorizes the novel as a portable mirror reflecting all aspects of life and nature. To him novel is the dominant genre of industrial society. His discussion of literature in the History of English literature makes it clear that he gives special importance to the 'milieu' that produces 'the state of mind' necessary for artistic creation. His Lectures on Art lays emphasis on the social conditions of the time. He believed in 'race milieu and moment' as the major determinants of literature. In this regard W. H. Hudson

argues, “Taine’s interest in reality was not in literature as literature but in literature as a social document in the history of national psychology” (39). Due to this noteworthy contribution, Taine is regarded as the father of the sociology of literature.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Frederick Engels (1820- 1895): With the spread of the ideas of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, the sociological approach became a scientific method of literary interpretation. Taine argues literature as the expression of ‘race, milieu and moment’, but Marx and Engel view it as epiphenomenon of the social structure. They were more concerned with purely economic factors and the role played by the social class. They thought that the essence, the nature and function of art and literature could be understood by relating it to the prevailing social conditions and by analyzing the social system as the whole. Literature and art, as considered by them, are forms of social France in the seventeenth century, Shakespeare in England Shakespeare in England during Renaissance, Goethe in the Germany of our day. For genius is nothing but a power developed and no power can develop completely, except in the country where it finds itself naturally and completely at home, where education nourishes it, where examples make it strong, where character sustains it, where the public challenges it (354). Taine categorizes the novel as a portable mirror reflecting all aspects of life and nature. To him novel is the dominant genre of industrial society. His discussion of literature in the History of English literature makes it clear that he gives special importance to the ‘milieu’ that produces ‘the state of mind’ necessary for artistic creation. His Lectures on Art lays emphasis on the social conditions of the time. He believed in ‘race milieu and moment’ as the major determinants of literature. In this regard W. H. Hudson argues, “Taine’s interest in reality was not in literature as literature but in literature as a social document in the history of national psychology” (39). Due to this noteworthy contribution, Taine is regarded as the father of the sociology of literature.

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explaining the economic causality of literature, they say: In the social production of their inner life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their well relations of productions which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. (363). The influence of Marx and Engels on literature and literary criticism has been tremendous. The major contributions of these scholars in the field of the sociology of literature are: *On Literature and Art*, *Selected Works Vol. I*, *The German Ideology*, and *The Holy Family*. However, there is no fashioned theory of relations of literature with society but some hints or dogmas in their writings. Nevertheless, their followers tried to develop a theory. The scholars who tried to contribute the Marxist approach towards literature are Plekhanov, George Luckacs, Goldman, Terry Eagleton and others. These scholars contributed greatly in the development of the sociology of literature.

George Plekhanov: Plekhanov was highly influenced by Engels' notion of social mirror and the concept of type. His approach towards Marxists was remarkably eclectic. He argues that art figuratively expresses the feelings and ideas developed under the influence of surrounding. He thinks that literature is bound to the means of production and property but at the same time, he is aware of the aesthetic function of literature. Plekhanov introduces the notion of an inborn sense of beauty, which leads man to accept great art, and enjoy it for its own sake. In his *Art and Social Life* (1912), he constantly reiterates literature as the reflection of social life with his nonsocial aesthetic instinct. He argues: "Art has significance only when it depicts or evokes or conveys actions, emotions and events that are of significance to society" (108). Literature to Plekhanov is the reflection of the class struggle. So he remarks: "Cultural history is nothing but the reflection of the history of its classes and their struggle" (164). In order to explain his concept of reflection of the history he gave an example of the eighteenth century French drama. According to him, the French tragedy under Louis XIV

stemmed from the demands of the courtly aristocracy introducing the characters from high social status and the dramatists who lacked the conventional dose of aristocratic superiority would never have won applause of the audience of the day, however great his talent. However, with the rise of bourgeois class at the end of the century a new dramatic model viz. 'sentimental comedy' in which an idealized man of the middle class was at the centre made its appearance became very popular among the audience of the day. Therefore, Plekhanov insists that the theatre is the direct expression of the class struggle. Thus, his concept of literature is that all literature is class bound and great literature is incompatible with bourgeois dominance.

George Luckacs: The most prominent Marxist theoretician of literature after Plekhanov is George Luckacs. He accepts the Plekhanov's concept of literature as the reflection of class struggle. In *The Historical Novel* he writes: "The historical novel in its origin, development, rise and decline follows inevitably upon the great social transformations of modern times" (17). He argues that literature that implies socialist perspective is written from the point of view of a class. He criticizes a literary work which denies socialist perspective, according to him the writer who rejects socialism closes his eyes to the future, gives up any chance of assessing the present correctly, and loses the ability to create other than purely static works of art. (60). This loss of socialism/humanism leads literature to subjectivist outlook in which man depicted as alienated, isolated, and essentially morbid, lacking any meaningful relation with the social world. For example, in the works of Beckett, Joyce, and Proust man is portrayed as fragmented and partial. However, we get perspective of all-sides of man in the works of Balzac and Dickens. So Luckacs admires bourgeois realists or socialists perspective and admits that the great writers are those who, in their works, create 'lasting human types', the real criterion of literary achievement. He argues that the 'type' flows out of the artist's awareness of progressive change. It constitutes the totality of relations in flux (56-57). So like Engels, he insists that all literature must be measured by bourgeois realism. The major contributions of George Luckacs in the history of the sociology of literature are *The Meaning of*

Contemporary Realism (1963), The Historical Novel(1963), Writer and Critic (1970), The Theory of the Novel (1971), and Studies in European realism (1972).

Lucian Goldman: Goldman's contribution in the history of the sociology of literature lies in the introduction of dialectical materialism, the sophisticated method of linking art and society. He borrowed the concepts of 'totality' and 'world view' from Marxists, especially from Luckacs, and argued all great philosophical and literary works embody these concepts. The term 'totality' refers to the entire socio-historical process and offers a critical level of interpretation with respect to the ideological perspectives of plural subjects. 'World view' on the other hand, describes a particular group's projection of this totality as an effort to respond to the problems posed to it by other groups and by the natural environment. The concept of world view explains the documentary level of a literary work and, in doing so, distinguishes the particular task of any aesthetics having sociological aspirations. It exists not only outside of the work of art, but becomes the very principles of its artistic structuration, and acts upon the reciprocal relations between its components and the global meaning of the artistic sign. In short, Goldman's approach towards the sociology of literature is highly idiosyncratic, fusing structural analysis with historical and dialectical materialism Goldman evolved his theory of genetic structuralism to analyze literary works. According to genetic structuralism, the literary work is a constitutive element of social consciousness and is less related to the level of real consciousness of trans individual subjects. His essay "The Sociology of Literature: Status and Problems of Method" presents some observations of genetic structuralism. According to him, the first general observation on which genetic structuralist thought based is that 'all reflection on the human sciences is made not from without but from within society'. The second basic idea of genetic sociology is that human facts are responses of an individual or collective subject. He further points out that the essential relationship between the life of society and literary creation is not concerned with the content of these two sectors of human reality but only with the mental structures and those mental structures are not individual phenomena but social phenomena (493-495). Goldman's conception of the sociology of literature

is concerned to structure created and transformed by human activity. To him structures were made through the 'praxis' of the human subject. This subject is nothing but a collective category of a social group that constitutes the true source of cultural creation. This collective subject is a significant structure. All major cultural forms embody a significant structure, a worldview that expresses the collective consciousness of a significant social group. The worldview unites the various elements and levels of a cultural form into unity and coherence. He thinks that since the artwork expresses the tendencies, actions and values of the collective subject, it bears a functional relation with it. Thus, to understand the totality of a literary work, it is necessary to explain its historical genesis. His major contributions in the field of the sociology of literature are: *The Hidden God* (1956), *Towards a Sociology of Novel* (1964), *The Sociology of Literature: Status and Problems of Method* (1967), *Cultural Creation in Modern Society* (1976), and *Method in the Sociology of Literature* (1981).

Leo Lowenthal (1900 –1993): Lowenthal was a German-Jewish sociologist usually associated with the Frankfurt School. He became a leading expert of the sociology of literature and mass culture after joining the Institute for Social Research in 1926. He, then, conducted seminar on the sociology of literature and wrote essays and books for the sociological study of literature. The notable among them are: *Literature and the Image of Man* (1957) and *Literature, Popular Culture, and Society* (1961). In his introduction to *Literature and the Image of Man* he states: Creative literature conveys many levels of meaning, some intended by the author, some quite unintentional. An artist sets out to invent a plot, to describe action, to depict the interrelationships of characters, to emphasize certain values . . . The writer indeed develops believable characters and places them in situations involving interactions with others and with the society in which they live. It is the task of the sociologist of literature to relate the experience of the writer's imaginary characters and situations to the historical climate from which they derive. He has to transform the private equations of themes and stylistic means into social equations (X). James Barret refers this book as the most stimulating contribution to the sociological study of literature.

He further states that Lowenthal's study applies imagination to significant sociological problems and is concerned with the unique and value-relevant rather than with the repetitive and measurable aspects of this art form (629). Such a study is certainly beneficial to the sociologists who try to study novels of any writer. Lowenthal's most inspiring essay "sociology of Literature in Retrospect", published in *Critical Inquiry* throws light on the several aspects of the sociology of literature.

Robert Escarpit (1918 - 2000): Robert Escarpit was a man of many accomplishments comprising an academician, a renowned writer, a professor of comparative literature, a literary historian and a specialist in publishing. He wrote on a variety of topics but his major critical works on the sociology of literature is noteworthy. After the tremendous success of *The Sociology of Literature*, an intentionally provocative book, which exceeded 100,000 copies in France and which was translated into 23 languages, he was interviewed by John and Anne-Marie Deveze Lulan in July 1992. In this interview Robert Escarpit says: A little book I published in 1948 in Mexico, called *History of French Literature*, there is a paragraph in the preface called: the three dimensions of literature, where I say: we know very well, in literature there are writers (there is much talk of their biography), there are the works (there is much talk of works of course) and there is a third character that is never discussed is that the reader (Escarpit interview). Escarpit was of the opinion that the literary act is an act of communication. In order to study the problem of communication through writing the book and its role in communication, he was asked by Julian Behrstock the director of the 'UNESCO Book' to write a book called *The Book Revolution* (1965). This book also has a huge success. Since its publication the book is translated into twenty languages. His major works in the field of the sociology of literature includes *A Handbook of English Literature* (1953), *The Sociology of Literature* (1958) and *The Book Revolution*(1965). Escarpit's major contribution in the sociology of literature is in production and consumption of literary works. In his famous essay "The Act of Publication: Publication and Creation", he points out the publication system that selects, prints and distributes literary creations is very essential for

that the reward of the writer's efforts. By giving the history of the publication and the different roles played by the publishers he states: "Reduced to their material operations, publisher's functions can be summed up in three verbs: choose, manufacture and distribute" (1970:400). In his article "the sociology of literature" published in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* he explains that the sociological approach to literature is by no means an easy one. It conceives the concept of literature first as a socio cultural fact and not an aesthetic one. To the cultured mind the study of the writer as a professional man, of the literary work as a means of communication, and of the reader as a consumer of cultural goods is vaguely mocking. A true sociology of literature appeared only when literary critics and historians, starting from literature as a specific reality, tried to answer sociological questions by using current sociological methods. While explaining the sociology of reading he states that no sociology of literature is therefore possible without sociology of reading and of cultural consumption in general. Much has been done in that direction since Schucking's pioneer work on the sociology of literary taste.

Alan Swingewood is a lecturer in Sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. In *Myth of Mass Culture* he points out: "The aristocratic theory of mass society is to be linked to the moral crisis caused by the weakening of traditional centers of authority such as family and religion" (5). Another book *Cultural Theory and the Problem of Modernity* (1998) gives a comprehensive account of different sociological theories of culture. In it he discusses in detail the concepts and theories of culture such as hegemony, force field and cultural materialism. His sociological approach to the study of literature is developed in the social and cultural context. In *The sociology of literature*, the most influential book written with Diana Laurenson, he presents the approaches and method of the sociology of literature. In its "Preface" he writes: "This book has been written in the hope that it may serve to introduce the idea of the sociology of literature both to those who believe that social science is simply the study of facts and to those for whom literature is a unique subjective experience which defies scientific analysis" (vii). He also applies this theory to the works of

Fielding, Sartre, Camus and George Orwell. His *Marx and Modern Social Theory* (1975) offers an account of the rise of sociological thought from its origins in the eighteenth century. It examines the paradigms of functionalism cultural theory and the problem of modernity, critical analysis of the relation between sociological theory and recent debates in cultural studies. In his *A Short History of Sociological Thought* (1984), Swingewood throws light on the several aspects and theories of sociology from its origin to the modern development.

Virtually all of the scholars who contributed to the collection of essays *Die Philosophie der Literaturwissenschaft* (The Philosophy of Literary Studies) are in agreement that a “scientific” approach to the history of literature would lead nowhere. Not only do they believe — and rightly so — that each literary work contains some non rational elements, they also consider any rational approach inadequate with regard to the very nature of the object under investigation. Consequently, the study of literature as it was founded in the nineteenth century is condemned and rejected as “historical pragmatism,” as “historicizing psychologism,” and as “positivistic method.” Certainly, Hermann Hettner’s or Wilhelm Scherer’s works lack absolute validity; indeed, they would never have claimed it. But all attempts to deal with literature which profess to a scholarly character have to draw critically on the scientific methods of the nineteenth century.

Isolation and simplification of a literary historical object is admittedly achieved in an exceedingly sublime process. Author and work become abstracted from the matrix of historical circumstances, and molded into a kind of predictable coalescence from which the diverse manifold of details and dimensions has been drained. Through this reification they acquire a dignity and worthiness which no other cultural phenomenon can boast. “In the history of literature acts and actors are ‘givens,’ whereas in world history we are presented with more or less falsified accounts of mostly shady dealings by rarely identifiable dealers.” True dignity is reserved only for such historical phenomena which are a manifestation of the mind, or may be perceived at least as existing in a unique domain. of course, only when an object of investigation is not considered part of inner and outer nature

and its variable conditions, but instead has to be ontologically conceived as a creation of a higher kind, do positivistic methods prove fundamentally insufficient. With the confidence of a philosophical instinct, the concept of structure introduced by Dilthey, which was based on historical contextuality, is abandoned and replaced by the concept of the organic “that clearly, unambiguously and decisively characterizes the spiritual as the individualization in history determined by unity of meaning.” Ambiguous terms such as “work form,” “content,” proclaim a metaphysically grounded unity of author and work, transcending and negating all diversity. This radical estrangement from historical reality finds its purest expressions in concepts such as “classicism” and “romanticism” which are not only relegated to history, but also metaphysically transfigured. “Like the super ordinate concept of eternity, both the concept of perfection and of infinity are derived from historical and psychological experience as well as from philosophical knowledge.”

This rigid and in itself irrational stance on the part of those representing literary scholarship today presumes its legitimation in the fact that the “methods of the natural sciences” analyze their object into bits and pieces, and when attempting to define its ‘vital poetic soul,” these methods cannot help but miss entirely its “secret.” The significance of these statements is hard to grasp. For nobody has ever demonstrated why, and to what extent, an object would be harmed or distorted by a rational approach. Any study of a phenomenon can be mindful of its wholeness, its “Gestalt,” while being conscious of a selective methodology. Admittedly, such an analysis will only yield the elements of a mosaic whose sum never represents the whole. But where on earth does scientific analysis exhaust itself in nothing but a summation of fractured parts? And are the methods of the natural sciences exclusively atomistic in nature? Certainly not, and neither do methods of literary analysis have to be, if they are inappropriate to a specific task. On their journey into the vagaries of metaphysics, the literary scholars also appropriated the concept of law. However, rather than to identify law with order and regularity which can be submitted to scrutiny and observation, the concept, from the start, is burdened with a troublesome new and vague

meaning. Instead of the search for regularity there appears a “unity of meaning,” and the “artistic personality” and the “poetic work” are identified, among others, as the major problems of literary studies, problems which seem to be resolved before they have been investigated. Yet, *personality* and work belong to those conceptual constructs which thwart any theoretical effort precisely because they are opaque and finite.

In as much as these fashionable literary scholars point to the pitfalls involved in seeking to understand the relationship of author and work through, for instance, mere philological data analysis, I have no quarrel with this anti-positivistic attitude. But precisely when it comes to an evaluation of a work of art and its qualitative aspects, an understanding of its intrinsic merit and its authenticity — questions so much at the center of the concerns of these scholars — their methods reveal their utter inadequacy. The question of whether and to what extent the literary artist consciously applies conventions of form, can only be explored by rational means. But the metaphysical mystification so prevalent in contemporary literary studies impedes any sober reflection and scholarship. Its tasks are not only historical in nature; I would like to refer to Dilthey’s concept of *Verstehen* (understanding) and its particular emphasis on the relationship between the author and his work. Admittedly, the demystification of investigative approaches to literature cannot be achieved by means of a formal poetics alone. What is needed above all is a psychology of art, i.e. a study of the psychological interaction between artist, artistic creation and reception. What is not needed, however, is a psychology that places the “great work of art” in a mystical relationship “with the people,” and that finds the “personal biography of the author . . . interesting and necessary, but unessential with regard to the act of artistic creation.”

In contrast to the vague declamatory statements so characteristic of Jungian psychology, the classical Freudian model of psychoanalysis has already made important theoretical contributions to a psychology of art. Some of its proponents have discussed central questions of literature, particularly those dealing with the psychic conditions under which great works of art originate,

specifically the origins and structure of artistic imagination, and last not least, the question of the relationship between the artistic work and its reception which so far has been ignored or at least insufficiently explored. Admittedly, some of these psychoanalytic propositions are not yet polished and refined enough and remain somewhat schematic. But to reject the assistance of scientific psychology in the study of art and literature does not provide protection from “a barbarian assault of conquerers,” as one contemporary literary mandarin put it, but rather is a “barbarian” argument itself.

Coupled with the condemnation of “historicizing psychologism,” which cannot explore the secret of the “authentic poetic soul,” is the repudiation of accepted historical methodology and particularly of any theory of historical causality, in short, what in modern literary scholarship is anathematized as “positivistic materialism.” But as in the case of psychology, the trend setters take liberties: modern literary scholarship has no qualms and even consistently makes use of grand historical categories such as “folk, society, humanity” or the “pluralistic, aspiring” and the “spiritualizing, articulating experience.” There is mention of „associations of essence and fate,” of “perfection and infinity” as “conceptual basis” of “historical experience”; while the phraseology of the “age of Homer, Pericles, Augustus, Dante, Goethe” is acceptable, any historically and sociologically oriented theoretical approach will meet with scorn and contempt when it attempts to understand literature as a social phenomenon in combination with the positivistic and materialistic methods which evolved out of the historical scholarship of the nineteenth century. The bluntly stated objective is “the abandonment of the descriptive vantage point of positivism and the return to a commitment to the metaphysical character of the *Geisteswissenschaften* (humanities).”

We shall see that such “abandonment” is demanded with even greater determination once the theory of historical materialism replaces traditional historical description. Even the boundary between scholarship and demagogery is obscured when the anti-historical transfiguration of a work of art has to be maintained: “Historical pragmatism may perhaps conclude that syphilis led to the

disappearance of Minnesang and its polygamous convention, or that the currency reform of 1923 gave rise to Expressionism. ... The essence of Minnesang and Expressionism remains unaffected by such findings. The question here is not why is it but what is it? The 'why' would simply lead to an infinite regress: Why at the end of the Middle Ages was lues spread, why at the beginning of 1924 was the *Reichsmark* introduced, and so on until the egg of Leda." This kind of rhetoric makes a caricature of any legitimate scholarly inquiry. By no means do causal questions require infinite regress; clearly stated they can be precisely answered, even if new questions might be posed by this answer. An investigation of the reasons for Goethe's move to Weimar does not require an investigation of the history of urban development in Germany!

Considering the current situation of literary scholarship as sketched in the preceding outline, its precarious relationship to psychology, history, and social science, the arbitrariness in the selection of its categories, the artificial isolation and scientific alienation of its object, one might agree with a modern literary historian who, dissatisfied with the "metaphysicalization" that has invaded his discipline, calls for the return to strict scientific standards, a passionate devotion to material, a deep concern for pure knowledge; in short, a new "appreciation of knowledge and learning." If Franz Schultz, however, simultaneously rejects any overarching theory," he does not have the courage of his own convictions. In fact, it is possible to conceive of a theoretical approach to literature which remains faithful to "knowledge and learning" and interprets literary works historically and sociologically, avoiding the pitfalls of both either descriptive positivism or mere metaphysical speculation.

Such concern with the historical and sociological dimensions of literature requires a theory of history and society. This is not to say that one is limited to vague theorizing about the relationships between literature and society in general, nor that it is necessary to speak in generalities about social conditions which are required for the emergence of literature. Rather, the historical explanation of literature has to address the extent to which particular social structures find expression in individual literary works and what function these works perform in

society. Man is involved in specific relations of production throughout his history. These relations present themselves socially as classes in struggle with each other, and the development of their relationship forms the real basis for the various cultural spheres. The specific structure of production, i.e. the economy, is the independent explanatory variable not only for the legal forms of property and organization of state and government but, at the same time, for the shape and quality of human life in each historical epoch. It is illusionary to assume an autonomy of the social superstructure, and this is not altered through the use of a scientific terminology claiming such autonomy. As long as literary history is exclusively conceived as *Geistesgeschichte*, it will remain powerless to make cogent statements, even though in practice the talent and sensibilities of a literary historian may have produced something of interest. A genuine, explanatory history of literature must proceed on materialistic principles. That is to say, it must investigate the economic structures as they present themselves in literature, as well as the impact which the materialistically interpreted work of art has in the economically determined society.

Such a demand along with the social theory which it presupposes, has a dogmatic ring unless it specifies its problematic. This has been achieved to a large extent in the fields of economics and political history, but even in the area of literary studies fledgling attempts have been made. Worthy of mention are Franz Mehring's essays on literary history which, sometimes using a simplified and popular, sometimes a narrowly defined political approach, have for the first time attempted to apply the theory of historical materialism to literature. But as in the case of the aforementioned psychological studies, the work of Mehring and other scholars of his persuasion has either been ignored or even ridiculed by literary historians. A sociologist of culture recently referred to "such a conceptual framework not only as unsociological or incompatible with scientific sociology," but also comparable to "a parasitic plant" that "draws off the healthy sap of a tree."

The materialistic explanation of history cannot afford to proceed in the simplifying and isolating manner so characteristic for the academic establishment

of literary history, interpretation, and criticism. Contrary to common assertions, this theory neither postulates that culture in its entirety can be explained in terms of economic relations, nor that specific cultural or psychological phenomena are nothing but reflections of the social substructure. Rather, a materialistic theory places its emphasis on mediation: the mediating processes between a mode of production and the modes of cultural life including literature. Psychology must be considered as one of the principal mediating processes, particularly in the field of literary studies, since it describes the psychic processes by means of which the cultural functions of a work of art reproduce the structures of the societal base. In as much as the basis of each society in history can be seen as the relationship between ruling and ruled classes and is, in fact, a metabolic process between society and nature, literature-like all other cultural phenomena — will make this relationship transparent. For that reason the concept of ideology will be decisive for the social explanation of all phenomena of the superstructure from legal institutions to the arts. Ideology is false consciousness of social contradictions and attempts to replace them with the illusions of social harmony. Indeed, literary studies are largely an investigation of ideologies.

The often-voiced criticism that the theory of historical materialism lacks methodological refinement and possesses a crude conceptual apparatus can easily be countered: the proponents of this theory have never avoided the discussion of its flaws. Its findings and results have always been open to the scrutiny of other scholars, as well as to possible theoretical changes prompted by new experiences in social reality. Historical materialism has certainly not taken refuge in quasi-ontological imagery which, seductive and enchanting as it might be, connotes a spurious philosophy of knowledge. As long as a theory does not consider itself finite but rather continuously sustained and possibly altered by new and different experiences the frequent accusation that historical materialism ultimately contains an element of faith seems of little consequence.

The following examples are intended to illustrate the application of historical materialism to literary studies and will address questions of form, motif, and content. Beginning with the issue of *form* I should like to consider the

problem of the encyclopedic novel as it exists in Balzac's *Comédie Humaine* or in Zola's *Les Rougon-Macquart*. Both seek to represent, through their all-encompassing narratives, the society of their time in its entirety with all its living and dead inventory, occupations, and forms of state, passions, and domestic furnishings. Their aim appears anchored in the bourgeois-rationalist belief that, in principle, it is possible to possess the world through thought and to dominate it through intellectual appropriation. In the case of Balzac, this rationalism is mediated by his adherence to a mercantilist model of the economy which supposedly allows government to regulate society in an orderly fashion — a Balzac anachronism rooted in his peculiar psychological infatuation with the *ancien regime*. In the case of Zola, however, one faces a critical orientation toward the capitalist mode of production and the hope of remedying its deficiencies through a critical analysis of the society it conditions. The breadth of each of these cyclic novels reveals just as much about the author and his place in a class society as it does about the theoretical and moral position he adopts toward the social structure of his time.

Social meanings present themselves in more specific issues as well. The same literary form, for instance, can have a completely different social meaning in different contexts. One example would be the emphasis on dialogue and the resulting limitation of the narrative voice or commentative inserts in the text. The works of Gutzkow and Spielhagen and the impressionist writers are paradigmatic for this style. Gutzkow was probably the first to introduce into German literature the modern bourgeois dialogue. The history of the dialogue in narrative texts is that of a development from a tradition of stiff conventions to the spontaneous, open conversational technique of the present. The dialogue is in reality the criterion of the varying degrees of psychological astuteness which the freely competing members of capitalist society, at least in its liberal epoch, are able to demonstrate. Those who are more adroit and possess superior insight into the response mechanisms of their interlocutors also have superior chances of economic success, so long as the situation is not controlled by crude power relations which would make any discussion impossible in the first place. The

function of the conversational form in the literature of the *Junges Deutschland* (Young Germany: the liberal intelligentsia of the 1830s and 1840s), which was almost entirely oblivious of its social context, is only indirectly identifiable, and in Spielhagen appears burdened by a kind of theory. The epic narrative insert has been reduced to a minimum, creating the impression that the author's arrangement of events has been dictated by the demands of reality, i.e. the verbalized interactions of the novel's characters, and that he has drastically reduced authorial interference through actions, events, and incidents as well as their authorial interpretation. Beginning with the later Fontane and Sudermann up until Arthur Schnitzler's last novellas, the impressionist novella makes extensive use of the uncommented dialogue. But this "renunciation of the privileges of the interpreting and supplementing narrator" has one meaning and function in Spielhagen and another in the German impressionists.

Spielhagen's technique is based on the conviction that through the conversations of people social reality becomes transparent to the reflective reader who then will discover their underlying theory about human and societal relations. A bourgeois idealist, Spielhagen believes in the power of the objective mind which materializes in the articulated thoughts of men so that the free exchange of dialogue can leave no doubt as to the substantive convictions of the author. In contrast, the ascetic absence of commentary characteristic for the impressionists, is an expression of the self-criticism liberal bourgeois society pronounced on itself since the beginning of the twentieth century. The inability to formulate a theory of society, the increasing insecurity, if not helplessness, of the German middle class, resulted in fact in a mentality of relativism, a loss of confidence in the subjective mind which believed in the possibility of universally applicable knowledge. While Gutzkow's groping increments in dialogue reflect the economic gropings of a liberal bourgeoisie in Germany in the first stages of upward mobility and while the novellistic technique of Spielhagen celebrates its social victory, the impressionist style reflects its crisis: it either hides this crisis with an ideological film or admits to it through pointless conversations which lead nowhere.

Other class relationships reveal themselves when one compares the technique of the narrative frame in the novellas of Theodor Storm and C. F. Meyer. This literary device fulfills radically opposed functions in the work of these authors. Storm assumes a posture of resignation, of renunciatory retrospection. He is the weary, petty bourgeois pensioner whose world has collapsed, a world in which he could hope to engage in affairs of social importance. Time has run out; the only sustenance the present still offers are “framed,” idealized remembrances of the past. Memory is capable of recovering only those fragments of the past that do not immediately bear on the gloomy present and therefore do not have to be repressed. In the case of Meyer, on the other hand, the narrative frames of his novellas quite literally serve as the magnificent frames of a glorious painting, and as such function as indicators of the worthiness of the image they enclose and are meant to separate the unique, which is all that matters, from the indifferent diversity of appearances. The same stylistic device which in Storm’s world symbolizes the modest, the small and the waning, is used by Meyer as the symbol of vital reality. While the petty bourgeois soul of Storm quietly mourns, Meyer thrusts his characters into a world that corresponds to the feudal daydreams of the German upper classes in the 1870s.

As a final example of the sociological implications in problems of form, I shall briefly consider the use of pictorial imagery. For Lessing the aesthetician, the pictorial has no place in literary arts. For Meyer it is a favorite artistic device. The progress of humanity in historical time, the development of mankind are the important issues for Lessing, who was a firm believer in the future. He was an early champion of a rising bourgeois society which saw in the tensions and resolutions of a drama the paradigm for the conflicts and possible resolutions in society. Meyer is the heir to this dramatic tradition, but the surviving victors are now limited to the members of the upper class. Where Lessing is a dramatist, Meyer has become a sculptor. Where the former animates, the latter in fact halts the motion of progress. If for Lessing art expresses a universalist morality binding for all men, a morality which transcends individual idiosyncracies, it is for Meyer the extraordinary and the unique in selected individuals that finds expression in

art. Magnificently framed, the infinite diversity of reality is condensed into the great moments of great individuals and eternalized as in a painting, transcending time and place. This ideological position mirrors precisely the self-image of the dominant strata of the bourgeoisie in the last third of the nineteenth century, for which the social world is but an opportunity for the development of the great personality, in short, the social elite. Its members stand aloof from trivial everyday cares and live surrounded by significant people, great ideals and important affairs which all reflect and confirm their uniqueness.

A *motif* that likewise serves to glorify economic power positions is the motif of boredom in the novels of Stendhal. Boredom is as fatal as death for “the happy few” who alone are entitled to read his books and for whom alone he chooses to write. These happy few, far removed from the consequences of an economically limited existence, are entitled to pursue their happiness according to their own autonomous morality. Just as Stendhal is the supreme novelist of the bourgeois aristocracy in the age of Napoleon, so Gustav Freytag sings the praise of the German mid-nineteenth century bourgeoisie which he transfigures by denying any knowledge of its contradictions that are evident in the division, organization and remuneration of labor. In as much as Freytag applies an undifferentiated concept of “work” to the equally undifferentiated concept of “the people,” (two concepts Stendhal would have never used) he successfully overlooked, in a literal sense, the antagonistic social order with its competing and feuding classes. Ideology comes to the fore at the very beginning of his major work *Soll und Haben* (Debit and Credit) which has as its motto the words of Julian Schmidt: “The novel ought to look for the German people where they are at their virtuous best, that is, at work.”

I should like to touch upon the death motif as it is struck repeatedly in Mörike’s *Maler Nolten* (Painter Nolten) and Meyer’s *Jurg Jenatsch*. Mörike’s world is that of the *Biedermeier* of the honest man, the not yet politically emancipated bourgeois in the period of the *Vormarz*, i.e. in the period between the Vienna Congress and the, in fact, abortive revolutions of 1848-49. In his novels, the death motif may be interpreted as a harbinger of the political defeat of the

bourgeoisie in his generation. The motifs of transience, fate, and death serve as ideological metaphors for the political impotence of the middle class in his time of which he himself was a prototype. By contrast, in the stories of Meyer, death takes on the aspect of a highly intensified moment in the fullness of life. When Lucretia kills Jurg Jenatsch this deed marks also the beginning of her own physical destruction. What is in fact a violent double murder is presented as the expression of heroic lifestyles. Only Jurg and Lucretia are worthy of one another, they represent a rare and perfect balance of character and fate; only by virtue of this singular congruity do these two have the right to eliminate each other. The solidarity of the international ruling minority proves itself unto death.

Finally, turning to *content*, I once more refer to Freytag and Meyer. Both wrote historical novels and short stories. Freytag's collected works might be called the textbook of the conformist middle class, exhorting the virtues and perils of its members. The study of history is not seen as an occasion for intellectual enjoyment for its own sake, but for its pedagogic values. Either for the purpose of warning or emulation, it contains the history of individuals and groups intended to teach future generations lessons of social competence which might help them avoid the dubious fate of the aristocracy or the sordid fate of the lower classes. If this stance toward history is a manifestation of the self-image of a bourgeoisie struggling for its existence with tenacious diligence, then, by contrast, Meyer's selective approach to history may be dubbed a "historicism of the upper bourgeoisie." When history is constituted randomly from disjoint events, the abundance of historical phenomena is forced into a dim twilight and the chain of diachronic experiences itself has no significance at all. There is no continuum of events of any interpretable character, be it causal, theological or otherwise teleological in nature. Political, economic cultural changes carry no weight and the flow of history is in itself without importance. The historian turns spectator taking pleasure in observing the singular like a magnificent drama. Thus the category of play penetrates real history as much as historical research to the extent that history's diversity and complexity is reduced to a puppet theater of heroes whose lives and activities are reconstituted for the playful enjoyment of the

spectator-interpreter. An upper-class bourgeois likes his favorite historian to be an aesthete.

Another example for the exploration of content is the question of politics. In Gottfried Keller we find an almost bold disregard for economic realities, but considerable emphasis is placed on the political sphere, whether in occasional caricaturization of armchair politics or in the informed and competent conversations of the burgher in the *Fahnlein der sieben Aufrechten* (The Seven Upright) on topics of general import. To identify politics as the supreme, if not exclusive arena for the confrontation and final settlement of public affairs, is characteristic for social groups which, on the one hand, experience themselves as economically secure, but whose social mobility, on the other hand, is limited. All through the nineteenth century the middle class is inclined to look at politics as a resource for arbitration between competing groups and individuals, as, literally, a "middle"-way. This notion of the middle station, incidentally, was already fervently glorified in the fictional and pamphlet literature read by the English middle class in the eighteenth century. In the case of Stendhal, politics does not function as an ideological device, rather, consciously or not, he acts as spokesman for the upper class of his time who considered political dealings part of economic transactions and conflicts, and governments nothing more than business partners of big business itself.

It has always been of great interest to me why a task as important as the study of the reception of literature among various social groups has been so utterly neglected even though a vast pool of research material is available in journals and newspapers, in letters and memoirs. A materialistic history of literature, unhampered by the anxious protection of the literary arts by its self-styled guardians and without fear of getting stranded in a quagmire of routine philology or mindless data collection, is well prepared to tackle this task.

Literature does not only reflect but it also shapes socio-political-economic relations. Literature is more like a mirror which reflects those social, political, and economic issues in any society at any given time. We know, for example, there were too many orphaned children struggling to survive in London in the mid-

1800s. Dickens didn't create that truth, but he did reflect it in his novels. Literature is the mirror which reflects the truth of both human nature and the human condition (social, political, economic, religious) in all times and all places.

Just to cite one example that might serve as a way in which literature influences society, postcolonial literature from writers in Africa originally stems from a postcolonial society, of course. But when read by someone from another society, it influences what that someone knows, thinks, understands about the postcolonial world. Even though the literature was reactive to start with, it certainly could be influential later on. And this is really the case in all scenarios. It's hard to believe that literature that reflects society, never gets read by someone who then acts on what they've read to form the future.

Most of the time, literature is a result of what is going on in politics, economics, or society as a whole. People become disenchanted, angry, depressed, whatever emotion you want to name, and they write about it. Take, for instance, Thomas Payne's *Common Sense* written just before the American Revolution. *Les Miserables*, *Fences*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, and *Letters From a Birmingham Jail* are just a few other examples of how people write to react to injustices going on in their lives.

It would be challenging to actually identify literature that does shape sociology, politics, or economics. We can find examples of literature that has had impact on political or world events. Yet, to make the case that literature is the origin of these experiences is quite challenging. Literature is shaped by and reflects the domains of sociology or politics.

Literature to be intelligible and meaningful to reader must have some connection with the reality as it exists. But this does not mean that the literature only reflects the society as it is. Literature may contain many other type of information like, evaluation of what is considered to be good or bad in the society, causes and possible remedies problems in society, a vision of a different kind of world. This different kind of world may be a vision of a better world or worse

world extrapolated from the characteristics of the current world. In this way literature also contributes to bringing about major changes in the society.

Sociology is the study of human societies, English literature reflects or rejects social norms and values of various periods in history and the modern day. The Sociology and English Literature cover the foundations of these two disciplines, giving you a broad and flexible foundation for a career or further study. In the sociology strand, you will learn about a range of concepts, theories and methods. These will be applied to understand social and cultural processes, social diversity and inequality, and the relationship between individuals, groups and institutions. In the English literature strand, you'll develop a critical understanding of the processes and traditions of literature in English. Engaging with a variety of theories, approaches and critical debates, you'll investigate how meaning is constructed through reading and writing, and how these are transformed by different historical, cultural and literary contexts. You'll think critically and creatively, develop detailed methods of analysis and interpretation, and be able to precisely communicate your ideas. These skills are highly sought after in the graduate jobs market, and can be applied to many different career areas including advertising, social work, teaching, publishing and journalism, or provide a solid foundation for further study or research.

The sociology of literature is used to refer to the cluster of intellectual ventures that originate in one overriding conviction: the conviction that literature and society necessarily explain each other. Scholars and critics of all kinds congregate under this outside umbrella only to differ greatly in their sense of what they do and what the sociology of literature does. They subscribe to a wide range of theories and methods. Many would not accept the sociology of literature as an appropriate label for their own work; others would refuse it to their colleagues. Nevertheless, every advocate agrees that a sociological practice is essential to literature. For the sociology of literature does not constitute just one more approach to literature. Because it insists upon a sociology of literary knowledge and literary practice within the study of literature, the sociology of literature raises questions basic to all intellectual

inquiry. The sociology of literature begins in diversity. The way that it combines the ancient traditions of art with the modern practices of social science makes the very term something of an oxymoron. There is not one sociology of literature, there are many sociological practices of literature, each of which operates within a particular intellectual tradition and specific in- Critical Inquiry.

Traditional literary history just like much social science is bound to case studies as predominantly theoretical work can never be. These epistemological differences between American and European intellectual practices reveal the disjunctions and the strains in the many sociological practices of literature on each side of the Atlantic. It is not surprising that the sociology of literature has a greater following in Europe where intellectuals like Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, and Raymond Williams move easily between disciplines and use their work to address issues of broad intellectual and social significance.

The institutional organization of intellectual life accentuates certain of these predispositions and minimizes others. The preponderant American empiricism promotes what seems to be an innate skepticism about "foreign" theoretical perspectives that seem to remove the critic from literature, whether it is regarded as a text by literary critics or as a social product by social scientists. The evident respect for disciplinary boundaries visible in American universities means that many academics think of "interdisciplinary" as a code word for indiscriminant borrowing and a fundamental disregard for crucial disciplinary distinctions. Perhaps, in some perverse sense, interdisciplinary work needs the partitions erected by departments. In any case, despite the recent proliferation of interdisciplinary committees in American universities, departments mostly prevail. To get ahead in the university, the academic-student or professor must find a niche. Finding a niche means finding a specialization, and that still, in the United States, means a departmental affiliation. By contrast, the very different organization of European universities stimulates movement between disciplines. The small number of chairs in any discipline and in most European universities accords the individual professor

considerable latitude in defining and redefining a field. Barthes, in effect, institutionalized his particular conception of semiotics by calling the position to which he was elected at the College de France a Chair of Semiology. Researchers, and to a lesser degree students, choose a professor (who may well also direct a research center) with as much care as they select a discipline. Here, disciplinary labels often mislead, which is why for European scholars it is imperative to know whose brand of history a historian actually practices, whose sociology, whose sociology of literature.

In both Europe and the United States, though for different reasons, the sociology of literature occupies a marginal position within the academy. That position is likely to remain peripheral. Inevitably, the interdisciplinary nature of the sociology of literature must struggle against the disciplinary organization of universities and the ideological rigidities of schools of thought. The lack of consensus over ends and means, the absence of agreement over central concepts erect an even greater obstacle to institutionalization. Without some elements of common understanding the sociology of literature will never possess significant institutional space.

To develop as a field in American universities, the sociology of literature would need to follow the path followed by American studies beginning in the 1930s, by comparative literature in the 1950s and 1960s, and by fields as different as semiotics and women's studies in the 1970s and 1980s. In Europe, it would need to find support in chairs within the university system. In both places the sociology of literature would need to define a set of shared problems and methods; it would have to fix a research agenda. But resolutions of its contradictions would entail sacrificing the diversity that makes the sociology of literature so exciting an adventure.

The sociology of literature owes its current disarray at least in part to the conflicting traditions that are its intellectual heritage. Like sociology itself, the sociology of literature arose in the nineteenth century, a product of its many revolutions. Momentous changes in the intellectual landscape notwithstanding, a sociological perspective on literature faced obstacles that

were numerous and significant. On the philosophical front, Kant's separation of aesthetics from metaphysics and ethics removed literature and art to a world apart, beyond the contingencies of the material world. Closer to specifically literary concerns, the insistence of classical aesthetics upon the universality of art similarly removed literary works from the influence of any one milieu. Romanticism rebelled against classical aesthetics on many counts. Yet the romantic conception of genius effectively took the writer out of society by defining him (the stereotype was almost exclusively masculine) in terms of divine inspiration. Much as Kantian aesthetics abstracted art itself, a certain romanticism detached the artist from any relevant social context. Other aspects of romanticism proved more favorable to a sociological perception of literature. Against the forces that denied the relevance of material factors, certain currents of thought supported a re conceptualization of the relationship between literature and society. Expressly relevant to the sociology of literature were Voltaire's social history

Logically, the incorporation of literature into a general linguistic or semiotic order should favor the conjunction of literary theory and the sociology of literature. Other facets of contemporary theories, however, effectively block cooperation. The sociology of literature opens literature to society; literary theory turns works back on themselves, enclosing the text within the linguistic order. Reaching outside of that order requires reaching outside of the theory. Exploring the social order, on the other hand, sends research in many different directions at once, and the considerable time such exploration takes may be more than many are willing to spend in the face of vocational pressures to complete a degree, find a job, get tenure. Focusing on the text alone allows greater concentration of effort, and hence more obvious access to intellectual specializations. These strategic advantages certainly play a significant role in the favor enjoyed in past and present American academic circles by a variety of formalist approaches, from New Criticism to deconstructive theory. They join in a collective denial of the social and historical components of any text.

Those scholars who do invest the effort to move beyond the text will discover that the very formulation commonly employed—literature and society—fosters an opposition between texts and institutions, between literary studies and sociological practices—precisely those oppositions that the sociology of literature should surmount. The dichotomies become all the more powerful to the degree that they respect a "logical" division of intellectual labor. The antagonism, as durable as it is simplistic, offers further testimony to the power of the reflection metaphor. Theory and institution betray similar conceptions of social and intellectual organization.

By working from the opposition between literature and society, the reflection model justifies disciplinary boundaries that similarly divide up knowledge about the world. These boundaries between literary studies and the social sciences, in return, support the reflection theory and its assumption of an absolute division between material reality and intellectual activity.

The reciprocal relationship between theoretical model and institutional setting strengthens each. Although discussions of texts as well as institutions become ever more sophisticated, few studies effectively challenge the principle of division upon which this work depends or the model that it accredits.

Although most critics strenuously reject the naive perception of literature and society implied by the reflection model, the mirror endures in practice even as it is denied in theory. If the reflection model has been discredited, it has not been replaced. Perspectives A metaphor that cannot be avoided deserves closer attention.

Interest in the relationship between literature and society is hardly a new phenomenon. We still read and refer to the ancient Greeks in this regard. In *The Republic*, for example, Plato presages both Mme. de Staël's treatise of 1800, which was the first to discuss cross-national differences in literature, and later notions of literary reflection with his idea of imitation. What is new, however, is the relative legitimacy of the study of literature within the discipline of sociology. This is due both to the increasing interest in culture in sociology after years of

marginalization (Calhoun 1989) and to the increasing influence of cultural studies on sociology and throughout the academy.

A broader interest in and acceptance of cultural sociology has meant that the types of research questions and methods common to sociological studies of literature are now more widely accepted within the field. Sociology has extended its methodological boundaries in response to both attacks on the dominance of positivism and the rising power of alternative stances suggested by postmodernism. At the same time, changes in the goals, and sometimes the methods, of studying literature sociologically have moved the area closer to what is still the mainstream of the discipline. Thus the sociology of literature has benefited from a twofold movement in which (1) sociology as a discipline has become more interested in and accepting of research questions pertaining to meaning (cf. Wuthnow 1987, however, for a particularly strong attack on meaning from within the culture camp) and employing qualitative methods; and (2) the sociology of literature has evolved in the direction of more mainstream sociological areas through the merging of quantitative with qualitative methods and of empirical with hermeneutic research questions.

As recently as 1993, Wendy Griswold maintained that the sociology of literature was a "nonfield" and "like an amoeba . . . lack(ing) firm structure" (1993, p. 455). Certainly the sociology of literature has been a marginal area in the discipline of sociology. As such, it has generally failed to attract the kind of career-long commitments common to more central areas of the discipline. Many scholars writing on the sociology of literature see the area as a sideline and produce only a single book or article on the subject. This has exacerbated the lack of structure in the development of the field. Even so, it is surprising just how much sociological research has been done on literature and on literature's relationship to social patterns and processes.

Traditionally, the central perspective for sociologists studying literature has been the use of literature as information about society. To a much lesser degree, traditional work has focused on the effect of literature in shaping and creating social action. The former approach, the idea that literature can be "read"

as information about social behavior and values, is generally referred to as *reflection theory*. Literary texts have been variously described as reflecting the "economics, family relationships, climate and landscapes, attitudes, morals, races, social classes, political events, wars, (and) religion" of the society that produced the texts (Albrecht 1954, p. 426). Most people are familiar with an at least implicit reflection perspective from journalistic social commentary. For instance, when *Time* magazine put the star of the television show *Ally McBeal* on its cover, asking "Is Feminism Dead?" (1998), it assumed that a television show could be read as information on Americans' values and understanding of feminism.

Unfortunately, "reflection" is a metaphor, not a theory. The basic idea behind reflection, that the social context of a cultural work affects the cultural work, is obvious and fundamental to a sociological study of literature. But the metaphor of reflection is misleading. Reflection assumes a simple mimetic theory of literature in which literary works transparently and unproblematically document the social world for the reader. In fact, however, literature is a construct of language; its experience is symbolic and mediating rather than direct. Literary realism in particular "effaces its own status as a sign" (Eagleton 1983, p. 136; see also Candido (1995, p. 149) on the "liberty" of even naturalist authors). Literature draws on the social world, but it does so selectively, magnifying some aspects of reality, misspecifying others, and ignoring most (Desan et al. 1989). The reflection metaphor assumes a single and stable meaning for literary texts. Anyone who has ever argued about what a book "really" meant knows what researchers have worked hard to demonstrate—textual meaning is contingent, created by active readers with their own expectations and life experiences that act in concert with inherent textual features to produce variable meanings (Jauss 1982; Radway 1984; Griswold 1987).

Despite repeated demonstrations of reflection's myriad failings (e.g., Noble 1976; Griswold 1994; Corse 1997), the idea of literature as a mirror of society still seems a fundamental way of thinking about why sociologists—and indeed many other people as well—are interested in literature. A relatively crude reflection approach remains common for teaching sociology department courses

on literature, and also in certain types of journal articles whose main interest is not the sociology of literature per se, but the illumination of some sociological theory or observation through literary "evidence" (e.g., Corbett's article (1994) advocating the use of novels featuring probation officers to teach courses on the sociology of occupations, or the continuing stream of articles examining gender portrayals in children's literature (e.g., Grauerholz and Pescosolido 1989). Convincing research arguing for literary evidence of social patterns now requires the careful specification of how and why certain social patterns are incorporated in literature while others are not.

CHAPTER VI

Reflection Theory

Alan Swingewood said in his book titled “The Sociology of Literature” that Sociology studied about a man in society objectively and significantly where it describes how its process in social life, also to answer how certain society is, what its characteristics are, how they adapt to survive in particular society. People know and comprehend social structure through a rigorous examination of the social institution, religion, and economy, politics and family.

“Sociology is essentially, objective study of man in society, the study on social institutions and of social processes; it seeks to answer the question of how society is possible, how it works, why it persists. Through a rigorous examination of the social institutions, religious, economic, political, and familial, which together constitute what is called social structure”. (Swingewood, 1972: 11)

Sociological approach is useful in literary works. Sociology has relation with family relationship or relative, class conflict between inferior and superior classes, whereas, it is obvious that literature is related to man in society and concerns on it. Sociology itself tries to reveal a process of society changes. The society changes give effect on social structure.

Meanwhile, Literature is a reflection of social culture, history and mirror of the age. Although the most popular perspective the documentary aspects of mirror age, it must be treated carefully in the application of literature. In this case, the author or writer has responsibility to describe social situations; he has critical function to form character in artificiality conditions to determine the objectivity. Its purpose is to discover values and meaning in the social world.

“The conception of the mirror, then, must be treated with great care in the sociological analysis of literature. Above all else, of course, it ignores the writer himself, his awareness and intention. Great writers do not set out simply to depict the social world in largely descriptive terms; it might be suggested that the writer

by definition has a more critical task, of setting his characters in motion within artificially contrived situations to seek their own private 'destiny' to discover values and meaning in the social world." (Swingewood, 1972: 15)

Literature describes human life and presents social problems happening in society and reflects social culture, history and mirror of the age. The concept of the mirror must be treated carefully in the application of literature. In this case, the writer has the responsibility to describe social situations, and has critical functions to form character in artificially conditions to determine the objectivity. Its purpose is to discover values and meaning in the social world.

"Literature is a direct reflection of various facts of social structure, family relationships, class conflict, and possibly divorce trends and population composition... The conception of the mirror, then, must be treated with great care in the sociological analysis of literature. Above all else, of course, it ignores the writer himself, his awareness and intention. Great writers do not set out simply to depict the social world in largely descriptive terms; it might be suggested that the writer by definition has a more critical task, of setting his characters in motion within artificially contrived situations to seek their own private 'destiny' to discover values and meaning in the social world" (Swingewood, 1972: 13-15)

In *History and Class Consciousness*, where Lukacs offers this explanation concerning the Hegelianism of the left, there is another important observation—likewise derived from Marx—on Hegel's philosophical limits and his proximity to Kant and Fichte. It is these limits of Hegel which have permitted the Hegelians of the left, and the Neo-Hegelians in general, to use him as their authority and to continue to use his language in order to uphold a Fichtean outlook. Lukacs recalls that Hegel rejects any possibility of judgment coming from the outside because he develops a philosophy of immanence and totality. Yet, according to the Hegelian conception, history is the work of the Absolute Spirit which, although intervening through its agents, remains outside reality and has a dualist relationship with it. Thus, despite the monism of a system which denies dualism, a dualism of the subject and the object virtually exists in Hegel between the Absolute Spirit and concrete history, according to Lukacs. This opposition of the subject and the

object was able to be accentuated and placed at the centre of their preoccupations by the Hegelians of the left, for whom the Absolute Spirit simply became the subjective consciousness of the critique, the 'subject' of history.

According to Lukacs it is not because the young Marx had been the most radical of the Hegelians of the left, i.e. in reality a Fichtean, that he developed dialectical materialism. Quite the contrary, it was because he was the only consistent Hegelian among them that he eliminated all of the Fichtean and Kantian residues from the thought of Hegel and that he turned toward rigorously monist thought. And he only attained this thought, and was only able to elaborate it completely, after his exile in France and his discovery of the proletariat as the new social force and as the basis of identical theory and praxis.

Since Marx's time, and even since *History and Class Consciousness*, the development of the forces of production and economic relations has again rendered problematic the relation between thought and reality. Even Lukacs abandoned the identity of the subject of praxis and the subject of the work, and no longer relates the work to the group, but to the relation of its creator to global history. Thus, the old theory of the revolutionary proletariat as the historical basis, by its action, of dialectical thought must be modified and can no longer be maintained or asserted as before. The Frankfurt School, which no longer admits this old conception, has the impression that the ground has been pulled away from under its feet. But this disappearance of the collective subject has not led it to join the structuralists who, on the basis of the technocratic structures of organizational capitalism, deny the existence of the subject. The Frankfurt School has kept its critical positions; nevertheless, it finds itself in the situation of the Hegelians of the left in the Germany of the 1840s. It has come back to the dualism between the subject and the object, and criticizes the world on the basis of ideas which it is far from being able to justify. Bauer came from Hegel.

Following Marx's directions, Lukacs was the first to overturn the old customary scheme of the development of Neo-Hegelian philosophy. He discusses the Neo-Hegelians in *History and Class Consciousness* and in articles on Lassalle and Moses Hess of the same period. These ideas of Lukacs continued by A. Cornu

in his books on M. Hess and Marx, are now very widespread and—as in the case of other Lukacsian ideas—their origin has been forgotten. The earlier history of Neo-Hegelianism was different. It constituted a chain which went from Hegel to the Neo-Hegelians, to those of the right, the centre, and the left, to reach Marx, as the most radical among the Hegelians of the left, who developed dialectical materialism. But Lukacs has shown that those who are called 'Hegelians of the Left' are in fact closer to Fichte—as the Neo-Kantians were later on—than to Hegel. They had moved away from the Hegelian position, according to Lukacs because they had abandoned the fundamental categories of totality and the identity of the subject and the object, in order to return to the subject-object opposition in the form of the opposition between 'critical consciousness' and the world.

In *The Holy Family* and *The German Ideology* Marx had already accused the Hegelians of the left—Feuerbach, Bauer, Stirner, etc.,—of having retained Hegel's language and his categories, but also for having returned to this side of Hegel, who tried to imagine himself in the world. In fact, the Hegelians of the left thought they were situated above the world and spoke from outside it, whereas according to Marx and he ardently insists upon it in *The German Ideology* when someone speaks, he should ask who is speaking and from where. The Hegelians of the left are in opposition to the reality of ideas which have no real basis: Bauer with his critical self-consciousness and Stirner with his egoistic individual which, Marx has shown, is not real and, in short, comes from a philosophical construction, just like Bauer's 'critical consciousness'. To know what one is speaking about, Marx very justifiably requires that one know who is speaking and from where: it is necessary to know that one always speaks from within a world from which comes the structure of consciousness of the one who is speaking and who, in order to know what he is saying, must know this world and this structuration at the risk of otherwise remaining within an ideology.

According to Lukacs the Hegelians of the left are the expression of a small, radical group oriented since the beginning of the 1840s toward the revolution of 1848, without being sufficiently strong to succeed in the revolution,

or capable of thinking about itself and the situation clearly. Moreover, after the failure of the revolution of 1848, the group altered and its thinkers (who had been very well-known) lost all importance. Beforehand, in the struggle against the Prussian State, which created all sorts of difficulties for them, the Hegelians of the left could not continue Hegel's compromise, nor find in Germany a real force which they could have relied on. And so they criticized the world as bad and negative without knowing where, in what place, and in what perspective or praxis, to situate their criticism. They placed it in an imaginary entity, a 'critical consciousness', or in the egoistic individual, Stirner's 'Unique Man' who is another version of this who opposes the world and judges it.

The reflection theory is found by The Hungarian theorist named George Lukács. He becomes one of the first major Marxist critics and develops the theory of reflection. Lukács explains that a reflection might be more or less tangible. Literary works do not reflect an individual phenomena in isolation, but the whole process of life.

“Lukács would say that a reflection may be more or less concrete... A literary work reflects not individual phenomena in isolation, but ‘the full process of life’. However, the reader is always aware that the work is not itself reality but rather ‘s a special form of reflecting reality’ (Selden, 1985: 29). Georg Lukács explains that a reflection might be more or less tangible. Literary works do not reflect an individual phenomenon in isolation, but the whole process of life. “Lukács would say that a reflection may be more or less concrete... A literary work reflects not individual phenomena in isolation, but ‘the full process of life’. However, the reader is always aware that the work is not itself reality but rather ‘s a special form of reflecting reality’ (Selden, 1985: 29).”

Lukács expresses that the reflection in the literature is not the same as the reflection of the mirror. In the literature, the writer shall be creative in his works. “Lukács did not see literature-reflecting reality as a minor reality as a minor reflects the object placed in front of it.... in literature reality has to pass through the creative, from giving works of the writer. The result in the case of correctly formed work will be that the form of literary work reflects the form of the real

world” (Jefferson, 1986: 171).” Lukács argues that the form is the aesthetic shape expressed in the content, in which it is created through technical features such as narrative time and the interrelationship of characters and situation in a work. “Form for Lukács is the aesthetic shape given to content, a shape manifested through technical features such as narrative time and the interrelationship of characters and situation in a work. The correct form according for Lukács is one reflects reality in the most objective way” (Jefferson &Robbey, 1986: 139-140).”

According to Lukács, literary works reflect an unfolding system. It has to reveal the underlying pattern of contradictions in social order. “Literary works as reflections of an unfolding system. A realist work must reveal the underlying pattern of contradictions in social order.” (Selden, 1985: 28)

Lukács describes that a literary work can give us more than just surface appearance, but it gives us a reflection of reality which is truer, more complete, more vivid and more dynamic. “... he returns to the old realist view that the novel reflects reality, not by rendering its mere surface appearance, but by giving us ‘a truer, more complete, more vivid, and more dynamic reflection of reality’. (Selden, 1985: 28-29). He added that to reflect something is to frame a mental structure changed into words. “To ‘reflect’ is to frame a mental structure transposed into words.” (Selden, 1985: 29). Lukacs mentioned in reflection of literature, the reality had been added the creative-form work by the writer. Then in a formed work would reveal that the literary works reflected the real world. “To be reflected in literature, reality has to pass through the creative form-giving work of the writer. The result, in the case of a correctly formed work, will be that the form of the literary work reflects the form of the real word.” (Jefferson, 171)

The most fully worked-out version of the reflection model in modern Marxist aesthetics is that of the Hungarian thinker Georg Lukacs, an important figure in the international communist movement from the twenties till his death in 1971. Lukacs did not see literature reflecting reality as a mirror reflects the 1 placed in front of it; literature is a knowledge of reality, and knowledge is not a matter of making one-to-one correspondences between things in the world outside and ideas in the head. Reality is indeed out there before we know it in our heads,

but it has shape, it is what Lukacs insists is a dialectical totality where all the parts are in movement and contradiction. To be reflected in literature, reality has to pass through the creative, form-giving work of the writer. The result, in the case of a correctly formed work, will be that the form of the literary work reflects the form of the real world. (Jefferson, 1992: 139)

According to Lukacs, a correct form is one which reflects reality in the most objective way. He considers the form of the early nineteenth century novel (Scott, Balzac, Tolstoy) to be the most correct for embodying a knowledge of the contradictory content of capitalist society as it develops. This notion of correctness depends on Lukacs's view that the reality which literature either manages or fails to reflect is a social and historical reality with a dialectical shape. (Jefferson, 1992: 140).

CHAPTER VII

Negative Knowledge Model

Theodor W. Adorno was one of the most important philosophers and social critics in Germany after World War II. Although less well known among anglophone philosophers than his contemporary Hans-Georg Gadamer, Adorno had even greater influence on scholars and intellectuals in postwar Germany. In the 1960s he was the most prominent challenger to both Sir Karl Popper's philosophy of science and Martin Heidegger's philosophy of existence. Jürgen Habermas, Germany's foremost social philosopher after 1970, was Adorno's student and assistant. The scope of Adorno's influence stems from the interdisciplinary character of his research and of the Frankfurt School to which he belonged. It also stems from the thoroughness with which he examined Western philosophical traditions, especially from Kant onward, and the radicalness to his critique of contemporary Western society. He was a seminal social philosopher and a leading member of the first generation of Critical Theory.

Unreliable translations hampered the initial reception of Adorno's published work in English speaking countries. Since the 1990s, however, better translations have appeared, along with newly translated lectures and other posthumous works that are still being published. These materials not only facilitate an emerging assessment of his work in epistemology and ethics but also strengthen an already advanced reception of his work in aesthetics and cultural theory.

Born on September 11, 1903 as Theodor Ludwig Wiesengrund, Adorno lived in Frankfurt am Main for the first three decades of his life and the last two (Müller-Doohm 2005, Claussen 2008). He was the only son of a wealthy German wine merchant of assimilated Jewish background and an accomplished musician of Corsican Catholic descent. Adorno studied philosophy with the neo-Kantian Hans Cornelius and music composition with Alban Berg. He completed

his *Habilitationsschrift* on Kierkegaard's aesthetics in 1931, under the supervision of the Christian socialist Paul Tillich. After just two years as a university instructor (*Privatdozent*), he was expelled by the Nazis, along with other professors of Jewish heritage or on the political left. A few years later he turned his father's surname into a middle initial and adopted "Adorno," the maternal surname by which he is best known.

Adorno left Germany in the spring of 1934. During the Nazi era he resided in Oxford, New York City, and southern California. There he wrote several books for which he later became famous, including *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (with Max Horkheimer), *Philosophy of New Music*, *The Authoritarian Personality* (a collaborative project), and *Minima Moralia*. From these years come his provocative critiques of mass culture and the culture industry. Returning to Frankfurt in 1949 to take up a position in the philosophy department, Adorno quickly established himself as a leading German intellectual and a central figure in the Institute of Social Research. Founded as a free-standing center for Marxist scholarship in 1923, the Institute had been led by Max Horkheimer since 1930. It provided the hub to what has come to be known as the Frankfurt School. Adorno became the Institute's director in 1958. From the 1950s stem *In Search of Wagner*, Adorno's ideology-critique of the Nazi's favorite composer; *Prisms*, a collection of social and cultural studies; *Against Epistemology*, an antifoundationalist critique of Husserlian phenomenology; and the first volume of *Notes to Literature*, a collection of essays in literary criticism.

Conflict and consolidation marked the last decade of Adorno's life. A leading figure in the "positivism dispute" in German sociology, Adorno was a key player in debates about restructuring German universities and a lightning rod for both student activists and their right-wing critics. These controversies did not prevent him from publishing numerous volumes of music criticism, two more volumes of *Notes to Literature*, books on Hegel and on existential philosophy, and collected essays in sociology and in aesthetics. *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno's magnum opus on epistemology and metaphysics, appeared in 1966. *Aesthetic Theory*, the other magnum opus on which he had worked throughout the 1960s,

appeared posthumously in 1970. He died of a heart attack on August 6, 1969, one month shy of his sixty-sixth birthday.

Long before “postmodernism” became fashionable, Adorno and Horkheimer wrote one of the most searching critiques of modernity to have emerged among progressive European intellectuals. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is a product of their wartime exile. It first appeared as a mimeograph titled *Philosophical Fragments* in 1944. This title became the subtitle when the book was published in 1947. Their book opens with a grim assessment of the modern West: “Enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the advance of thought, has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters. Yet the wholly enlightened earth radiates under the sign of disaster triumphant” (DE 1, translation modified). How can this be, the authors ask. How can the progress of modern science and medicine and industry promise to liberate people from ignorance, disease, and brutal, mind-numbing work, yet help create a world where people willingly swallow fascist ideology, knowingly practice deliberate genocide, and energetically develop lethal weapons of mass destruction? Reason, they answer, has become irrational.

Although they cite Francis Bacon as a leading spokesman for an instrumentalized reason that becomes irrational, Horkheimer and Adorno do not think that modern science and scientism are the sole culprits. The tendency of rational progress to become irrational regress arises much earlier. Indeed, they cite both the Hebrew scriptures and Greek philosophers as contributing to regressive tendencies. If Horkheimer and Adorno are right, then a critique of modernity must also be a critique of premodernity, and a turn toward the postmodern cannot simply be a return to the premodern. Otherwise the failures of modernity will continue in a new guise under contemporary conditions. Society as a whole needs to be transformed.

Horkheimer and Adorno believe that society and culture form a historical totality, such that the pursuit of freedom in society is inseparable from the pursuit of enlightenment in culture (DE xvi). There is a flip side to this: a lack or loss of freedom in society—in the political, economic, and legal structures within which

we live—signals a concomitant failure in cultural enlightenment—in philosophy, the arts, religion, and the like. The Nazi death camps are not an aberration, nor are mindless studio movies innocent entertainment. Both indicate that something fundamental has gone wrong in the modern West.

According to Horkheimer and Adorno, the source of today's disaster is a pattern of blind domination, domination in a triple sense: the domination of nature by human beings, the domination of nature within human beings, and, in both of these forms of domination, the domination of some human beings by others. What motivates such triple domination is an irrational fear of the unknown: “Humans believe themselves free of fear when there is no longer anything unknown. This has determined the path of demythologization Enlightenment is mythical fear radicalized” (DE 11). In an unfree society whose culture pursues so-called progress no matter what the cost, that which is “other,” whether human or nonhuman, gets shoved aside, exploited, or destroyed. The means of destruction may be more sophisticated in the modern West, and the exploitation may be less direct than outright slavery, but blind, fear-driven domination continues, with ever greater global consequences. The all-consuming engine driving this process is an ever-expanding capitalist economy, fed by scientific research and the latest technologies.

Contrary to some interpretations, Horkheimer and Adorno do not reject the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Nor do they provide a negative “metanarrative” of universal historical decline. Rather, through a highly unusual combination of philosophical argument, sociological reflection, and literary and cultural commentary, they construct a “double perspective” on the modern West as a historical formation (Jarvis 1998, 23). They summarize this double perspective in two interlinked theses: “Myth is already enlightenment, and enlightenment reverts to mythology” (DE xviii). The first thesis allows them to suggest that, despite being declared mythical and outmoded by the forces of secularization, older rituals, religions, and philosophies may have contributed to the process of enlightenment and may still have something worthwhile to contribute. The second thesis allows them to expose ideological and destructive

tendencies within modern forces of secularization, but without denying either that these forces are progressive and enlightening or that the older conceptions they displace were themselves ideological and destructive.

A fundamental mistake in many interpretations of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* occurs when readers take such theses to be theoretical definitions of unchanging categories rather than critical judgments about historical tendencies. The authors are not saying that myth is “by nature” a force of enlightenment. Nor are they claiming that enlightenment “inevitably” reverts to mythology. In fact, what they find really mythical in both myth and enlightenment is the thought that fundamental change is impossible. Such resistance to change characterizes both ancient myths of fate and modern devotion to the facts.

Accordingly, in constructing a “dialectic of enlightenment” the authors simultaneously aim to carry out a dialectical enlightenment of enlightenment not unlike Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Two Hegelian concepts anchor this project, namely, determinate negation and conceptual self-reflection. “Determinate negation” (*bestimmte Negation*) indicates that immanent criticism is the way to wrest truth from ideology. A dialectical enlightenment of enlightenment “discloses each image as script. It teaches us to read from [the image's] features the admission of falseness which cancels its power and hands it over to truth” (DE 18). Beyond and through such determinate negation, a dialectical enlightenment of enlightenment also recalls the origin and goal of thought itself. Such recollection is the work of the concept as the self-reflection of thought (*der Begriff als Selbstbesinnung des Denkens*, DE 32). Conceptual self-reflection reveals that thought arises from the very corporeal needs and desires that get forgotten when thought becomes a mere instrument of human self-preservation. It also reveals that the goal of thought is not to continue the blind domination of nature and humans but to point toward reconciliation. Adorno works out the details of this conception in his subsequent lectures on Kant (KC), ethics (PMP), and metaphysics (MCP) and in his books on Husserl (AE), Hegel (H), and Heidegger (JA). His most comprehensive statement occurs in *Negative Dialectics*, which is discussed later.

Dialectic of Enlightenment presupposes a critical social theory indebted to Karl Marx. Adorno reads Marx as a Hegelian materialist whose critique of capitalism unavoidably includes a critique of the ideologies that capitalism sustains and requires. The most important of these is what Marx called “the fetishism of commodities.” Marx aimed his critique of commodity fetishism against bourgeois social scientists who simply describe the capitalist economy but, in so doing, simultaneously misdescribe it and prescribe a false social vision. According to Marx, bourgeois economists necessarily ignore the exploitation intrinsic to capitalist production. They fail to understand that capitalist production, for all its surface “freedom” and “fairness,” must extract surplus value from the labor of the working class. Like ordinary producers and consumers under capitalist conditions, bourgeois economists treat the commodity as a fetish. They treat it as if it were a neutral object, with a life of its own, that directly relates to other commodities, in independence from the human interactions that actually sustain all commodities. Marx, by contrast, argues that whatever makes a product a commodity goes back to human needs, desires, and practices. The commodity would not have “use value” if it did not satisfy human wants. It would not have “exchange value” if no one wished to exchange it for something else. And its exchange value could not be calculated if the commodity did not share with other commodities a “value” created by the expenditure of human labor power and measured by the average labor time socially necessary to produce commodities of various sorts.

Adorno's social theory attempts to make Marx's central insights applicable to “late capitalism.” Although in agreement with Marx's analysis of the commodity, Adorno thinks his critique of commodity fetishism does not go far enough. Significant changes have occurred in the structure of capitalism since Marx's day. This requires revisions on a number of topics: the dialectic between forces of production and relations of production; the relationship between state and economy; the sociology of classes and class consciousness; the nature and function of ideology; and the role of expert cultures, such as modern art and social

theory, in criticizing capitalism and calling for the transformation of society as a whole.

The primary clues to these revisions come from a theory of reification proposed by the Hungarian socialist Georg Lukács in the 1920s and from interdisciplinary projects and debates conducted by members of the Institute of Social Research in the 1930s and 1940s. Building on Max Weber's theory of rationalization, Lukács argues that the capitalist economy is no longer one sector of society alongside others. Rather, commodity exchange has become the central organizing principle for all sectors of society. This allows commodity fetishism to permeate all social institutions (e.g., law, administration, journalism) as well as all academic disciplines, including philosophy. "Reification" refers to "the structural process whereby the commodity form permeates life in capitalist society." Lukács was especially concerned with how reification makes human beings "seem like mere things obeying the inexorable laws of the marketplace" (Zuidervaart 1991, 76).

Initially Adorno shared this concern, even though he never had Lukács's confidence that the revolutionary working class could overcome reification. Later Adorno called the reification of consciousness an "epiphenomenon." What a critical social theory really needs to address is why hunger, poverty, and other forms of human suffering persist despite the technological and scientific potential to mitigate them or to eliminate them altogether. The root cause, Adorno says, lies in how capitalist relations of production have come to dominate society as a whole, leading to extreme, albeit often invisible, concentrations of wealth and power (ND 189–92). Society has come to be organized around the production of exchange values for the sake of producing exchange values, which, of course, always already requires a silent appropriation of surplus value. Adorno refers to this nexus of production and power as the "principle of exchange" (*Tauschprinzip*). A society where this nexus prevails is an "exchange society" (*Tauschgesellschaft*).

Adorno's diagnosis of the exchange society has three levels: politico-economic, social-psychological, and cultural. Politically and economically he

responds to a theory of state capitalism proposed by Friedrich Pollock during the war years. An economist by training who was supposed to contribute a chapter to *Dialectic of Enlightenment* but never did (Wiggershaus 1994, 313–19), Pollock argued that the state had acquired dominant economic power in Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, and New Deal America. He called this new constellation of politics and economics “state capitalism.” While acknowledging with Pollock that political and economic power have become more tightly meshed, Adorno does not think this fact changes the fundamentally economic character of capitalist exploitation. Rather, such exploitation has become even more abstract than it was in Marx's day, and therefore all the more effective and pervasive.

The social-psychological level in Adorno's diagnosis serves to demonstrate the effectiveness and pervasiveness of late capitalist exploitation. His American studies of anti-Semitism and the “authoritarian personality” argue that these pathologically extend “the logic of late capitalism itself, with its associated dialectic of enlightenment.” People who embrace anti-Semitism and fascism tend to project their fear of abstract domination onto the supposed mediators of capitalism, while rejecting as elitist “all claims to a qualitative difference transcending exchange” (Jarvis 1998, 63).

Adorno's cultural studies show that a similar logic prevails in television, film, and the recording industries. In fact, Adorno first discovered late capitalism's structural change through his work with sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld on the Princeton University Radio Research Project. He articulated this discovery in a widely anthologized essay “On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening” (1938) and in “The Culture Industry,” a chapter in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. There Adorno argues that the culture industry involves a change in the commodity character of art, such that art's commodity character is deliberately acknowledged and art “abjures its autonomy” (DE 127). With its emphasis on marketability, the culture industry dispenses entirely with the “purposelessness” that was central to art's autonomy. Once marketability becomes a total demand, the internal economic structure of cultural commodities shifts. Instead of promising freedom from societally dictated uses, and thereby having a genuine

use value that people can enjoy, products mediated by the culture industry have their use value *replaced* by exchange value: “Everything has value only in so far as it can be exchanged, not in so far as it is something in itself. For consumers the use value of art, its essence, is a fetish, and the fetish—the social valuation [*gesellschaftliche Schätzung*] which they mistake for the merit [*Rang*] of works of art— becomes its only use value, the only quality they enjoy” (DE 128). Hence the culture industry dissolves the “genuine commodity character” that artworks once possessed when exchange value still presupposed use value (DE 129–30). Lacking a background in Marxist theory, and desiring to secure legitimacy for “mass art” or “popular culture,” too many of Adorno's anglophone critics simply ignore the main point to his critique of the culture industry. His main point is that culture-industrial hyper commercialization evidences a fateful shift in the structure of all commodities and therefore in the structure of capitalism itself.

Philosophical and sociological studies of the arts and literature make up more than half of Adorno's collected works (*Gesammelte Schriften*). All of his most important social-theoretical claims show up in these studies. Yet his “aesthetic writings” are not simply “applications” or “test cases” for theses developed in “nonaesthetic” texts. Adorno rejects any such separation of subject matter from methodology and all neat divisions of philosophy into specialized subdisciplines. This is one reason why academic specialists find his texts so challenging, not only musicologists and literary critics but also epistemologists and aestheticians. All of his writings contribute to a comprehensive and interdisciplinary social philosophy (Zuidervaart 2007).

First published the year after Adorno died, *Aesthetic Theory* marks the unfinished culmination of his remarkably rich body of aesthetic reflections. It casts retrospective light on the entire corpus. It also comes closest to the model of “paratactical presentation” (Hullot-Kentor in AT xi-xxi) that Adorno, inspired especially by Walter Benjamin, found most appropriate for his own “atonal philosophy.” Relentlessly tracing concentric circles, *Aesthetic Theory* carries out a dialectical double reconstruction. It reconstructs the modern art movement from the perspective of philosophical aesthetics. It simultaneously reconstructs

philosophical aesthetics, especially that of Kant and Hegel, from the perspective of modern art. From both sides Adorno tries to elicit the sociohistorical significance of the art and philosophy discussed.

Adorno's claims about art in general stem from his reconstruction of the modern art movement. So a summary of his philosophy of art sometimes needs to signal this by putting “modern” in parentheses. The book begins and ends with reflections on the social character of (modern) art. Two themes stand out in these reflections. One is an updated Hegelian question whether art can survive in a late capitalist world. The other is an updated Marxian question whether art can contribute to the transformation of this world. When addressing both questions, Adorno retains from Kant the notion that art proper (“fine art” or “beautiful art”—*schöne Kunst*—in Kant's vocabulary) is characterized by formal autonomy. But Adorno combines this Kantian emphasis on form with Hegel's emphasis on intellectual import (*geistiger Gehalt*) and Marx's emphasis on art's embeddedness in society as a whole. The result is a complex account of the simultaneous necessity and illusoriness of the artwork's autonomy. The artwork's necessary and illusory autonomy, in turn, is the key to (modern) art's social character, namely, to be “the social antithesis of society” (AT 8).

Adorno regards authentic works of (modern) art as social monads. The unavoidable tensions within them express unavoidable conflicts within the larger sociohistorical process from which they arise and to which they belong. These tensions enter the artwork through the artist's struggle with sociohistorically laden materials, and they call forth conflicting interpretations, many of which misread either the work-internal tensions or their connection to conflicts in society as a whole. Adorno sees all of these tensions and conflicts as “contradictions” to be worked through and eventually to be resolved. Their complete resolution, however, would require a transformation in society as a whole, which, given his social theory, does not seem imminent.

As commentary and criticism, Adorno's aesthetic writings are unparalleled in the subtlety and sophistication with which they trace work-internal tensions and relate them to unavoidable sociohistorical conflicts. One gets frequent glimpses of

this in *Aesthetic Theory*. For the most part, however, the book proceeds at the level of “third reflections”—reflections on categories employed in actual commentary and criticism, with a view to their suitability for what artworks express and to their societal implications. Typically he elaborates these categories as polarities or dialectical pairs.

One such polarity, and a central one in Adorno's theory of artworks as social monads, occurs between the categories of import (*Gehalt*) and function (*Funktion*). Adorno's account of these categories distinguishes his sociology of art from both hermeneutical and empirical approaches. A hermeneutical approach would emphasize the artwork's inherent meaning or its cultural significance and downplay the artwork's political or economic functions. An empirical approach would investigate causal connections between the artwork and various social factors without asking hermeneutical questions about its meaning or significance. Adorno, by contrast, argues that, both as categories and as phenomena, import and function need to be understood in terms of each other. On the one hand, an artwork's import and its functions in society can be diametrically opposed. On the other hand, one cannot give a proper account of an artwork's social functions if one does not raise import-related questions about their significance. So too, an artwork's import embodies the work's social functions and has potential relevance for various social contexts. In general, however, and in line with his critiques of positivism and instrumentalized reason, Adorno gives priority to import, understood as societally mediated and socially significant meaning. The social functions emphasized in his own commentaries and criticisms are primarily intellectual functions rather than straightforwardly political or economic functions. This is consistent with a hyperbolic version of the claim that (modern) art is society's social antithesis: “Insofar as a social function can be predicated for artworks, it is their functionlessness” (AT 227).

The priority of import also informs Adorno's stance on art and politics, which derives from debates with Lukács, Benjamin, and Bertolt Brecht in the 1930s (Lunn 1982; Zuidervaart 1991, 28–43). Because of the shift in capitalism's structure, and because of Adorno's own complex emphasis on (modern) art's

autonomy, he doubts both the effectiveness and the legitimacy of tendentious, agitative, or deliberately consciousness-raising art. Yet he does see politically engaged art as a partial corrective to the bankrupt aestheticism of much mainstream art. Under the conditions of late capitalism, the best art, and politically the most effective, so thoroughly works out its own internal contradictions that the hidden contradictions in society can no longer be ignored. The plays of Samuel Beckett, to whom Adorno had intended to dedicate *Aesthetic Theory*, are emblematic in that regard. Adorno finds them more true than many other artworks.

Arguably, the idea of “truth content” (*Wahrheitsgehalt*) is the pivotal center around which all the concentric circles of Adorno's aesthetics turn (Zuidervaart 1991; Wellmer 1991, 1–35 ; Jarvis 1998, 90–123). To gain access to this center, one must temporarily suspend standard theories about the nature of truth (whether as correspondence, coherence, or pragmatic success) and allow for artistic truth to be dialectical, disclosive, and nonpropositional. According to Adorno, each artwork has its own import (*Gehalt*) by virtue of an internal dialectic between content (*Inhalt*) and form (*Form*). This import invites critical judgments about its truth or falsity. To do justice to the artwork and its import, such critical judgments need to grasp both the artwork's complex internal dynamics and the dynamics of the sociohistorical totality to which the artwork belongs. The artwork has an internal truth content to the extent that the artwork's import can be found internally and externally either true or false. Such truth content is not a metaphysical idea or essence hovering outside the artwork. But neither is it a merely human construct. It is historical but not arbitrary; nonpropositional, yet calling for propositional claims to be made about it; utopian in its reach, yet firmly tied to specific societal conditions. Truth content is the way in which an artwork simultaneously challenges the way things are and suggests how things could be better, but leaves things practically unchanged: “Art has truth as the semblance of the illusionless” (AT 132).

Adorno's idea of artistic truth content presupposes the epistemological and metaphysical claims he works out most thoroughly in *Negative Dialectics*. These

claims, in turn, consolidate and extend the historiographic and social-theoretical arguments already canvassed. As Simon Jarvis demonstrates, *Negative Dialectics* tries to formulate a “philosophical materialism” that is historical and critical but not dogmatic. Alternatively, one can describe the book as a “metacritique” of idealist philosophy, especially of the philosophy of Kant and Hegel (Jarvis 1998, 148–74; O'Connor 2004). Adorno says the book aims to complete what he considered his lifelong task as a philosopher: “to use the strength of the [epistemic] subject to break through the deception [*Trug*] of constitutive subjectivity” (ND xx).

This occurs in four stages. First, a long Introduction (ND 1–57) works out a concept of “philosophical experience” that both challenges Kant's distinction between “phenomena” and “noumena” and rejects Hegel's construction of “absolute spirit.” Then Part One (ND 59–131) distinguishes Adorno's project from the “fundamental ontology” in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Part Two (ND 133–207) works out Adorno's alternative with respect to the categories he reconfigures from German idealism. Part Three (ND 209–408), composing nearly half the book, elaborates philosophical “models.” These present negative dialectics in action upon key concepts of moral philosophy (“freedom”), philosophy of history (“world spirit” and “natural history”), and metaphysics. Adorno says the final model, devoted to metaphysical questions, “tries by critical self reflection to give the Copernican revolution an axial turn” (ND xx). Alluding to Kant's self-proclaimed “second Copernican revolution,” this description echoes Adorno's comment about breaking through the deception of constitutive subjectivity.

Like Hegel, Adorno criticizes Kant's distinction between phenomena and noumena by arguing that the transcendental conditions of experience can be neither so pure nor so separate from each other as Kant seems to claim. As concepts, for example, the a priori categories of the faculty of understanding (*Verstand*) would be unintelligible if they were not already about something that is nonconceptual. Conversely, the supposedly pure forms of space and time cannot simply be nonconceptual intuitions. Not even a transcendental philosopher would have access to them apart from concepts about them. So too, what makes

possible any genuine experience cannot simply be the “application” of a priori concepts to a priori intuitions via the “schematism” of the imagination (*Einbildungskraft*). Genuine experience is made possible by that which exceeds the grasp of thought and sensibility. Adorno does not call this excess the “thing in itself,” however, for that would assume the Kantian framework he criticizes. Rather, he calls it “the nonidentical” (*das Nichtidentische*).

The concept of the nonidentical, in turn, marks the difference between Adorno's materialism and Hegel's idealism. Although he shares Hegel's emphasis on a speculative identity between thought and being, between subject and object, and between reason and reality, Adorno denies that this identity has been achieved in a positive fashion. For the most part this identity has occurred negatively instead. That is to say, human thought, in achieving identity and unity, has imposed these upon objects, suppressing or ignoring their differences and diversity. Such imposition is driven by a societal formation whose exchange principle demands the equivalence (exchange value) of what is inherently nonequivalent (use value). Whereas Hegel's speculative identity amounts to an identity between identity and nonidentity, Adorno's amounts to a nonidentity between identity and nonidentity. That is why Adorno calls for a “negative dialectic” and why he rejects the affirmative character of Hegel's dialectic (ND 143–61).

Adorno does not reject the necessity of conceptual identification, however, nor does his philosophy claim to have direct access to the nonidentical. Under current societal conditions, thought can only have access to the nonidentical via conceptual criticisms of false identifications. Such criticisms must be “determinate negations,” pointing up specific contradictions between what thought claims and what it actually delivers. Through determinate negation, those aspects of the object which thought misidentifies receive an indirect, conceptual articulation.

The motivation for Adorno's negative dialectic is not simply conceptual, however, nor are its intellectual resources. His epistemology is “materialist” in both regards. It is motivated, he says, by undeniable human suffering—a fact of

unreason, if you will, to counter Kant's "fact of reason." Suffering is the corporeal imprint of society and the object upon human consciousness: "The need to let suffering speak is a condition of all truth. For suffering is objectivity that weighs upon the subject ... " (ND 17–18). The resources available to philosophy in this regard include the "expressive" or "mimetic" dimensions of language, which conflict with "ordinary" (i.e., societally sanctioned) syntax and semantics. In philosophy, this requires an emphasis on "presentation" (*Darstellung*) in which logical stringency and expressive flexibility interact (ND 18–19, 52–53). Another resource lies in unscripted relationships among established concepts. By taking such concepts out of their established patterns and rearranging them in "constellations" around a specific subject matter, philosophy can unlock some of the historical dynamic hidden within objects whose identity exceeds the classifications imposed upon them (ND 52–53, 162–66).

What unifies all of these desiderata, and what most clearly distinguishes Adorno's materialist epistemology from "idealism," whether Kantian or Hegelian, is his insisting on the "priority of the object" (*Vorrang des Objekts*, ND 183–97). Adorno regards as "idealist" any philosophy that affirms an identity between subject and object and thereby assigns constitutive priority to the epistemic subject. In insisting on the priority of the object, Adorno repeatedly makes three claims: first, that the epistemic subject is itself objectively constituted by the society to which it belongs and without which the subject could not exist; second, that no object can be fully known according to the rules and procedures of identitarian thinking; third, that the goal of thought itself, even when thought forgets its goal under societally induced pressures to impose identity on objects, is to honor them in their nonidentity, in their difference from what a restricted rationality declares them to be. Against empiricism, however, he argues that no object is simply "given" either, both because it can be an object only in relation to a subject and because objects are historical and have the potential to change.

Under current conditions the only way for philosophy to give priority to the object is dialectically, Adorno argues. He describes dialectics as the attempt to recognize the nonidentity between thought and the object while carrying out the

project of conceptual identification. Dialectics is “the consistent consciousness of nonidentity,” and contradiction, its central category, is “the nonidentical under the aspect of identity.” Thought itself forces this emphasis on contradiction upon us, he says. To think is to identify, and thought can achieve truth only by identifying. So the semblance (*Schein*) of total identity lives within thought itself, mingled with thought's truth (*Wahrheit*). The only way to break through the semblance of total identity is immanently, using the concept. Accordingly, everything that is qualitatively different and that resists conceptualization will show up as a contradiction. “The contradiction is the nonidentical under the aspect of (conceptual) identity; the primacy of the principle of contradiction in dialectics tests the heterogeneous according to unitary thought (*Einheitsdenken*). By colliding with its own boundary (*Grenze*), unitary thought surpasses itself. Dialectics is the consistent consciousness of nonidentity” (ND 5).

But thinking in contradictions is also forced upon philosophy by society itself. Society is riven with fundamental antagonisms, which, in accordance with the exchange principle, get covered up by identitarian thought. The only way to expose these antagonisms, and thereby to point toward their possible resolution, is to think against thought—in other words, to think in contradictions. In this way “contradiction” cannot be ascribed neatly to either thought or reality. Instead it is a “category of reflection” (*Reflexionskategorie*), enabling a thoughtful confrontation between concept (*Begriff*) and subject matter or object (*Sache*): “To proceed dialectically means to think in contradictions, for the sake of the contradiction already experienced in the object (*Sache*), and against that contradiction. A contradiction in reality, (dialectics) is a contradiction against reality” (ND 144–45).

The point of thinking in contradictions is not simply negative, however. It has a fragile, transformative horizon, namely, a society that would no longer be riven with fundamental antagonisms, thinking that would be rid of the compulsion to dominate through conceptual identification, and the flourishing of particular objects in their particularity. Because Adorno is convinced that contemporary society has the resources to alleviate the suffering it nevertheless perpetuates, his

negative dialectics has a utopian reach: “In view of the concrete possibility of utopia, dialectics is the ontology of the false condition. A right condition would be freed from dialectics, no more system than contradiction” (ND 11). Such a “right condition” would be one of reconciliation between humans and nature, including the nature within human beings, and among human beings themselves. This idea of reconciliation sustains Adorno's reflections on ethics and metaphysics.

Like Adorno's epistemology, his moral philosophy derives from a materialistic metacritique of German idealism. The model on “Freedom” in *Negative Dialectics* (ND 211–99) conducts a metacritique of Kant's critique of practical reason. So too, the model on “World Spirit and Natural History” (ND 300–60) provides a metacritique of Hegel's philosophy of history. Both models simultaneously carry out a subterranean debate with the Marxist tradition, and this debate guides Adorno's appropriation of both Kantian and Hegelian “practical philosophy.”

The first section in the Introduction to *Negative Dialectics* indicates the direction Adorno's appropriation will take (ND 3–4). There he asks whether and how philosophy is still possible. Adorno asks this against the backdrop of Karl Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*, which famously proclaimed that philosophy's task is not simply to interpret the world but to change it. In distinguishing his historical materialism from the sensory materialism of Ludwig Feuerbach, Marx portrays human beings as fundamentally productive and political organisms whose interrelations are not merely interpersonal but societal and historical. Marx's emphasis on production, politics, society, and history takes his epistemology in a “pragmatic” direction. “Truth” does not indicate the abstract correspondence between thought and reality, between proposition and fact, he says. Instead, “truth” refers to the economic, political, societal, and historical fruitfulness of thought in practice.

Although Adorno shares many of Marx's anthropological intuitions, he thinks that a twentieth-century equation of truth with practical fruitfulness had disastrous effects on both sides of the iron curtain. The Introduction to *Negative Dialectics* begins by making two claims. First, although apparently obsolete,

philosophy remains necessary because capitalism has not been overthrown. Second, Marx's interpretation of capitalist society was inadequate and his critique is outmoded. Hence, praxis no longer serves as an adequate basis for challenging (philosophical) theory. In fact, praxis serves mostly as a pretext for shutting down the theoretical critique that transformative praxis would require. Having missed the moment of its realization (via the proletarian revolution, according to early Marx), philosophy today must criticize itself: its societal naivete, its intellectual antiquation, its inability to grasp the power at work in industrial late capitalism. While still pretending to grasp the whole, philosophy fails to recognize how thoroughly it depends upon society as a whole, all the way into philosophy's "immanent truth" (ND 4). Philosophy must shed such naivete. It must ask, as Kant asked about metaphysics after Hume's critique of rationalism, How is philosophy still possible? More specifically, How, after the collapse of Hegelian thought, is philosophy still possible? How can the dialectical effort to conceptualize the non-conceptual—which Marx also pursued—how can this philosophy be continued?

This self-implicating critique of the relation between theory and practice is one crucial source to Adorno's reflections on ethics and metaphysics. Another is the catastrophic impact of twentieth-century history on the prospects for imagining and achieving a more humane world. Adorno's is an ethics and metaphysics "after Auschwitz" (Bernstein 2001, 371–414; Zuidervaart 2007, 48–76). Ethically, he says, Hitler's barbarism imposes a "new categorical imperative" on human beings in their condition of unfreedom: so to arrange their thought and action that "Auschwitz would not repeat itself, [that] nothing similar would happen" (ND 365). Metaphysically, philosophers must find historically appropriate ways to speak about meaning and truth and suffering that neither deny nor affirm the existence of a world transcendent to the one we know. Whereas denying it would suppress the suffering that calls out for fundamental change, straightforwardly affirming the existence of utopia would cut off the critique of contemporary society and the struggle to change it. The basis for Adorno's double strategy is not a hidden ontology, as some have suggested, but rather a "speculative" or "metaphysical" experience. Adorno appeals to the experience

that thought which “does not decapitate itself” flows into the idea of a world where “not only extant suffering would be abolished but also suffering that is irrevocably past would be revoked” (403). Neither logical positivist anti-metaphysics nor Heideggerian hypermetaphysics can do justice to this experience.

Adorno indicates his own alternative to both traditional metaphysics and more recent antimetaphysics in passages that juxtapose resolute self-criticism and impassioned hope. His historiographic, social theoretical, aesthetic, and negative dialectical concerns meet in passages such as this:

Thought that does not capitulate before wretched existence comes to nought before its criteria, truth becomes untruth, philosophy becomes folly. And yet philosophy cannot give up, lest idiocy triumph in actualized unreason [*Widervernunft*] ... Folly is truth in the shape that human beings must accept whenever, amid the untrue, they do not give up truth. Even at the highest peaks art is semblance; but art receives the semblance ... from nonsemblance [*vom Scheinlosen*] No light falls on people and things in which transcendence would not appear [*widerschiene*]. Indelible in resistance to the fungible world of exchange is the resistance of the eye that does not want the world's colors to vanish. In semblance nonsemblance is promised (ND 404–5).

Adorno revealed his new conceptions at a recent congress on the sociology of literature, as, moreover, had Agnes Heller (one of Lukacs's closest collaborators) on behalf of Lukacs. According to Adorno, the creator situates himself outside reality, not at this necessary distance from the group whose world vision he expresses, but outside of reality, and his attitude toward it is extremely critical: a minimal acceptance and a maximal rejection. That leads Adorno to the idea of a purely negative dialectic, to rejection, and to the requirement of the impoverishment of content, an impoverishment and rejection for which the ideal would be Beckett. In almost Heideggerian tones—whom he criticizes sharply, moreover—Adorno now rejects everything which is popular, and any concession to the popular, and thus arrives, through criticism, at rather conservative positions.

He conceives of the work as a sort of objective reality, a nearly Platonic reality or form which the creator should attain. To defend the idea of this

constraint by form, Adorno recalls that, however great a genius he may be, the creator could only produce everything he wants to at the risk of succumbing to mediocrity. This is incontestable at the psychological level of the individual, but in no way does it explain to us the existence of its objective realities, nor their origin. As we have seen, this objective reality—in other words coherence, significant structure, aesthetic form, which goes beyond the subjective consciousness of the individual creator—is not in the least a Platonic reality, but rather the possible consciousness of a plural object, its world vision. This objectivity, this form, exists for the individual who must attain it not as an evident reality, but as a non-conscious norm; it is here that the individual is differentiated from the collective subject, because, in the historical praxis of a plural subject, the forms are neither given nor are they preexistent. It is by starting from this collective praxis that the forms become intelligible and that their genesis can be grasped.

Moreover, Adorno is little interested in these significant structures. What makes a work important for him, what interests him, is what he calls its 'truth content'. This truth content, according to his pronouncements on it at the congress, is difficult to define and always goes beyond the purely intellectual. Consequently, the work must not be approached in its totality and by following its genesis, but in relation to criticism, to the philosopher, who knows this truth content today. Literature no longer appears interesting or valid except to the extent that the critical philosopher speaks about it in order to extract certain elements from it which he judges in relation to something which is not the work itself. Thus, the truth content is beyond the work, in the consciousness of the critical philosopher who chooses this content in accordance with the critical consciousness, and the work is no longer considered except outside itself. This truth content, then, is situated outside history or in the history of philosophy. As a result, aesthetics is subordinated to philosophy, to truth, to the theoretically valid content. And, since this truth content is not a significant structure inherent to the work, it becomes a sort of evidence, of which the cultured man, the thinker, the philosopher may have a sort of intuitive knowledge. Their knowledge is shared by

other cultured men, without the existence of any foundation other than culture for this community. With much finesse and subtlety Adorno comes back to this Neo-Kantian thought and to the dualism of the subject and the object which Lukacs and Heidegger had transcended, thus taking up the position of Bruno Bauer's and Max Stirner's *Critical Consciousness*.

Today, Adorno comes from an earlier Adorno, close to the positions of *History and Class Consciousness*, who would not easily have accepted this radical rejection and this 'critical consciousness' which he upholds today, while continuing, on other points, his refined and intelligent dialectical analyses. The need to know worldly reality, the collective subject on the basis of which one thinks, obviously only exists for the dialectical thinker. Descartes—to take the famous example of a non-dialectical thinker—does not have such a problem and almost ignores its possibilities. The relation between the dialectical thinker and the worldly reality from which he begins, is a dialectical, circular, relation. The collective subject produces the mental structures which the thinker expresses and elaborates, and he must be able to account for their real origin in his thought.

If one does not accept Adorno's 'critical consciousness', which judges and scans reality from on high, or the individual relation to global history as Lukacs currently conceives it, if one wishes to maintain, no longer the idea of the revolutionary proletariat, but the requirements of Marx's dialectical thought (which always demands that one know who is speaking and from where), of the subject-object totality, then the basic question arises of knowing who is, now, the subject of speech and action. It is necessary to know in the name of what and from where we are speaking today, if we believe that there are only valid works and actions to the extent that they are placed within a universe created by men and are attached to specific groups.

There are situations in which one cannot give an answer because the group, from which speech and action comes, is not yet manifest. In these situations, on the basis of a modified tradition, individuals speak by formulating perspectives and positions for which the group, the true subject, if it is not yet

there, is in gestation or waiting to be elaborated. And very probably, these positions will be modified when the group becomes manifest.

Adorno and other Frankfurt School theorists developed the theory of alienation in the philosophy of Karl Marx and applied it to social cultural contexts. They were critical of the mechanical interpretation of Marxism as a “scientific theory,” which was presented by the “authorized” theorists of the Soviet Union. Adorno argued that advanced capitalism is different from early capitalism and so Marxist theory applicable to early capitalism does not apply to advanced capitalism. Furthermore, he asserted that “reification” or “commoditization” of human life should be the primary issue for Marxism.

Adorno was to a great extent influenced by Walter Benjamin's application of Karl Marx's thought. Adorno, along with other major Frankfurt School theorists such as Horkheimer and Marcuse, argued that advanced capitalism was able to contain or liquidate the forces that would bring about its collapse and that the revolutionary moment, when it would have been possible to transform it into socialism, had passed. Adorno argued that capitalism had become more entrenched through its attack on the objective basis of revolutionary consciousness and through liquidation of the individualism that had been the basis of critical consciousness.

Adorno's works focused on art, literature, and music as key areas of sensuous, indirect critique of the established culture and petrified modes of thought. The argument, which is complex and dialectic, dominates his *Aesthetic Theory*, *Philosophy of New Music*, and many other works.

The culture industry is seen as an arena in which critical tendencies or potentialities were eliminated. He argued that the culture industry, which produced and circulated cultural commodities through the mass media, manipulated the population. Popular culture was identified as a reason why people become passive; the easy pleasures available through consumption of popular culture made people docile and content, no matter how terrible their economic circumstances. The differences among cultural goods make them appear different, but they are in fact just variations on the same theme. Adorno conceptualizes this

phenomenon, *pseudo-individualization* and the *always-the-same*. Adorno saw this mass-produced culture as a danger to the more difficult high arts. Culture industries cultivate false needs; that is, needs created and satisfied by capitalism. True needs, in contrast, are freedom, creativity, or genuine happiness. Some, however, criticized Adorno's high esteem of the high arts as cultural elitism.

Some of the work on mass culture Adorno undertook together with Horkheimer. His work heavily influenced intellectual discourse on popular culture and scholarly popular culture studies. At the time Adorno began writing, there was a tremendous unease among many intellectuals as to the results of mass culture and mass production on the character of individuals within a nation. By exploring the mechanisms for the creation of mass culture, Adorno presented a framework which gave specific terms to what had been a more general concern.

At the time, this was considered important because of the role which the state took in cultural production; Adorno's analysis allowed for a critique of mass culture from the left which balanced the critique of popular culture from the right. From both perspectives—left and right—the nature of cultural production was felt to be at the root of social and moral problems resulting from the consumption of culture. However, while the critique from the right emphasized moral degeneracy ascribed to sexual and racial influences within popular culture, Adorno approached the problem from a social, historical, political, and economic perspective.

Adorno, again along with the other principal thinkers of the Frankfurt school, attacked positivism in the social sciences and in philosophy. He was particularly harsh on approaches that claimed to be scientific and quantitative, although the collective Frankfurt School work, *The Authoritarian Personality*, that appeared under Adorno's name was one of the most influential empirical studies in the social sciences in America for decades after its publication in 1950. Theodor Adorno was the most important of the Frankfurt School of critical theorists. His legacy for the human and social sciences has been enormous, though undoubtedly his major contribution has been to aesthetic theory. In sociology Adorno is probably most widely read as a representative, if not founder,

of critical social theory; he is less seen as a sociologist as such. Matthias Benzer's book offers an important corrective to the reception of Adorno as a theorist unconcerned with empirical analysis. His book provides a detailed account of Adorno's sociological writings, which are often neglected or misunderstood or simply seen as a kind of cultural critique or ideology critique unconnected with sociological theory. Benzer's book offers a much needed alternative reading and shows how his sociological writings can be understood only when considered in the context of his broader work. The works that are of most significance are the collections *Critical Models, Prisms, Minima Moralia* and two collective sociological research projects, the Authoritarian Personality and Group Experiment.

The concept of society was central to Adorno's sociology, which was primarily addressed to the reality of 'exchange society.' Society is an objective reality that shapes every aspect of the social world, including too nature. Society for Adorno is a relational concept in that it is formed out of social relations between individuals. Capitalism itself is dominated by exchange relations and through the process of social integration, which Benzer argues is a key concept in Adorno's sociology, more and more areas of social life are drawn into exchange society, for social integration allows the exchange principle to dominate.

Adorno attaches importance to the analysis of social phenomena from the standpoint of society as a whole and from the perspective of social actors who can change society. Much of Adorno's sociology is based on his observations of the minute details of everyday life as well as aspects of the culture industry, and was informed from the perspective of a somewhat disconnected foreigner in the United States. The perspective of the outsider and the experience of exile formed the basis of an approach that was otherwise not methodologically rigorous. Possibly his greatest work, *Minima Moralia*, is an exploration of everyday life distorted by the capitalist exchange principle. This approach, which can be characterized as a sociological analysis of exchange society, informed his philosophy of social science, which was opposed to positivist analysis in that he saw as the objective the analysis of complications and contradictions of social life.

Sociology should try to discover possibilities for social transformation within the present; it is in this sense a critical endeavour and one in the Hegelian-Marxist tradition.

Sociology, as practised by Adorno, must be based on a theory of society but it must also have an empirical dimension. He was opposed to the separation of theory from empirical research and always insisted that sociology was not a purely theoretical discipline, but required empirical field research. It is probably the case that what he had in mind here was the polarization of empirical social research and philosophy. He wanted sociology to occupy a mid-way position. Benzer's book offers a corrective to the conventional view that he was opposed to empirical research. The empirical material that informed his sociological analysis was drawn from his own personal observations of everyday life, many of which are deeply insightful while some are the bizzare thoughts of a bourgeois intellectual whose Marxism confirmed his disdain for everyday life. Adorno's difficulty lay with method-guided empirical research. He believed that such research isolates itself from theoretical analysis and is generally theoretically improvised. Benzer offers a very good account of Adorno's struggle to deal with theory, research methods, and empirical data. Adorno, while not always dismissive of conventional research methodology, was convinced that empirical social research is not entirely exhausted by method guided research and can instead be theoretically guided. Adorno's own engagement with method-guided social research was not a happy one; for example the famous F-Scale that was devised in the Authoritarian Personality studies to discover the extent of fascist personality traits in post-war America was flawed in its basic research design in that the research instruments presupposed the theory they were trying to validate.

Adorno was a product of Germany's unempirical sociological tradition. While he did his best to become familiar with empirical sociological research he was never at home in it and instead relied on his own rather idiosyncratic observations of everyday life, many of which were drawn from travel. It is possible to characterize Adorno's empirical sociology as a 'microsociology' of exchange society informed by a theory of society, which is also based on a range

of concepts such as constellation and mimesis, which are discussed by Benzer in later chapters of the book. Benzer suggests that his approach is a hermeneutics of capitalism and that he was informed by Weber's methodology in this regard. It was certainly a deeply personal kind of sociology based on his own observations and much of it written in the style of the essay than a journal article.

In this sense Adorno belonged to a generation of thinkers such as Simmel, Veblen, Kracauer, and Benjamin who did not engage with professional social research. It is difficult not to conclude that Adorno misunderstood not much of social life, but also had a poor understanding of social science. Whether the exchange principle is as dominating as Adorno believed is a matter of some debate. Adorno held that the exchange principle had much the same power of society as Weber's 'iron cage' and had a very limited perspective on society's capacity for social change. Yet, his work was haunted by the possibility that something could lie outside exchange society. His attack on positivism was often misdirected and over generalized, against both Mannheim and Popper for instance. His rejection of method-guided research was undoubtedly a product of his own failure to engage with the real world of social research. Benzer is aware of these problems and does not seek to offer a defence of what were clearly problems in Adorno's sociology. This book does an excellent job in clarifying Adorno's sociological approach in all its complexity. It is lucid and as clear as it is possible to be in explaining Adorno's often obscure concepts.

According to Adorno, there is a space or a distance between art and reality. We can criticize the actuality from the work art a vantage-point of this distance. "Adorno's own view is that art and reality stand at a distance from each other and that this distance gives 'the work of art a vantage-point from which it can criticize actuality'" (Jefferson, 1982: 188). Adorno states that the art is separated from the reality. Its separation can give special meaning and power to the art for criticising the reality.

In Adorno's view, art is set apart from reality; its detachment gives it its special significance and power. Modernist writings are particularly distanced from

the reality which they allude, and this distance gives their work the power of criticising reality (Selden, 1985: 34).

Adorno adds the point this critical distance come out from the fact that literature has its “formal laws”. “For Adorno, this critical distance comes from the fact that literature (his word is art, but he means it to include literature) has its ‘formal laws’...” (Jefferson,1982: 188)

Adorno does not explain what these formal laws are, but he gives two important indications of the kind of thing he means. The first, he talks of procedures and techniques in modern art, the subject matter is recognized and cannot be solved. Secondly, in his view, the art is the essence and image of reality. It is not merely reproduction of photogenic. According to Adorno, we can also see the reality from the structure which is received of a process of thought besides through our eyes or through camera lens.

Firstly, he talks of the ‘procedures and techniques’ which in modern art ‘dissolve the subject matter and reorganize it. Secondly, he says that the art is the “essence and image” of reality rather than its photographic reproduction “... Adorno takes reality to be not the empirical world we see through our eyes or through the camera lens but the dialectics totality, a structure which can only be perceived by a process of thought linking things together and seeing how they effectively are.” (Jefferson,1982: 188-189)

Adorno emphasizes on the distance between work and reality and he also insists on the work’s formal laws, according to him, an art really exist in the real world and has a function in it. It is the reverse of which is the case. He also states that literary work does not give us a neatly-shaped reflection and knowledge of reality but it acts in reality to expose its contradictions. According to him, Art is the negative knowledge of the actual world. He describes that negative knowledge which implies a knowledge which could deny and undermine of false or reified condition. “...he stresses the distance between the work and reality. He says that ‘art exists in the real world and has a function in it’ and yet it is ‘the antithesis of that which is the case’” The literary work does not give us a neatly-shaped reflection and a knowledge of reality but acts within reality to expose its

contradictions. Adorno says, 'Art is the negative knowledge of the actual world "Negative Knowledge" does not mean knowledge of nothing, non-knowledge. It means knowledge which can undermine and negate a false or reified condition.' (Jefferson, 1982: 189 - 190)

In negative knowledge model, Adorno views literature and reality stand at a distance from each other and that this distance gives 'the work of art a vantage-point from which it can criticize actuality' (Jefferson, 1982). For Adorno, this critical distance comes from the fact that literature (his word is art, but he means it to include literature) has its own 'formal laws'. He does not spell out precisely what these formal laws are, but he gives two indications of the kind of things he means. Firstly, he talks about 'procedures and techniques' which in modern art 'dissolve the subject matter and reorganize it' (Jefferson, 1982:153). Secondly, he says that art is the 'essence and image' of reality rather than its photographic reproduction. An image in a work of art comes for Adorno from the artist (the subject) absorbing in the creative process what he perceives in reality (the object); 'In the form of an image the object is absorbed into the subject' (Jefferson, 1982:160). Adorno takes reality not as the empirical world we see through our eyes or through the camera lens but the dialectical totality, a structure which can only be perceived by a process of thought linking things together and seeing how they effectively are.

In addition, for Adorno, a great modernist work is precisely that which manages to reveal the contradiction between appearance and reality. He stresses the distance between the work and reality by saying that 'art exists in the real world and has a function in it' and yet it is 'the antithesis of that which is the case' (Jefferson, 1982:159).

The literary work does not give us a neatly-shaped reflection and knowledge of reality but acts within reality to expose its contradiction. Adorno says 'art is the negative knowledge of the actual world', but 'negative knowledge does not mean knowledge of nothing, non-knowledge. It means knowledge which can undermine and negate a false or reified condition (Jefferson, 1982: 160). Adorno makes this knowledge a negative rather than a positive one and places a

central emphasis on the antagonistic, critical role played by the literary work which respects its formal laws. Adorno opens up modernist writing to Marxist literary theory by showing that a different kind of relationship between the text and reality is possible; one of critical distance and negative knowledge rather than reflection. He stresses that all art stands a distance from reality.

The main features of Hegel's and Marx's dialectical method. This runs counter to the thesis of Theodor Adorno in his celebrated *Negative Dialectics* who argues that a genuinely dialectical method cannot be spelled out in a straightforward narrative form. To establish the identity of the dialectical method through such a narrative would, in his view, render the method impotent. What, at best, can be done to present the method is to identify some of the underlying concepts which are important in its use and then to advance a number of models in which these concepts are employed. According to Adorno, dialecticians may legitimately aspire to teach by example, but in trying to do more they risk the method being turned into a dogma. Above all, Adorno believes those who employ dialectic should attempt to avoid the platitudes and simplifications of the Marxism of the Stalinist era.

The key principle of dialectical thinking for Adorno is the principle of non-identity. By this principle Adorno means 'that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder.' With this principle Adorno appears to be attacking both the philosophical basis of Hegel's dialectic and the dogmas of dialectical materialism. Common to both these approaches appears to be the assumption that in dialectic we have an exhaustive explanation of human experience. The dogmatist assumes that dialectic sums up all that can be rationally said of the world. Adorno takes such an approach to be antagonistic to a truly dialectical mode of procedure since for him the main impetus behind such a procedure is the recognition that our thinking can never fully encapsulate its object. It is the inherent incompleteness of our intellectual attempts to capture the essence of our experience which provides the continual stimulus for dialectical enquiry.

Insisting on this principle of non-identity is not, however, a straightforward task since 'the appearance of identity is inherent in thought itself.' 'To think is,' as Adorno says, 'to identify'. The way out of this dilemma for those who want to think and write dialectically is to refrain from fully establishing the identity of objects. To attempt to encapsulate in full the nature of an object is, for Adorno, to undermine the dialectical process of thought. In place of such a positive philosophy of identification Adorno proposes negative dialectics. Negative dialectics he sees as a meta philosophy which is parasitic on ordinary, non-dialectical thought. The meta philosophy points out the contradictions of ordinary thinking and hints at more enlightening ways of conceptualizing our experience.

But persuasive as Adorno's criticisms of idealism and dialectical materialism are, his meta philosophy in which he refuses to identify dialectic with anything in particular leaves us with nothing solid to grasp. Apparently, the conclusion we can draw from this is that without Adorno's own complex, aphoristic speculation there cannot, it seems, be a negative dialectic. When we set to one side Adorno's ornate style what is most striking about his critique of identity thinking is the sense of scepticism and aloofness which it imparts. Withdrawal from the world appears to be Adorno's answer to the dilemmas of modern life. He takes too far his thesis of non-identity when he refuses to be clear about what he is doing. If dialectic is a riddle then it cannot be recommended to anyone as a form of thought. Adorno harks back to the suggestive, enigmatic dialectic of Heraclitus rather than moving forward to the more systematic dialectic of Hegel and Marx. I think it is worth the effort to go beyond Adorno. To show that there is something solid to grasp I have outlined and criticized Hegel's meta philosophy of dialectic and tried to derive from various examples of Marx's analysis of capitalist society an account of his dialectical method. But I have not entirely rejected Adorno's conclusions. I agree with Adorno and Sartre's view (expressed in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*) that existence is primary and that our way of comprehending the world should not be identified with the world.

[3] As Adorno puts it, concepts do not fully contain their objects. I accept also

Adorno's view that dialectic is a form of meta philosophy which is parasitic upon ordinary thought. The best starting point for our attempts to comprehend the world is the given of ordinary experience and thought. Existence though has its own peculiar form. We cannot start simply with objects, sensations or theories since what is first given to us is given to us also in our language and its received ideas. Our existence is usually already structured by thought. But this ordinary thought operates with categories and concepts which are not brought into a fully systematic relation with each other. What the analyst attempts to do with the dialectical method is to bring these categories and concepts into a coherent form.

If dialectic is a meta philosophy it appears to follow that it cannot be something which is inherent in things. By definition it would appear that a meta philosophy is not directly of the world. Things (i.e., external objects in the world) provide an impetus to this meta philosophy but they never wholly provide its substance. In attempting to comprehend the world with the help of this meta philosophy we come to know it only as the knowledge of 'things' as they affect the human senses and mind and as they are, in turn, shaped by human activity and purposes. (To speak of a knowledge of things not brought to our attention in this way is, I feel, to speak of a non-imaginable world). In Marx's dialectical method this subjective element pertaining to all knowledge is taken into account, but he appears to regard it not as indicating the limited nature of human knowledge but as testifying to its possible authenticity. Our knowledge of the world is always that of practically active human beings. But this is a knowledge of something which when initially encountered always lies beyond the wit and intelligence of the individual human being. Our thought is inevitably incommensurate with the reality it seeks to take in. We form our knowledge from our experience of things, not from those things in themselves. In recognizing that dialectic operates only at a meta philosophical level we take it for granted that things may have an unpredictable logic of their own. Dialectical method does not provide a privileged intuition into the nature of the world. On the contrary, the dialectic method when employed most usefully affords an understanding of the world which captures its

essence only at one particular historical juncture. The dialectical method feeds off what we experience of the world, it does not control that experience.

However, his *Negative Dialectics* tries to avoid, rather than deal with, a difficulty which besets any attempt to outline the dialectical method. This difficulty is summed up in Spinoza's famous dictum 'all determination is negation'. Interestingly, this phrase is referred to in Volume 1 of Marx's *Capital* where he criticizes the vulgar economists who try to explain profit as a return for the abstinence of the capitalist. (4) These vulgar economists fail to see that any activity can from one point of view be regarded as abstinence whilst from another being seen as enjoyment. The abstinence of the capitalist in not deciding to spend his income is no doubt compensated for by the enjoyment received through maintaining and expanding the business through further investment. Doing anything has both a positive and negative significance. The risk that Adorno thinks is run by spelling out the dialectical method is similar in that it may, he fears, by exposing both its strengths and weaknesses, appear simply to be one philosophical method just like any other. In this respect Adorno appears to share Hegel's view that dialectic represents the only appropriate method of enquiry. But to try to shield dialectical method from critical examination in refusing to stipulate what it is, does nothing to advance the claim that the method may often be the most appropriate one. The truth of Hegel's claim about dialectic has to be tested by an examination not only of examples of the method's use in practice but also through an analysis of the bare bones of the method itself. When this is done it becomes apparent, as Marx recognizes, that the dialectical method is not the one solely satisfactory method of enquiry in science or the humanities. Knowledge can be gained in a vast variety of ways: through observation, classification, experiment, play, repetition, and making mistakes; procedures which owe nothing to the dialectical method. Where the dialectical method does offer a unique contribution to our gaining understanding is possibly in the systematic presentation of the results of an enquiry. Its suggested rules, such as the unity of opposites, the true is the whole and difference within identity,

provide us with the means with which to make sense of the most complex and confusing information given to us by our experience and understanding.

Despite Lukacs's view that the literary work reflected reality by using its own distinctive formal resources, he treated the reflection itself as being similar to the way reality was reflected in human consciousness. Adorno criticizes Lukacs precisely because he transfers 'to the realm of art categories which refer to the relationship of consciousness to the actual world, as if there were no difference between them'. (Adorno, 1977: 159). Adorno's own view is that art and reality stand at a distance from each other and that this distance gives 'the work of art a vantage-point from which it can criticize actuality' (Adorno, 1977: 160).

For Adorno, this critical distance comes from the fact that literature has its own 'formal laws'. He gives two important indications of the kind of thing he means. Firstly, he talks of the 'procedures and techniques' which in modern art 'dissolve the subject matter and reorganize it' Secondly, he says that art is the 'essence and image' of reality rather than its photographic reproduction. An image in a work of art comes for Adorno from the artist (the subject) absorbing in the creative process what he perceives in reality (the object); 'In the form of an image the object is absorbed into the subject'. (Jefferson, 1982: 156-157)

The concept of reality, Adorno takes reality to be not the empirical world we see through our eyes or through the camera lens but the dialectical totality, a structure which can only be perceived by a process of thought linking things together and seeing how they effectively are. Adorno emphasizes the alienated nature of reality in contemporary Western society, a world where people appear to be at the mercy of the mechanical laws of the market and of a rationalized and bureaucratic State. (Jefferson, 1982: 157)

Adorno says, 'Art is the negative knowledge of the actual world'. Negative knowledge does not mean knowledge of nothing, non-knowledge. It means knowledge which can undermine and negate a false or reified condition.

CHAPTER VIII

Structuralism

Structuralism is a way of thinking about the world that is predominantly concerned with the perception and description of structures of interrelated objects, concepts or ideas. Structuralism hinges on the view that the world does not consist of independently existing objects whose concrete features can be perceived clearly and individually. Structuralism takes as its object of investigation the inter relationship between objects of enquiry as opposed to the objects themselves. Structuralism, however, is not a single unified theory or approach but has been developed in several disciplines and in diverse ways. Approaches to structuralism include: semiotics, search for deep structures and Marxist structuralism. These, are not, however to be regarded as discrete. To some extent they overlap and draw on similar traditions. They all have two aspects; a methodic and a metaphysical component.

Common to structuralism in all its approaches, at least to some degree are the following: The world can only be understood on the basis of structural relationships. The first principle of structuralism, then, is that the world is made up of relationships rather than things. This means that the significance of any element cannot be grasped independently of the structure of which it forms a part. Unlike systems theory or structural functionalism that identify elements, structuralism looks at the relationship between elements. Structuralism is concerned with underlying structure not just surface reality. Thus structuralism sees structures as rational or logical and assumes that there is some form of underlying structure (or deep structure). This may be implicit or ostensibly the focus of attention of structuralist analysis. Structuralism argues that actions are determined (in some way) by social structures rather than as affected but different from social structures. The pre-eminence of structures leads to an indifference (or even hostility) towards history (and especially historicism). Structuralism, because of its concern with structural relations, and thus of the meaning of signs/objects

etc. as dependent upon their relations with other signs/objects, is strongly anti-empiricist.

Structuralism is not concerned with the role of the active subject, subjects are 'determined' by structures. Structuralism sees social meanings as more than the sum of subjective perspectives. This has implications for the notion of the self. The self comes to appear as a product of conventions, constructed, as it is within a structure of trans-subjective components. The 'I' is not something given, rather it comes to exist mirroring society as the organism grows from infancy.

Structural explanation is guided by a system of norms such as the rules of a language, the collective representations of a society, or the mechanisms of a physical economy. However, such rules are not overt and may be 'unknown' to the structuring agent. They exist, argue Saussure, Freud and Durkheim, in the unconscious. All observation is, structuralists maintain, inherently biased and no 'objective' observation is possible as any observer actually creates something of what he or she observes. It is only the relationship between observer and observed that can be observed. This is what reality consists of. Reality is not the things themselves but the relationships we construct and perceive between entities. Structuralism can be seen to have begun in the work of Vico (1725) who argued that people constantly structure their world. A basic human characteristic, Vico argued, was the capacity to use language to generate myths to make sense of, and thus deal with, the world. In this sense we are all structuralist.

Structuralism has developed as a way of looking at the world that is practiced in a variety of disciplines. In the main it derives from work done in linguistics (Saussure, Pierce, Jakobson) but also has roots in philosophy (Kant), anthropology (Levi-Strauss) and sociology (French sociology) and has been developed in the fields of psychoanalysis (Lacan), film studies (Metz) and media analysis (Derrida, Barthes). It also has a more common currency in sociology notably through those who have been labelled Marxist structuralists, notably Althusser and Poulantzas. The ultimate goal of structuralism for some structuralists is revealing the permanent structures into which individual human acts, perceptions, etc., fit and from which they derive their final nature. Jameson

argues that this leads ultimately to a search for the permanent structures of the mind itself.

The three approaches to structuralism are: 1) Semiology derived from Saussurian linguistics and developed as a sociological tool (especially in film and media studies) through Barthes. It hinges on the analysis of the 'mythical' level of sign systems. 2) The search for deep structures. Levi-Strauss, Piaget, Jameson and, to some extent, linguistic structuralism in general, all are involved in a search for the underlying structures of society, language, myths and even thought. Thus structuralism is a theory of general meanings: ideas have an underlying (rational) structure that determines what we think. 3) Marxist structuralism, which owes most to Althusser's endeavors. It draws on the long tradition of French sociology as well as epistemological debates in the philosophy of science. It sees social structures existing independently of our knowledge of them and of our actions.

Structuralism is a metaphysical system (i.e. 'statements about the world which cannot be proved but must be taken on faith' (Craib, 1984). These metaphysical assumptions are: a) The world is a product of our ideas. This is a 'distortion' of Kant. In extreme form is anti-empiricist. b) A logical order or structure underlies general meanings and c) The subject is trapped by the structure. The idea that there is an unconscious logical structure is common to all structuralist approaches (Larrain 1979). Thus ideology becomes an unconscious phenomenon whose meaning is received but not read (as in Barthes) or a set of images, concepts and structures subconsciously imposed upon people (as in Althusser) or a psychological structure of mind that determines the logic of myth (as in Levi-Strauss).

Structuralism is a method. As a method it sets out to show structural relationships. Various methodological devices are used: a. Linguistic model: based on the work of Saussure and Pierce, it sees language as the underlying structure behind speech. This relies on an analysis of signs and their relationships. b. The anthropological method of Levi-Strauss, which is based on a notion that the human mind arranges world into binary pairs (opposites). c. Semiotics, principally the adaptation of Saussurian semiotics by Barthes.

Sometimes these, or elements of these, are combined and labelled the 'structuralist method'. In general a structuralist method allows for a way to classify what is an apparently infinite number of variations by analyzing structure. For example, when analyzing the Western film Wright (1975) analyses the structural forms of the narrative rather than the multiplicity of roles and actions of the participants.

Types of Structuralism

1) Anthropological Structuralism

Anthropological structuralism is exemplified by the work of Levi-Strauss and his attempt to reveal 'deep structures'. Levi-Strauss extended Saussure's analysis of signification to non-linguistic sign systems, inc. food, myth, economic systems and kinship. Each are constituted through rules of a code.

Prior to *Mythologiques*, Levi-Strauss analyzed individual myths using a linguistic pattern of approach, i.e. 'language-speech' type differences. He exposes the constituent units, mythemes, (like phonemes in normal language) which are basically sentences. The story of the myth is broken down into the shortest possible sentences, written on an index card bearing a number reflecting its sequence in the story. Synchronic bundles of mythemes comparing a *unit of meaning* are assembled, which also allow for sequential reading of the story. Like a musical score, this dual analysis is done via a vertical reading (harmony) and a horizontal reading (melody). Telling the myth is a principle of diachronic speech, understanding involves ignoring this and reading 'vertically through' the text. This vertical reading is through four columns, two represented the terms of the contradiction to be solved and the other two are the mediating terms whose relationship is supposed to reduce the contradiction to a new logical and manageable dimension.

After, *Mythologiques* Levi-Strauss abandons this and concentrates on the interrelationship between myths. 'A sort of spiral methodology is thus employed: one myth illuminates another, which in turn elucidates a third, and so forth. Every aspect is related to its homologue in other myths and the analysis aims at

discovering an internal coherence, a general logic of myth. Now the emphasis is much less on the particular contradictions which myth supposedly seeks to solve in a logical manner and more on the general unconscious mental structures behind it.' (Larrain, 1979, p. 148).

In 1961, Levi-Strauss defined anthropology as a branch of semiology following on his work of fifteen years earlier. Levi-Strauss had suggested anthropology follow phonology and analyze signifying phenomena in order to investigate actions or objects that bear meaning, he should postulate the existence of an underlying system of relations and try to see whether the meaning of individual elements or objects is not a result of their contracts with other elements and objects in a system of relations of which members of a culture are not already aware. (Culler, 19***, p. 94).

Trubetzkoy (1939) had already argued for a phonological approach to social science, on the grounds that social science investigates meaning, that meaning inheres in differentiation of elements and thus cannot be grasped by natural science, which investigates intrinsic (natural) properties of phenomena. The natural sciences have nothing approaching a difference between langue and parole, whereas social and human sciences are concerned with the social use of material objects and the system of differentiation which give them meaning and value.

Levi-Strauss argues that the psychological structure of mind, common to all humanity, is what determines the logic of myth. It is an unconscious structure, unknown by people. The true nature of cultural life is in its being unconscious. Ultimately, Levi-Strauss is engaged in the search for the universal synchronic logic.

Levi-Strauss [curiously given the arbitrary nature of sign systems] leads towards a notion of the 'translatability' of one rule system from another. This he does through an attempt to reveal 'innate cultural universals', which are not dependent upon social reality. 'The unrealized supposition of Levi-Strauss's anthropology is the ultimate reducibility of the diversity of human cultural

practices to a unitary and universal 'depth-grammar' of the mind' (Benton, 1984, p. 12).

The important thing for Levi-Strauss is not that myth may distort reality, but that myth makes sense from a logical point of view. 'In myth, structural anthropology sees a means whereby individual subjects are bound together in their submission to the symbolic representation of the founding and integrity of their social order. But the integration of their lived experience with the intelligible categories of the myth, the means whereby the order sustains itself, is no guarantee of the truth of the myth. On the contrary, the characteristic structuralist detachment of signification from reference implies that whatever 'truth' the myth attains will be disclosed not to the consciousness of the believer, but only to the anthropologist who applies to it structuralist methods of analysis.' (Benton, 1984, p. 13)

The human sciences then exhibit a relation to their object similar to that which the natural sciences exhibit. Levi-Strauss, in common with many other structuralists, has little time for history. He is opposed to any notion of 'man-made' history (Sartre), which he regards as a modern myth, which also answers to social imperatives. The myth of the French Revolution, for example, motivates revolutionary action but is not necessarily true. For the myth to be true would require that contemporary schemes of interpretation were 'congruent with imperatives of action'. History, then, is not the product of conscious subjects but as a process whose meaning is endowed by the totality of rule systems within which subjects are located. The structure of the cultural system predates the subject who is subordinate to the constituting rules of cultural practices. Subjective projects are devised only within such practices.

The idea of 'man made history', Levi-Strauss also relates to 'presentist' ('Whig') history. He argues that cultures and historical forms are either incommensurable, or they are interpreted selectively from the standpoint of the project of the present. The latter entails the imposition of a spurious continuity upon discrete historical forms and periods, denying the specificity of those periods and cultural forms.

For Levi-Strauss, Sartre's conception of history inhibits analysis. Cultures and historical forms are either incommensurable, or they are interpreted selectively from the standpoint of the project of the present. The latter entails the imposition of a spurious continuity upon discrete historical forms and periods, denying the specificity of those periods and cultural forms. Levi-Strauss draws a direct comparison of this approach with 'primitive' mythology. In myth (particularly creation myths), structural anthropology sees a means whereby individual subjects are bound together in their submission to the symbolic representation of the founding and integrity of their social order. However, the integration of their lived experience with the intelligible categories of the myth, the means whereby the order sustains itself, is no guarantee of the truth of the myth. On the contrary, the characteristic structuralist detachment of signification from reference implies that whatever 'truth' the myth attains will be disclosed not to the consciousness of the believer, but only to the anthropologist who applies to it structuralist methods of analysis.

Levi-Strauss is concerned with the origin and structure of myth. He argues that the structure of myth reveals the structure of the mind, which he sees as autonomous. He does this by assuming what this structure is and then demonstrating that the conceptual meaning of tribal myths is expressed through this structure. The structure is one borrowed from linguistics; the idea of binary oppositions. Strauss claims that if myth exhibits the same binary structure as phonetics, this structure must be derived from the human mind. In *Mythologiques* he demonstrates the existence of binary oppositions in tribal myths. For Levi-Strauss, this implies that myths signify the mind that evolves them. This psychological concern prevents him from paying particular attention to the way myths of a particular society relate to its social actions or institutions, although he argues meticulously that the myths of totemistic societies serve to resolve conceptual contradictions inherent in those societies.

In analysing myth, Levi-Strauss begins with the notion of classification. In 'scientific' communities, classification is according to abstract or primary qualities. In 'primitive' societies, classification is according to sensible, or

secondary, qualities. Levi-Strauss looks at the binary oppositions in the structure of myth. An image of something (a human) is structurally opposed in a myth to an image of something else (an animal). The sensible differences (like human/unlike human) become symbols of conceptual differences (culture/nature). Thus the image of a character (human) in a myth does not come to represent a concept (culture) because of any inherent properties of the image but because of *differences* between it and the image of the character (animal) it is opposed to. Each society has a system of such oppositions and it is through them that myths are (unconsciously) understood by members.

The inherent binary nature of myth, for Levi-Strauss, is simply because myth is the mind imitating itself as object and the (autonomous) mind operates on binary oppositions. This does not adequately address the issue for Wright who notes that Levi-Strauss got the idea from Roman Jakobson who argues that the structure of language is inherently dichotomous. Jakobson's approach, based on Saussure's idea of the diacritical nature of symbols, i.e. that symbols are defined negatively in relation to other terms of the system.

For Jakobson, a dichotomous system means that the symbolic meaning of an image is determined only by differences, similarities are irrelevant. When three or more images/characters are structurally opposed, their symbolic reference becomes more restricted and obscure because fine distinctions are required and thus their interpretation becomes more difficult. On the other hand, when two characters are opposed in a binary structure, their symbolic meaning is virtually forced to be both general and easily accessible because of the simplicity of the differences between them.

Levi-Strauss, therefore, argues that tribal myths are cognitive rather than emotional attempts to classify and understand the world. (Burke takes a similar approach to works of literature in modern societies). Levi-Strauss, Burke and others concentrate on the conceptual dimension of myths (and literature) at the expense of their function as a model of social action. The concern with social symbolism tends to ignore the movement of the story as evidenced in the resolutions of the plot. According to Levi-Strauss, the narrative (syntagmatic)

aspect of the myth is to the binary (paradigmatic) aspect as melody is to harmony in music: the former provides the interest, the latter provides the depth. Levi-Strauss also argues that the narrative contains only superficial, or apparent, content; the real, conceptual meaning of myth is established and communicated solely by the structure of oppositions.

For Levi-Strauss, myth designates the underlying sphere of connotation which represents the ideological level. He sees myth as a particular kind of language 'whose purpose is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction (an impossible achievement if, as it happens, the contradiction is real).' (Larrain, 1979, p. 142). This, says Larrain, is similar to Marx's concept of ideology, as both see the solution to contradiction as distorting, Marx because it inverts reality and Levi-Strauss because myth is a logical model unable to succeed when facing a real contradiction.

'Levi-Strauss's concept of science tends entirely to substitute the discovery of an order or arrangement in phenomena for their causal explanation. These operations are not necessarily opposed, but when the emphasis lies heavily on the classificatory side without taking into account the cause-effect relationship, science becomes powerless'. (Larrain, 1979, p. 143–144). Larrain argues, however, that Levi-Strauss, emphasis form over content and his myth therefore differs from Marx's ideology. Levi-Strauss's myth respond to a logical problem of human nature, Marx's ideology responds to historical contradiction.

Marx sees ideology as attempting to solve social contradictions and myth as attempting to solve contradictions with nature. In mythology it is nature that is invested with subjective characteristics. Myth exists in primitive classless societies with simple social relations whereas ideology emerges when social relations have become complex enough to produce a class system. As science proceeds and people progressively gain control over the environment, then myth diminishes as ideology evolves towards more abstract forms whose contradictory character assumes an increasingly deceptive appearance.

Larrain argues that Levi-Strauss's view is at variance with Marx because it ignores the fact that the structures are themselves historically produced through

praxis. Myth, for Marx, like ideology deals with concrete historical situations, rather than the 'universal conflict of the human species'. Ideology, for Marx, is always given in the consciousness of individuals through the process of their practice. Ideology is produced in the conjunction of subject and object it is neither pure illusion nor pure mentality. It cannot be said that ideology constitutes a hidden structure which imposes itself upon people without passing through their practice.

The main critiques of Levi-Strauss is that his structuralism entirely ignores content in favour of form and that he tends to be arbitrary in leaving out those elements that do not fit the postulated structure.

Some elements of the 'deep structure' perspective are to be found in some developments of structural linguistics. For example, the search for deep structure of language and the structuralist analysis of texts which relies on the elaboration of opposites. (Hawkes, 1977). This latter, in effect seems to develop an analysis through an assessment of paradigmatic relationships, irrespective of any concerns about mythical or ideological re-presentations.

2) Psychoanalytic structuralism

Psychoanalytic structuralism can be seen in the work of Lacan who traces the constitutive subject to its psychic source. This he does through a re-working of Freudian psychoanalysis. The core of Freud is seen to be his discovery of the nature and significance of the unconscious. Rather than an 'ego-centered' psychoanalysis, Lacan employed the basic concepts and distinctions of structural linguistics to show that the conscious life of the individual is not self-sufficient, and does not carry the means of its own intelligibility. Not only is analysis via language, but Lacan claimed, the unconscious is structured like a language. The Freudian phases of identity constitution are transformed by Lacan into phases in the subjection of this subject to the authority of the culture, i.e. the symbolic order. (Benton, 1984, p. 14)

3) French (Social) Structuralism

French structuralism refers to a general attitude rooted in a French tradition of thought that stands opposed to subject-centered history and subject-constituted knowledge. This goes back as far as Comte and is clearly expressed in Durkheim. For these, human subjects are constituted by their social milieu. The consciousness of the individual subject is a function of external social constructs.

4) Marxist structuralism

Marxist structuralists attempt to combine Marxism with structuralism. They argue strongly that Marx developed a structural analysis of capitalism in his later works, which used history as a context rather than as an analytic tool.

Structural Marxists accept that there is an epistemological break in the work of Marx. Larrain (1979) says that structuralist approaches to Marx see a break in his work and regard *German Ideology* with suspicion as it comes at the point of the break (1845?) 'Structuralism wants to free Marx from a conception of ideology as 'pure speculation' or false consciousness'. (Larrain, 1979, p 154).

Structuralism is opposed to historicism, which supposedly emphasizes the role of the subject class and of consciousness in the origin of ideology thus making ideology an arbitrary and psychological creation of individuals. Structuralism advocates a material existence for ideology, which determines the subject. Ideology, then, it's not a false representation of reality because its source is not the subject but material reality itself' (Larrain, 1979, p 154). Structuralist Marxists tend to argue that the economic base is, in the final analysis, the determinant of super structural constructs (although this is by no means a simple economic determinism of some Orthodox Marxism).

Althusser's approach is the best known and most widely debated version of structuralist Marxism. The work draws upon what is seen as Marx's concerns with structure in his later works (*Capital*). Althusser argues that Marx, in analyzing capitalism, is dealing with a system rather than with a historiographical task. Structuralist Marxism sees capitalism as a self-generating system.

Althusser argues that Marx has been misread. First, he proposed a fundamental error in the reading of Marx within an empiricist theory of knowledge. Althusser drew on structuralism and conventionalism in developing his reconstruction of Marxism. He, thereby, proposed instead an entirely different epistemology whereby the subject matter of Marxism can be identified as:

- a) the real object: the reality that the theory seeks to explain.
- b) the thought object: the theoretical system making up the science.

Theoretical development takes place directly at the level of the thought object. What Althusser is doing is distinguishing clearly between reality and the process whereby we come to know reality. This enables Althusser to present a new theory of reading which involves a dialectic between the theory whose principles govern the reading and the theory contained in the text. Second, Althusser identified an epistemological break in the works of Marx. He interprets Marx's writings as being in two parts: the early Marx which, in he regards as an ideology and the later Marx which he sees as a science. The difference is between an ideology, which formulates a problem (a problematic) that is merely the theoretical expression of the conditions that allow a solution to be imposed, and a science that allows an objective understanding of the theory at work in the text. In this case the text chosen is *Capital*. In principle then the ideology formulates the framework of the problematic; the theory specifies the problematic and the objective solution to the problematic by a symptomatic reading of the text. There are two outcomes to this symptomatic reading. First, the concept of over-determination. This relates to the notion of totality (about which *Capital* is concerned). A totality is determined by the contradictions between the social relations of production and the material processes of production (forces of production). Totality is not a harmonious structure but it posses a certain hierarchal order and autonomy. Its unity is that of a complex of instances at uneven stages of development relative to each other. In the last resort, however, a totality is determined by the structure-in-dominance. That is, the totality is over-determined. Second, the notion of theoretical practice. The totality is the sum of the instances and the practices associated with each instance. Practice is the

process of transformation of a determinate raw material into a determinate product. Althusser proposes to discuss three forms of practice: ideological, political and theoretical. Political and ideological practice are manifested in the super structural agencies Althusser calls the *ideological state apparatuses* (civil society) and *repressive state apparatuses* (political society). However these practices are designed to maintain the hidden mystery of capitalist relations of production. Theoretical practice is that which can reveal the hidden mystery.

Theoretical practice works at three levels: Generality I, Generality II and Generality III. Generality I comprises the raw material of theoretical practice - the body of concepts upon which the process will set to work to transform them. Generality II comprises the system of concepts whose unity comprises the 'theory of the science by defining the field in which the problems of the science must be posed. Generality III is the 'concrete-in-thought' the knowledge produced by the work of G II on G I. There is always a real transformation between GI and GIII; the 'work' between GI and GIII takes place in thought.

CHAPTER IX

The Genetic Structuralism

Genetic structuralism is a term applied by Goldmann to his historicist Marxist methodology. Methodologically, Goldmann (1971) sees all human behavior as a significant structure that may be understood. He distinguishes understanding or comprehension, which is the description of basic universal and permanent structures, from explanation, which proceeds via the identification of laws and causes. Goldmann regards comprehension alone as non-genetic structuralism. Genetic structuralism in effect combines understanding and explanation. It involves an *internal* analysis aiming to understand the social structure by revealing its immanent structure and an *external* analysis aiming to explain the structure by inserting the structure as a functional element in another larger structure. Thus, genetic structuralism sees comprehensive description and causal explanation as two sides of the same process. Every partial structure is explained by its subsumption under a wider structure but each partial structure must be understood through comprehensive description. Structures are dynamic and the result of praxis.

Genetic structuralism is based on the assertion that the significance of social phenomena is given by their being structured and upon the fact that these significant structures are the result of a genesis and cannot be understood or explained independent of this genesis. The genesis of structures must be sought in the wider structure which subsumes it. Every human fact is a process of structuration, which tends towards a provisional equilibrium. The equilibrium becomes contradictory and, for that reason, is at the same time a process of destructuration. This dynamism is not merely internal to the structure in question but is closely related to the dynamism of a wider structure which also tends to a provisional equilibrium. The reference to the structure in itself is description or comprehension, the reference to the wider structure which subsumes it is explanation (Larain, 1979: 123). As an example of what he means Goldmann

refers to literary analysis. To understand it one needs to go beyond mere analysis of text. But to impute the author's intentions is essentially an arbitrary procedure. The author's intentions are determined by his Weltanschauung. Goldmann raises two problems in attempting to assess an authors' intentions first, the delimitation of the author's output so as to isolate the important or significant texts, second the problem of contextualisation.

What is needed, he argues, is a structure within which to locate both text and author. As a historicist, Goldmann sees this structure to be the Weltanschauung, which permits of the counterposing of oppositional frameworks. The Weltanschauung of a class, he argues, is manifested in the works of 'gifted' members of the class who convey this perspective coherently.

Weltanschauung and Ideology in Goldmann's Genetic Structuralism.

Utilizing the concept of Weltanschauung as fundamental structuring principle raises certain problems when Goldmann approaches ideology. Following Lukacs, Goldmann distinguishes the real (i.e. factual) consciousness from the possible consciousness of the class, the latter being what the class might attain without changing its nature. Thus Kant's 'tragic vision' is justified by the situation of the 18th century German bourgeoisie 'which aspired to a revolution it was unable to bring about'. According to Goldman, the frustrated class created a tragic vision that refers a real contradiction to a new conceptual one or imaginary opposition, which makes the situation bearable. (In this Goldman reflects Levi-Strauss' logic of myth but differs from Strauss in that Goldmann privileges class struggle not logical paradoxes, and concentrates on historical and not universal structures.)

Goldmann causes confusion by sometimes equating Weltanschauung with ideology and sometimes differentiating between them. When used interchangeably they form a general concept that elaborates 'truth'. Ideologies exist on different planes, and different ideologies have different scientific values. The criteria for objective assessment is based on which allows for a critical

understanding of the other. Thus Marxism provides a full understanding and critique of Saint-Simonism but not vice-versa.

The above view of ideology and *Weltanschauung* dispenses with Marx's negative or critical aspect of ideology and reflects Lenin's formulation of ideology as the embodiment of the class interest. Goldmann, however, confuses the issue by attempting a distinction in which he refers to ideology as partial and distorted whereas *Weltanschauung* is total. For Goldmann, ideologies are products of defensive postures of declining class interests. *Weltanschauungen* are related to social classes which 'possess an ideal bearing on the whole of society'. In constituting ideology as a distorted *Weltanschauung* the critical nature of ideology is lost and the ascendant *Weltanschauung*, *per se*, transcends ideology.

Larrain (1979) argues that Goldmann's identification of class consciousness with the production of literary and philosophical works is a problematic element in genetic structuralism as it fails to take account of the mediation of the individual and of other cultural products. Furthermore, Goldmann's requirement that only relevant literature be taken into account introduces an arbitrary element for what determines how authentic literature may be distinguished from inauthentic.

In Marx, class consciousness is the collective consciousness of the class based upon praxis. To relate ideology in the sense of *Weltanschauung* to class consciousness ignores the practical aspect of class consciousness. Larrain argues that, in effect, in Goldmann's usage, class consciousness, ideology and *Weltanschauung* become confused and overlapping concepts. He suggests that Goldmann's contribution consists of 'comparative study of cultural production and an analysis of its social determination by the class struggles of the historical period in which it emerges'. (Larrain, 1979: 129).

Goldmann derives genetic structuralism from the work of Lukacs. Goldmann develops his historicist perspective from Lukacs's (1923) 'History and Class Consciousness'. Despite Lukacs's later reservations about this work, written in the post Russian Revolutionary era, Goldmann (1971) considers that it contains methodological, philosophical and sociological elements relevant to a

contemporary understanding of the social world. For Goldmann, Lukacs (1923) was the first expression of a rebirth of dialectical thought in Marxism. Apart from Rosa Luxemburg and the, then, unknown works of Gramsci, Lukacs was alone in opposing the positivist orthodoxy of the Russian Bolsheviks. This orthodoxy constituted a return to mechanism and Stalinist positivism from 1922 and picked up momentum after the death of Lenin. For Goldmann, then, Lukacs provided a return to the essence of Marx's thought. Lukacs's theoretical analyses constitute a vital element in the development of the metascience of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. Central to this is the idea that the collective, not the individual subject, is the proper focus of historical enquiry. Specifically, Lukacs argues that social classes are the only historical subjects, and that the ideology (?) of the individual subject is a deforming ideology, which is itself the product of a collective subject. Social classes, as trans-individual subjects, are accorded a privileged position (not available to, for example, families and professional groups) because they are the only ones

‘Whose consciousness and action are directed to the organization of the sum of interhuman relationships and relationships between men and nature, with a view to either keeping them as they are or of transforming them in a more or less radical manner; this is to say they they are the subject *par excellence* of historical action, and, at a level of consciousness, the subject of the creation of conceptual and imaginative worlds.’ (Goldmann, 1971:72).

The relating of historical process to the trans-historical subject (social class) requires, says Goldmann, a radical reversal of scientific perspectives and methodology. This is provided by Lukacs. Goldmann sees the individual as having both a libidinal and a collective existence and that these aspects are difficult to disentangle. The relationship between the *individual* subject and the surrounding world is, at the level of knowledge, inevitably static and contemplative. It required the identity of the subject and the object of thought and action. So the contemplative individual could only move into the field of action via a radical break which identified theory with praxis. For Goldmann, all other philosophies concentrated on the individual and only attempted to avoid a

dichotomy of thought and action via speculative transcendentalism. Thus, Goldmann saw Lukacs's reworking of Marx as important because it opposed the notion that fact and value were independent judgements with no necessary connection.

Lukacs's dialectical approach, encapsulated in the concept of the transhistorical subject offered a resolution to the numerous dichotomies (subject-object, thought-action, science-conscience, fact-value, part-whole, synchrony-diachrony, static-dynamic, political-moral, ends-means) that divorced theory from praxis. The trans-individual subject as basis of a dialectical analysis makes redundant such dichotomies. In terms of the science-conscience dichotomy the duality disappears because the study of the object is simultaneously a transforming self-knowledge of the subject. Only the structuring force of history is important in dialectical analyses because it takes account of the limitation on action of prevailing social conditions and the resulting mental categories. However, this limitation provides an arena for social class action within which this very action modifies the social structures thereby affecting the scope of this arena, in Goldmann's terms, the structuring of history itself effects the freedom of social classes. The dichotomous relationships posited above, then, are not permanent and static but are a function of historical circumstances.

Methodologically, Goldmann notes that dialectical thought (like psychoanalysis at the individual level) involves an internal analysis aiming to understand the social structure by revealing its immanent structure (and thus the potential significance of the various elements of a given relationship) *and* an external analysis aiming to 'explain them by inserting the structure as a functional element in another larger structure.' (Goldmann, 1971: 76).

Goldmann says, therefore, that despite their differences the philosophies of Hegel, Marx, Freud and Lukacs are all varieties of genetic structuralism based on the idea that all human acts must be regarded as actions whose aim is to establish a more satisfactory equilibrium between the subject and the world surrounding it. Goldmann reasserts Marx's distinction between class in itself and class for itself.

The actual consciousness of a class must be perceived in the light of the potential consciousness (the potential reality which the class seeks to bring into being).

The McGraw-Hill (2004) in 'Sociological Theory' defines genetic structuralism as an approach which involves the study of objective structures that cannot be separated from mental structures that, themselves, involve the internalization of objective structures. Structuralism is a theory that depends on the view that there are hidden or underlying structures that determine what transpires in the social world.

Here we get a precis of Goldmann's famous analysis of Pascal and the Jansenists. It seems to me this analysis stands on its own regardless of what thinks about the basic philosophical postulates of collective subjects and the like. Goldmann ends up addressing the general question of meaning and the dilemmas involved, for example, in Althusser, who poses the alternative of Spinoza vs. Feuerbach, interpreted in dubious ways. This somehow ends up as a choice between mechanism and idealism, a dichotomy which plagues the history of Marxism as well as social science in general. (76-77) Both Hegel and Marx reject this dichotomy. Then there is a return to the discussion of Jansenism, and eventually of contradiction and coherence in world views. (83)

Goldmann concerns himself with the problem of adequation of scientific knowledge, but his bearing toward the subject-object relation obviates a standard materialist/realist view. Goldmann is quite willing to criticize Stalinism, admit the difficulties of revolutionary prospects in the current situation (1960s), and so forth. And of course he is not shy about linking Heidegger to Hitler. Goldmann is pretty much silent about the late Lukacs and Lukacs' repudiation of the young Lukacs. And I think this is the major symptom of my puzzlement over this book. Goldmann criticizes both Lukacs and Heidegger, but is also sympathetic to both on some level. But ultimately on what basis? The basis looks suspicious to me. Furthermore, while it is a standard cliché of the artificial construct known as "Western Marxism" to excoriate dialectical materialism and link it to Stalinist orthodoxy, my own opinion is that idealism is just as or more congenial to Stalinism. Early Lukacs with his collective subject and subject-object identity

seems to be *more* conducive to Stalinism in some respects than something like *The Destruction of Reason*, which comes into being with Stalin's gun pointed to Lukacs' head. Hence Goldmann's ontological foundation, the basis for his sympathy to these two figures, and his silence about the later Lukacs, all place a question mark over this book.

So this is what I find troubling about Goldmann's argument. I suppose everyone's viscera reacts differently. My problem here is not with the alleged bloodlessness of epistemological and ontological foundations, but the reverse: how they can tangibly muck up our understanding of the world. Goldmann, piggybacking on Hegel and early Lukacs, finds his way out of the dichotomy variously characterized as mechanist-idealist, Kantian, dualist, via the fundamental notions of totality, subject-object identity, and the collective subject. It's a neat package, I admit, but I think it's inadequate.

Literary works have four approaches (Abrams, 1979: 3-29): mimetic approach, pragmatic approach, expressive approach, and objective approach. Structuralism theory included in the objective approach, namely literary works stand-alone, autonomous, regardless of the surrounding nature, both the reader and even the author himself. Therefore, in order to understand a work of literature, the literature must be analyzed through structural elements.

In the development, perceived structuralism theory less valid in the provision of literary meaning. If literature is only understood from the intrinsic elements, the literature can be considered apart from its social context. Literature should always relate to society and history surrounding the creation of literary works. Therefore, the theory of structuralism has been criticized, especially from people who subscribe to the theory of genetic.

Hippolyte Taine (1766-1817) was a French critic and historian who first introduced the theory of genetic structuralism. He tried to review the literature from the perspective sociological and trying to develop a scientific insights in the literature approach. According to him, literature is not only imaginative but also a certain form of mind at the time the work was born. This is the first genetic concept but used different methods. Genetic Structuralism is a theory under the

sociology of literature. Genetic structuralism was born from a French sociologist Lucien Goldmann (1975). Appearance caused, dissatisfaction against the approach of structuralism, which studies only focused on the intrinsic elements without regard to extrinsic elements of literary works, literary works are considered to be separated from its social context. Genetic factors include genetic structuralism in literature, literary means the origin of the genetic literature . The factors involved in the origin of literature and is the author of historical fact are also conditioned the literature when it was created. Genetic structuralism trying to fix weaknesses structuralism approach, by inserting genetic factors in understanding literature. Genetic structuralism often referred to historical structuralism, which considers the typical literary work is analyzed in terms of the historical. Goldmann intends to bridge the gap between the approaches of structuralism (intrinsic) and sociological approaches (extrinsic).From the perspective of the sociology of literature, genetic structuralism has significance, because it puts the literature as a baseline study, sees it as a system of multi-layered meanings which constitute a totality that can not be separated (Damono, 1979:42). Essentially literary work is always related to society and history are also conditioned the creation of literary works, although not entirely under the influence of external factors. According to Goldmann, the structure is not static, but rather is the product of an ongoing historical process, a process of structuration and destructuration who lived and internalized by the society of origin literature is concerned (Faruk, 1999b:12).

Goldmann believes in the existence of homology between the structure of a literary work with the structure of society because both are products in the same structuration activity (Faruk, 1999b: 15).To support his theory, Goldmann build coherent set of categories to one another which he calls the genetic structuralism. The categories is a fact of humanity, the collective subject, literary structure, world view, understanding and explanation.

1) Fact of Humanity

The fact of humanity is all of the result of activity or human behavior, both verbal and physical, which seeks understood by science (Faruk, 1999b: 12). Activity or human behavior must adjust to the life of the neighborhood. The individuals come together to form a community. With society, humans can adapt to the environment. Humans and the surrounding environment are always in a process of reciprocal structuration conflicting but complementary at the same time. Therefore, the fact that humanity is a meaningful structure.

2) The Collective Subject

Collective subject is part of humanity in addition to the fact the individual subject. Humanity facts arise because of human activity as the subject. The author is a subject that is in the middle of society. Therefore there are in fact human society. Literary works created by the author. Thus the literary work is more of a duplication of the fact that humanity has been mixed by the author. All ideas can be regarded as a representative author of a social group. Therefore, assessment of the literature can not be separated with the author to get a thorough sense. Collective subject is a collection of individuals who form a single unit and its activities. Goldman (in Faruk, 1999:15) specifies them as a social class in the Marxist sense, because that's the group that is proven in history as the group has created a complete and comprehensive view of the life and that has influenced the development of human history.

3) Literary Structure

Literature is an expression of the views in an imaginary world, and in his attempt to express the world view, the author creates the characters, objects, and imagination. In his essay entitled *The Sociology of Literature: Status and Problem Method*, Goldman said that in almost all of his research is focused on the elements of unity, the effort reveals a coherent and unified structure that governs the entire universe of literary works (Faruk in Chalima, 1994).

4) World View

Goldmann also developed the concept of a world view that can be manifested in literature and philosophy. According to him, the categorical structure which is a whole complex of ideas, aspirations, and feelings, which links together the members of a particular social group called world view (Faruk, 1999a: 12). Understanding of the literary work is an attempt to understand the mix of elements, intrinsic and extrinsic elements. According to Goldmann, the author was not as individuals, but represent a class (class) society (Satoto, 1986:175). Historical background, age and social condition helped the creation of literary works both in terms of content or in terms of form and structure.

5) Understanding and Explanation

Goldmann describes the method: to be realistic, must be historical sociology; vice versa, to be scientific and realistic, historical research should be sociological (Damono, 1979:43). Thus, genetic structuralism is an alternative theory to analyze literary works between historical and sociological. Literary works should have coherence between structures with each other. Outside elements and the elements in both importance in building literature. Cohesiveness of the two elements gives completeness, that literature can not only be seen from within(text) literature, but forming elements from outside. Literary work trying to uncover the problems facing mankind. The problems that some have been solved and some not found a way out. Therefore, Goldmann tries to develop the dialectical method. Dialectical method developed two concepts, namely "understanding-explanation" and "Overall-section. "Understanding is a description of the structure of the object being studied, whereas explanation is move to incorporate into larger structures. Genetic structuralism looked not only as a work of literature that have loose structure, but the intervention of other factors (social factors) in the process of its creation. Literary work is understood as the totality of the structure blend in and outside the structure.

There are many ways a postface to, or retrospective theoretical framework for, Goldmann's famous study *The Hidden God : a study of Tragic vision in the*

Pensees of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine (1959). Here, Goldmann begins by arguing that 'cultural creation' is but one of the many 'sectors of human behavior' (156). He attempts to analyze some of the fundamental principles of genetic structuralism as applied to the human sciences in a term normally associated with the work of the child psychologist Jean Piaget – who had an enormous influence on Goldmann – but which Goldmann uses in a much more expansive way as something of a synonym for Hegelian Marxist theory. He also offers a few reflections concerning the analogy and opposition between the two great complementary schools of criticism associated with this method: Marxism and psychoanalysis. The basis of genetic structuralism is the hypothesis that all human behavior is an attempt to give a meaningful response to a particular situation and tends, therefore, to create a balance between the subject of action and the object on which it bears, the environment. This tendency to equilibrium, however, always retains an unstable, provisional character, in so far as any equilibrium that is more or less satisfactory between the mental structure of the subject and the external world culminates in a situation in which human behavior transforms the world and in which this transformation renders the old equilibrium inadequate and engenders the tendency to a new equilibrium that will in turn be superseded. Thus human realities are presented as two-sided processes; deconstruction of old structurations and structuration of new totalities capable of creating equilibria capable of satisfying the new demands of the social groups that are elaborating them. He concludes that the scientific study of human facts, whether economic, social, political, or cultural, involves an effort to elucidate those processes by uncovering both the equilibria which they are destroying and those toward which they moving.

A whole series of problems suggest themselves, one of which is the problem of knowing who in fact is the subject of thought and action. Goldmann lists three possible responses that of the empiricists, rationalists and, more recently phenomenologists who identify this subject with the individual; certain types of romantic thought which reduce the individual to a mere epiphenomenon and see in the collectivity the only real, authentic subject (an approach that

borders on mysticism in so far as it denies the individual all reality and autonomy) and believes that the individual may and must become identified wholly in the totality; and dialectical Hegelian, and above all Marxist thought which, while accepting that the collective is the real subject, stress that this collectivity is no more than a complex network of inter-individual relations and that it is important always to specify the structure of this network and the particular place that the individuals occupy within it – the individuals appearing quite obviously as the immediate, if not ultimate, subjects of the behavior being studied.

The question arises, however, as to why the work should in the first place be attached to the social group and not to the individual who wrote it. This is important given that the dialectical perspective does not deny the importance of the individual and the rationalist, empiricist, or phenomenologist positions do not deny the reality of the social environment which they equate with an external conditioning, that is to say, as a reality whose action on the individual has a causal character. In Goldmann's view, the answer is simple :

when it tries to grasp the work in its cultural (literary, philosophical, artistic) specificity, the study that confines its attention solely or primarily to the author may ... account, at best, for its internal unity and the relation between the whole and its parts; but it cannot establish in a positive way a relation of the same type between this work and the man who created it. (Goldmann, 1975:157)

Goldmann argues that the psychological structure is too complex a reality for one to be able to analyze it with the help of various sets of evidence concerning an individual who is no longer alive, or an author whom one does not know personally, or even on the basis of the intuitive or empirical knowledge of an individual to whom one is bound by close bonds of friendship. This is why he repeats his point made in the Hidden God that no psychological study can account for the fact that Racine wrote precisely the dramas and tragedies that he did and explain why he could not write the plays of Corneille and Moliere.

In studying great cultural works, sociological study finds it easier to uncover necessary links by relating them to collective unities whose structuration is much easier to elucidate. These unities are complex networks of inter-individual relations in which the complexity of the psychology of individuals derives from the fact that each of them belongs to a fairly large number of different groups (familial, occupational, national, friends and acquaintances, social classes, et.) and that each of these groups acts upon his consciousness thus helping to form a unique, complex, and relatively incoherent structure, whereas conversely, as soon as we study a sufficiently large number of individuals belonging to one and the same social group, the action of other different social groups to which each of them belongs and psychological elements due to this membership cancel themselves out, and we are confronted with a much simpler, more coherent structure (Goldmann, 1975:158)

This is why Goldmann contends that the relation between the truly important work and the social group, which - through the medium of the creator - is, in the last resort, the true subject of creation, are of the same order as relations between the elements of the work and the work as a whole. In both cases, we deal with the relations between the elements of a comprehensive structure and the totality of this structure, relations of both a comprehensive and explanatory kind. For this reason, he argues, "in so far as science is an attempt to discover necessary relations between phenomena, attempts to relate cultural works with social groups qua creative subjects proves much more effective than any attempt to regard the individual as the true subject of creation.

However, two problems arise in turn. Firstly, that of determining what is the order of the relations between the group and the work; secondly, that of knowing between which works and which groups relations of this type may be established. On the first point, genetic structuralism, exemplified by the work of Georg Lukacs represents a real turning-point in the sociology of literature. All other schools of literary sociology, old or contemporary, try in effect to establish relations between the contents of literary works and those of the collective consciousness, an approach which presents two major conveniences: A) traces of

elements of the content of the collective consciousness, or, quite simply of the immediate empirical aspect of the social reality that surrounds him, is almost never either systematic or general and is to be found only at certain points in his work. In other words, a sociological study oriented, exclusively or principally, towards the search for correspondences of content, allows the unity of the work to escape, and with it its specifically literary character; and B) the reproduction of the immediate aspect of social reality and the collective consciousness in the work is more frequently found in the work of writers of little creative force who are each content to describe or recount his personal experience without transposing it. For this reason, literary sociology oriented towards content often has an anecdotal character and is most effective in the study of works of average importance or literary tendencies, as opposed to major works of creation. Genetic structuralism offers a total change of orientation in its view that the collective character of literary creation derives from the fact that the structures of the world of the work are homologous with the mental structures of certain social groups or is in intelligible relation with them, whereas on the level of content, that is to say, of the creation of the imaginary worlds governed by these structures, the writer has total freedom. (Goldmann, 1975: 159). The writer creates the imaginary worlds by inserting the immediate aspect of his individual experience into his works.

Goldmann summarizes the relation between the creative group and the work in this way; the group constitutes a process of structuration that elaborates in the consciousness of its members affective, intellectual, and practical tendencies towards a coherent response to the problems presented by their relations with nature and their inter-human relations. However, these tendencies fall far short of effective coherence, in so far as they are counteracted in the consciousness of individuals by the fact that each of them belongs to a number of other social groups. Moreover, mental categories exist in the group only in the form of tendencies moving towards a coherence I have called a world-view, a view that the group does not therefore create, but whose constituent elements it elaborates (and it alone can elaborate) and the energy that makes it possible to bring them together. The great writer (or artist) is precisely the exceptional individual who

succeeds in creating a given domain, that of the literary (or pictorial, conceptual, musical, etc.) work, an imaginary, coherent, or almost strictly coherent world, whose structure corresponds to that towards which the whole of the group is tending; as for the work, it is, in relation to other works, more or less important as its structure moves away from or close to rigorous coherence (Goldmann, 1975:160)

This points to a crucial difference between what he terms the sociology of contents and structuralist sociology; the first sees in the work a reflection of the collective consciousness, the second sees it on the contrary as one of the most important constituent elements of this collective consciousness, that element that enables the members of this group to become aware of what they thought, felt, and did without realizing objectively its signification. This is why the former approach best deals with average works while the latter, the genetic structuralist approach, is more effective in dealing with the masterpieces of world literature. Such works represent the expression of world views, that is to say, slices of imaginary or conceptual reality, structured in such a way that, without it being necessary to complete their structure in essence, one can develop them into over-all worlds.

It is the point that an epistemological problem presents itself; though all human groups act on the consciousness, affectivity, and behavior of their members, only the action of certain particular, specific groups encourage cultural creation. The structuration of slices of imaginary reality takes place on the part of only those groups whose consciousness tends to an over-all vision of man. He contends that social classes are the only groups of this kind (though, he warns, this may not be true of non-European societies where other factors may come into play. He is of the view the affirmation of the existence of a link between great cultural works and social groups oriented towards an over-all restructuring of society or towards its preservation eliminates at the outset any attempt to link them to a number of other social groups, notably to the nation, generations, provinces, and family, to mention only the most important. He admits that these groups do act on the consciousness of its members and therefore on that of the

writer, but they can explain only certain peripheral elements of the work and not its essential structure. For example, he argues, a common Frenchness does not explain the work of Pascal, Descartes, or Gassendi, nor that of Racine, Corneille and Moliere to the very extent that these works express different and even opposite views, although their authors all belong to seventeenth century French society, though it may explain the presence of certain formal elements common to these thinkers.

Goldmann then turns his attention to what he terms the most important problem of all sociological research of a genetic-structuralist type: that of the carving-up of the object which one is striving to comprehend. One can study structures only if one has defined the set of immediate empirical data that make it up, while one can define these empirical data only in so far as one already possesses a more or less elaborate hypothesis about the structure that gives them unity. This presents a problem (sometimes called that of the hermeneutical circle) of something of the order of which comes first, the chicken or the egg? Goldmann's solution: one sets out with the hypothesis that one may gather a number of facts into a structural unity, one tries to establish between these facts the maximum number of comprehensive and explanatory relations by trying to include in them other facts that seem alien to the structure that one is uncovering, one repeats this operation by successive approximations until one arrives at a structural hypothesis that can account for a perfectly coherent set of facts. (Goldmann, 1975:161-162)

Those who study cultural creation find themselves at an advantage: great literary, artistic, or philosophical works constitute coherent signficatory structures for which reason the object of study in question is always already to some extent carved up. However, each such work can contain heterogeneous elements that undermine its unity. Furthermore, such unity is diminished the more one considers all the writers of one and the same writer.

Hence, Goldmann's recommendation that one begin with the analysis of each of a writer's work and study them in the order of composition. Proceeding in this way will enable us to make provisional groupings of writings on the basis of

which we can seek in the intellectual, political, social, and economic life of the period, structured social groupings, in which one can integrate, as partial elements, the works being studied, by establishing between them and the whole intelligible relations and, hopefully, homologues. The progress of a piece of genetic-structuralist research consist in the fact of delimiting groups of empirical data that constitute structures, relative totalities which can later be inserted as elements in other larger, but similar structures, and so on.

This method has the double advantage first of conceiving of the whole set of human facts in a unitary manner and, then, of being both comprehensive and explanatory. The reason for this is that the elucidation of a significatory structure constitutes a process of comprehension, whereas its insertion into a larger structure is, in relation to it, a process of explanation. He then illustrates what he means by arguing that to elucidate the tragic structure of one of Racine's plays is a process of comprehension (or understanding) just as to insert them into extremist Jansenism by uncovering the structure of this school of thought is a process of comprehension, but a process of explanation in relation to the writings of Racine. In turn, to insert Jansenism, as a movement of ideological expression, into the history of the seventeenth century noblesse de robe is to explain Jansenism and to understand the noblesse de robe and so on.

In short, the passage from appearance to essence, from the partial, abstract, empirical datum to its concrete, objective signification is brought about by the insertion into relative, structured, and significatory totalities – every human fact may, and even must possess a certain number of significations, differing according to the number of structures into which it can be inserted

What does Goldmann mean by 'mental structure' and the structure of a literary work? He is not thinking of linguistic structures but of patterns of ideas and concepts. He believes that 'certain privileged social groups' possess a superior form of ideology he calls a 'world view' (*vision du monde*). A world view is the expression of those groups in society whose thought, feeling and behaviour were oriented toward an overall organization of interhuman relations and of relations between men and nature. (Goldmann, 1977: 76). These social

groups can either be revolutionary or reactionary classes (Goldmann, 1977:17). A world view expresses itself as a mental structure and this structure is given what Goldmann terms 'coherence' by the work of great writers and philosophers who represent the social group. (Jefferson, 1982)

CHAPTER X

Hegemony

The term 'hegemony' refers to the leadership, dominance or great influence that one entity or group of people has over others. Historically, this term often referred to a city-state or country that exerted power over other city-states or countries indirectly rather than through military force. Modern uses of 'hegemony' often refer to a group in a society having power over others within that society. For example, the wealthy class might be said to have hegemony over the poor because of its ability to use its money to influence many aspects of society and government.

Strinati (1995: 165) stated "Dominant groups in society, including fundamentally but not exclusively the ruling class, maintain their dominance by securing the spontaneous consent of subordinate groups, including the working class, through the negotiated construction of a political and ideological consensus which incorporates both dominant and dominated groups."

The word hegemony is derived from the Greek verb *hegeisthai*, which translates as 'to lead'. Early leaders who were able to exert control and influence over a group of people might be referred to as hegemons. A hegemon had to have the support from at least one dominant class of people to keep the population as a whole from rebelling against the leadership. Hegemony is certainly not the same thing as dictatorship. (Gramsci, 1977:45)

Hegemony is the leadership that goes to domination. The concept of hegemony begins when there is a superiority that dominates inferiority. It is related to the view of oriental that as a powerful country, the most powerful group must be dominant or superior. Antonio Gramsci thought that the function of culture is only as an instrument to create people who can not adjust themselves. The concept is based on the assumption that the specialty of the social groups to express themselves into ways, as the hegemony of domination and as the hegemony intellectual morality. The most powerful group uses the hegemony

concept to dominate, to possess a country which has no leadership. The groups who think that they have a power may rule or dominate the country with a political superiority.

Based on the conflict, hegemony can be divided into three kinds: integral, decadent, and minimal. Integral hegemony is a relation between the dominant and the subordinate groups and shows a strong moral and intellectual unity, thus creating a good relationship between them. In this kind of hegemony, the subordinate group shows respect to the dominant group. The subordinate group obeys the rules which are made by the dominant group, and hence their relationship will not bring about conflicts. Decadent hegemony is a hostile relation between the dominant and the subordinate groups that has become antagonistic to one another. In this kind of hegemony, there is no sense of belonging between the subordinate group and the authority. This relationship produces a hidden conflict that will make political integrity collapse easily. Minimal hegemony is indicated by the conflict between the social classes in which none of those classes is willing to compromise in order to gain mutual benefits. The superior will do anything that is possible to maintain their power and to make the minor go along with their rules and on the country. Minimal hegemony occurs when the superior groups do not want to adapt their interest and aspirations with those of another class in the society.

No man wants to live in the shadow of another one's power, while on the other hand man never gives up the ambition of influencing and even controlling his fellow countrymen. Therefore, the democracy is invented to alleviate the conflict between the instinct of chasing power and the will of equality, namely, democracy is a system to prevent the emergence of dictatorship and ensure the sharing power of all citizens. However, the principle of democracy abided by in the domestic political life never gets the upper hand in the struggle with hegemony in international relations during long history of human being. To some extent, the contemporary and modern international history is also the history of chasing hegemony by powers. According to patterns or methods taken by the

hegemonist to maintain hegemony, three different types of hegemonies exist. They are strength hegemony, institution hegemony and culture hegemony.

Strength hegemony is the traditional hegemony. It emphasizes the importance of force. Using force and threat against the territory integrity and political independence of any countries challenging the existing hegemon is its philosophy, which partly results in the outbreak of First World War and Second World War and the advent of cold war. In practice, any hegemon worshipping and cherishing the concept of strength hegemony will concentrate on developing, maintaining and making use of their military and economic power. They tend to ignore the international organizations and laws, or acknowledge them as tools to serve their interests or their rivals.

Institution hegemony is the way and strategy to consolidate existing hegemony structure through designing, maintaining and enforcing international institution. It builds on the existing unchallengeable power of hegemon, such as political and economic power. In other word, institution hegemony depends on strength hegemony. However, contrary to the latter, it attaches much importance to benevolent rule, that is, rule by virtue rather than by force, which decides its emphasis on the importance of mutual interests. Making best use of mutual interests instead of despotism, hegemon wins the support of other countries in the process of establishing international institution. Through international institution created according mostly to its will, hegemon cooperates with other main powers to rule to world.

Culture hegemony ranks highest in the three types of hegemonies. It controls the world through dominating the international main stream cultures. In practice, culture hegemony calls for the hegemon to take advantage of his political, cultural and institutional creation power to disseminate its value standard worldwide, influence other countries and gradually assimilates others. Hence, culture hegemony emphasize civil power and cultural and value identity. Through achieving similar cultures, hegemon can better realize its aim of controlling the world.

To conclude, there are three types of hegemonies. They are different from one another in pattern or level. Meanwhile, they depend on and mix up one another in practice, so it is hard to distinguish them. However, their aim is same, that is, to satisfy the will of hegemon to control the world.

Minimal hegemony is indicated by the conflict between the social classes in which none of those classes is willing to compromise in order to gain mutual benefits. The superior will do anything that is possible to maintain their power and to make the minor go along with their rules and on the country. Minimal hegemony occurs when the superior groups do not want to adapt their interest and aspirations with those of another class in the society.

Minimal hegemony occurs when the dominance put more emphasis in executing their domination, rather than implement a strong leadership. Moreover, the dominance did not share collective interest and aspiration with other members of their society. In this type of hegemony a significant conflict arise due instability and disintegration, usually marked by war or struggle for independence, etc. The dominance cannot establish policies to cater society's interest.

“Minimal hegemony is a regime under which the leading state does not wish to lead anybody, that is, there is no desire to persuade other states to share its interest and aspirations. Dominance becomes more important than exercising leadership per se. At this juncture, significant conflict has evolved between the interest of the leading and subordinate states. Minimal hegemony is achieved through what Gramsci calls “Passive Revolution”. The leading state is no longer powerful enough to fashion policies capable of serving collective interests, but the subordinate states are too weak and disorganized to bring together counter hegemonic bloc. The leading state maintains hegemony through co-optation of the leaders of the rival bloc, leading the formation of an even broader collective leadership. Nevertheless, minimal hegemony is characterized by instability and disintegration. However, coercion is not employed as a result of the co-optation of rival leading states.” (Thomas, Daryll C. 2001: 21)

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relationship between them. In this kind of hegemony, the subordinate group shows respect to the dominant group. The subordinate group obeys the rules which are made by the dominant group, and hence their relationship will not bring about conflicts.

In integral hegemony, a harmony is established between dominance and the dominated party. The dominated party respected the dominance, and the dominance have strong leadership that advance the community, not only satisfying oneself existential requirements but also encourages its cadres in increasing their economic and productive activity. In integral hegemony, conflict is none existence.

“Integral hegemony is the strongest and most consolidated form of power. It describes the evolution of highly established leading state characterized by a well-developed sense of shared objectives and lack of overt antagonism among various subordinate states. The leading state is capable of simultaneously satisfying its own economic goals and those of the system as a whole. Integral hegemony thus defines as a particular type of power marked not only by strong intellectual leadership and the formation of consensus, but also by policies through which the ruling strata “really cause the whole community to advance, not merely satisfying its own existential requirements, but continuously increasing its cadres for the conquest of ever new spheres of economic and productive activity”. (Thomas, Daryll C. 2001: 21).

Decadent hegemony is a hostile relation between the dominant and subordinate groups that has become antagonistic to one another. In this kind of hegemony, there is no sense of belonging between the subordinate group and the authority. This relationship produces a hidden conflict that will make political integrity collapse easily.

Decadent hegemony occurs when the dominance cannot meet everyone’s interest with their ideas and achievements of the system, according to Fermia. It resulted in fragile cultural, social and political integration. Conflict existed and ready to burst beneath the surface. However, the conflict is not openly realized. In

addition, Ferria stated a harmony cannot be established and the potential for social disintegration is present.

“In modern capitalist society, Gramsci claims, bourgeois economic dominance, whether or not it faces serious challenge, has become outmoded: no longer is it capable of representing or furthering, everyone’s interest. Neither is it commanding unequivocal allegiance from the non-elite: ‘as soon as the dominant group has exhausted its function, the ideological bloc tends to decay’. Thus, the potential for social disintegration is ever-present: conflict lurks just beneath the surface. In spite of the numerous achievements of the system, the needs, inclinations, and mentality of the masses are not truly in harmony with the dominant ideas. Though widespread, cultural and political integration is fragile; such a situation might be called decadent hegemony. (Femia, Joseph V. 1981:47)

No man wants to live in the shadow of another one’s power, while on the other hand man never gives up the ambition of influencing and even controlling his fellow countrymen. Therefore, the democracy is invented to alleviate the conflict between the instinct of chasing power and the will of equality, namely, democracy is a system to prevent the emergence of dictatorship and ensure the sharing power of all citizens. However, the principle of democracy abided by in the domestic political life never gets the upper hand in the struggle with hegemony in international relations during long history of human being. To some extent, the contemporary and modern international history is also the history of chasing hegemony by powers. According to patterns or methods taken by the hegemonist to maintain hegemony, three different types of hegemonies exist. They are strength hegemony, institution hegemony and culture hegemony.

Strength hegemony is the traditional hegemony. It emphasizes the importance of force. Using force and threat against the territory integrity and political independence of any countries challenging the existing hegemon is its philosophy, which partly results in the outbreak of First World War and Second World War and the advent of cold war. In practice, any hegemon worshipping and cherishing the concept of strength hegemony will concentrate on developing, maintaining and making use of their military and economic power. They tend to

ignore the international organizations and laws, or acknowledge them as tools to serve their interests or their rivals.

Institution hegemony is the way and strategy to consolidate existing hegemony structure through designing, maintaining and enforcing international institution. It builds on the existing unchallengeable power of hegemon, such as political and economic power. In other word, institution hegemony depends on strength hegemony. However, contrary to the latter, it attaches much importance to benevolent rule, that is, rule by virtue rather than by force, which decides its emphasis on the importance of mutual interests. Making best use of mutual interests instead of despotism, hegemon wins the support of other countries in the process of establishing international institution. Through international institution created according mostly to its will, hegemon cooperates with other main powers to rule to world.

Culture hegemony ranks highest in the three types of hegemonies. It controls the world through dominating the international main stream cultures. In practice, culture hegemony calls for the hegemon to take advantage of his political, cultural and institutional creation power to disseminate its value standard worldwide, influence other countries and gradually assimilates others. Hence, culture hegemony emphasize civil power and cultural and value identity. Through achieving similar cultures, hegemon can better realize its aim of controlling the world.

Strinati (1995:166) stated “it can be argued that Gramsci’s theory suggests that subordinated groups accept the ideas, values and leadership of the dominant group not because they are physically or mentally induced to do so, nor because they are ideologically indoctrinated, but because they have reason of their own.” From Gramsci’s view, the supremacy of the bourgeoisie is based on two, equally important facts: power of the wealthy and intellectual and influence. But in this new era of information, this one point is as important as those two, it is media power.

Power of the wealthy.

In many democracies, the wealthy class can be said to have hegemony over the middle class and the poor. Wealthy individuals can contribute the most money to the campaigns of certain political candidates, political parties or causes. To ensure re-election or continued contributions, government officials who use those funds might then pass laws or create policies that favor those who contributed to the campaigns. People who don't have the money to contribute, however, are unable to influence the government in the same way. One argument against significant dominance over the poor by the wealthy is that wealthy people don't all share the same political ideologies and different members of the upper class might actually contribute to competing candidates, parties or causes. Also, not all wealthy people favor policies that benefit only the wealthy, such as certain tax laws, and many wealthy people support policies that benefit the poor. This means that the wealthy class' money isn't necessarily being used to increase its dominance or influence over the poor and might even be helping the poor.

Intellectual and influence

Hegemony more often refers to the power of a single group in a society to essentially lead and dominate other groups in the society. This might be done by controlling forms of communication, by influencing voters or by influencing government leaders. Some lobbying groups, for example, might have hegemony status over leaders in congress. Rules that would prohibit or limit political spending by special interest groups are designed to reduce their dominance and allow individual voters to have more control.

A single country might also be considered to be hegemonical if it has enough power to influence the way that other countries behave. States that are hegemonies, such as the British Empire of the mid-19th century, have extraordinary influence over many other countries. Hegemony that exists in a single country means that the dominant and most influential group often is able to affect government policies to its advantage.

Media power.

Beside money, other forms of influence can be used by one group to dominate others. For example, control of the media can influence things such as what shows get aired or canceled and the degree to which a television station covers or does not cover certain news stories. In the late 20th century and early 21st century, however, this dominance was reduced because the internet gave individuals and small companies more access and control over different forms of media, such as news and music.

People became able to self-publish music, videos, texts and other works of art rather than being under the control of broadcasting, publishing or other types of corporations. In addition, a greater variety of these works became available to consumers. News came to be disseminated through blogs and social networking websites in addition to traditional media outlets. All of these things reduced the hegemony of large corporations in the news and entertainment industries.

CHAPTER XI

The Functions of Literature

Literature reflects the various experiences, ideas, passions of human beings in their daily life that express on several forms and styles of literary works. Since literature directly derives from human life, it can increase our knowledge and experiences about human problems included values, morals, cultures, and human interests. After reading a literary work, the readers may get a certain impression of what he/she has read.

Literature as a product of human culture has its own functions. Literature has two functions. The first is literature of power. Literature of power means that the function of literature as power is to move the heart and mind of the readers. The second is literature of knowledge. Literature of knowledge has function to teach. It means that literature gives particular values, messages, and themes to the readers.

Literature has great function in developing human's feelings, ideas, and interests. Generally, the functions of literature are as follows: the first function is literature gives knowledge of those particularities with which science and philosophy are not concerned. The second function is that literature makes the human perceive what human see, imagine what human already know conceptually or practically. The final function of literature is that literature relieve human—either writers or readers—from the pressure of emotions.

Literature also functions to contribute values of human lives. In education program, literature may give significant contribution for students' development and knowledge. The contribution of literature in education covers intrinsic values and extrinsic values. The intrinsic values are the reward of a lifetime of wide reading recognizable in the truly literate person while the extrinsic values facilitate the development of language skills and knowledge.

Many literary texts such as poem, song lyric, and short story are used in language teaching. There are some factors of using literature in language teaching

in terms of linguistic, cultural, and personal growth. Linguistically, literary texts offer a range of genuine texts in a variety of registers, styles, and text-types at many level of difficulty. Literary texts provide a very real sense the vehicle for culture. The settings, characterizations, situations, and assumptions which literary texts embody offer the students with manifold opportunities for raising awareness of difference and for developing tolerance and understanding. Finally, literature provides affect and emotion. When the students interact with a literary text, it usually involves a deeper level of mental processing, a greater personal involvement and response. In this case, students also learnt a lot about reading critically, emphatically, and creatively.

A. The Moral Importance of Fiction and Literature

One important purpose of literature has always been to allow us to safely test our moral fibres against the grain of hardened anathemas: killing, adultery, incest, pornography, theft, anarchy have all been explored in various forms of literature.

Whether as primary or even minor themes, words became safety-gloves allowing authors to pull these taboos from the heart of outrage. Here, no one was *really* killed, no one is *really* being cheated on. These characters are as real as you want them to be, existing in your head: but, nevertheless, the good writer makes you feel as though these *are* people betrayed, killed, misunderstood. Whether you came to change your moral outlook on adultery because of *Madame Bovary* or lessened your anger at murder because of *Crime and Punishment* remain less important than whether you truly engaged with these concepts, from the safety of the open book.

It seems, as usual, that the hardened religious folks are the ones who truly understand the power of words: *they* are the ones wanting various books to be used as kindle for their literal flames of outrage. Whether it was Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, Miller's "pornographic" *Tropic of Cancer*, and so on, the outraged were the ones realising the power of moral testing that literature provokes. Often,

those who are the most outraged by social taboos are those least qualified to talk about them: whether from experience or from intellectual understanding. Yet it is these very same who want no words but their own to have moral dominion in our conceptions of what is and is not taboo. This should be an unacceptable position for any person genuinely interested in what is right by virtue of reason, not by assertion.

With reason, we can debate, repair our moral failing, improve on mistakes. Assertion brings with it the presumption of infallible moral thinking. We call this dogma

To prevent dogma, we ought to engage as reasonable beings with these taboo issues. Literature, like novels and comics, allow us to experience such taboos “first-hand”: it’s happening “to you” and “no one else”, though it still allows you to talk it out with fellow readers.

Weaving these kinds of social taboos, along with strictly *comics* taboos, writers like John Milton, James Joyce, and – as I will be arguing in follow up posts – comic writer Alan Moore help move readers forward in their thinking to be better moral agents and, therefore, better people.

Hitting close to the mind also means hitting close to the heart, in these cases. Writers, as creator gods, can fashion characters we can – often *literally* – fall in love with, only to kill them off due to the dictates of story. Consider how often people have cried over poetry, over literature, or, indeed, over character deaths. Characters aren’t merely “squiggles on a page”: they are given form and life as much as anyone else – our reactions might be less by degrees, but not different in terms of kind.

The ethical importance then of literature and fictional story-telling – in the form of novels, comics, even video games, films and television – is that of the safe space we’re allotted to test our and other kinds of morality.

B. The aesthetic function of Literature.

The aesthetic function occupies an important place in the life of individuals and of society as a whole. The range of people who come into direct contact with art may be quite restricted both by the comparative rarity of an aesthetic predisposition—or at least by its being restricted in some instances to only certain areas in art—and by the barriers that stratify society (certain social classes have only limited access to works of art and limited training in aesthetics). Yet the effects of how art works mean that it also impacts on people who have no direct relationship to it (consider, for example, how poetry affects how a language system develops); moreover, the aesthetic function is effective over a far greater area than art alone. Any object and any activity (whether natural or human) may become a vehicle of the aesthetic function.

This assertion does not amount to panaestheticism since: 1. it expresses only a general possibility, but not any necessity of the aesthetic function; 2. it does not claim that the aesthetic function has pride of place among all the functions of given phenomena for the entire area of aesthetics; 3. it neither confuses the aesthetic function with other functions, nor does it conceive of the other functions as mere variants of the aesthetic function. That assertion merely serves to indicate our espousal of the view that there is no solid borderline between the aesthetic and extra-aesthetic spheres; there are no objects or actions which by virtue of their essence or organic structure are, regardless of time, place or the person evaluating them, carriers of an aesthetic function, and others which, again by their particular adaptation, would be necessarily placed outside its range.

At first sight this statement might appear exaggerated. It could be countered with examples of objects and actions that appear utterly incapable of any aesthetic function (for example, certain basic physiological actions such as breathing, or certain highly abstract thought processes), or, conversely, with examples of phenomena that are preordained by their entire structure to have an aesthetic effect, such as works of art in particular. From Naturalism onwards, modern art has been totally unselective about the areas of reality from which to draw its

subject matter, and since the time of Cubism and its kindred in the other arts, it has set itself no limits as to the materials and techniques it uses.

Likewise modern aesthetics lays great emphasis on the breadth of the sphere of the aesthetic (Jean-Marie Guyau, Max Dessoir and his school, and others), all of which provides ample evidence that even such things as traditionally would not have been accorded any aesthetic potential may become aesthetic facts. We may recall what Guyau said: “To breathe deeply and feel one’s blood being cleansed by contact with the air, is this not an intoxicating experience whose aesthetic value would be hard to deny?” (*Les problèmes de l'esthétique contemporaine*), or again Dessoir: “If we describe a machine, the solution to a problem in mathematics, or the way a particular social group is organised as a beautiful thing, this is more than just a manner of speaking” (*Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, Stuttgart 1906). One may also cite instances of the opposite, where works of art that are privileged bearers of the aesthetic function may lose it and then be either destroyed as superfluous (as with the obliteration of old frescoes or graffiti by their being painted or plastered over), or they may become used without regard to their aesthetic purpose (as with the conversion of ancient palaces to army barracks etc.).

There are, however, within art and beyond it, things that by virtue of their organic structure are meant to have an aesthetic effect; in the case of art that is its core attribute. However, an active capacity for functioning aesthetically is not an inherent property of an object, even if it were deliberately created with that in mind; it only transpires under certain circumstances, specifically in a given social context. The very same item that has been a privileged bearer of the aesthetic function at a certain time or in a certain country may be incapable of having this function in a different time or country; the history of art is not short of instances where the original aesthetic, even artistic validity of a given work has been rediscovered only through scholarly enquiry (see, for example, N. S. Trubetzkoy: “Khozheniye Afanasiya Nikitina kak literaturnyi pamyatnik”, *Versty* 1, Paris, 1926, or R. Jagodić: “Der Stil der altrussischen Vitae”, *Contributions to the Second International Congress of Slavists*, Warsaw, 1934).

Thus the bounds of the sphere that is aesthetics are not set by reality itself, and they are highly subject to change. This becomes particularly apparent from the standpoint of the subjective evaluation of phenomena. From our own milieu we all know people for whom anything can take on an aesthetic function, and, conversely, people for whom the aesthetic function barely exists at all; and we even know from experience that the boundary between the aesthetic and non-aesthetic spheres, dependent as it is on the measure of aesthetic receptivity, shifts for each and every one of us with a change in age, health or even the mood of the moment. The moment we dispense with the individual's standpoint, however, and adopt that of social context, it transpires that despite all ephemeral individual variations there is a largely stable distribution of the aesthetic function in the world of objects and events. Even then, the division between the sphere of the aesthetic function and that of non-aesthetic phenomena will not be entirely clear-cut, given that the degree of involvement of the aesthetic function varies immensely and it is seldom possible to determine the total absence of even the slightest aesthetic residue with absolute certainty. But what can be ascertained objectively—from symptomatic evidence—is the extent of the aesthetic function in, for example, dwelling, dress and the like as acts.

But as soon as we change our perspective, whether in time or space, or from one social formation to another (e.g. between classes or generations), we invariably find a change also in the distribution of the aesthetic function and the bounds of its domain. So, for example, the aesthetic function of food is evidently more powerful in France than in Czechoslovakia; the aesthetic function of clothing in the Czechoslovak urban environment is stronger with women than with men, though that distinction does not apply to environments in which folk costume is the norm; the aesthetic function of clothing also varies according to the typical situations that apply to a given social context: thus the aesthetic function of clothes worn to work will be much weaker than in the case of those worn to special occasions. As regards shifts over time, we may note that, unlike the situation today, in the seventeenth century (the age of the Rococo), men's apparel still had the same strong aesthetic function as women's; and, following the Great

War, the aesthetic function of dress and the home took on much wider social dimensions and involved many more types of situation than before the war.

As we seek to identify the bounds of the aesthetic sphere that set it apart from the non-aesthetic, we must always bear in mind that the two areas are not totally separate or discontinuous. There is a constant dynamic relationship between them that may be described as a dialectical antinomy. One cannot examine the condition or evolution of the aesthetic function without asking how widely (or not, as the case may be) it has flooded the entire expanse of reality; whether its boundaries are relatively fixed or more fluid; and whether it is spread evenly across all strata of the social context or largely confined to just certain groups and milieus—with due regard, of course, to the particular time and particular social entity. In other words, what will characterise the condition and evolution of the aesthetic function is not just where and how it is found to manifest itself, but also the extent to which it is found to be absent or at least weakened and the circumstances where this applies.

At this point it is appropriate to recall what was hinted at in the first chapter on the gradual nature of the transition between art and other aesthetic phenomena. Frédéric Paulhan is correct when he says (in *Le Mensonge de l'art*, Paris, 1907) that “the high arts, such as painting and sculpture, are, by their very nature, also ‘decorative’ arts: the purpose of a picture or statue is to decorate a hall, salon, façade or fountain”. We should add here that for Paulhan the decorative arts are “the kind of production that processes a material to give it useful forms, or confines itself to making it decorative”; as Paulhan, and the French in general, conceive them, the decorative arts are not, therefore, real arts at all, but crafts, that is, non-artistic aesthetic phenomena. Paulhan shows that the decorative element, as also the practical function, may lead to a coalescence of art with the domain of all other aesthetic phenomena to the point that it becomes indistinguishable. Otakar Hostinský puts it even more tellingly: “If we attribute a great portal with decorative doors to architecture, what right entitles us to accord a lower standing to a work, perhaps even by the same person, such as a fine cabinet or other piece of moveable furniture?” (*O významu průmyslu uměleckého*, Prague,

1887.) This hints at one of the natural bridges between art and the remaining sphere of the aesthetic; there are, of course, very many other routes by which norms migrate straight from the high art that sets them into the non-artistic sphere.

To take one more example at least: the influence of gesture in the theatre on the body language that goes with good manners, decorum. Decorum is known as a fact that has a strong aesthetic tone (on which see Max Dessoir: *Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*), but its dominant function lies elsewhere: to facilitate and regulate social intercourse among the members of a collectivity. It is, then, a fact that is aesthetic, but non-artistic, and the same goes for gestures in the broadest sense of the word, including mimicry and such phenomena in language as intonation and articulation. The aesthetic function has the important job here of toning down the original spontaneous expressiveness of a gesture and converting a gesture-reaction into a gesture-sign. But we may also observe this interesting phenomenon: body language varies not only from nation to nation (even in the case of nations of roughly the same culture and the same social stratification), but also, and quite radically, from age to age even within one and the same nation. To verify that this is so, suffice it to consider the paintings and drawings, especially engravings, and photographs from as relatively recently as the 1840s and 1850s. The most conventional gestures portrayed, such as simple standing upright, strike us today as almost histrionic: the leg not bearing the body weight is thrust forward, the hands seem to be expressing emotion out of all proportion to the situation, and so forth. Thus body language is prone to evolution, but where does that stem from? Just as sensory perceptions, notably the visual and auditory, evolve under the influence of art (painting and sculpture have always enabled man to experience anew the act of seeing, music likewise with hearing), and just as poetry continually renews man's sense that speaking is being creative with language, so too gesticulation, body language, has a corresponding art that constantly renews it: acting—since time immemorial in the theatre, in more recent times also in cinema. For the actor, a gesture is a fact of art whose dominant function is aesthetic. This releases it from the context of social relationships and enhances its scope for change. Any new norm arising from such a change then

seeps back from the stage into the auditorium. The influence of acting on gesture has long been known to educationalists and has led to the use of amateur acting as a pedagogical device (think of school plays in the age of Humanism). Today this influence on day-to-day living is quite striking, especially as mediated through film: it has unfolded before our very eyes, over quite a short period of time, and especially in women, whose imitative instinct is greater than in men—in their entire system of body language, from their gait to the tiniest of motions, such as opening a powder compact or the play of facial muscles. This is one way in which new aesthetic norms stream out of art right into daily life, whether the location be an artisan's workshop or the rarified environment of a salon. Outside art they carry much more weight than within the art that engendered them, because outside art they function as true yardsticks of value, not as the mere setting for the violation of norms.

This application of norms is not entirely automatic either, because it subjects the norm to the influence of various forces, for example, fashion. In essence, fashion is not a pre-eminently aesthetic phenomenon, but more an economic one; Hubert Gordon Schauer has defined it as “the exclusive domination that a product enjoys for a period of time”, and the German economist Werner Sombart has devoted an entire study (*Wirtschaft und Mode*) to the economic aspect of fashion. And yet among all the numerous functions of fashion (such as the social, sometimes the political and, in dress, even the erotic) the aesthetic function is one of the most important. Fashion has a levelling effect on the aesthetic norm by eliminating the many forms of competition arising out of the norms that run parallel to it in favour of a single norm. After the Great War, with the huge rise in the part played by fashion, we find—at least in Czechoslovakia—that differences between urban and rural attire and the attire of the older and younger generations disappear. On the other hand, as time progresses this levelling is compensated for by the rapid changes in norms that fashion brings about. Examples are superfluous here—leafing through a few years' worth of any fashion magazine will reveal plenty. Non-artistic aesthetic phenomena constitute fashion's territory proper, though it can make incursions

into art, in particular some of its fringe branches, such as the low-brow art of the salon or the mass-appeal art of the *boulevard*, where its main effect is how it influences consumption; consider here the popularity of pictures with particular subjects as a standard element in household furnishing (e.g. still-life paintings of flowers). What may also happen is that specific works begin to appear as the norm, as when, some years back, Gabriel von Max's Christ on the Cross (the painting properly called *Dokonáno jest!—Es ist vollbracht!—It is Finished!*, 1882) hung in countless homes. See also H. G. Schauer's study "Móda v literatuře" (Fashion in Literature, first published in the journal *Moravské listy* in 1890, reprinted in the collected works edition *Spisy H. G. Schauera*, Prague, 1917), where, discussing marital infidelity as a theme in poetry, he shows, quite interestingly, that literary fashion, as opposed to fashion proper, is typified by inertia, and that fashion as a factor in poetry may hinder direct contact between themes presented in literature and drama, and the actual condition of society.

For all that, it is undeniable that there is a relationship between the aesthetic and social hierarchies. Each stratum of society, but also many environments (e.g. rural–urban), have their own aesthetic canon as one of their most distinctive hallmarks. If, say, an individual from a lower stratum is passing into a higher one, he will generally try to acquire at least the outward signs of the stratum to which he aspires (changes in how he dresses, in his home, or in his behaviour in company etc., where aesthetics is concerned). However, since it is extremely difficult to change one's true taste, it is actually one of the most hazardous—no matter how well concealed—criteria of one's original social background. Whenever there is within a certain group a trend towards regrouping the social hierarchy, that tendency will also be reflected in some manner in the hierarchy of tastes. Thus, for example, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the sharp rise in socialist aspirations to wipe out class differences was accompanied systematically by the development of arts and crafts, the founding of folk theatres and schemes to foster art education. In Chapter 1 we discussed the close parallelism between developments in engineering and the revival of arts and crafts, but there was also a connection to the way social evolution was tending,

and people were aware of it. The prime mover behind the promotion of a culture of aesthetics, John Ruskin, saw his efforts as a drive towards improving society (raising the level of public morality, etc.), while his successors William Morris and Walter Crane were by conviction socialists. At the Second Congress for Art Education, Stephan Waetzoldt read a paper where he said: “Socially and intellectually the nation is so fragmented and divided that today its various strata barely understand one another.”¹ And he anticipated that art education would cement society back together. Others who promoted art education from positions other than the socialist were also of the view that art and a culture of aesthetics in general should act as a social cement: in his *Rembrandt als Erzieher* Julius Langbehn hopes by this device to turn the German peasantry, burgher class and nobility into “eine Adelspartei im höheren Sinne” [an aristocratic party in the higher sense]. Hand in hand with the aspiration to wipe out or at least weaken the hierarchisation of society, there was, then, an attempt to level taste too, and on the highest possible plane: the youngest, and thus highest, aesthetic norm was to become the norm for all.

A continuation of what was happening in society, and with it in aesthetics, came at the start of the Russian Revolution, when the artistic avant-garde allied itself with the social avant-garde. However, later on in the social transformation of Russia the aspiration was to find an aesthetic equivalent to the classless society in the reduction of all taste to the *median*; symptoms of this include Socialist Realism in literature as a return to the barely reinvigorated stereotype of the Realist novel, an older canon already in serious decline, and the compromise with Classicism in architecture. Thus the relationship between how society is organised and aesthetic norms is not rigidly unequivocal, not even in the sense that a particular social trend, such as an attempt to even out differences of class, has to be matched, always and anywhere, by an identical reaction in the realm of aesthetics: first there is an attempt at levelling out the various canons on the highest plane, then at the general adoption of what is average, and finally there is a proposal to generalise the lowest level of aesthetic norm—where lowest means relatively the most archaic.

The linkage between how society is organised and how the aesthetic norm evolves is, as we have seen, undeniable and our model of a parallelism existing between the two hierarchies is entirely defensible. It only founders if it is treated as an automatic necessity and not as the mere basis for evolutionary variants. As they age and stagnate, aesthetic norms generally sink down the ladder of social hierarchy as well, though this is a complex process. For none of the strata of a society is—because of divisions on the horizontal plane—an internally homogeneous environment, which explains why there is usually more than one aesthetic canon to be discerned within a single stratum. Even the domain of the ruling stratum in a society does not generally coincide with the domain of the most recent aesthetic norm—not even when a given norm has its wellspring in that stratum. Exponents of the youngest norm (whether as artists or as members of the public) may be of the young generation that is in opposition—often not just as regards aesthetics—to the older generation that actually rules and seeks to set patterns for the strata below it. In other instances the exponents of the avant-garde norm are individuals who have come into contact with the dominant stratum not by birth, but by upbringing, they themselves having come from the lower orders, as in the case of the Czech poet Karel Hynek Mácha (1810–36) and a few decades later Jan Neruda (1834–91) and Vítězslav Hálek (1835–74).³ In both cases—that of rebellious youth and that of members of an alien order—the dominant stratum initially evinces resistance to the new norm and only once that resistance has subsided can the new norm become the norm of the stratum that really is dominant. And in this same manner we could analyse all other strata with respect to how aesthetic canons are distributed. Numerous complications would arise on every front: it would seldom be possible to find an instance where the bond between a certain aesthetic canon and a particular social grouping was so tight that within that grouping it would have the status of exclusivity, or, conversely, that its range would not stretch beyond the bounds of that grouping. An example of where an aesthetic canon does spread out of its home environment into a different one is discussed in the paper by Roman Jakobson and Petr Bogatyrev “Die Folklore als eine besondere Form des Schaffens” (Folklore as a particular form of creativity)

(in the Festschrift *Donum natalicium Schrijnen*, 1929). In educated Russian circles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, *belles lettres* and folk literature, whose natural home was the countryside, existed side by side. Despite all these complications, however, the pattern whereby an aging aesthetic norm sinks downwards through the aesthetic *and* social hierarchies remains valid.

However, despite this descent, the norm does not actually and irrevocably depreciate in value, given that it is usually not that a canon is just accepted passively by the lower order, but that it is actively reshaped in some way within the context of the aesthetic tradition of the given milieu and of the whole range of different kinds of norms valid within that milieu. There are also frequent instances where a canon that has sunk to the lowest limit is suddenly raised back into the focal point of aesthetic activity to become again—albeit in an altered form—the new young and up-to-the-minute norm. This progression is particularly commonplace in the art of our own day, as I have exemplified in “Dialektické rozpory v moderním umění” (*Listy pro umění a kritiku*, 1935). We might well then speak in terms of a *merry-go-round of aesthetic norms*.

After aesthetic function and aesthetic norm it is now the turn of aesthetic value. At first glance it might seem that the issues surrounding aesthetic value have been dealt with exhaustively in the discussion of aesthetic function, the force that creates value, and aesthetic norm, the rule by which it is measured. However we have shown in the foregoing that: 1. The domain of the aesthetic function is broader than that of aesthetic value in the strict sense of the word, given that in cases where the aesthetic function is merely an adjunct to some other function, the question of aesthetic value is also only secondary in the appraisal of a given object or action. 2. Satisfying the norm is not a necessary condition of aesthetic value, most notably so where this value outweighs all others, namely in art. From this it follows that art is the true domain of aesthetic value, being the privileged domain of aesthetic phenomena. While outside of art value is subordinate to norm, within art the reverse applies: outside art satisfaction of the norm is synonymous with value, within art the norm is often violated, being met only part of the time, though in such an event meeting it is a means, not an end. If the norm is met,

aesthetic pleasure ensues; however, besides pleasure aesthetic value may also entail strong elements of displeasure while remaining an undivided whole. See F. W. J. von Schelling, *Schriften zur Philosophie der Kunst*, Leipzig 1911, p. 7: “In dem wahren Kunstwerk gibt es keine einzelne Schönheit, nur das Ganze ist schön” (In the true work of art there is no one particular beauty; only the whole is beautiful). By the application of an aesthetic norm an individual case is subjected to a general rule and only one aspect of the case is affected: its aesthetic function, which need not be the dominant one. By contrast, an aesthetic evaluation judges a phenomenon in all its complexity, since all its non-aesthetic functions are only validated as components of the aesthetic value (see my article “Básnické dílo jako soubor hodnot. Jízdní řád literatury a poezie”, in the volume *Studie z estetiky* (Studies in Aesthetics, Prague, 1966: 140–43). For this same reason aesthetic evaluation treats a work of art as a closed unit and is an act of individualisation: aesthetic value in art is unique and cannot be replicated.

The issues surrounding aesthetic value must, therefore, be examined in their own right. The underlying question relates to the validity and range of aesthetic evaluation. Starting out from this question, the way is equally open to us in two directions: towards an examination of the variability of the specific act of evaluation *and* towards the quest for the noetic premises of the objective (i.e. independent of the perceiver) validity of an aesthetic judgement. Let us take first the variability of aesthetic evaluation at any given time. That immediately places us in the sociology of art. Above all, the work of art itself is far from being a constant: with each shift in time, space or social milieu the artistic tradition applicable at one time—the prism through which a work is perceived—changes, and the effect of these shifts is to alter also the aesthetic object that corresponds, in the mind of a given collectivity, to a material artefact—something created by an artist. So even if a certain work is evaluated equally positively in chronologically separate periods, the object of the evaluation is on each occasion a different aesthetic object, that is, in some sense, a different work. Naturally, such shifts in the aesthetic object are often accompanied by a change in its aesthetic evaluation as well. In the history of art we see all too often that the value of a particular work

changes over time from positive to negative, or it might slip from a high, exceptional value to average and vice versa. There is often a pattern of a rapid rise followed by a fall and another rise, though not to the same level of aesthetic value (see my monograph *Polákova Vznešenost Přírody* (Polák's *Nobility of Nature*), *Sborník filologický* (nákl. Čes. akademie), vol.X, no.1, Prague, 1934, p. 68). By contrast, some works survive at a high level with no dropping off: these are "eternal" values, as in the case, in poetry, of the verse of Homer at least since the Renaissance; in drama, the works of Shakespeare or Molière; in painting, the works of Raphael and Rubens. Although each age sees such works differently, of which there is tangible evidence in how conceptions of the way Shakespeare's plays should be staged have evolved, they have always, or almost always, been ranked at the top of the scale of aesthetic values. However, it would be a mistake to infer from this that things do not change. For one thing, a closer inspection would, even in such cases, reveal often quite considerable fluctuations, and for another, there is no unequivocal conception even of what constitutes the highest aesthetic value: there is a difference between whether a work is felt to be a "living" value or an "historic" or "representative" or "academic" or "exclusive" or "popular" value etc. Right across all these nuances, the work of art, while gradually swapping one for another, or implementing several of them simultaneously, may persist as an "eternal" value, such persistence being not a state, but—just as with works whose position on the scale does change—a process.

So aesthetic value is changeable at all levels; passivity is impossible. "Eternal" values merely change and interchange both more slowly and less appreciably than those lower down the scale. But even the very ideal of the changeless perpetuity of an aesthetic value, independent of exterior influences, has been neither the highest ideal in all ages and in all circumstances, nor the uniquely desirable one. For besides art made to last and to retain its validity for as long as possible, there are instances of art intended by their very creators to be short-lived, as "consumer" art. This includes "occasional" verse or the kind of cryptic verse intended for the poet's most intimate circle of friends, topical works

that depend for their subject matter on circumstances familiar only to a certain period or a certain restricted circle of recipients. In the visual arts, the anticipated duration of a particular artistic value is often evinced through the choice of material: for example, wax sculpture is evidently created with a different anticipated duration than works done in marble or bronze, and mosaic has an expectation of unlimited duration of both the work and its value unlike the case of, say, a water colour. So we have “consumer” art as the constant antithesis of “permanent” art, though there are actually times when an artist may favour the short, sharp impact of a work over a lasting appeal that rises gently over time. A telling example of this is the art of our own time. The kind of value sought after in their day by the Symbolists was meant to be as durable as possible, independent of changing taste and random audiences. His yearning for the “absolute” work was what brought Mallarmé down, and the Czech Otakar Březina (1868–1929) had occasion to express the conviction that it is possible to find “the supreme verse (i.e. metrical) form, so polished that no improvement on it would be at all possible” (see my Preface to Antonín Hartl’s edition of Karel Hlaváček’s *Žalmy* (Psalms; Prague, 1934: 12). Compare this with what has been said by an artist of our time, André Breton (*Point du Jour, Paris*, p.200):

Picasso is great in my eyes precisely because he has constantly remained on the defensive against these external things, including those he had drawn from himself, and has never taken them to be anything but *moments* of intercession between himself and the world. He has sought out the perishable and the ephemeral for themselves, going against the grain of everything that is usually the object of artistic delight and vanity. The twenty years that have washed over them have already yellowed those newspaper clippings, whose fresh ink contributed their fair share to the insolence of his magnificent collages from 1913. The light has faded, and humidity has stealthily lifted the corners of the great cutouts in blue and pink. And that’s the way it should be. The stupefying guitars made of low-grade wood, makeshift bridges cast daily over the song, have not held up against the singer’s headlong rush. But it’s as if Picasso had already counted on this impoverishment, this weakening, even this dismembering. As if in this

unequal struggle waged *nonetheless* by human creations against the elements, where there is no doubt about the outcome, he had wanted in advance to leave his options open, to reconcile everything precious—because it is ultra-real—with the process of its atrophy.

The propensity for aesthetic value to change is, then, no mere secondary phenomenon arising from an “imperfection” in artistic creativity or perception, that is, from man’s inability to attain to the ideal, but is part of the very essence of aesthetic value, which is a process, not a state, *energeia*, not *ergon*. So even without any change in time or space, aesthetic value is a polymorphous, complex activity, as is evinced by, for example, discrepancies in the views of critics on new works, fluctuating consumer demand in the art and book markets, and so forth. The times we live in are again a telling example of this, with its rapidly changing predilections when it comes to works of art; we see it in, for example, the book trade, with its unceremonious price-cutting on poetry, or the rapid rise and fall in values on the visual arts market. However, this is only a fast-motion version of a process that is played out in any age. The causes of this dynamics in value are, as Karel Teige has shown in his *Jarmark umění* (*The Art Fair*, Prague, 1936), social in origin: the looser relationship between the artist and the consumer (or client), and between art and society. Even in times past, however, the process of aesthetic value has always been quick to respond to the dynamics of social interrelations, since it is at once predetermined by that dynamics and it acts upon by a backlash effect.

In any case it is society that creates the institutions and authoritative bodies through which it exerts its influence on aesthetic value by regulating how works of art are appraised. These institutions include the apparatus of criticism, the role of experts, art classes in schools (to which we can add colleges of art and institutions whose role it is to cultivate passive contemplation), the art market and its promotional machinery, surveys held to determine the most valuable work, art exhibitions, museums, public libraries, competitions, prizes, academies, and often even censorship. Each of these institutions has its own specific objectives, which may well be more than merely to influence the condition and development of

aesthetic evaluation (for example, one task for museums is to assemble materials for research purposes), and one of these other objectives may often be their main one (for example, censorship's is to regulate the non-aesthetic functions of a work in the interest of the state and the ruling social and moral order); and yet all exert some influence on aesthetic value and are exponents of particular social trends. Thus, for example, the critic's role has often been interpreted as one of seeking out objective aesthetic values, at other times as expressing the critic's personal response to the work under review, or again as popularising new art works that laymen find hard to comprehend, or yet again as propagandising on behalf of a particular artistic trend. All of these certainly enter into any critique, though with one or other always predominating. But above all, the critic is either a spokesman for, an opponent of or a renegade from a particular social formation (class, milieu, etc.). In a lecture on the history of Czech criticism delivered at the Prague Linguistic Circle (April 1936), Arne Novák demonstrated quite accurately that, for example, (Josef Krasoslav) Chmelenský's (1800–39) negative appraisal of Karel Hynek Mácha's *Máj* (1836) was not merely a sign of the critic's random personal dislike for the work, but also, and, in the context of Chmelenský's other critical activity and his ideas on the role of criticism, above all, a sign of the desire by the confined literary milieu of the time to stem the tide of unusual aesthetic values that might gnaw away at the taste and ideology of that milieu; it is striking that at that moment, or shortly thereafter, the reading public began to expand even in terms of its social background, as Arne Novák also showed in the same lecture.

The process of aesthetic evaluation is, then, connected with how society itself evolves, and enquiry into that process makes for a chapter in the sociology of art. And let us remind ourselves of the fact, mentioned in the previous chapter, that within a given society there is no one stratum in the art of poetry or painting, etc., but invariably several (e.g. avant-garde, official, or mass-appeal art or the art of the urban proletariat etc.), and, accordingly, more than one scale of aesthetic value. Each of these lives a life of its own, but they often cross one another's path and cross-penetrate one another. A value that has become invalid in one may, whether by a rise or a fall, cross into another. Since this stratification corresponds,

if not directly or quite accurately, to the stratification of society, the multi-layered nature of art contributes to the complex process of shaping and re-shaping aesthetic values.

Finally, it should be added that aesthetic evaluation is both collective and binding and this is reflected in individual aesthetic judgements. The evidence is abundant: for example, as publishers' questionnaires have revealed, readers most often decide to buy a book not on the basis of the views of professional critics, which strike them as too tinged by the taste of their authors, but on the basis of recommendations from friends, members of the same readership as themselves (see Levin Ludwig Schücking, *Die Soziologie der literarischen Geschmacksbildung*, Leipzig, Berlin, 1931; the authority of annual reader surveys is also well known; art collectors often go for a particular work on the sole grounds that its creator's name has the cachet of a generally recognised value; hence the effort put by dealers into creating such name-values (Teige: *Jarmark umění*, p.28ff), and also the importance of experts, whose job it is to attribute works to authors and confirm their authenticity (Max Jacob) Friedländer, *Der Kunstkenner*, Berlin, 1920).

It transpires, then, that aesthetic value is a process whose motion is determined on one hand by the immanent development of the very structure of art (think of the tradition applicable at a given time as the backdrop against which any work is evaluated) and on the other by the motion of and shifts in the structure of social coexistence. The placing of a work of art at a particular point on the scale of aesthetic value and its survival there, or its relocation to another point on the scale, or even its removal from the scale altogether, are dependent on other factors than just the attributes of the material object created by the artist, which alone is what endures as it passes from age to age, place to place or from one social environment to another. It would be wrong to refer here to relativity since for an evaluator rooted at a given point in time and space and wedged in a particular social environment this or that value of a given work is a necessary and constant quantity.

Does this fully resolve—or actually eliminate—the question of the objectivity of aesthetic value as adherent to the work as material object? Has this question—to which answers have been sought across the centuries, whether through metaphysical enquiry, by appeal to the anthropological make-up of man, or by treating a work of art as a unique, and therefore once-for-all expression—been rid of all validity and urgency? There are—for all the acknowledged changeability of aesthetic value—certain indications that it has not lost its importance. How, for instance, do we explain the fact that among works of one and the same movement or even by the selfsame artist, that is, works arising out of the same state of the structure of all art and the same conditions of society, some come across with an urgency bordering on self-evidence as more valuable, others as less? It is also evident that between an enthusiastically positive and fiercely negative evaluation there is not nearly so great a gulf as between both these and indifference; and it is far from unheard-of for praise and damnation to occur simultaneously during the appraisal of a single work. Is there not here yet another hint that the focussing of attention—whether approving or disapproving—on a particular work may, at least in some instances, be underpinned by the work's objectively higher aesthetic value? And how are we to comprehend—if not from an assumption of objective aesthetic value—the fact that a particular work of art may be acknowledged as a positive aesthetic value by even those critics who in other respects dismiss it out of hand, as was the case with the reception of Mácha's *Máj* by Czech critics of the time? The history of art, however much its method seeks to reduce evaluation to values that are explainable in historical terms (*Poláková Vznešenost přírody* (v.s.), p.6), continues to run up against the problem of the value that attaches to a given work without regard to its historical aspects; we might go so far as to say that the existence of this problem is attested precisely by the constantly renewed attempts at curbing its influence on historical research. Finally, it should be recalled that every fight for a new aesthetic value in art, just as any counter-attack against it, is conducted under the assumption that that value is objective and permanent; only under such an assumption is it possible to account for the fact that “a truly great artist cannot

conceive of life being shown, or beauty fashioned, under any conditions other than those that he has selected” (Oscar Wilde, *The Critic as Artist*).

Thus the problem of the aesthetic value of a work of art that is independent of external influences can simply not be avoided. Viewed from this perspective, the autonomy of a work of art, and the supremacy of aesthetic value and function within it, comes to be seen not as necrotising any contact between the work and the natural and social reality, but as constantly revitalising it. Art is a vital agent of extreme importance even at those stages of its evolution and in those forms that stress the principle of art for art’s sake and the dominance of aesthetic value and function; indeed a stage of development when that principle is particularly emphasised may exert considerable influence on man’s attitude to reality (consider the case of Mácha’s *Máj*, analysed in my “Příspěvek k dnešní problematice básnického zjevu Máchova”, *Listy pro umění a kritiku*, IV).

Now we can return finally to the question with which we began: whether it is in any way possible to demonstrate that an aesthetic value has an objective validity. We have already suggested that the immediate object of an aesthetic evaluation is not a “material” artefact, but the “aesthetic object” that is its reflection and correlate in the observer’s consciousness. Nevertheless any objective (i.e. independent and permanent) aesthetic value, insofar as it exists, has to be sought in the material artefact, which alone endures without change, while an aesthetic object is changeable, being defined not only by its organic structure and the properties of the material artefact, but also by the given stage of development of the non-material structure of art. The independent aesthetic value inherent to a material artistic artefact, assuming that there is one, is, in comparison to the actual value of an aesthetic object, merely potential: a material artistic artefact constructed in such and such a way has the ability—irrespective of the stage of development of the whole structure of art—to evoke in the minds of observers aesthetic objects with a positive *hic et nunc* aesthetic value. So any question as to the existence of an objective aesthetic value can only be framed in terms of whether such an organic structure of a material artistic artefact is possible.

In what way is a material artefact involved in the rise of an aesthetic object? We have seen that its properties, or the meaning arising from how they are arranged (the work's content), enter into the aesthetic object as vehicles of non-aesthetic values that in turn enter into complex interrelations, both positive and negative (congruities and incongruities), giving rise to a dynamic whole that is sustained as a unit by the congruities and at the same time set in motion by the incongruities.

We may therefore infer that the independent value of an artistic artefact will be the greater, the more numerous the bundle of non-aesthetic values that the artefact can attract to itself and the more robustly it is able to dynamise the relationship between them—all that without regard to the transformations in their quality from one time to another. It is of course customary to take as the main measure of aesthetic value the impression of unity that the work evokes. However, unity must not be interpreted as something static—total harmony, but as something dynamic—a task that the work sets the observer. In this connection, let us recall Viktor Shklovsky's pronouncement: "A living pathway, a pathway along which one's foot can feel the stones, a pathway that keeps returning—that is the pathway of art." (*Teorie prózy* (Czech trans. of Russian original), Prague, 1933: 27.) If the task is too easy, that is, if the congruities outweigh the incongruities in a given instance, the work's effect is diminished and it quickly fades from view, because it does not demand that the perceiver stay or come back later. This is why works with poor credentials for dynamism become automatised. But if, by contrast, the discovery of a work's unity is too difficult for the perceiver, that is, the incongruities far exceed the congruities, the perceiver may be unable to grasp the work as an intentional construct. However, the huge impact of incongruities that create a welter of obstacles will never impair a work's effectiveness to the same extent as an absence of them: a sense of disorientation, of being unable to uncover the unifying intention behind a work of art, is actually quite common at the first encounter with a conspicuously unusual piece of art. Finally there is a third possibility, where both sides, the congruities and the incongruities, contingent on how a material artistic artefact is structured, are strong, but in

equilibrium; this would appear to be the optimum case and to satisfy the postulate of independent aesthetic value to the fullest extent.

However, we should not forget that in addition to a work of art's inner structure, and closely associated with it, there is also the relationship between the work as a corpus of values and the range of values that apply in practice for the collectivity that is receiving the work. Of course, for as long as it endures, a material artefact comes into contact with a variety of collectivities with many disparate value systems. What does this mean for the postulate of its independent aesthetic value? Clearly, here too, the role of incongruities is at least as important as that of congruities. A work calculated to comport freely with recognised life values is perceived as a fact that is not unaesthetic, but unartistic, simply appealing (kitsch). It is the tension between a work's non-aesthetic values and a community's system of values that alone enables the work to have an effect on the relationship between man and reality, an effect that is the most fundamental purpose of art. It can therefore be said that any independent aesthetic value of an artistic artefact is of a higher order and the more enduring in inverse proportion to the ease with which the work lends itself to literal interpretation in terms of the generally accepted system of values of a given age or milieu. To return to the internal structure of an artistic artefact: it is surely not difficult to agree on a view that says that works having powerful internal incongruities afford—precisely for their splintered nature and the ambiguities that follow from it—a much less suitable basis for the mechanical application of an entire system of practically applicable values than works lacking in internal incongruities or having them present only to a weak degree. So here again we see that it is a potential aesthetic plus for a material artefact to be internally polymorphous, diverse and polysemic. This then shows that an artistic artefact's independent aesthetic value resides in all respects in the tension which it is the perceiver's task to surmount; this, however, is something quite different from the harmoniousness that is often portrayed as the highest form of perfection and the highest perfection of form in art.

It is of course impossible to derive from the principles at which we have arrived any kind of detailed rules. The congruities and incongruities among the

non-aesthetic values discussed and how they are surmounted by a perceiver may—even with one and the same artistic artefact—be materialised in endless different ways arising out of the infinite diversity of a work's encounters with developments in the structure of art and developments in society. We were already aware of this at the moment when we raised the question of an independently valid aesthetic value. Yet it was vital to attempt to answer it because only the hypothesis of independent aesthetic value, constantly sought anew and constantly materialised anew in countless permutations, gives some meaning to how art has evolved historically. Only such a hypothesis can explain the pathos of the constantly repeated attempts to create the perfect work, and the incessant way in which evolution returns to values created previously (thus, for example, the modern play has evolved under a constant barrage of effects arising from a handful of permanent values, such as the works of Shakespeare or Molière). Hence any theory of aesthetic values has to come to terms with the issue of independent value, even if the given theory is one that reckons with the irreducible changeability of any *hic et nunc* evaluation of works of art. The importance of the problem of independent aesthetic value shone out even more brightly as we attempted to resolve it, which brought us to the most fundamental task of art: to guide and constantly renew the relationship between man and reality as the object of human action.

CHAPTER XII

A Theory of Literary Production

The French Marxist Pierre Macherey has developed a model of the relationship between the literary work and reality which differs significantly from Lukacs's reflection model. It can be helpful to see this model as taking off from Lukacs's, since it proposes an alternative to what looked so seamless in Lukacs: the correct literary form as a bond between the realist work and historical reality; and it opens up some of the seams that Lukacs's model leaves; the relationship between author and text, between ideology and realism.

Macherey's most substantial theoretical work is *A Theory of Literature Production*. As the title implies, this book is concerned with how literary works are made. But Macherey gives 'production' a quite specific meaning. He sees literature as like productive labour, where raw materials are worked into an end-product. He sees the author not as a creator but as someone who works pre-existing literary genres, conventions, language and ideology into end-products: literary texts. Anything that enters the text will tend to be changed into something else when the text is written, just as, for example, the steel which goes into making an aircraft propellor changes its appearance and function after being cut, welded, polished and fitted onto the aircraft with other components. (Jefferson, 1982:145)

Macherey: Scientific Criticism and the Question of the Text

In *A Theory of Literature Production*, Macherey attempts to develop a scientific literary criticism in the form of a realist and materialist concept of literary practice. Such a criticism, he insists, must address two basic questions: the question of what the work says and "the question of the question," that is, what the text does not say and why. The first question reveals the work as an expression, as a structure; the second reveals the condition of this effect—conditions of which the work has no awareness. If the first question may be compared to the question of the manifest content of the text, the second question is the question of its

unconscious. "The critical problem," as Macherey sees it, lies "in the conjunction of the two questions; not in a choice between them, but in the point from which they appear to become differentiated." The complexity of the critical problem, in other words, is "the articulation between the two questions" (Macherey 1978, 90). A realist and materialist criticism must (a) define a general concept of literary practice (the literary effect as a particular form of ideological production with its own relative autonomy) that establishes the theoretical object of inquiry for criticism and (b) account for the production and reception of literary texts in terms of their determinate historical contexts (the place and function assigned to the literary effect by the social formation as a complex whole), thus establishing criticism as a regional theory of historical science and a subfield of the theory of ideology. Macherey takes as his point of departure Althusser's discussion in his "Letter on Art" of the possibility and the necessity of a scientific criticism of art: "in order to answer most of the questions posed for us by the existence and specific nature of art, we are forced to produce an adequate (scientific) *knowledge* of the processes which produce the 'aesthetic effect' of a work of art. . . . The *recognition* (even the political recognition) of the existence and importance of art does not constitute *a knowledge of art*. . . . Like all knowledge, the knowledge of art presupposes a preliminary *rupture* with the language of *ideological spontaneity* and the constitution of a body of scientific concepts to replace it." (Althusser, 1971: 225-26).

Following Althusser, Macherey insists that criticism and its object—in his case, the literary text—be firmly distinguished: science is not the duplication of its object but rather the constitution of its object, as a theoretical object, from a perspective outside of the object and capable of knowing it as it cannot know itself. Macherey contrasts this view with two other critical strategies, "normative" and "empirical" criticism, which must serve as negative reference points for scientific criticism. According to Macherey, empiricist criticism tends to accept the text as a "given" that offers itself spontaneously to the inspecting glance; normative criticism, by contrast, tends to measure the text against a model of what it might be—to refuse the text as it is in order to "correct" it against an ideal object

that precedes it. In both cases, Macherey insists, the text is treated as an object of consumption, and the apparent opposition between the two methodologies is, in actuality, a simple "displacement" of this commodity form: empiricist criticism receives the work as an immediately given object of consumption while normative criticism treats and modifies this object so that it can be better or more "profitably" consumed.

Criticism claims to treat the work as an object of consumption, thus falling into the empiricist fallacy . . . because it asks only how to receive a given object. But this first fallacy is closely followed by a second, the normative fallacy, in which criticism proposes to modify the work in order to assimilate it more thoroughly, denying its factual reality as being merely the provisional version of an unfulfilled intention. The second fallacy is no more than a variety of the first, a displacement of it. In fact only the empirical characteristics of the work are transposed, by being attributed to a model—that fixed and independent entity which exists alongside the work, guaranteeing both its consistency and its readability and making it accessible as an object of judgement. The normative fallacy proposes a transformation of its object only within previously defended limits. It is the sublimation of empiricism, its ideal image, but based ultimately on the same principles. (Macherey, 1978: 19)

Macherey criticizes the passivity of empiricist criticism with respect to the literary text. In the case of empiricism, he argues, the distance between the object of criticism and the knowledge of this object is reduced, and criticism collapses into the submissive reception and consumption of "literature"—a mysterious essence imposed on criticism from without and whose meanings define the horizon of critical knowledge. In contrast to such a passive and self-limiting reception of the text, Macherey insists on criticism as an active and autonomous enterprise. If criticism has as its domain the study of literature, this domain does

not necessarily constitute the object of criticism, nor does it delimit, in advance, the entire field of critical knowledge: "knowledge is not the rediscovery of hidden meanings, it is newly raised up—an *addition* to the reality from which it begins" (Macherey, 1978: 6). Thought about the object is never identical to the actual object, Macherey reminds us, and empiricist criticism merely destroys the autonomy of its own practice when it "unites" with the literary work through the "discovery" of the latter's "truth." Such criticism, because it takes the text as a given, immediate object, can neither explain it nor formulate the concepts or laws of its production. Normative criticism, which adds a previously given model that is taken to be the truth of the text's phenomenal essence, merely adds a superficial complexity to this same process. In both cases, Macherey concludes, criticism has been reduced to axiology, a matter of judgment and description, a set of practical rules of taste and value.

Macherey's criticism of empirical and normative approaches may be extended to include many of the critical practices that have dominated the twentieth century. For example, it speaks directly to the hermeneutics of Gadamer as well as the aesthetic historicism of Jauss and Iser, the so-called *Rezeptionästhetik*. In varying degrees these methodologies valorize the "authority of tradition" and the "horizon of expectations" of successive ages as principles of textual interpretation capable of consciously, albeit indirectly and incompletely, bringing forth the "reality" of art, that is, the "phenomenal essence" of art that persists through time precisely because it is an essence. Such a view marries a mythology of literary production (the creative genius) to an equally mythologized notion of literary reception (the value judgments of critics), a shotgun marriage designed to propagate cultural elitism (the canon) and present, as virtue itself, the illicit relation uniting literary production and reception (the class bias embedded in the text-reality relationship). The hermeneutic notion of an "ongoing totalization" of the past through the "aesthetic experience" denies the objectivity of both the past and the text, while the idea of a general theory of "literariness" elaborated within the constraints of hermeneutics is an idealist evasion of the task of producing a scientific concept of the literary effect. In

contrast to the irrationalist and ultimately conservative appeal to "tradition" endemic to hermeneutics, the Structural Marxist concept of literature as an ideological practice grounds the production and the reception of literary texts in real history and at the same time produces real knowledges of literary production and reception—knowledges that are neither the slaves of the past nor the tools of the status quo.

Macherey's scientific criticism also raises powerful objections to the methods of structuralist and poststructuralist methodologies. For Macherey, the structuralist critical enterprise revolves around the decipherment of the "enigma of text" in order to disengage from it a cryptic but nonetheless coherent sense (Macherey, 1978: 136-56). The text is posited as a message, and the function of the structuralist critic is to isolate the transmitted information in order to extract the truth of the text from its inner space and to reveal this truth as the timeless "combinatory" of immutable semiological forms. The language system is not only the sole condition of literary production, it is also an ahistorical condition. The text's production, therefore, can only be the appearance of a production for structuralist criticism, since its true object always lies behind it. In Macherey's view, structuralist criticism is simply another form of empiricism—an adequation and conformation of knowledge to its privileged object, in this case the art of transmitting and interpreting messages.

Poststructuralism, which develops out of that aspect of structuralism that sees meaning as a diacritical, elusive, absent center of discourse—the perpetual and relational discrepancy between signifiers that both supports and eludes centering—presents a somewhat different problem for Macherey since he himself is as critical of the idea of a single "meaning" of a literary text as is any deconstructionist. Indeed, the attempt to reduce the diversity of the work to a single signification, what Macherey calls "interpretive criticism," constitutes a third negative reference point to be explicitly rejected by scientific criticism. Interpretive criticism, Macherey explains, rests on a number of related fallacies: "it locates the work in a space which it endows with its own depth; it denounces the spontaneously deceptive character of the work; finally, it presupposes the

active presence of a single meaning around which the work is diversely articulated. Above all, it confirms the relationship of interiority between the work and its criticism: commentary establishes itself at the heart of the work and delivers its secret. Between knowledge (critical discourse) and its object (the literary work) the only distance is that between power and action, meaning and its expression" (Macherey, 1978: 76-77).

However, poststructuralist criticism, by basing itself on the infinite openness of meaning, the indefinite multiplicity of the text, collapses writing into reading and abolishes even the memory of production. By making production a secret, a mystery whose processes cannot even be mentioned, the text becomes the accomplishment of the reader—a valuable insight, no doubt, when directed against crude axiologies of immanent value, but one that Macherey insists has nothing to do with the real complexities of the text, which stem from its character as a determinate ideological production of a determinate historical matrix: "Under the pretence of identifying the theoretical incompleteness of the work, we must not fall into an ideology of the 'open text': by the artifice of its composition, the work constitutes the principle of its indefinite variation. It has not one meaning but many: although this possible indefinite multiplicity, a quality or effect accomplished by the reader, has nothing to do with that real complexity, necessarily finite, which is the structure of the book. If the work does not produce or contain the principle of its own closure, it is nevertheless definitively enclosed within its own limits (though they may not be self-appointed limits)" (Macherey, 1978: 80).

For Macherey, the work is finite because it is incomplete, a paradox that stems from the ideological origins of the text and its character as an ideological production. The incompleteness of the work must be understood, Macherey explains, not in terms of its consumption but in terms of its production. Macherey introduces two concepts to clarify his meaning: *dissonance* (the decentered, contradictory nature of the text) and *determinate absence* (the inherent incompleteness of the text). Literary texts are internally dissonant, he argues, not as a function of their reception (that is, the reader) but because of their peculiar

relationship to their ideological origins. Since the dominant ideology functions to call social subjects into existence, place them in positions within existing social relations, and reproduce those positions and relations, it manifests an inherent tendency to mask social contradictions by a process of distortion, exclusion, and omission. In a sense, the dominant ideology exists because there are certain things that must not be spoken of, things that are visible only as limits of ideological discourse.

Such silences in ordinary ideological discourse also obtrude into second-order ideological productions such as fiction, in which, Macherey contends, their presence-absence takes a determinate form that is the true object of criticism. "By interrogating an ideology, one can establish the existence of its limits because they are encountered as an impossible obstacle; they are there, but they cannot be made to speak. . . . Even though ideology itself always sounds solid, copious, it begins to speak of its *own absences* because of its presence in the novel, its visible and determinate form" (Macherey, 1978: 132). The text, by putting ideology into determinate form, bears within it the marks of certain determinate absences that twist its various significations into conflict and contradiction. "The necessity of the work is founded on the multiplicity of its meanings; to explain the work is to recognize and *differentiate* the principle of this diversity. . . . What begs to be explained in the work is not that false simplicity which derives from the apparent unity of its meanings but the presence of a relation, or an opposition, between the elements of the exposition or levels of the composition" (Macherey 1978, 78-79). This determinate absence, which is the principle of the work's identity, cannot be explained in terms of a unified meaning; it is not some extension of meaning but is instead "generated from the incompatibility of several meanings" that constitute "the bond by which it is attached to reality, in a tense and ever-renewed confrontation" (Macherey, 1978: 80).

According to Macherey, the distance that separates the work from its ideological origins embodies itself in an "internal distance," which, so to speak, separates the work from itself and forces it into a ceaseless difference and division of meanings. In "putting ideology to work," the text necessarily illuminates the

absences and begins to "make speak" the silences of that ideology. The absences, the "not said" of the work, are precisely what bind it to the ideology from which it emerged. This being the case, Macherey argues, the task of criticism cannot be, as normative or empirical criticism would have it, to situate itself within the same space as the text, allowing the text to speak or completing what it leaves unsaid. On the contrary, criticism must install itself in the incompleteness of the work in order to theorize what is unsaid: in order to become a theoretical object, the work must be transformed. However, the number of possible transformations is not unlimited; Macherey insists that the ideology from which it emerges renders the text determinate and thus finite. "If the work does not produce or contain the principle of its own closure," Macherey says, "it is nevertheless definitively enclosed within its own limits" (Macherey, 1978: 80). Because the relationship between the work and what it cannot say is a determinate one, Macherey characterizes textual absences as structural contradictions and holds them to be constitutive of the text. Structural contradictions are internal to the text, not external, part of a process of internal concealment to which Althusser refers as the "inner darkness of exclusion" (Althusser and Balibar, 1970: 26). Only by breaking with all spontaneous, lived relation to the text—that is, by refusing the discourse of the text as the ground of ratification and by establishing it instead as an object of knowledge within a theoretical practice entirely foreign to the text itself—only then, Macherey insists, can we come back to the text and "see" those visible absences that mark its peculiar relationship to ideology.

Representation and Figuration in Verne's *Mysterious Island*

Macherey puts his method to work in an extended essay on Jules Verne's *Mysterious Island* (Macherey, 1978: 159-240). He demonstrates how a contradiction emerges from the ideological materials and processes that constitute Verne's text, a contradiction between *representation* (the "ideological project" or what the text "wants" to show: in this case, the human conquest of nature) and *figuration* (the "fable" of the text itself, what it effectively does show by means of images, objects, places, and attitudes). At the level of manifest content,

Verne's work attempts to represent the ideology of the colonizing French bourgeoisie of the Third Republic as a linear narrative of progress: a scientific voyage, overcoming obstacles to penetrate and dominate nature's extremities. This vision of direct and certain progress through the heroic conquest of nature by humanity is, at any rate, how the project of a colonizing bourgeoisie "tells itself." However, Macherey argues, in Verne's works something happens to the narrative such that, on the level of figuration, this ideology is "told" in a way that limits it and reveals its internal contradictions. The two otherwise coherent levels of representation and figuration are rendered incompatible, and in the passage from the first to the second the ideological theme undergoes a "complete modification": the futuristic novel turns into a retrospective narrative; the initial forward-looking project of conquest dissolves into a repetition of the past (the explorers always find they are following the path of one who has gone before them); the myth of genesis, the island as origin, becomes a loss of origins and a return to the father; liberating, technological mastery of "virgin" territory by "humanity" obliquely draws attention to an excluded portion of humanity, the island's "natives"; and so on.

Linking Verne's work to the "myth of origins" of the Robinson Crusoe legend—which masks the real history of colonialism—Macherey emphasizes how the text undermines the myth by presupposing the real history that it suppresses. Verne does not, Macherey argues, oppose this myth of origin by recording the real history of colonization or by "reflecting" the latent contradictions inscribed within its ideology. Because ideology masks its contradictions, they can be revealed only from without, and thus Macherey insists it is only by "putting the ideology to work" that Verne is able to put it into contradiction: only through the mechanisms of production inherent in literary practice is the seamless web of ideology rent asunder. The literary text achieves its "truth" by putting ideology to work, which in turn creates a tension between project and realization—the incapacity of the text to maintain the discursive task it had assigned itself.

At the source of ideology we find an attempt at reconciliation. Also, by definition, ideology is in its way coherent, a coherence which is indefinite if not

imprecise, which is not sustained by any real deduction. In this case, the discord is not *in* ideology but in its relation with that which limits it. An ideology can be *put into contradiction* : it is futile to denounce the presence of a contradiction in ideology. Also, the ideological project given to Jules Verne constitutes a level of representation which is relatively homogeneous and consistent, linked internally by a kind of analogical rigour; the *flaw* is not to be sought in the project. Similarly, the inventory of images and their insertion into the chosen fable is in itself perfectly consistent. Verne begins with an ideology of science which he makes into a mythology of science: both the ideology and the mythology are irreproachable in their authority. It is the path which leads from the one to the other which must be questioned: it is in this *in between* , which . . . has its marked place in the work, that a decisive encounter occurs. In the passage from the level of representation to that of figuration, ideology undergoes a complete *modification* —as though, in a critical reversal of the gaze, it were no longer seen from within but from the outside: not from and impose upon it a certain shape by preventing it from being a different ideology or something other than ideology. (Macherey, 1978: 194)

It is clear that the work does not "reproduce" ideology in a way that would make its own contradictions reflect historical conditions. On the contrary, for Macherey the contradictions within the text are the product of the ideologically determined absence of such a reflection of real contradictions. According to Macherey, the work's problematical relationship to ideology produces its internal dissonances. In the text, ideology begins to speak of its absences and manifest its limits, not in the Lukácsian sense that the work's aesthetic powers allow it to over-reach ideological mediations and achieve a direct encounter with historical truth, but because, in transforming rather than merely reproducing ideology, the text necessarily illuminates the "not-said" that is the significant structure of what is said: "the literary work is simultaneously (and it is this conjunction which concerns us) a reflection and the absence of a reflection: this is why it is itself contradictory. It would therefore be incorrect to say that the contradictions of the work are the *reflection* of historical contradictions: rather they are the

consequences of the absence of this reflection" (Macherey, 1978: 128). As a mirror, the text is blind in certain respects, but it is a mirror for all its blindness. "In this sense literature can be called a mirror: in displacing objects it retains their reflection. It projects its thin surface on to the work and history. It passes through them and breaks them. In its train arise the images" (Macherey, 1978: 135).

For Macherey, the problem of criticism is to meet a double exigency, to conceptualize the relative autonomy of the literary text (its irreducibility to other signifying practices) without losing sight of its determinate production (its dependence on other ideological practices and real historical conditions). The concept of literature as ideological production serves this purpose admirably. It allows a critical inquiry that avoids the twin pitfalls of accepting the text as "spontaneously available" (the empiricist fallacy) or replacing the text by a model or a meaning (the normative and interpretive fallacies). By placing the theory of literary production outside the text in the domain of the science of history—specifically, within the region of ideological practice—literature as a theoretical object becomes possible. However, *A Theory of Literary Production* is not without certain serious problems. One deficiency, noted by Claude Bouché (1981), is that, despite its title, the book specifies the general conditions of literary practice, or rather its principle, instead of the material aspect of its production, the totality of its objective determinations. This is a serious omission, but one that is readily correctable. A more serious flaw, in my opinion, stems from the monolithic and unified view of ideology on which so much of the book's conceptual development rests. Ideology, Macherey insists, "cannot sustain a contradictory debate, for ideology exists precisely in order to efface all trace of contradiction" (Macherey, 1978: 131). Such a view may be justly accused of failing to properly differentiate the dominant ideology from other, rival ideologies; moreover, it fails to recognize the contradictory nature of interpellation itself—the internal tension against which even the dominant ideology is always struggling and which makes of all ideology a force not only for the reproduction of the existing relations of production but for their transformation as well.

From such a monolithic view of ideology, and the corresponding notion that only a second-level discourse such as literature may be said to be contradictory, it is a relatively short step to reducing ordinary ideology to a "false" discourse and raising literary discourse to a negative analogue of "truth." In this way Macherey slips subtly from the idea of literature as a production of ideology to the idea that this distancing, this *mise-en-scène*, is necessarily and automatically subversive, and from this view into a negative reflectionism: what the text doesn't say is true, and what it does say is false. The question of truth or falsity, authenticity or inauthenticity, is not the issue. Ideology may agree or disagree with what science says about a certain fact or event, but as we have shown, this is not its point, nor is it the point of literary discourse. Just as surely as it can subvert an existing ideology, a text can underwrite it, reproduce it, impoverish it, or revitalize it, yet these capacities find no place in Macherey's framework.

While retaining the concept of the text as an ideological production, we must also acknowledge the fact that not all texts are thrown, invariably, into internal disarray by their relation to ideology; we must acknowledge as well the fact that a literary text, like any ideology, may contain "true" as well as "false" elements. It is one of the advances of Eagleton's *Criticism and Ideology* to have pointed out that literary texts work sometimes with and sometimes against the historically mutable valences of the ideological formation: "finding itself able to admit one ideological element in relatively unprocessed form but finding therefore the need to displace or recast another . . . the text disorders ideology to *produce an internal order which may then occasion fresh disorder* both in itself (as an ideological production) and in the ideology" (Eagleton, 1976: 99). Such a complex movement cannot be adequately captured by a formulation that insists that the literary text reproduces the structure of ideology, either positively or negatively. The literary text can be grasped, Eagleton insists, only as a "ceaseless reciprocal *operation* of text on ideology and ideology on text, a mutual structuring and de-structuring in which the text constantly overdetermines its own

determinations. The structure of the text is then the product of this process, not the reflection of its ideological environs" (Eagleton, 1976: 99).

Macherey: Scientific Criticism Versus a History of Aesthetics

Literary criticism focuses necessarily on the relationship between the form and content of the text and its historical and ideological context. However, the existence of a literary text as a social production by no means exhausts either its historical significance or the interest of Marxism in literature as a historical phenomenon. If *production* is the key to a realist and materialist concept of literature, its mechanisms do not directly determine or sufficiently explain the *reception* of the text, that is, its ideological impact (although they remain a necessary condition of such an explanation). In *A Theory of Literary Production*, Macherey largely ignores the concrete historical existence of literature, in the sense of literature as a practice that "lives" only by a process of interaction with particular readers. This tactic was necessary, of course, if Macherey was to demonstrate effectively the fact that the relationship between the text and reality has nothing to do with what contemporary readers felt about the text. Marxism is not obliged to accept outside judgments regarding a text's value in order to use it as a historical document; nevertheless, a general theory of history must be able to account for the text's reception and its ideological effectivity as well as its production and ideological origins. It is my position that a synthesis between criticism, the science of literary texts as social products, and what I will call a history of literary effects is necessary, but such a synthesis is possible only on the condition that the concept of literary discourse developed in the preceding pages is retained.

My position strongly contrasts with the trajectory of Macherey's own development, which since *A Theory of Literary Production* has taken a dramatic turn away from the concept of literature as a particular type of discursive practice. In making this move, Macherey seems to have been decisively influenced by Althusser's rejection of "theoreticism" in *For Marx* and *Reading Capital* and by his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." In response to Althusser's

shift of emphasis from ideology as a system of imaginary relations and the distinction between ideology and science toward a greater concern with ideology as a material force inscribed in material institutions and constituting social subjects, Macherey has come to reject any possible continuity or compatibility between the two projects. In a 1976 essay, "Problems of Reflection," Macherey insists that "for historical materialism, ideology must cease to be considered as a system of representations, of facts of consciousness, of ideas, as a discourse. . . . From a materialist point of view, ideology is constituted by a certain number of ideological state apparatuses" (Macherey 1976, 50). However, as I have argued, an underlying coherence unites Althusser's early and later works—a coherence organized around his unfaltering commitment to scientific realism. With Macherey, unfortunately, this is not the case. In his more recent work Macherey has not only turned to the problem of the material effect of literature, that is, the history of literary effects, but has also gone so far as to redefine literature exclusively in terms of its historical reception, a project that denies, if not the legitimacy of a scientific concept of literary practice, at least its utility: "A study of the literary process is no longer an investigation into what literature is produced from, into the basis of its existence, but an attempt to identify the effects which it produces" (Macherey, 1976: 51).

By reducing literature to the historical effect of its reception, Macherey has not simply rejected theoreticism; he has also rejected the very project of a science of history, a position that brings him closer to Hindess and Hirst than to Althusser. Macherey has rejected a realist and materialist concept—by which literary practice could be explained functionally by virtue of its distinct discursive nature (not by its authenticity or value, about which scientific criticism can have nothing to say)—for an irrationalist, *gauchiste* position that renounces the project of objective, scientific criticism and embraces the historicist, relativist denial of a general concept of literary production. This volte-face does not answer the "materialist" question of reception, as Macherey seems to think; it only casts doubt on the very possibility of such a materialist understanding. Unable to synthesize the "text-reality" relationship and the "text effect" relationship,

Macherey posits a false antithesis between them: either literature is an objectively distinct discourse (and thus exists in a theoretically distinct relationship to the real by way of its ideological origins and its mode of production), or it is a historically relative discourse that functions to interpellate subjects (and thus exists exclusively as a function of the ideological apparatuses that determine its reception). Macherey eliminates the antithesis by rejecting the reality of the text's production in order to affirm the reality of its reception, but he can produce no "materialist" understanding of reception because he can have no concept of what it is that is being received: the objective existence of the literary text simply dissolves into a postmodern, hermeneutic fog of subjective interpretation.

The question of the concept of literature no longer has any meaning for Macherey: "Literature is a practical material process of transformation which means that in particular historical periods, literature exists in different forms. Literature with a capital 'L' does not exist; there is the 'literary,' literature or literary phenomena within social reality and this is what must be studied and understood" (Macherey, 1977: 3). The question of the relationship between literature and ideology, he maintains, must be posed in terms that escape the "confrontation of universal essences in which many Marxist discussions have found themselves enclosed" (Macherey and Balibar, 1974: 30). Disingenuously ignoring the fact that there are distinct levels of theoretical discourse ranging from the abstract-general to the concrete-specific, Macherey imperiously dismisses the "illusion that literature in general exists . . . that literature is something, that is to say a whole united around a coherent system of principles which ensure its conformity to a fixed and immutable essence" (Macherey, 1976 : 51).

There is no reason to accept the terms of Macherey's false antithesis between the production and reception of literary discourse. What is actually going on beneath the surface of Macherey's argument is a misguided attempt to combat the class-biased aesthetic judgments about literature by taking an idealist and irrationalist position with respect to art ("criticism is an ideological effect of class struggle") as opposed to a materialist and realist position ("aesthetics is class struggle in culture"). In an attempt to defend Macherey's position, Tony Bennett

puts the problem this way: "What is in dispute is not the material existence of texts but the contention that, in any part of their objective and material presence they declare themselves to be "literature." Written texts do not organize themselves into the "literary" and "non-literary." They are so organized only by the operations of criticism upon them. This contention is fully substantiated by the history of the term "literature" which finally achieved the range of meaning [we now give the term] only during the nineteenth century, side by side with the consolidation of literary criticism and aesthetics as autonomous and academically entrenched areas of inquiry". (Bennett, 1979: 7)

This line of argument graphically reveals the incoherence of Macherey's reduction of literature to its reception. Most certainly texts do not "organize themselves" into the "categories of their reception." But this does not mean that all "criticisms" that "organize the reception" of literary texts are the same; that there is no vital difference between axiological aesthetics and scientific criticism. By denying the possibility of a general concept of literature, Macherey and Bennett have put historical materialism in the awkward position of uncritically accepting concepts of literary practice that it is supposed to be explaining. If there is no distinction between a scientific analysis of a literary text and any other interpretation, by extension there can be no distinction between a scientific analysis of any historical phenomena and any other interpretation of those phenomena. Of course, such a critique completely cuts the ground out from under any knowledge of history, making nonsense of any attempt at "studying and understanding" literary phenomena even as unique, concrete objects. When Bennett attempts to persuade us that "what is needed is not a theory of literature as such but a historically concrete analysis of the different forms of fictional writing and the ideologies to which they allude," he is, strictly speaking, talking nonsense. What is fictional writing? What are ideologies? Without a conceptual problematic—that is, without concepts—one cannot say. To speak of a "historically concrete analysis" without concepts of the historical practices being analyzed is to assert blithely the existence of historical science while denying its theoretical conditions of existence.

In opposition to the idea of knowledge without concepts, we must insist that without concepts the knowledge effect of criticism becomes theoretically indistinguishable from the ideological effect of reception. I do not wish to deny the class-biased nature of reception, but I do protest the reduction of criticism (a scientific practice) into a class-biased form of aesthetics (ideological reception), which is the ultimate effect of the historicism espoused by Macherey and Bennett. Rather than seeing criticism as a scientific practice with political effects, criticism itself becomes merely a political act: "The task which faces Marxist criticism is not that of reflecting or bringing to light the politics which is already there, as a latent presence within the text. . . . It is that of actively politicizing the text, of making politics for it" (Bennett, 1979: 167-68). Such statements hopelessly muddle the distinction between criticism and aesthetics; the task of Marxist criticism is precisely to explain the presence of "politics" within the text as well as the "politics" of its reception, while the task of Marxist aesthetics, presumably what Bennett means by the term criticism, is to combat the *already* politicized system of valorizations and exclusions that surround the text and constitute the field of its reception. A Marxist position in aesthetics is not advanced at all by denying the possibility of a scientific knowledge of literary discourse (on which any Marxist aesthetic position must necessarily be based). Macherey and Bennett seem to have succumbed to voluntarist political pressures to emphasize class struggle to such an extent that they reduce literary criticism and the concept of literature to functions of a rigid, simplistically conceived class polarity and to the equally reductionist effects of direct class domination.

In order to valorize the function of literature as an ideological apparatus, Macherey goes so far as to deny its autonomy as an ideological production. Not only is he no longer interested in the signifying power of the text, but he also seeks to empty the text of any and all cognitive relation to the real: "to analyze the nature and the form of the realization of class positions *in* literary production and its outcome ('texts,' those 'works' recognized as literary), is at the same time to define and explain the ideological modality of literature. . . . This problem should be posed as a function of a theory of the history of literary effects" (Macherey and

Balibar, 1974: 19). The project of a history of literary effects, an important and necessary project in its own right, has become the beginning and the end of all knowledge of literature. Certain essential facts—that the aesthetic effect signifies something, that the signifying effect of this "something" stands in a determinate relation of production to its ideological origins, and that this "something" is knowable (and worth knowing)—have disappeared completely from Macherey's later work. In fact, it is the text itself that has disappeared. Urging that the concept of the "text" or the "work" that has for so long been the mainstay of criticism should be abandoned, Macherey advances the argument that there are no such things as works or texts: "the materialist analysis of literature rejects on principle the notion of the 'work'—i.e., the illusory representation of the unity of a literary text, its totality, self-sufficiency and perfection. . . . More precisely it recognizes the notion of the 'work' (and its correlative 'the author') only to identify both as the necessary illusions inscribed in the ideology of literature that accompanies all literary production" (Macherey and Balibar, 1981: 49). The literary effect is reduced by Macherey to three dimensions of a monolithic process of ideological domination: "(1) as produced under determinate social relations; (2) as a moment in the reproduction of the dominant ideology; and (3) consequently as an ideological domination effect in itself" (Macherey and Balibar, 1981: 54).

Such a simple-minded reduction of literature to its modes of reception not only betrays the very project of producing knowledge about literature but also subverts the materialist position in philosophy, the class struggle in theory, and in aesthetics, the class struggle in culture. By contrast, defending the complementary nature of scientific criticism and the history of aesthetic reception—and defending as well the concept of ideological practice by which scientific and literary discourse and literary production and reception become comprehensible—affirms a materialist and realist position in both philosophy and aesthetics. Inserting literature into the social formation, studying its role as an ideological apparatus and its relationship to the reproduction of the dominant ideology and the existing relations of production, is not only a legitimate activity but an essential one as well. What is at issue here is not the legitimacy of this enterprise but rather the

proposition that such an activity has as its corollary the rejection of a concept of literature and the relative autonomy of the text as a signifying discourse. This is demonstrably not the case. It is possible to analyze literary effects as ideological apparatuses only on the condition that we have a concept of literature as an ideological production—that is, a concept of literature as signifying *something* — as well as a theory of the "text-reality" relationship that specifies what that something is. It is, after all, only by virtue of the text's peculiar relation to ideology that the relatively autonomous field of reception is opened up. Without a concept of literature, the "minimum generality" necessary to constitute a text as a theoretical object, the very basis of reception itself becomes incomprehensible.

CHAPTER XIII

The Bakhtin – Volosinov Circle

The basic assumption by which these theories bring language to the centre is that society itself is not separable from language. They see language as the material medium in which people interact in society, and they see ideology as made of language in the form of linguistic signs. (Jefferson, 1982: 160)

Bakhtin and Volosinov were Russian critics who provided a Marxist orientation to the relationships between the sign and its referent, between language and ideology. Although most of Bakhtin and Volosinov's work has centered on literature, their understanding of the processes of language in the novel required attention to how language has operated in social context. Contextualized language, the heteroglossic nature of the speech community, and the relationship between language and ideology are three concepts which relate to Peircian sociolinguistics. Each concept challenges Saussure's (1959) contention that language, as a formal system, carries only symbolic value and a single interpretive frame with which to apprehend it.

Bakhtin's discussion of the "word" as "language in its concrete living totality" (1973:150) closely approaches Peircian interpretations of the linguistic sign. Bakhtin and Volosinov (1973) argue that focusing only on language's strictly referential semantic content eclipses its social, ideological, and transformative power. Words do carry strictly referential, semantic value, akin to the Peircian symbolic mode. However, the contextual grounding of linguistic signs in time and space between socially constituted individuals provides words with their ideological and social value.

Bakhtin's notion of the word has received the attention of sociolinguists (e.g. Hill 1985, Wertsch 1985). The word is "language in its complete and living totality" (1973:150) and is directly tied to the contexts in which it is used.

Bakhtin elaborates: "All words have the "taste" of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones are inevitable in the word" (1981:293).

The three types of words in the novel include the direct word, the objectivized word, and the double-voiced word, each depending on a distinct relationship between a speaker's authority and context (or author and character) for its meaning (Bakhtin, 1973).

The *direct word* is akin to language in its symbolic mode, depending on pure referential and semantic value for its meaning. There is necessarily an indexical relationship between an author's form of expression and her personality, ideological beliefs, social background, etc. However, this indexical relationship is backgrounded because, in the writing itself, the author posits no other voice or word. An author thus asserts her own singular "ultimate authority" (Bakhtin, 1973:164) by selecting and imposing a single, unitary interpretive frame.

The objectivized word is an author's representation of another's word. In this relationship, the author's speech carries semantic authority over that of her character; there are no inconsistencies between a character's voice and that of the author. Objectivized words are indexical to the extent that the author relies upon certain formal features of speech to typify a character through speech, as well as the indexical features of her own, direct word.

The double-voiced word merges an author's word with that of another, and is distinctive of novelistic writing. Bakhtin offers three kinds of double-voiced words: single directed, hetero-directed, and active. Authors use single-directed words when depicting another persona, assuming stylistic characteristics to typify that person's speech. When the author's and character's voices merge, they are consistent with one another, "the distance between them is lost" (Bakhtin, 1973:164), and the single-directed word is reduced to the singular semantic authority of the direct word.

The hetero-directed word is an author's ironic or parodied use of another's word. If the parodied words "are allowed no independence against the author" (Hill, 1985:729) and are subordinated to the author's semantic control, the hetero-directed word can be reduced to two distinct forms of the direct word.

The active word, characteristic of the modern novel and discourse-in-practice, incorporates the struggle between the author's word and the word of others. Each competes for prominence, involving a dialogue where the reader (or listener) necessarily contributes to interpreting the importance and value of each.

All of these formulations of the word presuppose indexical value. Each word involves a writer (or speaker) struggling with her own semantic authority. She can falsely assert a single, legitimate interpretive frame, as in the direct word and single direct word, to establish legitimacy for her words. Another option is to allow her word to mingle with other voices, making her utterance into the listeners' opportunity to transform their interpretation of the semantic and ideological content of each of the voices—the active word.

Volosinov (1973) suggests that every utterance of a word has a different meaning, because "there are as many meanings of words as there are contexts to its usage" (p.79). The word, by definition, is contextually grounded. Once placed in context, through being uttered or written in a novel, the interpretation of an utterance is subject to change (Bakhtin 1981). However, Volosinov realizes that there is always a unifying feature that connects all utterances (or tokens) to a semantic value (or symbolic type). In Peircian terms, Volosinov distinguishes between the symbolic and indexical value of words, but realizes the difficulty of establishing a word's strictly symbolic value.

A paradox arises when we try to "unpack" the indexical value of another's utterance. When reproducing another's word, we necessarily omit some contextual features and place the utterance in a new contextual position, flavoring it, for example, with academic overtones. An informant's word in context, becomes something very different when tape-recorded or exposed to (to take a close example) semiotic exegesis.

As Peircian indexicality presupposed an internally differentiated speech community, the double-voiced word entails socially patterned variants entering into dialogue with one another. All national languages are internally differentiated (or "stratified" (Bakhtin, 1981:262) at any single moment. These stratifications create and are created by social differentiation. Bakhtin notes: "Actual social life and historical becoming create within an abstractedly unitary national language a multitude of concrete worlds, a multitude of bounded verbal-ideological and social belief systems; within these systems are elements of language filled with various semantic and axiological content and each with its own different sound" (1981:288)

This view supports Irvine's (1979) contention that linguistic diversity and social diversity imply one another. This relationship is based on the indexical relationships utterances generate when they co-occur with a social group or a particular ideological message. Ochs's (1987) and Schieffelin's (1987) work shows that the linguistic manifestations of social categories can be variable.

Bakhtin and Volosinov view language as a necessarily ideological phenomenon. Speech co-occurs with the ideological positions of a speaker; it indexes ideology. Human consciousness becomes possible only through the symbolic (in the Peircian of Peirce) quality of language. Ideology is encoded in and transmitted through language because "wherever a linguistic sign is present, ideology is present" (Volosinov, 1973:10).

Bakhtin (1981) discusses the tension between "centripetal" and "centrifugal" forces of language (p.272). Centripetal forces (e.g. state-sponsored language academies, the Church) seek to impose a unitary frame for linguistic, ideological, and political expression and interpretation. This process is constantly thwarted by centrifugal forces, the spatial-temporal grounding of the word-in-context, which prevents a unitary frame from taking hold. Because every word "tastes" of the different contexts in which it has been uttered and the speakers who have used it, centripetal forces, seeking to impose ideology as well as linguistic form on speakers, are doomed to failure (or only partial success). Language can

thus be seen as both "reflecting" and "refracting" ideology (Bakhtin, 1981:300, Volosinov, 1973:9).

In his discussion of the ideological nature of the linguistic sign, Volosinov (1973) discusses language's involvement in class struggle. The word is flavored with the intentions of all social classes and groups through use. The dominant class may try to impose a singular, dominant (centripetal) interpretation for all linguistic signs. The inner "dialectical" quality, or contradiction, embedded in the word persists, but remains hidden. Bakhtin's centripetal forces may thus succeed for a time, but inevitably fail at the time of social crisis or revolutionary change.

Hill (1985, n.d.) discusses how ideology and resistance are conveyed through language, documenting Mexicano speakers' struggles with the use of their indigenous language and Spanish. A speaker's code choice (of lexical items and grammatical structures) signal attitudes about the relationship between Spanish speakers and Mexicano speakers. A cultivator's addition of Mexicano morphology onto a Spanish loan word can be seen as a form of "double-voicing," at once acknowledging Spanish influence in Mexicano life and language, and resistance to this process through claiming Spanish as her /his own (Hill 1985). Don Gabriel's stumbling and use of Spanish words when discussing his son's capitalistic business ventures relates to his use of language as an "ongoing ideological resistance to capitalist ideology" (Hill n.d.:66) characteristic of peasant discourse. Power relations, between urban and rural, between capitalism and reciprocity, are played out in the linguistic field.

Bakhtin (1973, 1981) and Volosinov's (1973) interpretation of the concept of ideology, rooted in Marxist theory, refers to the conscious and unconscious, socially mediated understanding of the relationships between social groups, power, and access to resources. According to their analyses, language necessarily conveys ideological information.

Bakhtin and Volosinov's conception of language as reflecting and refracting ideology is a process similar to Silverstein's (1985) bidirectional dialectic between language and ideology. Silverstein's discussion of

ideology, however, implies that utterances do not necessarily carry ideological value. The ideological force of some lexical items in language can have salience, such as the use of English pronouns “she” and “he” for an unspecified third person. Strict Peircians would argue that signs have indexical ideological value when, and only when, an interpreter apprehends this value.

Hence, the unconscious ideological value of utterances that Volosinov posits is problematic in a Peircian framework.

Key theories of Mikhail M. Bakhtin

Mikhail M. Bakhtin (1895–1975) is increasingly being recognized as one of the radical philosophy major literary theorists of the twentieth century. He is perhaps best known for his work on language, as well as his theory of the novel, underpinned by concepts such as “dialogism,” “polyphony,” and “carnival,” themselves resting on the more fundamental concept of “heteroglossia.” Bakhtin’s writings were produced at a time of momentous upheavals in Russia: the Revolution of 1917 was followed by a civil war (1918–1921), famine, and the dark years of repressive dictatorship under Joseph Stalin. While Bakhtin himself was not a member of the Communist Party, his work has been regarded by some as Marxist in orientation, seeking to provide a corrective to the abstractness of extreme formalism. Despite his critique of formalism, he has also been claimed as a member of the Jakobsonian formalist school, as a poststructuralist, and even as a religious thinker. Bakhtin’s fraught career as an author reflects the turbulence of his times: of the numerous books he wrote in the post-revolutionary decade and in the 1930s, only one was published under his own name. The others, such as the influential *Rabelais and his World* (1965), were not published until much later. After decades of obscurity, he witnessed in the 1950s a renewed interest in his works and he became a cult figure in the Soviet Union. In the 1970s his reputation extended to France and in the 1980s to England and America.

Born in the town of Orel in Russia, Bakhtin subsequently obtained a degree in classics and philology from the University of St. Petersburg (Petrograd) in 1918. St. Petersburg at this time was the locus of heated literary-critical debate

involving the symbolists, futurists, and Formalists. Bakhtin was influenced by figures such as F. F. Zelinski, a classicist, and the Kantian thinker Vvedenski.¹ Fleeing the ensuing civil war, Bakhtin moved to Nevel, where he worked as a schoolteacher. It was here that the first Bakhtin Circle convened, including such figures as the musicologist (and later linguist) Valentin Volosinov, the philologist Lev Pumpianskij, and the philosopher Matvej Isaic Kagan. In 1920 Bakhtin moved to Vitebsk, a haven for many artists, where Pavel Medvedev joined the Circle. He married and returned with his wife to St. Petersburg in 1924. His "Circle" now included the poet N. J. Kljuev, the biologist I. I. Kanaev, and the Indologist M. I. Tubianskij. In 1929 Bakhtin's first major publication appeared, entitled *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*, which formulated the concept of "polyphony" or "dialogism." In the same year, however, Bakhtin was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for alleged affiliation with the underground Russian Orthodox Church; mercifully, the sentence was commuted to six years' exile in Kazakhstan. In 1936 he obtained a teaching position at the Mordovia State Teachers' College in Saransk; but the threat of more purges prompted him to resign and to move to a more obscure town. Afflicted by a bone disease, on which account his leg was amputated in 1938, he did not subsequently procure a professional appointment. After World War II, in 1946 and 1949 he defended his dissertation on Rabelais, creating an uproar in the scholarly world; the professors who opposed acceptance of the thesis won the day, and Bakhtin was denied his doctorate. His friends, however, procured him a teaching position in Saransk, as Chair of the Department of Literature. These colleagues – comprising a third "Bakhtin Circle" – included scholars at the University of Moscow and the Gorkij Institute, such as V. Kozinov, S. Bocarov, and the linguist V. V. Ivanov. The final years of Bakhtin's life brought him a long-elusive recognition. His book on Dostoevsky, republished in 1963, was a success, as was the volume on Rabelais, appearing two years later.

Bakhtin's major works as translated into English include *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* (1990), *Rabelais and his World* (1965; trans. 1968), *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929; trans. 1973), *The Dialogic*

Imagination: Four Essays (1930s; trans. 1981), and *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (1986). His important early essay *Towards a Philosophy of the Act* (1919) was not published until 1986. This and other early writings, such as *Art and Responsibility* and *Author and Hero*, are Kantian in orientation, offering a phenomenological account of the intersubjective connection of human selves in language. Bakhtin's interest in the nature of language was formed in part by members of his Circle. Indeed, the authorship of some of the Bakhtin Circle's publications is still in dispute: two books, *Freudianism* (1927) and *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929, 1930), were published under the name of Valentin Voloshinov. A further title, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* (1928), was published under the name of Pavel Medvedev. The dispute was provoked by the linguist V. V. Ivanov, who claimed that these texts were in fact written by Bakhtin. Bakhtin himself refrained from resolving the matter, and the debate continues. It may well be, in any case, that these texts were collaboratively authored or that they express to some extent the shared ideas of members of the Circle.

Bakhtin's major achievements include the formulation of an innovative and radical philosophy of language as well as a comprehensive "theory" of the novel (though Bakhtin's work eschews systematic theory that attempts to explain particular phenomena through generalizing and static schemes). The essay to be examined here, *Discourse in the Novel*, furnishes an integrated statement of both endeavors. Indeed, what purports to be a theory of the novel entails not only a radical account of the nature of language but also a radical critique of the history of philosophy and an innovative explanation of the nature of subjectivity, objectivity, and the very process of understanding.

At the outset, Bakhtin states that his principal object in this essay is to overcome the divorce between an abstract "formal" approach and an equally abstract "ideological" approach to the study of "verbal art" (here referring to the language of poetry and the novel). He insists that form and content in discourse "are one," and that "verbal discourse is a social phenomenon" (DI, 259). Bakhtin's point is that traditional stylistics have ignored the social dimensions of

artistic discourse, which has been treated as a self-subsistent phenomenon, cut off from broader historical movements and immersion in broad ideological struggles. Moreover, traditional stylistics have not found a place for the novel, which, like other “prosaic” discourse, has been viewed as an “extraartistic medium,” an artistically “neutral” means of communication on the same level as practical speech (DI, 260). He acknowledges that in the 1920s some attempts were made (he appears to be thinking of the Russian Formalists) to recognize “the stylistic uniqueness of artistic prose as distinct from poetry.” However, Bakhtin suggests that such endeavors merely revealed that traditional stylistic categories were not applicable to novelistic discourse (DI, 261).

Bakhtin lists the stylistic features into which the “unity” of the novel is usually divided: (1) direct authorial narration, (2) stylization of everyday speech, (3) stylization of semiliterary discourse such as letters and diaries, (4) various types of extra-artistic speech, such as moral, philosophical, and scientific statements, and (5) the individualized speech of characters. His point is that each of these “heterogeneous stylistic unities” combines in the novel to “form a structured artistic system” and that the “stylistic uniqueness of the novel as a genre consists precisely in the combination of these subordinated, yet still relatively autonomous, unities . . . into the higher unity of the work as a whole.” Hence the novel can be “defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized” (DI, 262).

It quickly becomes apparent that Bakhtin’s view of the novel is dependent upon his broader view of the nature of language as “dialogic” and as comprised of “heteroglossia.” In order to explain the concept of dialogism, we first need to understand the latter term: “heteroglossia” refers to the circumstance that what we usually think of as a single, unitary language is actually comprised of a multiplicity of languages interacting with, and often ideologically competing with, one another. In Bakhtin’s terms, any given “language” is actually stratified into several “other languages” (“heteroglossia” might be translated as “other-languageness”). For example, we can break down “any single national language

into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, . . . languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions . . . each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphases.” It is this heteroglossia, says Bakhtin, which is “the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre” (DI, 263).

“Dialogism” is a little more difficult to explain. On the most basic level, it refers to the fact that the various languages that stratify any “single” language are in dialogue with one another; Bakhtin calls this “the primordial dialogism of discourse,” whereby all discourse has a dialogic orientation (DI, 275). We might illustrate this using the following example: the language of religious discourse does not exist in a state of ideological and linguistic “neutrality.” On the contrary, such discourse might act as a “rejoinder” or “reply” to elements of political discourse. The political discourse might encourage loyalty to the state and adherence to material ambitions, whereas the religious discourse might attempt to displace those loyalties with the pursuit of spiritual goals. Even a work of art does not come, Minerva-like, fully formed from the brain of its author, speaking a single monologic language: it is a response, a rejoinder, to other works, to certain traditions, and it situates itself within a current of intersecting dialogues (DI, 274). Its relation to other works of art and to other languages (literary and non-literary) is dialogic.

Bakhtin has a further, profounder, explanation of the concept of dialogism. He explains that there is no direct, unmediated relation between a word and its object: “no living word relates to its object in a singular way.” In its path toward the object, the word encounters “the fundamental and richly varied opposition of . . . other, alien words about the same object.” Any concrete discourse, says Bakhtin, finds the object at which it was directed already as it were overlain with qualifications, open to dispute, charged with value, already enveloped in an obscuring mist – or, on the contrary, by the “light” of alien words that have already been spoken about it. It is entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgments and accents. The word, directed toward its

object, enters a dialogically agitated and tensionfilled environment . . . it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue . . . The way in which the word conceives its object is complicated by a dialogic interaction within the object between various aspects of its socio-verbal intelligibility. (DI, 276–277)

Offering a summary of his view, Bakhtin states that the “word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it; the word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object. A word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic way” (DI, 279). The underlying premise here is that language is not somehow a neutral medium, transparently related to the world of objects. Any utterance, whereby we assign a given meaning to a word, or use a word in a given way, is composed not in a vacuum in which the word as we initially encounter it is empty of significance. Rather, even before we utter the word in our own manner and with our own signification, it is already invested with many layers of meaning, and our use of the word must accommodate those other meanings and in some cases compete with them. Our utterance will in its very nature be dialogic: it is born as one voice in a dialogue that is already constituted; it cannot speak monologically, as the only voice, in some register isolated from all social, historical, and ideological contexts.

We might illustrate this notion of dialogism with an example taken from the stage of modern international politics. Those of us living in Europe or America tend to think of the word (and concept of) “democracy” as invested with a broad range of positive associations: we might relate it generally with the idea of political progress, with a history of emancipation from feudal economic and political constraints, with what we think of as “civilization,” with a secular and scientific worldview, and perhaps above all with the notion of individual freedom. But when we attempt to export this word, this concept, to another culture such as that of Iraq, we find that our use of this word encounters a great deal of resistance in the linguistic and ideological registers of that nation. For one thing, the word “democracy” may be overlain in that culture with associations of a foreign power, and with some of the ills attendant upon democracy (as noted by thinkers from Plato to Alexis de Tocqueville): high crime rates, unrestrained individualism, the

breakdown of family structure, a lack of reverence for the past, a disrespect for authority, and a threat to religious doctrine and values.

What occurs here, then, is precisely what Bakhtin speaks of: an ideological battle within the word itself, a battle for meaning, for the signification of the word, an endeavor to make one's own use of the word predominate. The battle need not occur between cultures; it can rage within a given nation. For example, a similar battle could exist between conservative religious groups and progressive groups in either America or Iraq. Similar struggles occur over words such as "terrorism," welded by the Western media to a certain image of Islam, and qualified in the Arab media with prefixes such as "state-sponsored." In such struggles, the word itself becomes the site of intense ideological conflict. We can see, then, that according to Bakhtin's view of language, language is not some neutral and transparent expression of conflict; it is the very medium and locus of conflict.

In formulating this radical notion of language, Bakhtin is also effecting a profound critique not only of linguistics and conventional stylistics but also of the history of philosophy. He sees traditional stylistics as inadequate for analyzing the novel precisely because it bypasses the heteroglossia that enables the style of the novel. Stylistics views style as a phenomenon of language itself, as an "individualization of the general language." In other words, the source of style is "the individuality of the speaking subject" (DI, 263–264). In this view, the work of art is treated as a "self-sufficient whole" and an "authorial monologue," whose "elements constitute a closed system," isolated from all social contexts (DI, 273–274). Bakhtin sees such a view of style as founded on Saussure's concept of language, itself premised on a polarity between general and particular, between *langue* (the system of language) and *parole* (the individual speech act). This notion of style presupposes both a "unity of language" and "the unity of an individual person realizing himself in this language" (DI, 264). Such a notion leads to a distorted treatment of the novel, selecting "only those elements that can be fitted within the frame of a single language system and that express, directly and without mediation, an authorial individuality in language" (DI, 265).

Stylistics, linguistics, and the philosophy of language all postulate a unitary language and a unitary relation of the speaker to language, a speaker who engages in a “monologic utterance.” All these disciplines enlist the Saussurean model of language, based on the polarity of general (language system) and particular (individualized utterance) (DI, 269).

Bakhtin’s essential point is that such a unitary language is not real but merely posited by linguistics: “A unitary language is not something given . . . but is always in essence posited . . . and at every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia. But at the same time it makes its real presence felt as a force for overcoming this heteroglossia, imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding and crystallizing into a real, although still relative, unity – the unity of the reigning conversational (everyday) and literary language, ‘correct language’ ” (DI, 270). Hence, when we speak of “a language” or “the language,” we are employing an ideal construct whose purpose is to freeze into a monologic intelligibility the constantly changing dialogic exchange of languages that actually constitute “language.” In this respect, the historical project of literary stylistics, philosophy, and linguistics has been one: Aristotelian poetics, the poetics of Augustine, the poetics of the medieval church, of “the one language of truth,” the Cartesian poetics of neoclassicism, the abstract grammatical universalism of Leibniz (the idea of a “universal grammar”), Humboldt’s insistence on the concrete – all these, whatever their differences in nuance, give expression to the same centripetal forces in socio-linguistic and ideological life; they serve one and the same project of centralizing and unifying the European languages. (DI, 271)

Bakhtin sees this project as deeply ideological and political: it was a project that entailed exalting certain languages over others, incorporating “barbarians and lower social strata into a unitary language of culture,” canonizing ideological systems and directing attention away “from language plurality to a single proto-language.” Nonetheless, insists Bakhtin, these centripetal forces are obliged to “operate in the midst of heteroglossia” (DI, 271). Even as various attempts are being made to undertake the project of centralization and unification,

the processes of decentralization and disunification continue. As Bakhtin puts it, alongside “the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work” (DI, 272).

This dialectic between the centripetal forces of unity and the centrifugal forces of dispersion is, for Bakhtin, a constituting characteristic of language. Every utterance, he says, is a point where these two forces intersect: every utterance participates in the “unitary language” and at the same time “partakes of social and historical heteroglossia.” The environment of an utterance is “dialogized heteroglossia.” Hence the utterance itself – any utterance – consists of “a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of two embattled tendencies in the life of language” (DI, 272). What is fundamental to Bakhtin’s view of language, then, is that no utterance simply floats in an ideally posited atmosphere of ahistorical neutrality; every utterance belongs to someone or some class or group and carries its ideological appurtenance within it. As Bakhtin states: “We are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view” (DI, 271). In contrast, the disciplines of linguistics, stylistics, and the philosophy of language have all been motivated by an “orientation toward unity.” Given that their project must occur amid the actual diversity, plurality, and stratification of language, i.e., amid heteroglossia, their project has effectively been that of seeking “unity in diversity,” and they have ignored real “ideologically saturated” language consciousness (DI, 274). They have been oriented toward an “artificial, preconditioned status of the word, a word excised from dialogue” (DI, 279).

Bakhtin’s own view recognizes that the actual word in living conversation is “directed toward an answer . . . it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer’s direction. Forming itself in the atmosphere of the already spoken, the word is at the same time determined by that which has not yet been said” (DI, 280). Bakhtin here draws attention to the temporal nature of language, to the fact that the word exists in real time, that it has a real history, a real past, and a real future (as opposed to the static time constructs posited by linguistics), all of which condition its presence. His views bear comparison to

Bergson's views of language as a medium that is essentially spatialized and that has contributed to our conceptual spatializing of time, rather than dealing with real time or *durée*. What Bakhtin, like Bergson, is doing is reconceiving not merely the nature of language but the act of understanding itself: this, too, is a dialogic process. Every concrete act of understanding, says Bakhtin, is active; it is "indissolubly merged with the response, with a motivated agreement or disagreement . . . Understanding comes to fruition only in the response. Understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other; one is impossible without the other" (DI, 282). This "internal dialogism" of the word involves an encounter not with "an alien word within the object itself" (as in the previously explained level of dialogism) but rather with "the subjective belief system of the listener" (DI, 282).

What Bakhtin appears to be saying is that the clash of different significations within a word is part of a broader conflict, between subjective frameworks, which is the very essence of understanding. Using this model, Bakhtin emphasizes that the dialogic nature of language entails "a struggle among socio-linguistic points of view" (DI, 273). Every verbal act, he explains, can "infect" language with its own intention; each social group has its own language, and, at any given moment, "languages of various epochs and periods of socio-ideological life cohabit with one another . . . every day represents another socio-ideological semantic 'state of affairs,' another vocabulary, another accentual system, with its own slogans, its own ways of assigning blame and praise" (DI, 291). The point, again, is not just that language is "heteroglot" and stratified; it is also that "there are no 'neutral' words and forms – words and forms that can belong to 'no one'; language has been completely taken over, shot through with intentions and accents" (DI, 293). Moreover, it is not merely that language is always socially and ideologically charged and is the locus of constant tension and struggle between groups and perspectives: in its role of providing this locus, it also furnishes the very medium for the interaction of human subjects, an interaction that creates the very ground of human subjectivity. For the individual consciousness, says Bakhtin, language "lies on the borderline between oneself and

the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word" (DI, 293). Prior to this moment of appropriation, the "word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language"; rather, it is serving other people's intentions; moreover, not all words are equally open to this "seizure and transformation into private property . . . Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others" (DI, 294).

Bakhtin's account of language as constitutively underlying the interactions of human subjects bears a certain resemblance to Hegel's account of the formation of the human subject in interaction with others; whereas Hegel sees subjectivity as a reciprocal effect, arising from the mutual acknowledgment between the consciousnesses of two people, Bakhtin's exposition explicitly posits language as the medium of such interaction, and hence sees subjectivity as a linguistic effect, though no less reciprocal and dialogic. As Bakhtin puts it, consciousness is faced with "the necessity of having to choose a language. With each literary-verbal performance, consciousness must actively orient itself amidst heteroglossia" (DI, 295).

Given these political and metaphysical implications of Bakhtin's views of language, it is clear that for him, the study of works of literature cannot be reduced to the examination of a localized and self-enclosed verbal construct. Even literary language, as Bakhtin points out, is stratified in its own ways, according to genre and profession (DI, 288–289). The various dialects and perspectives entering literature form "a dialogue of languages" (DI, 294). It is precisely this fact which, for Bakhtin, marks the characteristic difference between poetry and the novel. According to Bakhtin, most poetry is premised on the idea of a single unitary language; poetry effectively destroys heteroglossia; it strips the word of the intentions of others (DI, 297–298). Everything that enters the poetic work "must immerse itself in Lethe, and forget its previous life in any other contexts: language may remember only its life in poetic contexts" (DI, 297). In other words,

the language of poetry is artificial; the meanings and connotations of words are accumulated through a specifically literary tradition insulated from the life of language beyond this self-enclosed system (T. S. Eliot's notion of literary tradition as an "ideal order" might fit very neatly into Bakhtin's conception). The language thereby built up is a language that, according to Bakhtin, has largely bypassed the heteroglossia and dialogism of language as used in other registers. Everywhere in poetry, says Bakhtin, "there is only one face – the linguistic face of the author, answering for every word as if it were his own." Such a treatment of language "presumes precisely this unity of language, an unmediated correspondence with its object" (DI, 297–298). Another way of characterizing this "project" of poetry is to say, as Bakhtin does, that the poetic image carves a direct path to the object, ignoring the numerous other paths laid down to that object, and the meanings previously attached to it, by "social consciousness" (DI, 278).

In the novel, on the contrary, this dialogization of language "penetrates from within the very way in which the word conceives its object" (DI, 284). In the novel, the actual dialogism and heteroglossia of language are fundamental to style; they comprise the enabling conditions of novelistic style, which thrives on giving expression to them. Poetic style extinguishes this dialogism or, at least, does not exploit it for artistic purposes (DI, 284). For the poet, language is an obedient organ, fully adequate to the author's intention; the poet is completely "within" his language and sees everything through it (DI, 286). Heteroglossia can be present in poetry only as a "depicted thing," seen through the eyes of the poet's own language. The novel, on the contrary, integrates heteroglossia as part of its own perspective; it will deliberately deploy alien languages, and the heteroglot languages of various social registers (DI, 287). Words for the novelist are regarded as "his" only as "things that are being transmitted ironically" (DI, 299n). Indeed, the "stratification of language . . . upon entering the novel establishes its own special order within it, and becomes a unique artistic system . . . This constitutes the distinguishing feature of the novel as a genre" (DI, 299–300). Hence, any stylistics capable of dealing with the novel must be a "sociological stylistics" that does not treat the work of literature as a self-enclosed artifact but

exposes “the concrete social context of discourse” as the force that determines from within “the entire stylistic structure of the novel” (DI, 300).

Bakhtin acknowledges that in actual poetic works, it is possible to find “features fundamental to prose,” especially in “periods of shift in literary poetic languages” (DI, 287n). Heteroglossia can exist also in some of the “low” poetic genres. In general, however, the language of poetic genres often becomes “authoritarian, dogmatic and conservative, sealing itself off from the influence of extraliterary social dialects,” and fostering the idea of a special “poetic language” (DI, 287). He also acknowledges that “even the poetic word is social” but poetic forms reflect lengthier social processes, requiring “centuries to unfold” (DI, 300). Bakhtin sees the novel’s history as far lengthier than conventional accounts, deriving from a variety of prose forms, some of which reflect his notion of “carnival” as elaborated in earlier works such as Rabelais and his World. His account is worth quoting at length: At the time when major divisions of the poetic genres were developing under the influence of the unifying, centralizing, centripetal forces of verbal-ideological life, the novel – and those artistic prose genres that gravitate toward it – was being historically shaped by the current of decentralizing, centrifugal forces. At the time when poetry was accomplishing the task of cultural, national and political centralization of the verbal-ideological world in the higher official socio-ideological levels, on the lower levels, on the stages of local fairs and at buffoon spectacles, the heteroglossia of the clown sounded forth, ridiculing all “languages” and dialects; there developed the literature of the fabliaux and Schwanke of street songs, folk-sayings, anecdotes, where there was no language-center at all, where there was to be found a lively play with the “languages” of poets, scholars, monks, knights and others, where all “languages” were masks and where no language could claim to be an authentic, incontestable face.

Heteroglossia, as organized in these low genres, was . . . consciously opposed to this literary language. It was parodic, and aimed sharply and polemically against the official languages of its given time. It was heteroglossia that had been dialogized. (DI, 273)

It might be objected that Bakhtin's conception of poetry is narrow; that some species of poetry do indeed enlist heteroglossia and are politically subversive; it might also be urged that the novelistic form per se may not be subversive, that some novelists express deeply conservative visions. But clearly, in the passage above, Bakhtin sees the genres of poetry and the novel as emblematic of two broad ideological tendencies, the one centralizing and conservative, the other dispersive and radical.

It may even be that "poetry" and "novel" are used by Bakhtin as metaphors for these respective tendencies: thus poetry can indeed be radical, but inasmuch as it challenges official discourses, it enlists attributes of language that are typically deployed by prose. What is interesting is that for Bakhtin, the ideological valency of any position is intrinsically tied to the particular characteristics of language deployed. The "novel" embodies certain metaphysical, ideological, and aesthetic attitudes: it rejects, intrinsically, any concept of a unified self or a unified world; it acknowledges that "the" world is actually formed as a conversation, an endless dialogue, through a series of competing and coexisting languages; it even proposes that "truth" is dialogic. "The development of the novel," says Bakhtin, "is a function of the deepening of dialogic essence . . . Fewer and fewer neutral, hard elements ('rock bottom truths') remain that are not drawn into dialogue" (DI, 300). Hence, truth is redefined not merely as a consensus (which by now is common in cultural theory) but as the product of verbal-ideological struggles, struggles which mark the very nature of language itself.

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BIO DATA PENULIS



Nama : **Sylvie Meiliana,**

Tempat/tanggal lahir : Jakarta, 27 Januari 1957

Alamat : Perum Jati Agung Satu Blok B2 No. 1, Jatibening
Baru Pondok Gede Bekasi.

Email : sylviemeiliana@gmail.com

Pendidikan : S-1 Sastra Inggris Universitas Nasional, Jakarta.
S-2 Ilmu Susastra, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta.
S-3 Ilmu Sastra Universitas Gadjah Mada,
Yogyakarta.

Pekerjaan : Dosen Fakultas Sastra
Universitas Nasional, Jakarta (1986 s.d sekarang)

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PUSTAKA MANDIRI
Penerbit Buku Super

Kompleks Puri Kartika AB 19
Tajur, Ciledug, Kota Tangerang
Pos-el : zaenalarifin_48@yahoo.com
Blog : zaenalarifin28.wordpress.com
Telepon : 081 5162 2855

