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Every genre [is] a peculiar reflection of reality, that genres could only arise as reflections of typical and general facts of life that regularly occur and which could not adequately be reflected in the forms hitherto available.

In order to explain how, if this is so, he can reject these genres which are necessarily determined by, and accurately reflect, reality, Lukács differentiates between critical explanation and critical evaluation, rejects historical relativism in the latter, and insists that

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It is the duty of Marxist aesthetics not only to explain this impoverishment and inadequacy in a social-genetic way, but also to measure them aesthetically against the highest demands of the artistic reflection of historical reality and to find them lacking,⁶

for 'criticism must be allowed the right to judge and condemn the artistic products of entire periods while acknowledging their social-historical necessity.'⁷

The sophistry of these arguments, with their oscillation between epistemological and aesthetic standards, hardly needs underlining. All genres reflect reality. Realism's virtue lies in the fact that it reflects reality. No other literary reflection of reality is acceptable. To qualify as realism it is obviously not sufficient merely to reflect reality. The very word 'reflect' implies that it is the nature of the reality reflected, and not the mode of reflection, that is the criterion.

That Lukács did not change his attitude is well illustrated by this passage from The Meaning of Contemporary Realism:

Of still greater importance is the fact that many - and not the least extreme - components of modernist literature ... are not as far removed from contemporary life as it might seem. On the contrary, they reflect very well certain aspects of reality, certain contemporary characteristics and peculiarities (of a certain social class, at least). Even with the most abstruse anti-realistic writers, stylistic experiment is not the willful twisting of reality according to subjective whim: it is a consequence of conditions prevailing in the modern

world. Modernist forms, like other literary forms, reflect social and historical realities ...⁸

This being so, the use of non-modernist forms in the modern era must surely lead to a less adequate reflection of changed realities. This far Lukács will not go, but he does concede that

Many of these experiments are, in effect, reflections of contemporary reality. If realistic writers sympathize with these experiments, and are stimulated thereby to widen the scope of realism, it is because they wish to find new means to deal with contemporary subject-matter.⁹

Allowing for the moment that these new modes of reflecting present day reality are optional and not necessary, what distinguishes the realist using modernist forms from the modernist using modernist forms? The answer is simple:

While the modernist writer is uncritical towards many aspects of the modern world, his contemporary, the realist writer, can step back from these things and treat them with the necessary critical detachment.¹⁰

In other words, the answer lies in a certain moral attitude.

The problem here is once again a question of being simultaneously too narrow and too broad: too narrow in his dogmatic view of reality and literary form, too broad in his conception, or at least articulation, of the relation between text and context. Perhaps Lukács might have clarified his position in the modernism-realism issue by distinguishing between genre-determining socio-historical realities and those socio-historic realities that the

realistic text must reflect, that is, between ideology and the material reality underlying that ideology. It is both of these that are intended by the blanket term 'social-historical realities'. This brings us back to what I have called Lukács's dual vision: where modernism is concerned, determinism operates and Lukács focuses upon the mediating factor, ideology, which stands between the real and its reflection in literature, but where realism's literary reflections are concerned, he ignores that intermediary term, that essential dimension of the real, and both insight and literary form have the status of options. Doctrine destroys logical consistency.

As we have seen, Lukács believes that the same style may be used to express different worldviews. He gives the example of Joyce's and Mann's use of the stream-of-consciousness technique. Accordingly, the same worldview may be expressed in different literary forms. Here Lukács cites Balzac's use of typically romantic devices to serve a realistic purpose. He writes:

To sum up our enquiry so far: similarity of technique does not imply similarity of ideology; nor is the approval or rejection of certain techniques a pointer to a writer's basic aim.¹¹

It would seem that realism as worldview has no particular literary form exclusively attached to it. Yet elsewhere in The Meaning of Contemporary Realism, Lukács decries 'that exaggerated concern with formal criteria, with questions of style and literary technique' which 'conceals the

opposing principles actually underlying and determining contrasting styles'.¹² In other words, style and technique, which constitute literary form, are determined by worldview, and different worldviews engender different forms. This means that there must, in fact, be a specific form peculiar to realism as a distinct worldview. Lukács's general denigration of formalistic experiment constitutes an implicit affirmation of what might be called a transparent form as the preferred mode for realism despite his apparent open-mindedness upon the subject. This 'open-mindedness' is probably partly because conformity of worldview is Lukács's first priority, but mostly because to relate realism as a worldview to an invariable literary form would be to open the door to those questions of determinism and ideology that Lukács has so selectively applied only to modernism.

So much for Lukács's contradictory pronouncements about the relation between worldview and literary form. If we look now at what he has to say about the relation between form and content, we find a similar situation prevails: contradictions abound and point unerringly to what I have called Lukács's double vision. The contradictions are mainly due to an inconsistency in what Lukács intends by the term 'content': sometimes it is the writer's consciousness or worldview as revealed in his work, sometimes it is 'real' life, and sometimes it is the apparently formless literary reflection of that real life. The inconsistency is due to a dubious distinction between false

and true consciousness and the respectively ideological and realistic literature they give rise to.

Having denied a necessary relation between specific literary forms and particular worldviews, which is tantamount to claiming that any set of meanings may be used to communicate any other, Lukács now maintains that meaning, or worldview, resides in content, which determines literary form. The following quotation illustrates this Lukácsian contention, and, incidentally, shows how confusing Lukács's loose use of such terms as 'style' and 'form' can be.

What determines the style of a given work of art? How does the intention determine the form? (We are concerned here of course, with the intention realized in the work; it need not coincide with the writer's conscious intention.) The distinctions that concern us are not those between stylistic 'techniques' in the formalistic sense. It is the view of the world, the ideology or weltanschauung underlying a writer's work, that counts. And it is the writer's attempt to reproduce this view of the world which constitutes his 'intention' and is the formative principle underlying the style of a given piece of writing. Looked at in this way, style ceases to be a formalistic category. Rather, it is rooted in content; it is the specific form of a specific content. Content determines form.¹³

Here content appears to be synonymous with worldview or ideology. What is not clear is the relation between content and the real. For Lukács there are two types of content-as-worldview. Firstly, there is life, the raw material of literature, as seen from the perspective of certain ideologies and as selectively distorted to produce

an imaginative literary illustration of that ideology. In other words, what we have here is appearance-taken-for-reality and appearance-presented-as-reality. Secondly, there is life, the raw material of literature, as it really is, that is, as given in the worldview of the realist and as reflected in his writing. In other words, what we have here is 'true' reality. It follows, if content-as-worldview determines form, and only one worldview is acceptable, then only one literary form will do. This identification of reality with a single worldview explains how one can limit literature to a single form in perpetuity - because the content which determines literary form, and which it must reflect, is not life or socio-historical realities, which change constantly, but an ultimate worldview, which does not.

Of course, for the unprejudiced understanding, there is an invariable relationship between so-called 'reality' and all worldviews, and there is little difference between content conceived of as life - of which ideology is an integral part - or content conceived of as literary material selected and organised in accordance with an ideology, except that the latter is one step further away from 'real' reality. Thus life may be described as reality-as-constituted-by-ideology and literature as the imaginative recreation of that ideologically constituted reality. Both life and literature are ideological appearances, the one social, the other aesthetic, while reality-as-it-really-is defies

knowledge.

Note that at no stage in this formulation is one dealing with 'pure' content, as Lukács would have us believe. Life is pre-informed content which is then re-informed in the literary work, and since the worldviews which inform at each level are also forms, it might equally well be said that form determines content. In fact, to distinguish simplistically between form and content at any level, even for analytic purposes, is specious, and can only lead to confusion. I do not want to anticipate my argument, but in the Goldmann section I will discuss the far more sophisticated structuralist understanding of the problem, in particular, their distinction between different levels of form in a work which account for worldview and style.

But to return to Lukács's version of the matter, while at times he writes of content as worldview, at other times he identifies it with an unproblematic conception of everyday reality and the simple reflection of this. as if these were possible to achieve quite divorced from the modifying perspective of ideology. When Lukács says of Kafka, whom he characterises as an allegorical writer, that

he found a direct, uncomplex way of communicating this basic experience; he did so without having recourse to formalist experimentation. Content is here the immediate determinant of aesthetic form - that is why Kafka belongs with the great realistic writers,¹⁴

one realises that for Lukács content is now the opposite of form, for it refers to that formless form represented by

Kafka's 'descriptive detail', by the 'materiality of his world' and 'the portrayed reality, uncannily accurate as it is',¹⁵ as if this in itself constitutes realistic reflective form despite the author's non-realistic intention, an intention that Lukács is not unaware of.

This impression is reinforced when Lukács writes:

Andersch is right to imply that abstract art is not wholly without content, that it represents a revolt against what he calls 'ideology' ... But it is all too evident that the end product of this flight from the reality of the present day must be a form of nihilism. Once a commitment to the realities of the age is refused, human content disappears.¹⁶

With his incredible mixture of insight and obtuseness, with his prejudice against what he most frequently sees as gratuitous formal experimentation, Lukács fails to see that Andersch's 'ideology' is his 'reality of the present day', that stylistic innovation is inseparable from a questioning of content, taken-for-granted meanings, life.

The same Lukács that I quoted earlier as conceding that literary experimentation is not a question of subjective whim, but a consequence of modern realities, and as such constitutes a permissible option for the realist writer, also says that 'the selective principle which apparently underlies modernist writing is no more than a crude selection of content on the one hand, and of technique, on the other.'¹⁷ Despite the inconsistent pronouncements that result from Lukács's double standards, it seems clear that it

is not only a particular worldview that he is concerned to promote, but a particular literary form as well.

For Lukács, obtrusive form is what makes literature unrealistic. What Lukács admires in nineteenth-century critical realism and wants to make a transhistorical standard for all literature is that see-through form that gives the appearance of objective correspondence to a real referent, that seemingly transparent use of concrete, immediate, full-of-content writing that gives the impression of being an accurate reflection of reality. Extensiveness is an important dimension of this effect. In his article 'Realism in the Balance' Lukács says:

Only when the masterpieces of realism past and present are appreciated as wholes, will their topical, cultural and political value fully emerge. This value resides in their inexhaustible diversity, in contrast to the one-dimensionality of modernism. Cervantes and Shakespeare, Balzac and Tolstoy, Grimmelshausen and Gottfried Keller, Gorky, Thomas and Heinrich Mann - all these can appeal to readers drawn from a broad cross-section of the people because their work permits access from so many different angles. The large-scale, enduring resonance of the great works of realism is in fact due to this accessibility, to the infinite multitude of doors through which entry is possible. The wealth of the characterisation, the profound and accurate grasp of constant and typical manifestations of human life is what produces the great progressive reverberation of these works.¹⁸

Of course, what escapes Lukács in his condemnation of modernism for formalism, for using techniques that have no intrinsic relation to content and emphasising them

at the expense of content-meaning, is that he himself is guilty of formalism in attempting to establish a single, eternal literary form that is not determined by socio-historical realities, but by ideological fiat.

So now we see that what Lukács wants here is realist content in a realist form, that is, a Marxist view of the reality underlying capitalism, a 'non-ideological' perspective on social appearance, expressed in an apparently non-formalistic, purely referential literary mode. If he would draw out the implications of his own earlier identification of form and ideology, or even of his contention that content as worldview determines form, he would be forced to confront the ideological nature of his conception of realistic form. But it is this blindness to the myth of realism, existing in tension with his perfect insight into other genres, that I set out to demonstrate here. It remains now to make good the deficiency in Lukács's work and to turn an objective analytic eye upon the concept of literary realism.

Realism purports to mirror objective truth, not only because as worldview it corresponds to that truth, but because as literary form it constitutes a linguistic vehicle that facilitates the process. But since meaning is inherent in language, what is meant is totally dependent upon the way in which it is formulated linguistically, the reality that is communicated is inseparable from the manner in which it is expressed in words: form and content

simply cannot be distinguished as Lukács would have us believe, and so-called realistic form is as pregnant with ideological implication as any other genre.

As modern structuralists point out, the realist work must be seen in terms of closure. Its very 'readability' encourages the reader to surrender to the text, to consume it passively. It might, thus, well be characterised as the literary embodiment of the ideology of a consumer society, however critical of that society it may appear to be on the surface. Realism, critical or otherwise, encourages mental apathy, and, accordingly, reinforces ideology, for its conventional modes merely evoke an equally conventional set of responses. It is, in fact, modernism, as Andersch realised, which, by using formal innovations to subvert those conventional responses, alerts the reader, questions established ideology - including the realistic form - and constitutes an implicit criticism of taken-for-granted meanings. Moreover, not only do the conventions of realism confer reality on the fictional world, but, by extension, they transfer objective existence from the literary work to the real life world it purports to mirror. This is the propagandistic effect of realism, for in concealing its form it effectively insists that its world is the real world.

It is, perhaps, because Lukács believes realism to be a transparent medium that he can propose it as a paradigm for art, whose function he believes to be a mirroring of

reality. A transparent medium, after all, can be universally viable as a vehicle for art's fulfillment of its function. It is only a form with its own peculiar implications of meaning and its intrinsic relation to content that is not universally applicable. As soon as one sees that realism is indeed a form like any other, it becomes obvious that nineteenth-century critical realism is neither determined by, nor true to, contemporary life and consciousness, and cannot serve, as Lukács hopes, as a model for twentieth-century socialist realism. Realism is, in fact, neither a form nor a content, but a goal whose means of achievement vary with each attempt.

I began my examination of Lukács's concept of realism with an analysis of its component parts that was directed towards showing that there is an underlying worldview that supports ostensibly literary criteria, and I argued that this worldview, unlike those that underlie other literary genres such as tragedy and comedy, makes claims for itself that lie outside the order of the aesthetic. I went on to suggest that Lukács's attempt to construct a literary theory that would do justice to the strange nature of realism involves the reconciliation of reflection and revelation, appearance and reality, but boils down to ethical and aesthetic conformity. I also suggested that failure on a practical level could be traced to a conflict between literary taste and ethical belief, to the desire to justify an aesthetic conservatism in ideological terms,

and to a dualistic attitude towards the relations between content, form, style, genre, worldview, and material reality - relatively understanding as regards the modernistic literature he rejects, totally obtuse as regards the realistic mode he propounds. I claimed that these factors account for Lukács's failure to produce either a satisfactory explanation for, or definition of, realism. I proceeded to illustrate the contradictions that arise because Lukács refuses to extend to his preferred genre, realism, the same skeptical attitude that he applies to modernism. The intention here was to indicate both the overtly ideological and the covertly ideological, or formal, components of Lukács's concept of realism and his failure to recognise them. Finally, I offered a brief discussion of the truth behind the myth of realistic literary form. My overall aim has been to show that the problem is basically the narrowness in literary taste that Lukács arrives at, which results in an ideologically justified exclusiveness and the promotion of a single, unchanging, supposedly non-ideological literary model.

So much for the first thread in my argument, Lukács's aesthetic narrowness; I turn now to the second thread, Lukács's methodological broadness, and my undertaking to remedy this by developing within the broad category of literary realism a system of fine distinctions that will increase its descriptive and explanatory power and its sociological significance. In accordance with my

earlier contention that the concept of literary realism has both an epistemological and an aesthetic dimension, I shall attempt to relate each literary mode in my system of classification to its respective epistemological position. Such an analysis might be tabulated as shown in section 2 of this chapter.

2. An Alternative View of Literary Realism

Three-way literary distinction:

- 1) Mimetic realism - that mode that purports to copy life in literature
 - i) Passive or inductivist, e.g. Austen
 - ii) Active or experimental, e.g. Zola
- 2) Critical realism - that mode that purports to reveal an underlying objective reality
 - i) Bourgeois, e.g. Dickens
 - ii) Socialist, e.g. Mann
- 3) Sociological realism - that mode that reveals the socio-historical forces which determine not only what is represented as life, but the structure of the literary work itself, e.g. Brecht

Three-way epistemological distinction - involving different conceptions of the real:

- 1) Naive realism - claims things are largely what they appear - related to positivism
- 2) Platonic/Hegelian idealism and Marxist materialism - claim things are not what they appear and offer theoretical account of how they really are, the nature of an underlying reality

- 3) Sophisticated realism - claims that we work in our theoretically informed activity towards an ever improving apprehension of reality - see Habermas

While theory and methodology are ultimately inseparable, it is interesting to note that 1) is essentially a method with a hidden theory, 2) is a theory whose method is problematic, and 3) is a goal at which an integrated theory-praxis aims. I suggest that 1) mistakes the nature of its method, that 2) misunderstands its achievement, for it is neither epistemologically nor literarily realistic, and that only 3) is truly self-conscious, that is, realistic.

Aesthetically, mimetic realism is a reaction against the excesses of romanticism. Identifying art with artificiality, its protagonists wish to substitute a natural style, human truth, and everyday life for the obtrusive conventionality and far-fetched subject-matter of much romanticism.

Epistemologically, mimetic realism is the aesthetic product of a positivistically orientated society. Its precepts are that in literature as in science reason must rule, imagination and emotion must yield to the observation and analysis of objective phenomena so that these may be explained in cause and effect terms and the natural laws governing men and society may be expressed in mimetic fashion. Literature, in other words, is going to face the facts of everyday life quite dispassionately and record them in unbiased representations, à la science, and it is

going to begin from the same premise, namely, that reality is a self-subsistent world of facts structured in a law-like manner and available to the senses and to reason.

We are back to the science versus art dichotomy, but this time science is associated with truth and art with artificiality, science with life and the real, art with an unreal human product. The true ideology behind mimetic realism is a far cry from Lukács's aesthetic theory of art as a form of cognition that is morally as well as epistemologically superior to science.

I have distinguished two categories within mimetic realism in terms of positivism's ideals of the scientific observer and the scientific experimenter, basing my distinction on Zola's explicit formulation of a theory of realism and his account of its methods of implementation as these appear in the Preface to Thérèse Raquin (1873)¹⁹ and The Experimental Novel (1893)²⁰. Both forms aim to eliminate the idea of subjectivity usually associated with art, and to identify the artistic product with an objective mirror-image of reality. In the earlier formulation, Zola naively suggests that the artist is merely an observer who reproduces a 'slice-of-life', and he describes an unselective, disordered, non-significant process of imitation. In eliminating subjectivity he has also eliminated the artist. In the later formulation, he reintroduces the conscious artist and now describes a process of selection and organisation of the raw material of human action in accor-

dance with the artist's desire to confirm or refute a preconceived idea: this is the artist in the role of an experimenter.

The first type of mimetic realism, that which I have chosen to call 'passive', is, of course, no such thing, although this is the impression it likes to give. There is no art without selection and organisation and no selection and organisation without a governing ideology. In other words, all apparently passive mimetic realism is active, in Zola's sense of the word, and is thus far from being an objective mirror-image of life. Nevertheless, maintaining the passive-active distinction within the category of mimetic realism serves as a convenient means of identifying two different kinds of self-understanding, or rather, of self-presentation, which distinguishes writers such as Jane Austen from writers such as Émile Zola despite their shared characteristics.

Zola really represents a transitional stage between mimetic and critical realism, for notwithstanding his conception of literary realism as an objective imitation of life and his acceptance of material reality at face value, his intention is not to reflect the ordinary taken-for-granted world like Miss Austen, but to reveal those very facts of life and strata of society that she ignores. As might be expected, a stylistic difference accompanies this difference in perspective and purpose; the prosaic world of Sense and Sensibility²¹ does not require for its

expression the same literary devices as the anything but ordinary world of the railwaymen in La Bête humaine.²² I shall come later to discuss the two interrelated factors, changing socio-historical realities and the worldviews of particular classes, that account for these differences.

Critical realism differs from mimetic realism in that it sets out not to reflect appearances, but to reveal an underlying reality. This involves a questioning of the taken-for-granted world and the challenging of shared values. Since the writer opposes his (unwittingly historically informed) individual consciousness to that of the general run of society, it is not surprising to find in his work subjective and symbolic elements that are excluded from mimetic realism proper.

Now in adopting a critical stance towards his world, the writer sets himself the task of creating different meanings, or at least establishing a positive standpoint from which to criticise the existing régime. This brings us to the difference between the two categories that I have distinguished within critical realism, bourgeois and socialist critical realism. What is intended by the latter term are not the crass pro-proletarian offerings that Lukács so graphically described as 'revolutionary romanticism', but those more subtle works that derive their critical standpoint from the perspective of socialism seen as an alternative to capitalism. Bourgeois critical realism, on the other hand, is incapable of envisaging an

alternative system and merely wants capitalism purified.

What both forms of critical realism have in common is an ultimate lack of self-consciousness. Bourgeois critical realism does not see how its works are actually governed at the level of deep meaning by that capitalist scheme of values that it superficially appears to reject. Bourgeois critical realism faces the economic facts of life, exposes anomalies in the system, but never questions the reality of what it criticises. This is a literature of conscience not consciousness: despite its ostensible criticism, it reflects to a remarkable extent the assumptions of its time and class, and only serves to flatter the latter's smug sense of morality. Socialist critical realism, on the other hand, offers a totally different version of reality, an alternative interpretation of capitalist appearances, but where it fails is in its uncritical and unquestioning acceptance of its own concept of the real.

In addition, socialist critical realism tends to posit a static ideal and to eliminate conflict, and in so doing it denies the dynamism and contradiction that are essential to the realistic novel. As far back as The Theory of the Novel, Lukács demonstrated that it is incompatible with the very form of the novel for it to attempt to transform or create reality or to depict the utopian as existent. Because it is essentially a form bound to the historical moment, either it is rooted in the values of that moment, or it veers from realism to romanticism.

The difficulties immanent in advocating socialist critical realism in a bourgeois world are perfectly obvious to Lukács, and his awareness accounts for his anomalous position in The Meaning of Contemporary Realism. Political doctrine encourages him to promote socialist realism, but literary insight acknowledges the pitfalls, and so he winds up requiring of bourgeois critical realism in a bourgeois society only that it should not entirely reject the possibility of socialism as an alternative - a mere gesture in the right direction, and of socialist critical realism in a socialist society that it should form an alliance with bourgeois critical realism of both past and present so as to perfect itself both aesthetically and epistemologically.

Sociological realism is the name I have chosen to give to that ideal form in which selfconsciousness, or what Lukács meant by 'irony' in The Theory of the Novel, is the controlling factor aesthetically and epistemologically. Rejecting the false mirror-image selfunderstanding of literary realism, it will use conventions in such a way as to stress their conventional nature and to draw a parallel between socially determined aesthetic constructions and social constructions of reality. This will in itself constitute a form of criticism. It will regard both existing systems and its own alternatives as moments in a process rather than as ultimate solutions, and this distancing and detachment will encourage a realistic

assessment.

Having now distinguished different types of realism, I am in a position to qualify that extremely brief and broad discussion of realism and romanticism as literary responses to certain phases in the sequence of social formations that came at the end of Part I. It is now possible to be more specific in relating particular forms of realism to both classes and historical situations, always remembering that these general factors are modified by personal environmental factors. The account that follows is extremely schematic and does not allow for such individual differences, nor does it attempt to explain differences in various countries that arose as a result of national variations on international trends.

In order to relate different types of realism to different social formations, a recapitulation of the distinguishing characteristics of realism and romanticism as the two poles of literary expression and social response will be useful, for the varieties of realism are situated at different positions on the continuum between these extremes.

Realism in general may be described as the collective response of a class who, whether they are rising, established, or resisting consciousness of decline, see their interests as natural and universal. It is collective in the sense that it uses in the main a literary style heavily dependent upon a shared symbolic system, which in turn

depends upon a commonly accepted social system. It is conservative in the same sense of relying upon accepted literary conventions and social meanings. It is ideological in the sense that it conceals its own nature as a formal process of significant fictions and presents as a linguistically neutral and aesthetically formless reflection of reality. It is propagandistic in the sense that in naturalising the 'vraisemblable'²³ of a particular society it confirms that this is indeed reality.

Romanticism in general is a more individual response on the part of a member of a being-supplanted class, or of a class whose time has not yet come, to the experience of the disintegration of the old order. Obviously there can be no communication without a certain proportion of shared meanings, but within the framework of these the romantic is concerned to construct new meanings that will express a reality no longer taken for granted, but now in question. The subjective and symbolic elements characteristic of romanticism are the result of social instability and reflect a lack of consensus. Present insecurity leads the romantic to avoid the here-and-now where the realist celebrates it. Strangely, it is romanticism rather than realism that displays a concern with the reconciliation of apparent contradictions, notably the social and the natural, for where realism identifies the two, romanticism contrasts them. This primary function of romanticism is revealed by its attempted synthesis of

contradictory form and meaning, a highly mannered style and natural values, social artifice and natural being. It is in this sense that romanticism may be said to be more realistic than realism.

If realism and romanticism constitute the two poles of literary expression, and if different types of realism display different proportions of these compositional elements, the degree of romanticism must always remain below a certain level so that it does not shatter the context of shared meanings or challenge shared social structures too radically. The measure of the extent to which realism finds its values and meanings within the system is the degree to which it is conventionally realistic. Similarly, one finds that symbolism plays a larger part in critical realism, where there is a certain questioning of shared values, than it does in mimetic realism, where there is total acceptance.

An element of critique is inseparable from all types of realism: mimetic realism's criticism is directed at the non-conformist individual; critical realism adopts a critical attitude towards contemporary society; and sociological realism constitutes a critique of all constructions of reality, social and aesthetic. However, there is, as we have seen, no room in the realistic novel for the direct expression of a positive alternative, which can only be expressed romantically and symbolically and ineffectually.²⁴

Meaning exists only within a specific context upon which it depends. No single person can achieve significance in isolation, so that if the context is rejected as meaningless without any alternative shared context replacing it, the search for meaning is doomed. This explains the inevitable hopeless ending to the romantic quest. Since the same reservations apply to the hero or heroine in the critical realist novel, it will be found, in practice, that the happy outcome here invariably involves an accommodation to capitalism, and that the necessary meaningful context is supplied by the commonly accepted social structure despite the writer's apparent rejection of it.

With those preliminary remarks in mind, I propose to relate different types of realism to the response of different classes to particular socio-historical circumstances, and to show how these determining factors are reflected in the form and content of these works.

It is the eighteenth-century writings of Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding that are commonly held to mark the beginnings of the realistic novel, for they portray contemporary morals and psychology in a form which claims the authority of fact, hence the popularity of the epistolary method. These works represent the replacement of the romantic expressions of the heroic and chivalric ideals of feudalism and the allegorical expressions of the Puritan ethic (e.g. Bunyan) by secular expressions of the exuberant self-interest and self-confidence of the rising metro-

politan bourgeoisie. Indeed, Fielding described himself as the historian of bourgeois society.

These novels reflect the growing dominance of middle-class interests and values. Defoe's Moll Flanders²⁵ is a vivid account of the social and economic individualism of the bourgeoisie. It takes the form of a quest for middle-class security, the most compelling reality, although this sometimes still exists in uneasy conflict with older values such as religion and personal feeling. Richardson's Pamela²⁶ has a plot which centres around the idea of an innocent of the lower orders triumphing over her would-be exploiter, a member of the aristocracy, and forcing him into the middle-class security of marriage.

If these novels are not narrowly mimetic, this can be attributed to two possible causes. In the first place, they include remnants of the old style romances, for a new literary form almost always shows traces of the traditions that it rejects. Here the focus and the intention may be different, but certain modes belonging to the literary past are adapted to their new purpose. Secondly, these early works were expressing a growing system of values rather than an old established one, and, as we have seen, it is this that most profoundly affects the type of realism. That these writers could not utilise a code about which there was complete consensus is confirmed by their frankly expressed intention of educating their reading public, particularly the country people, to whom, of course,

change came more slowly. Equally slow to develop are the accepted literary conventions that convey the shared meanings.

When we come to the mimetic realism of Jane Austen's novels, written at the turn of the nineteenth century, just such a situation does exist. These novels represent the narrow vision of a single group, the landed gentry, who have resolutely turned their backs on change and are desperately trying to perpetuate a past order. With their belief in the naturalness of an hierarchically ordered society, and their concern with the trivial actions of a small privileged group whose unreal existence centres around maintaining their membership of that group, either by steadfast adherence to its mores or by marriage, they represent the epitome of mimetic realism's conservatism.

Mimetic realism is a literary style that is neither critically nor sociologically realistic. The passive mimetic reflection of life in literature presupposes an uncritical idea of what constitutes real life, a belief in the validity of objective appearances, and an assumption as to the existence of a universe of shared and absolute values. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that the frame of reference within which these works are written is a total acceptance of the values of a particular class, which are projected as unquestionably right and natural. Criticism in these novels is not directed at these values, but at those who deviate from them, and the reason it is

humorous rather than acrimonious criticism is because the deviants in no way raise doubts about the values they fail to hold and so do not threaten the security of the writer, her readers, and their shared, taken-for-granted world.

Passive mimetic realism can achieve literary order while imitating a social order only at the cost of drastic exclusion. As one might expect, always remembering that the frame is a limiting device, mirror-image literature excludes all but a very small segment of society - that class of which the writer is a member. Nor is one surprised to find that Austen's canvas is small in time and space as well. If one is trying to freeze a state of affairs whose time is already past, it follows that one will ignore large sweeps of historical time, with its inevitable changes, and concentrate upon small sweeps of personal time, with equally inevitable, but predictable, and therefore stable, changes. Similarly, the fact that these works are set in the country, where change comes more slowly, protects them from the intrusion of such world-shaking events as revolutions, from such threatening developments as industrialisation, urban slums, and the growth of the self-made bourgeoisie with their very different code of values, and from the necessity of acknowledging the existence of the working class.

Before considering my next category, critical realism, I want to point out that I have been discussing the extreme of mimetic realism. If one considers Trollope's

Barsetshire novels,²⁷ written some fifty years later, one sees that not even the mimetic realist has been able to stem the tide of extension of social privilege, and so, while these novels are also set protectively in the country with its rigidly enforced class structure, Trollope is forced to take cognisance of the existence of certain of the lower orders as well as of his own class. And so one could continue giving examples of certain variations on the basic type that arise as a result of historical change or personal idiosyncratic factors.

When we come to look at the critical realism of such nineteenth-century writers as Dickens and Thackeray, we are faced with the response of a man who finds himself in a marginal position vis-à-vis bourgeois society to the decline of that society. The complexity of his social standing is paralleled by the complexity of his stance, for, as I have suggested, the critical realist is exposing the facts of a system that he basically accepts as natural and inevitable, and a careful analysis of the structure of these novels reveals the extent to which they are unwittingly informed by the preconceptions of capitalism and the bourgeoisie.

Where the mimetic realist chided the deviant individual, the critical realist plays the role of deviant individual and attacks the system. The far-reaching significance of this radical difference in intention results in a completely different scope, tone, and style. Where

mimetic realism is rational and controlled, critical realism is intense and emotional; where mimetic realism gives the appearance of objectivity and transparency, critical realism includes a number of subjective and symbolic elements; where mimetic realism retreats into the security of exclusiveness and status, critical realism takes a panoramic view of life and ranges widely through time and space and social degree; accordingly, where mimetic realism orders the literary work through extreme limitation, it is the active imagination of the critical realist that has the task of aesthetically integrating the multitudinous world he presents; where nature for the mimetic realist is the domesticated possession of the landed classes, for the critical realist it is a symbol of the human social condition - his primary concern; and where the mimetic realist sets his work in the country, the critical realist places his in the big cities of the world, those centres of the new order where change is most obtrusive and where it is more difficult to keep the social strata separate.

To illustrate my points I refer to Thackeray's Vanity Fair²⁸ and Dickens's Bleak House.²⁹ Both cover an enormous span of time and space, are set mainly in cities, deal with every imaginable type of humanbeing, are intense and emotional in tone, combine symbolism and fantasy with a more realistic mode, are concerned with the social rather than the natural, use several literary devices to order their extensive canvases, and, most significant of all,

combine overt criticism with covert conformity.

Running through both works is an unconscious contradiction between an awareness of the evils of capitalism and a faith in material progress and its benefits. There is a tension between the hardheaded acceptance of empiricism, materialism, productivity, and liberal individualism at a subliminal level, and an explicit regret for the lack of sentimentality, disinterestedness, gratuitousness, and other simple human values in a world of competitive egos. Both contain a middle-class stress on the value of respectability and a revulsion for the excesses of both the aristocracy and the mob, yet that middle-class respectability is shown to be unlikable and unlikable. In purifying capitalism, the critical realist merely eliminates its vitality, individuality, and plausibility.

To appreciate this ambiguity one has only to compare Vanity Fair's energetic villainess, Becky Sharp, with the foolish and feeble virtuous heroine, Amelia, and to notice that, significantly, Amelia's survival is only due to Becky's kind offices. Similarly, in Bleak House, the indescribably sickly-sweet heroine, Esther, is provided with a wealthy guardian angel and he and his money see her safely through all her trials. Virtue may be desirable and the institutions of capitalism may be the object of criticism, but virtue needs vice and that prime institution of capitalism - inherited wealth - to survive. Both Thackeray and Dickens wind up unconsciously endorsing what they set

out consciously to destroy.

Realism in general constitutes a confidence trick, but there is a slight difference between the manner in which mimetic and critical realism operate which is worth noting. Firstly, the reader's consciousness of the literariness of the work is reduced by the creation of what appears to be a facsimile of a common, taken-for-granted, real-life world. This establishment of a shared context of meaning controls the response of the reader, allowing no room for personal interpretation, and elicits an uncritical endorsement of those conventional norms that form its basic frame of reference.

The trick in critical realism is to combine sufficient familiarity so that the reader does not feel threatened with sufficient originality so that one does not simply reinforce stereotyped responses. The essence of critical realism is to arouse, and then confound, the reader's expectation that this literary world will conform exactly to his worldview. The initial suggestion of correspondence leads the reader to begin by judging the literary work in terms of his knowledge of the real, but the original elements lead him to end up judging his knowledge of the real in terms of the literary work. It is the irony of that nineteenth-century critical realism that the Marxist Lukács so admires that the reality it reveals is the same as that with which it began, that it never escapes the framework of the very system it rejects.

What both mimetic and critical realism do is to misunderstand the nature of literature as a process of socially-determined and subjective world-constitution. To ignore the two essential aspects of literature, its fictitious nature and its subjective construction, is to give it a false facticity which results from an extension to it of the qualities of reification and alienation that already inform the world it purports to reflect or reveal. This is the propagandistic intention of realism. It takes a partisan perspective on life, a subjective social construction dependent upon the relative and partial vision of a particular class at a particular moment in history, and passes it off as objective reality, as life, thus confirming aesthetically a social misconception.

This brings me to sociological realism, which is the name I have chosen to give to that form of literature which is fully conscious of the fictitious nature of both aesthetic and social constructions of reality and whose *raison d'être* is precisely to draw the reader's critical attention to this. I have chosen a dramatist and a play as my examples here, for they illustrate simply and clearly, without mystification, the type of work I have in mind. Brecht's The Good Woman of Setzuan³⁰ should probably be classified as socialist critical realism, for it represents the critical response of a Marxist living in a capitalist society, but it has one element that is usually missing from that category, it subjects its own perspective to

the same critical scrutiny and suggests that it is only one amongst several points of view.

In the first place, rejecting the mirror-image conventions of realism, this play frankly stresses the conventional nature of dramatic and theatrical modes. This anti-illusory policy by its unfamiliarity keeps one's critical faculties awake and exposes the unrealistic qualities of the lives lived by the characters. In other words, in a complete reversal of the effect of traditional realism, the patently unreal nature of the drama is extended to the form of life it represents.

This play is structured in terms of a parody on several well-worn classical, religious, romantic, and even Marxist tales, each representing an obviously unrealistic belief typical of that particular worldview. It uses these obvious fictions to reveal the equally mythic nature of certain plausible, and as yet unexposed, Christian and bourgeois ideas. But the writer's didactic purpose is never obtrusive, and one never feels that his work is merely an ideological vehicle. This is probably due to the fact that while the device of the courtroom forces the reader to judge, it forces him to judge for himself. The issue is in no way predetermined, for Brecht's critical detachment allows him to present several points of view at once through the use of antithetical juxtapositions which point up the pros and cons of each option as against the others, and the entire play is presented in the form of contra-

dictions which remain unresolved at the end. This has the effect, so important for true sociological realism, of suggesting an ongoing process of selection from relative truths rather than the dogmatic imposition of an arbitrary absolute truth.

If Brecht abjures the illusory conventions of mimetic realism, he also exhibits a realistic insight into the evils of capitalism and the fate of good in such a society that goes far beyond the ostensible rejection and actual acceptance of the critical realist. The Good Woman of Setzuan shows clearly that good simply cannot exist in this kind of society and that what is required is not reformation of the system, but a different system altogether. Here the adaptation and compromise necessary for survival in such a world constitutes the central problem, not the final resolution.

This play also goes beyond what is envisaged by socialist realism of the critical type. (We may safely ignore the other kind of socialist realism as pure romance.) It takes into account the interaction of men with both their natural and social environments; it looks at different classes of men, at different forms of authority, at different principles of social organisation - all with their differing codes of value. It examines the contradictions within capitalism, but also poses the question of certain ambiguities that may be inherent in the human condition itself so that socialism will be subject to the

same problems, and it does all this with apparent open-mindedness.

With this proposal for an alternative understanding of the nature of literary realism and for certain helpful distinctions which might be made within that broad type on the basis of socio-historical periods, social class affiliations, and ideological foundations, we have come to the end of Part II and our discussion of Lukács. These preliminary suggestions for a modification of the Marxist conception of literary realism will be extended in Part III when I come to deal with structuralism and its insights into the linguistic aspects of the realistic form. It is this dimension, as I initially claimed, that needs to be reconciled with Marxism's approach to literature in order to augment the latter's sociological application.

PART III

LUCIEN GOLDMANN

I began by demonstrating the difference between orthodox Marxism's prescriptiveness and that dogmatism that is often taken for (or masquerades as) orthodoxy. I then proceeded to investigate the work of Lukács as a prime example of the contradictions and inconsistencies that arise from Marxist orthodoxy's inability to reconcile a respect for the work of art as an autonomous and selfsubsistent entity with purely aesthetic dimensions and the demands of a social theory which requires that art fulfill the ethical and epistemological functions of increasing human selfawareness and encouraging the realisation of human potentiality through the revelation of social reality - a conception of art which automatically introduces moral criteria that either suppress aesthetic standards, or must somehow be integrated with them. Nor does an identification of the moral and the aesthetic, the good and the beautiful, prove a satisfactory solution to men whose literary tastes have been formed by a classical education: they find it impossible to condemn bourgeois literature that pleases aesthetically but not morally, or to endorse socialist literature that pleases morally but not aesthetically.

There is a fundamental consciousness here of the dual nature of art, as a social product with a social function and value and as an aesthetic object with its own specific

functions and values. Related to this consciousness of the dual mode of existence of the literary work, and a consequent confusion of external and internal norms, is a parallel problem regarding the process of literary creation. The Marxist is committed to some version of the determination of superstructural phenomena (such as the literary work) by the material base. On the other hand, the orthodox theorists we have studied so far are also committed to a belief in individual creativity, which presupposes a degree of freedom and autonomy. This duality necessitates some hypothesis as to the synthesis of reflection and creation, correspondence and coherence, in the text.¹ Upon this issue hangs the methodological question: a 'determined' text suggests a critical method that is essentially genetic, explaining in terms of the social and historical context, while a 'created' text lends itself to the sort of immanent criticism that treats its object as an integrated and independent system of meanings to be explicated.² It also follows that a work which is held to reflect the world may be evaluated in terms external to itself, while a work which creates its own world largely generates its own standards.

We have seen that in his attempt to construct a coherent theory of literature within the conceptual framework of Marxism, a Marxist theory of the products of human consciousness that would nevertheless allow him to preserve the 'morally reprehensible' works that comprise the

classical literary canon, Lukács was forced to confront this duality of the object-literary work (as both social product and aesthetic object) and of the subject-writer (as both determined and free).³ In other words, he was confronted with the complex of problems subsumed under the headings 'form and content', 'reflection and creation', 'realism and ideology' in my earlier discussions. In terms of literary theory this led him to reductionism and prescription: he limited art to one form, realism, and within that form prescribed his own view of reality. In terms of practical criticism it led him to narrowness, contradictions and inconsistencies. For all his brilliance Lukács cannot be said to have found a satisfactory synthesis, for while it may be conceptually inclusive, it depends upon a substantive exclusiveness.

Lucien Goldmann, Lukács's self-styled arch-disciple, is both a highly respected literary critic and a professed Marxist whose explicit aim is to devise a sociological approach to cultural creation that will reconcile explanation and explication, social cause and aesthetic meaning.⁴ By its very name Goldmann's genetic structuralism reveals its synthetic intention, and I shall examine here to what extent Goldmann succeeds in integrating the two poles⁵ we have distinguished in literary theory, and in avoiding the ambivalence that we have seen to be a primary characteristic of orthodox Marxist literary criticism.

Goldmann is a difficult man to generalise about

because his assertions often differ from text to text, and even within the context of a single work he may move from an orthodox understanding of the complexities of mediation to a dogmatic assertion of mechanical materialism. For example, in the first chapter of The Hidden God, Goldmann expresses one of the basic premises upon which his methodology rests:

... any great literary or artistic work is the expression of a world vision. This vision is the product of a collective group consciousness which reaches its highest expression in the mind of a poet or a thinker.⁶

Yet, in the first chapter of Towards a Sociology of the Novel, he writes:

The novel form seems to me, in effect, to be the transposition on the literary plane of every day life in the individualistic society created by market production,⁷

and

... this direct transposition of the economic life into the literary life ... occurs outside the collective consciousness.⁸

It will be one of the concerns of Part III to consider whether these inconsistencies are actual or apparent, whether they are a question of a change of heart over a period of time which could be described as a developmental process and dealt with in chronological form, whether they are an inescapable by-product of the synthetic nature of his beliefs, or whether they stem from the tentative quality of Goldmann's theorising and the absence of any attempt to

articulate a coherent system of ideas, a lack not altogether justified by his constant reiteration of his credo that an adequate theory depends upon the partial investigations of many researchers,⁹ and his equally frequent insistence on the fragmentary and provisional nature of his own contributions.¹⁰ Indeed, one might question whether Goldmann exploits the principle of the dialectical method by using it as a justification for his vagueness in certain areas where he simply has not formulated a comprehensive and consistent theory.

The problem is compounded by the fact that Goldmann does not do his own ideas justice and the reader must often mentally redefine carelessly used terms and reorganise confusingly structured material in order that it may constitute a more cogent argument. The problem is whether to be true to the letter or the spirit of Goldmann's writing. A line by line demonstration of Goldmann's inconsistency is unproductive, but too helpful an attitude on the part of the analyst is equally unwarranted and misleading. On the other hand, individual texts become clearer if one follows his injunction to see meaning as a function of the relation between the parts and the whole.¹¹

There is a further problem in that Goldmann's writings seem to consist of the repetition of a limited number of basic ideas which are not so much significantly developed as simply rephrased. This tendency is displayed even within the context of a brief single text - see, for example,

the four different formulations of the three universal laws of human behaviour that occur within a mere eight pages of the article he contributed to Littérature et Société.¹² Here, again, one has to read constructively.

I shall be concerned in Part III with Goldmann's work as an attempt to resolve orthodox Marxism's aesthetic problem by synthesizing structuralism and Marxism. It is my contention that the inadequacy of Goldmann's theory is not due to its nature as a synthesis but to the nature of the synthesis, which combines an emasculated version of Marxism with an inappropriate type of structuralism. Accordingly, I shall indicate firstly, those areas where Goldmann's theory is less satisfactory than orthodox Marxism, and secondly, those developments in structuralism which, if incorporated into orthodox Marxism, would provide a better mode of dealing with the dual nature of the literary work as aesthetic object and social product than the particular variety of structuralism that Goldmann adopts.

This part falls into three chapters, proceeding from the most general to the most particular. Since there are two main theoretical strands in Goldmann's genetic structuralism, namely, Marxism and structuralism, I shall be concerned in Chapter 9 with Goldmann's right to be classified as a Marxist and/or structuralist, and with those brands of Marxism and structuralism that he professes.

Goldmann's theory of cultural creation comprises the major part of genetic structuralism, and the most important

components of this theory of cultural creation are the concepts of class consciousness and worldview, together with the related notion of ideology. In Chapter 10 I shall provide a critical analysis of this theory that concentrates upon these ideas. I shall point out its inconsistencies and its deficiencies and question whether it represents an advance over the work of Lukács. My argument will be that it both fails to come to grips with the issue of 'literariness', and fails to provide an adequate explanation for the social dimension in individual creation, the two problems that it was specifically designed to handle.

In Chapter 11 I shall consider Goldmann's theory of the novel, looking at how it manipulates Lukács's early theory to suit its own dogmatic and polemical ends. Goldmann's problem is essentially the same as that of Lukács - to account for bourgeois critical realism - and his inadequacies in this area are also similar to those we find in Lukács - a blind spot as regards literary conventions and the literary tradition, which, ultimately, despite moments of promising insight, inhibits a true understanding. In conclusion, here, I shall suggest where one may find a more successful Marxist-structuralist approach.

CHAPTER 9

GENERAL THEORY

Goldmann's works in the fields of literature, philosophy, and sociology represent complementary investigations of different aspects of a complex social totality. Thus, in the same way as one cannot separate Lukács's aesthetics from his philosophy, Goldmann's theory of literature must be seen in the context of his general sociological perspective. I propose, therefore, to begin with a brief examination of the latter with a view to understanding both those central beliefs upon which Goldmann's particular orientation rests and their methodological implications.

It will be the main task of this chapter, then, to trace the intellectual allegiances of Goldmann's genetic structuralism, notably his debt to Piaget's structuralism and the way in which this has modified his Marxism. Dealing with the Marxist strand first, I shall argue that Goldmann may justifiably be so labelled despite a positivistic tendency which must be indicated and explained if possible. I shall suggest that his Marxism, with its emphasis on human consciousness and meaning, is similar to that of the Frankfurt School: they share a concern with humanism, dialectics and critique, and an analysis of post-capitalistic society together with certain associated cultural developments.

As regards Goldmann's structuralism, I shall suggest

that this derives more from Piaget than from Marx. Of course, rigid distinctions in terms of influences are difficult to maintain. There are indeed structural elements in Marx which often appear to overlap with similar ideas in Piaget, but the fact that these are held within different conceptual frameworks makes a crucial difference, and there is certainly not the homogeneity between the two that Goldmann believes. Ironically, although Goldmann expressly denies any alignment with such Marxist structuralists as Althusser and Lévi-Strauss,¹ I shall suggest that he falls into the very anti-Marxist structuralist errors that he condemns in them.²

Underlying this section is a very general theoretical question, that is, whether a structuralist approach, genetic or otherwise, necessarily implies a positivistic slant, and whether, therefore, structuralism is ultimately irreconcilable with Marxism.

1. Marxism

The first question to be considered is whether or not Goldmann is a Marxist. Bisztray expressly denies this:

There are two significant and controversial critics who more or less claim to be Marxists, and whose whole activity shows strong influence of scientificism, notably positivism, both in its Cartesian-rationalistic and in its empirical form. These are the French-Rumanian Lucien Goldmann and the Italian Gervano Della Volpe. Both are recently deceased.

The myth of Goldmann as a proto-Marxist literary sociologist was, and still is, widely accepted in Europe and North America, showing an unfortunately indiscriminating and uninformed attitude among the intellectuals toward the main problems, terms, and nuances of the Marxist theory of literature. Goldmann himself had two bases for repeatedly stating that he was influenced by Marxism. One is his constant reference to Lukács's early work, Die Theorie Des Romans. This influence, however, can be discarded as a Marxist one. Lukács wrote this work well before his theoretical acquaintance with Marxism. Goldmann with his strong interest in structuralism, could have found a sound influence in Lukács's speculative neo-Hegelian mental structures, but this is something far removed from Marxism.

Goldmann's other claim to Marxism is his use of the basis-superstructure relationship in the analysis of literary works, which he utilized particularly in his Pour Une Sociologie Du Roman. In his theory that the psychological structures of literary heroes are analogous to social economic structures he supersedes in no respect the practice of the Soviet sociological critics, except that he never refers to this tradition.

The result of this sociologism is that historically speaking, Goldmann is merely repackaging an old tradition in a fashionable mixture of structuralistic, existentialistic and psychoanalytical jargon.³

Firstly, Bisztray's criterion of delimitation is 'committed party critics, not self-assigned Marxists',⁴ a more rigid distinction than I have been prepared to make here, and a distinction, incidentally, which rules out Lukács's most brilliant work. Secondly, the passage is contradictory, indicting Goldmann both for his positivistic non-Marxism and for his unoriginal dogmatic Marxism.

During the course of this analysis I shall present evidence that supports Bisztray's criticisms, but these elements in Goldmann's work do not disqualify him from being classified as a Marxist. I suggest that it is largely the scientific jargon referred to by Bisztray that cloaks Goldmann's essential Marxism: it is difficult for the traditionalist to recognize Marxist axioms like 'Being precedes consciousness' when they are expressed in such Goldmannese as:

In fact, every group tends to have an adequate knowledge of reality; but its knowledge can extend only up to a maximum horizon compatible with its existence. Beyond this horizon, information can be received only if the group's structure is transformed ...⁵

Fokkema and Kunne-Ibsch⁶ have a conception more in line with the distinctions and terminology observed in this dissertation. They refer to Goldmann as a neo-Marxist, explaining that by this they mean that he is undogmatic and does not accept the authority of the Communist Party. They point out that he selects his Marxist sources carefully and stress the influence of Lukács's Hegelian brand of Marxism,⁷ but they do not deny that Goldmann's perspective is basically Marxist. Swingewood⁸ and Williams,⁹ other Goldmann analysts, also approach him as unquestionably a Marxist, although the former finds a positivistic element in Goldmann's work, and the latter doubts that it is truly dialectical. The question of the meaning and validity of these latter judgments will be pursued during the following discussion.

What ought really to be in question here is not whether Goldmann is a Marxist but to what 'school' of Marxism he belongs. In tracing Goldmann's affiliations constant references are made to Hegel, Kant, Lukács, and Marx,¹⁰ but no mention is made of the members of the Frankfurt School with whom he has so much in common and whose status as Marxists is seldom questioned.

Goldmann and the Frankfurt School arrived at similar positions by different paths. Under the respective influences of Lukács's History and Class Consciousness and Marx's Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, they both developed an approach to the human sciences that stresses critique and the dialectic. I remarked in Chapter 6 that History and Class Consciousness (1923) presents an Hegelian version of Marxism that is perfectly consonant with the views of the young Marx, but what makes this so curious is the fact that Marx's early work had not as yet been published. However, when the Frankfurt School attempted to revitalise Marxism in the '30's by returning to the humanism of the young Marx, they did so from the vantage point of an acquaintance with his Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts published in 1930.

Apart from this humanist orientation with its stress on dialectics and critique, the work of both Goldmann and the Frankfurt School is distinguished by their concern with an analysis of post-capitalistic society in general and certain associated cultural developments in particular.

Their rejection of the methodological assumptions of traditional social science and their revision of classical Marxism's theory of capitalism stem from an overriding concern with human consciousness¹¹ and involve a different conception of the relation between social realities and the products of consciousness, especially the literary text.

Goldmann's criticism of traditional social science, like that of the Frankfurt School, is based upon a rejection of the objectivist preconception of positivism that leads its adherents to conceive of social reality in terms of autonomous and stable entities to which they apply certain conventional categories of thought. For these synchronic constants he wishes to substitute as the object of analysis the historical process of world-constitution by human thought and action, and as the method of analysis an open-ended, unfinished, on-going probing which derives its categories from what is being analysed. This is, of course, nothing other than that dialectical method which, in Lukács's opinion, characterises Marxism. Unfortunately, as we shall see, there is a vast difference between Goldmann's methodological pronouncements and his practical methods.

A further aspect of positivism's objectivism is the traditional social scientist's untenable claim to objectivity. The implied dichotomy of facts and values that legitimates his methodology and supports his belief in the absolute nature of his findings is something that Goldmann and the Frankfurt School both reject. Instead, they stress

the role played by the inherited, socially determined, and partial mental categories of the theorist and the consequent importance of critical self-reflection.¹² As Goldmann says:

The first general observation on which genetic structuralist thought is based is that all reflection on the human sciences is made not from without but from within society ... the subject of thought is thus seen to form part, at least to some extent and with a certain number of mediations, of the object to which it is directed. On the other hand, this thought does not constitute an absolute beginning and it is, in a very large measure, shaped by the categories of the society which it studies, or of a society deriving therefrom.¹³

Thus, where positivistic social science is characterised by dualities and atomism or abstraction, divorcing subject and object, fact and value, theory and practice, philosophy and science, dialectics is an approach that seeks to integrate all these and is characterised by its comprehensiveness. And since it attempts to deal with the whole man in the context of the historical totality in a selfconscious manner, it necessarily includes critique. We shall see, however, in Goldmann's sociology of the novel, how he reverts in practice to the transcendent critic.

Now, ostensibly, 'genetic structuralism' is simply the name Goldmann gives to that methodology that he considers appropriate to such a dialectical conception in that it deals with both the subjective and objective dimensions of any given phenomenon, but since no use of language is

entirely 'innocent', the fact that the Marxist Goldmann found 'dialectics' inadequate and resorted to 'genetic structuralism' has implications that will be revealed when we turn from this examination of his Marxism to an analysis of his structuralism, but first we must consider his theory of modern capitalism.

In Power and Humanism Goldmann writes:

Fifty or sixty years later, we find ourselves before a new set of transformations of capitalist society, which oblige us to create a third concept, beside the concepts of capitalism and imperialism: organisation capitalism or technocratic society (the terminology has not as yet been fixed). We do this without forgetting that they are still capitalist societies where the fundamental concepts of exploitation, alienation, and surplus-value, are still valid. The introduction of a new concept is nonetheless necessary for understanding the concrete nature and present functions of exploitation, alienation, surplus-value, and a whole series of contemporary phenomena.¹⁴

Like the Frankfurt School, Goldmann felt that certain developments within Western civilisation unforeseen by Marx, plus the fact that other predicted developments did not materialize, invalidated his prognostications for capitalism, particularly that of the proletarian revolution. Instead, Goldmann subscribes to a view of western post-capitalistic society that sees as the determining factors stability through state intervention, the changed character of the workingclass and their integration into society, the rise of a decision-making technocratic élite, the emergence of the passive consumer, and the cumulative effects

of reification upon the collective consciousness of the people - developments which necessitate a liberation of consciousness above all else, and which make reform a more likely possibility than revolution.

The importance of his non-traditional perspective on present day capitalism for his literary theory cannot be overstressed. It forms the basis for his conception of the nature of the relationship between text and world in post-capitalistic society and justifies the manner in which this necessarily differs from Marx's understanding of that relationship, tied as it was to a different stage in the development of capitalism. We shall return to this issue in greater detail when we deal with Goldmann's theory of the novel because, like Lukács, Goldmann takes the novel to be the characteristic modern capitalistic genre.

I have said that both threads discussed above - the anti-positivistic understanding of the fallacy of objectivism and objectivity, and the unorthodox version of modern capitalism - lead to an interest in human consciousness and a primary stress upon meaning. As Habermas discloses the human interests that underpin various constructions of reality,¹⁵ so Goldmann dwells on what he calls 'functionality'.¹⁶ Functionality, he claims, is that Marxian concept that links superstructural phenomena to substructural facts and allows facts to be explained in terms of the collective subject. Goldmann's quarrel with structuralism, and particularly with such Marxist struc-

turalists as Lévi-Strauss and Althusser, is that they eliminate the subject and with him the notion of functionality.¹⁷

But modern structuralism's so-called Marxist interpretation is characterised by the replacement of functionality (Althusser even says combinatoire when he translates this text)¹⁸ with relations of homology, inversion, or transformation. That is, it eliminates the subject and its specific function, which is to account for functionality and intelligibility.¹⁹

For Goldman 'the concept of functionality is the most exact, precise form corresponding to what was formerly and much more approximately called meaning.'²⁰

Since facts are subjectively constructed, and constructed thus and not otherwise in order to serve a particular purpose, which purpose constitutes their essential meaning, explanation relies upon discovering this purpose through the relation of the phenomenon being studied to its genesis in the whole - hence genetic structuralism. Where Goldman differs from Habermas and diverges from Marxist realism is in his interpretation of the collective subject, for his anthropological-type subject is little better than the Marxist structuralists' no-subject-at-all. Goldman ties functionality to human psychological function rather than to sectional social interests and in so doing exchanges the Marxist dimension of moral responsibility for the objectivist position of functionalist behaviourism.

In the following extract from 'Dialectical Thought and Transindividual Subject' Goldman may merely be trying

to introduce the Marxist idea of false consciousness, but the implications of his example, analogy, and vocabulary are that behaviour - physical or mental - is a response to conditions or stimuli set by the outer environment and inner biological or psychological processes, that all behaviour is adaptive action ruled by a drive towards equilibrium, and that understanding involves a process of observation and consequent deduction of causal purposes that may largely ignore subjective states.

To take a banal example, when a cat catches a mouse its behaviour is functional: it can be translated in terms of problem and solution; there is a disequilibrium which must be resolved; that does not presuppose consciousness.

When men act, consciousness is always present; but there is no reason to concede - it is not even probable - that this consciousness is always perfectly adequate: it is one element of behaviour. Very often it may be adequate, just as it may be inadequate or more or less adequate. What matters is that men's behaviour is functional and as such meaningful, exactly like the behaviour of the cat catching the mouse.²¹

This is an example of Goldmann's tendency towards positivism as well as an instance of the way in which he eliminates the subject (that is, the Marxist historical subject) by reducing him to the human subject (an instance of a general law), and this despite his stated intentions and his criticisms of other structuralists. When we come to examine his exposition of the essential nature of man, we shall see further evidence of this

tendency.

I have been concerned to show the basic orientation of Goldmann's particular brand of Marxist theory and how this resembles that of the Frankfurt School. The two main threads I distinguished are the rejection of traditional social science and his definition and analysis of the contemporary situation as post-capitalism. The former is largely based on a belief in the subjective construction of 'facts' and leads to a concern with human consciousness; as regards the latter, it is this altered understanding of the contemporary relation between human consciousness and economic and social realities that underpins Goldmann's history of the novel form.

I have suggested very tentatively that even at this broad level contradictions begin to emerge within the theory as well as between theory and practice. For instance, there is an essential contradiction between Goldmann's anti-positivism and his explication of functionality, the concept upon which the process of reality construction rests, for here, in underplaying the role of consciousness and substituting a general for a particular subject, he himself leans towards positivism rather than Marxism. More light will be thrown on this matter by a consideration of the other broad strand in Goldmann's perspective, his structuralism.

2. Structuralism

Is Goldmann a structuralist? The answer must be a qualified 'yes', because, despite the implications of the name Goldmann has given his method, he is primarily a Marxist. There is a passage in Power and Humanism which perhaps clarifies Goldmann's attempt to marry Marxism with structuralism in his work:

I am rather afraid that, when we speak of contemporary economic events, of social events, and particularly of political events, we tend to use ancient categories which emerged in a world now in process of disappearing, categories and words of which even the relative validity existed only within such a world. This is true, not only for reactionary thought, but also, and particularly so, for socialist and even for Marxist thought. Therefore it seems to be particularly important that one should no longer let oneself be dominated by the letter of this or that doctrine or tradition, that one should not engage in discussions which, in becoming more and more quarrels over words, in fact betray these traditions; so that, on the contrary, one should remain faithful to their spirit by adapting the terms and the categories to reality, and not the reality to the categories.²²

If I am correct in interpreting Goldmann's motivation in terms of this passage, then there is a further inference to be drawn from it which relates to the next question: Since structuralism is not a single homogeneous philosophy, what brand of structuralism does Goldmann profess? While Goldmann would admit that Piaget's structuralism has formed the basis of his own, he would also insist not only that structuralism is perfectly compatible with Marxism,

but that Piaget's structuralism is Marxism in modern dress.

It is common these days to claim Marx as, at least, 'a precursor of present day structuralism',²³ or at most, as the theorist whose 'work, correctly interpreted, and uncluttered by that of his imitators, might help to hasten the process of acceptance',²⁴ of the structural method upon which rests the only possibility of the development of the sciences of man. Jameson²⁵ suggests that the common factor that justifies the assimilation of the one to the other is merely their reductive nature. This is a little unkind. That there are several points of similarity will be evident when we examine the central tenets of Piaget's theory, but, and here lies Goldmann's error - a strange error indeed for a structuralist - apparently similar concepts and concerns take on an entirely different complexion within the context of a different conceptual framework.

To compare Marxism and structuralism in general is impossible considering the number of different 'structuralisms' that lay claim to that name, but it is possible to give a brief outline of the salient points of that non-Marxist form of structuralism that is most relevant to a study of Goldmann, that of Piaget.²⁶

Piaget²⁷ singles out three essential elements of the structuralist's understanding of the notion of structure: a) the idea of wholeness, b) the idea of transformation, and c) the idea of self-regulation. Wholeness is what distinguishes a structure from an aggregate in that the

meaning and significance of the constituent elements depends upon their interrelationship in the whole. Transformation is what distinguishes structure from form in that it constitutes not a limited and passive single phenomenon, but a type of generative potentiality.²⁸ Self-regulation is what makes a structure a closed, self-validating system and distinguishes it from other systems of meaning whose existence and functions are dependent upon some external 'reality'.

As I suggested earlier, to draw parallels between this and Marxism is easy, but it is actually their differences which characterise each system. Keat and Urry point out the obvious and primary points of departure for ostensibly similar forms of structural analysis:

From this outline of common features, it is not difficult to see where serious differences of method and approach will arise: the nature of the relational properties, the sorts of elements relationally analysed, the explanation of the structure's orderly character, the nature of the totality, the forces which produce or maintain wholeness, the relationship between one structure and another, and, most importantly, the relation between the 'structure' and physical or social reality.²⁹

Without going into a detailed analysis of the specific differences between Piaget's structuralism and the structural elements in Marx, and without falling back upon the oft-cited general distinctions of dubious validity, such as closed versus open, synchronic versus diachronic, I suggest that the two key areas of difference to watch as

we examine Goldmann's structuralist-Marxist theory are the subject and meaning, for it is here that we will see the first signs of contradiction - the non-Marxist elimination of the historical subject, and the substitution of the structuralist explanation of meaning in terms of homologies for the Marxist explanation in terms of function.

Since what Goldmann owes to Piaget is not solely his understanding of the concept of structure, but those fundamental beliefs about the nature of man and society which constitute the foundations of Goldmann's literary theory, I intend to show here how these derive from Piaget's epistemological theory, how they relate to, and differ from, the fundamentals of conventional orthodox Marxism, and in what respects Goldmann considers them an advance on other forms of structuralism or Marxism.

Goldmann is no exception to the rule that beneath every social theory lies a preconception as to the essence of humanbeing.³⁰ It is necessary, therefore, to start with his understanding of man as a psychologically adaptive, significance-constructing organism. In an article entitled "Genetic Structuralism" in the *Sociology of Literature*, Goldmann presents what he considers to be the three distinguishing characteristics of human behaviour:

- A. According to genetic structuralism, there are three fundamental characteristics of human behaviour ...
 1. The first is the fact that all human behaviour has a tendency, as I have said, towards significance and rationality. To avoid any misunderstanding, I must emphasize that by

rationality I do not mean Cartesian reasoning (which is only one of the manifold forms of rational behaviour), nor any logical rationality independent of all sociological and psychological circumstance: by rationality I mean quite simply the fact that human behaviour is always a response to the problems with which the environment faces man, and that this response points towards significance, i.e., it permits either the individual organism or the group to survive and develop in the way which is most effective and which best fit its inherent tendencies ...

2. The second basic characteristic of thought and behaviour rests in the fact that, independently of the inherent tendency towards significance which is found in every structured section of social life, individuals, and therefore social groups, have a tendency towards creating some overall consistent pattern out of the totality of sectional parts. In this tendency towards overall consistency, naturally, the different sectional parts exert specific and different forces. These forces depend upon a multiplicity of factors but also, among other things, on the quantitative importance of that sector of thought or action in the concrete existence of men and also on the threat which may exist at any given moment to important aspects of action ...

3. The third and last fundamental characteristic of human behaviour is the constant movement of efforts towards transcendence; this is the principle of negativity discussed by Hegel, but it is also Pascal's concept of transcendence: the active, transforming, practical quality of all social and historical action.³¹

With its failure to define such key terms as 'significance', this is not perhaps the most adequate formulation of Goldmann's ideas on the subject. Further on in the same article we have the following brief summary which is

clearer: but omits such important concepts as 'function' and 'social groups':

- B. [The] three fundamental characteristics of all human action ...
1. The tendency towards adapting to the realities of the environment and, hence, its characteristic form of relating to that environment, through rationality and by rendering it significant.
 2. The tendency towards overall consistency and towards creating structural forms.
 3. Its dynamic nature, i.e., the tendency towards modifying and developing the structure of which it forms part.³²

Now, in order to understand what Goldmann is getting at here, we must examine a major source of these beliefs - Piaget's theory of the development of intellectual behaviour, or those fundamental ideas in it that are relevant to an understanding of what Goldmann owes to him in the passage quoted above.

Firstly, Piaget distinguishes between the invariant function of intellectual activity, adaptation to the environment, and those changing intellectual structures which subserve this function. The notion of intellectual structures has already been discussed, but it is important to stress here that these structures alter and form part of a developmental process distinguished by increasing complexity.

Now adjusting to, and dealing with, the environment, which for Piaget is almost a definition of intelligence, depends upon two complementary subprocesses, assimilation

and accommodation. Assimilation refers to that process by which new experience is responded to on the basis of existing cognitive structures and is absorbed into them; accommodation refers to the modification of these existing cognitive structures to cope with new situations.

This is the theory that Goldmann adapts from a psychological account of the development of human intelligence to a sociological account of the essence of human behaviour. One of the problems involved in this adaptation is to accomplish it in such a manner as to account for differences in social constructions of reality. Piaget holds that since all men begin with more or less the same modes of adaptation to the environment, and since the physical environment remains fairly constant, all men pass through the same stages of development. By introducing the idea of differences in the (social) environment, Goldmann simultaneously adds the necessary sociological dimension and accounts for differences in worldviews. The question is how satisfactorily he achieves this.

A further inadequacy in Piaget's theory - for Goldmann's purposes - is his handling of the issue of motivation. Piaget, unlike most other learning theorists, sees adaptive behaviour as pleasurable in itself. Here Goldmann deviates from Piaget and follows the majority in postulating that adaptive behaviour is conditional upon some optimum relation between the needs of the organism and the system of contingencies characterising the environment. His use of terms

such as 'equilibrium', 'survival', 'selfrealisation', 'inherent tendencies', and so on, indicate the direction of his solution. Again, the question is whether Goldmann has succeeded in injecting a sufficiently sociological orientation.

We can now approach the problems posed earlier: firstly, in what way Piaget's theory is more acceptable to the Marxist Goldmann than other forms of structuralism; secondly, in what way Goldmann's adaptation of Piaget is more acceptable to him than traditional Marxism; thirdly, in what respects this essentially psychological and structuralist theory satisfies Goldmann's sociological and Marxist demands; and, finally, in what respects it is different from, and less satisfactory than, Marxism.

The advantages of Piaget's epistemological theory over what we might call 'common' structuralism are as follows. Firstly, we are concerned here with a dynamic process: the object of analysis is a diachronic development not a synchronic situation. Points A3 and B3 of Goldmann's account of human behaviour show his determination to avoid the static connotations that usually accompany the term 'structure'. He conceives of a situation in which processes of structuration and destructuration strike a temporary and uneasy balance. Variations in the environment, brought about by such exogenous phenomena as war or immigration and such endogenous factors as the actions of members of the society, give rise to a new situation

within which the law of adaptation demands a new rationality, new structures of thought and feeling, a new coherence, and a new equilibrium. Adding Hegel to Piaget, Goldmann suggests that when the resultant transformation of structure X has gone so far that it is better to describe it in terms of structure Y, we have an example of the transition from quantity to quality.

The second advantage lies in the fact that although successive developmental phases are based on earlier ones, the relationship between them is one of growing complexity, not homological transformation. Thirdly, this process is governed at all stages by interaction with the environment rather than by the application to reality of a grid of innate categories. And finally, Piaget's conception of an epistemological circle (with the subject introducing meaning into the world of which he is a part, while being constituted by that world which is part of him) effectively replaces with a dialectical understanding of the subject-object unity the more common structuralist dualism between historical subject and ahistorical objective system of meanings.

Why Piaget rather than Marx himself? Is there some advantage, beyond that of novelty or popular appeal, in dressing a traditional theory in the up-to-date jargon of a modern scientific trend? The first possibility is Piaget's exclusive concern with human consciousness, remembering that this was the primary interest of both

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Goldmann and the Frankfurt School. Marx's theory of man as essentially a producer who creates himself as well as his world has been interpreted as stressing the instrumental aspect and relegating the construction of meaning to second place. Indeed, Habermas - incorrectly, I believe - accused the later Marx of just such a wrong-headed emphasis and maintained that this leads directly to the positivistic interest of control.

A further possibility is that Goldmann is trying to make Marxism more palatable to its critics. He appears to find the structuralist conception of holism less controversial than the Marxist idea of determinism and as valid a 'theoretical' justification for his Marxist methodology since dialectical materialism is also an holistic perspective. Similarly, he seems to find Piaget's notion of structure as characteristically independent of any external reality more attractive than that prescriptive Marxist realism which so severely limited Lukács's literary theory. In other words, Goldmann might be trying to avoid the suggestion that there is an underlying reality to which the Marxist has privileged access, together with its aesthetic corollary that correspondence to this 'truth' is the primary criterion for art. However, when we come to look at Goldmann's theory of the novel, we shall find that the structuralist terminology hides this same Marxist prescription.

We must now consider in what respects Piaget's theory

of intelligence so conforms to the Marxist understanding of man that it can appear to Goldmann to be an acceptable contemporary substitute. This is not an easy question to answer, but it becomes easier if one remembers that what is involved are two views on human consciousness and if one looks for the absence of conflict rather than for conformity.

Since Piaget's is not a maturational theory of inevitable unfolding in the sense of an endogenously self-sufficient process, it might appear compatible with the Marxist idea that man constructs rather than discovers meaning.³³ Indeed, Piaget's notion of the development of increasingly complex intellectual structures for the handling of the environment may be seen as emphasizing the active role of the humanbeing in the evolution of these constructs. The significance of using a learning theory as a basis for his ideas must be sought in this area as well. Since learning is defined as changes in behaviour due to interaction with the environment, Goldmann can highlight that relation between social praxis and consciousness which is so important to the Marxist conception, and it also provides him with a perfect vehicle for the presentation of his interpretation of the man-as-essentially-rational perspective in a guise that will not quarrel too much with the Marxist theory of man-as-universal-producer.

Now the question arises whether this new version of Marxism, which is supposedly more suited to present day reality, is indeed true to the traditions of Marxism. The main problem with Goldmann's adaptation of Piaget arises precisely because Goldmann does not seem to understand that the spirit of a theory and the categories in which that spirit is expressed are inseparable.³⁴ The use of such terms as 'survival', 'inherent tendencies', and 'equilibrium',³⁵ which carry connotations of uncontrollable, and therefore non-moral, human drives, effectively removes the essential element of moral responsibility contained in the Marxist concept of functionality. Thus, in one sense it merges facts and values and in another sense separates them, for there is no room here for that evaluation of human behaviour and meanings that one finds in Marxism, but only for their explanation. Nor is this a realist theory in the sense that Marxism is: the only realities here are the practical ones of the environment and the human need to adapt to it both physically and psychologically in the interests of survival. Realism here is intellectual pragmatism.

Furthermore, there is a vast difference between Lukács's stress upon consciousness and Goldmann's ostensibly similar intention, for where Lukács remains faithful to the spirit of Marxism while concentrating upon one aspect of it, Goldmann does not. By taking as his starting point a certain innate human drive, adaptation to the real, Goldmann re-

places the selfcreated and selfcreating subject of Marxism with the constant object of positivism (See A1), and his postulation of a tendency towards transcendence (See A3) does little to remedy the matter.

There is a passage in 'The Revolt of Arts and Letters in Advanced Civilizations' which clearly reveals Goldmann's respect for positivism and his understanding of it as the expression of an essential dimension of humanity, an attitude quite unlike modern Marxism's appraisal of it as the epistemological expression of an unhuman will to dominate. This passage also suggests that it is Goldmann's intention in his three characteristics of human behaviour to temper pragmatism (A1) with idealism (A3), to synthesize adaptation to the real (A1) and creation of an ideal (A3), to blend positivism (A1) with dialectics (A3). Unfortunately, juxtaposition does not make a synthesis, just a contradiction - as the following extract illustrates:

Traditionally, during the entire history preceding our contemporary societies (and probably also in the present and the future, although these things are not as clear), man has defined himself in terms of two fundamental dimensions in which his psychic life and his behaviour develop: the tendency to adapt to the real, and the tendency to overcome the real toward the possible - towards a beyond which men must create by their behaviour.

Adaptation to the real is an essential function for the individual as much as for social groups. Such adaptation, however, tends to create equilibria which threaten to become static.

Until now society always changed due not only to the action of the individuals and groups composing it but also to external influences. Thus, well before it was attained (usually as it was only being approached), equilibrium was no longer adapted to the real problems of social life; and men came to be oriented toward a different and often higher equilibrium.

Although I cannot pursue the point - I will say that the possible is the fundamental category for comprehending human history. The great difference between positivist and dialectical sociology consists precisely in the fact that whereas the former is content to develop the most exact and meticulous possible photography of the existing society, the latter tries to isolate the potential consciousness in the society it studies: the potential (virtuelles), developing tendencies oriented toward overcoming that society. In short, the first tries to give an account of the functioning of the existing structuration, and the second centers on the possibilities of varying and transforming social consciousness and reality.³⁶

We notice that the two dimensions of humanbeing mentioned in paragraph one reduce to one in paragraph two where the tendency to transcend reality is shown to be a question of altering one's adaptation to reality in accordance with an alteration in that reality. Yet the whole tenor of the passage and the use of such words as 'overcoming', 'a beyond', and 'higher equilibrium' make it clear that Goldmann does not intend his conception of transcendence to be merely Piaget's notion of accommodation and a counter to stasis.

Despite Goldmann's attempts to avoid a static situation, one is reminded of a type of structuralism not previously mentioned here - structural functionalism - for his theory seems in some ways to be a psychological variant of this. There is the same concern with maintaining equilibrium, the same understanding of function in terms of this, the same avoidance of ethical judgments and implicit justification of the status quo, the same implication of consensus and lack of conflict theory, the same mode of explanation in terms of an eternally valid external reference point that differs completely from the Marxist method of immanent analysis of phenomena in their historical individuality.

Perhaps Goldmann's primary error is his indiscriminate eclecticism. He begins with Marx's conception of man as a producer who creates both himself and his world. Ignoring the instrumental aspect and concentrating upon rational transformation, or what would now be called the social construction of reality, he offers us a version of this process that derives from the learning theory of a structural psychologist. He then borrows from an organic model the idea of homeostasis (optimum equilibrium) as a survival mechanism and from an evolutionary model the notion of adaptation to the environment as a further means of survival, and he transfers these, too, to the sphere of human consciousness.³⁷ At this level two of the three laws governing the Hegelian dialectic become operative,

that of negativity and that of the change from quantity to quality. Here, Goldmann reverts to Marx's account of factors affecting changes in forms of social organisation and stresses their role in effecting changes in the organisation of social consciousness. To lend this amalgam its final oddity, there is the use throughout of the vocabulary of the psychologist and the overtones of Freudianism.³⁸ Eclecticism and modernisation have not provided an updated Marxism but a travesty of the original. The attempt to synthesize two different models of man - that is, man defined metaphysically in terms of an essential nature, which is to be selfdetermining, and man defined positivistically as driven by uncontrollable psychological forces - simply does not come off.

CHAPTER 10
CULTURAL CREATION

In discussing Goldmann's understanding of what it means to be human and the debt that his theory owes to Piaget, I suggested several reasons why Goldmann may prefer his adaptation of Piaget to the more traditional versions of Marxism, and I pointed out several respects in which his theory is both different from, and less satisfactory than, orthodox Marxism. I have up to now neglected the crucial question of how successful Goldmann has been in adding a sociological dimension to what is essentially a psychological theory, mainly because Goldmann himself only comes to grips with this question of group or class consciousness - if, indeed, he can be said to come to grips with it at all - when he narrows his field of interest to cultural creation.

Goldmann's theory of cultural creation is essentially an attempt to reconcile the dimensions of individual creation and social determinism; but I shall argue that as regards the former, he confuses criteria of sociological significance with literary criteria, and that as regards the latter, the lack of a clearly formulated theory is betrayed by a general amorphousness.

In considering Goldmann's theory of cultural creation in this chapter, I shall begin by examining in turn these two related aspects - his construction of a literary

theory that integrates creative freedom with social determinism, coherence with correspondence, and his sociological adaptation of Piaget. My discussion of these issues will draw largely on Goldmann's article 'Genetic Structuralism' in the *Sociology of Literature*, since this represents one of his rare attempts to present a comprehensive account of his position.

Now, Goldmann's success or failure in these two areas is largely dependent upon the acceptability of his altered understanding of stratified society, which is in turn dependent upon his modified interpretation of contemporary capitalism. I intend to show here that in his analysis of cultural developments as post-capitalistic, Marxist materialism is replaced by romantic idealism, and class conflict gives way to the implication of community and consensus, leaving no satisfactory explanation for ideology. I shall show how this failure relates to Goldmann's attempt to distinguish two different types of ideology - one with unacceptable sociological and political overtones, the other a psychological phenomenon - and to an inadequate account of both of these.

This chapter points ahead in that it paves the way for my critique of the inconsistencies in Goldmann's theory of the novel by showing the lack of a solid theoretical foundation in the more general area of cultural creation as a whole, and it points backwards in reinforcing what I suggested in Chapter 9 - that Goldmann's structuralism,

far from enhancing his Marxism, actually undermines it, replacing an holistic perspective that sees things in their historical context with a reductive methodology that seeks a single universal factor in human activity.

Goldmann's commitment to the concept of totality results in a rejection of any separation between the laws governing cultural activity and those operating in every other sphere of human behaviour. The whole point of Goldmann's statement of the three characteristics of human behaviour discussed in Chapter 9 is to provide a universally applicable general hypothesis which will account for the special qualities (from the point of view of the critic) and status (from the point of view of the society involved) of cultural creation, especially literary creation.¹

One must at this point predict a problem and indicate a certain finesse. As regards the problem it is usual when working from the general to the specific to distinguish by difference. What Goldmann is proposing to do, however, is to account for the specific in terms of its universality. This effectively ignores whatever it is that constitutes the uniqueness of this particular form of the general. This intention rests upon a reductive preconception which is quite different from that Marxist-structuralist interpretation of the totality that Goldmann uses elsewhere to support the rigorously holistic

method of genetic structuralism, namely, the belief that meaning resides in the relation between elements and that explanation requires a knowledge of the context. His account in The Hidden God is perfectly orthodox:

I set out from the fundamental principle of dialectical materialism, that the knowledge of empirical facts remains abstract and superficial so long as it is not made concrete by its integration into a whole; and that only this act of integration can enable us to go beyond the incomplete and abstract phenomenon in order to arrive at its concrete essence, and thus, implicitly, at its meaning. I thus maintain that the ideas and work of an author cannot be understood as long as we remain on the level of what he wrote, or even of what he read and what influenced him. Ideas are only a partial aspect of a less abstract reality: that of the whole living man. And in his turn, this man is only an element in a whole made up of the social group to which he belongs. An idea which he expresses or a book which he writes can acquire their real meaning for us, and can be fully understood, only when they are seen as integral parts of his life and mode of behaviour. Moreover, it often happens that the mode of behaviour which enables us to understand a particular work is not that of the author himself, but that of a whole social group; and, when the work with which we are concerned is of particular importance, this behaviour is that of a whole social class.²

In 'Genetic Structuralism' in the Sociology of Literature', however, he offers in support of his holism a version of the linguistic analogy upon which so many forms of structuralism are based, and falls into that most unsatisfactory of structuralist positions - the reduction of all phenomena to a common denominator.

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I have said that genetic structuralism is above all a rigorously holistic position. This is why, just as it rejects any separation between history and sociology, it also cannot accept a radical separation between the fundamental laws of creative behaviour within the cultural sphere, and those which govern the everyday behaviour of all men in social and economic life. These laws, to the extent that they exist (and it is one of the tasks of sociology to bring them to light), apply as much to the activity of the workman, craftsman or tradesman in the exercise of his occupation or in his family life as they do to Racine or Claudel at the times when they are composing their writings. Of course there are, within the framework of very general laws, specific characteristics and laws appropriate to the behaviour of particular social groups, and this increasing specificity can be carried very far. However, it appears to me specially important to begin by formulating universal laws of behaviour, in order to see to what extent, starting from them, one can account for the special status possessed by cultural activity, and particularly by literary creation, in social life as a whole.

Here I have to insert a parenthesis. I think, in fact, that to try to understand cultural activity outside the totality of life in the society in which it is developed is just as futile an enterprise as trying to detach, not provisionally and for the needs of study, but fundamentally and for good, a word from a sentence and a sentence from an utterance. If you agree that this is wrong, I think it also follows that statements cannot be validly studied by separating them from the individual who formulates them or by separating this individual from the socio-historical relations in which he is involved. Thus any radical (or quasi-radical) dualism or pluralism in one's approach to the different areas of human behaviour strikes me as questionable, and condemned in advance as leading to a partial and discordant image of the reality of human behaviour.

Now let me resume. Underneath all genetic structuralist studies in the area of cultural activity, there is the hypothesis that there is a universal characteristic which is valid for all human behaviour and this characteristic must be able to account for the very special attributes with which certain forms of cultural behaviour are credited, not only by critics but by the same societies in which they are developed.³

In this extract, while Goldmann offers some argument in support of his contention that a 'dualism or pluralism in one's approach to the different areas of human behaviour' is questionable, he offers no argument to bolster his hypothesis that a universal characteristic of human behaviour must be able to account for the uniqueness of specific forms of cultural activity, particularly literary creation. He merely intermingles his discussion of these two issues, the holistic and the reductive, a methodological precept and a theoretical preconception, and this is where the finesse occurs, for one is led to believe that the analogy which legitimates the former also legitimates the latter.

The unarticulated preconception here that accounts for this hypothesis is the belief that creative activity is the human activity par excellence,⁴ the form of behaviour which epitomises the essential nature of humanity, which, we recall, is to adapt to reality by constructing meaning and striving for coherence. If so, then Goldmann has certainly achieved an interesting reversal of the usual issue: we no longer have to seek the special quality

that distinguishes art from advertising, but rather to pinpoint what inadequacy in advertising makes it a less than ideal human activity.

We also have an answer here to the question of how one is to accomplish the act of definition (and thereby of distinction) that must precede the search for common factors in different forms of human activity. Obviously, in order to discover what art and advertising have, or do not have, in common, one must first be able to recognize both of them. As one might expect from Goldmann's reductive attitude, his answer to this problem of distinguishing cultural from everyday activities is a matter of degree rather than difference.

We recall that human behaviour is characterised by the tendency to create coherent structures of significance. Incredibly, a crucial qualification of this point is appended in a footnote in which Goldmann tells us that all men tend to create significant structures, that all members of a single social group tend to create the same significant structures, and that all members of 'certain select groups' tend to create the same, totally inclusive significant structures that he calls 'world views'. What distinguishes cultural activity is its more or less coherent realisation of that global significant structure towards which all the members of a 'certain social group' are tending.⁵

What we have here is an ingenious attempt at achieving

a synthesis of the aesthetic ideal of coherence and the social ideal of correspondence, with a sophisticated twist in that what is demanded is not correspondence to some absolute reality but to a socially specific construction of reality. Where Lukács resorted to prescriptiveness, Goldmann espouses relativism - in theory, that is.

Two problems must be indicated here. Firstly, cultural activity is distinguished by a broad descriptive criterion that is also an evaluative one. Now, if we concede the dubious point that art differs from advertising by virtue of its degree of coherence, how does literature differ from philosophy? The answer is that for Goldmann it does not.⁶ Furthermore, if one uses an evaluative criterion to distinguish between activities, one cannot effectively use the same criterion within a particular activity. So in terms of this there is presumably no good art and bad art, but only art and non-art: Goldmann's concept of coherence is useless for the purpose of fine discriminations of kind or quality.

If we refer back to the passage from The Hidden God quoted on page 344, we find evidence of a further problem attached to Goldmann's two criteria, coherence and correspondence, in the last few lines, where he tells us that the 'important' work is the most representative work. That is to say, it is the work that is explicable purely in terms of the common distinguishing characteristics of an entire social class: it is the work that is the least

individual or idiosyncratic in its underlying worldview. There can be little doubt that by 'important' Goldmann means 'of sociological significance', but does this imply that only coherence is a literary criterion, while correspondence - unlike Lukács's realism - is merely an explanatory device and a sociological standard?

If coherence measures literary quality and correspondence measures sociological significance, we arrive at a position that reinforces my contention that Goldmann's criteria distinguish art and non-art, but not good and bad art, for we now have a class - art - whose members are not evaluated as art (that is, in terms of their membership in that class) but only as regards their importance (that is, in terms of the requirements of a different class altogether, the sociologically significant). This is not very different from the position adopted by the dogmatic Marxists discussed in Part I.

Moreover, if we examine these criteria - coherence and correspondence - a little further, we find that they actually converge, that a work is coherent only when it corresponds to the collective consciousness, so that coherence is neither a description of a cultural work, nor an aesthetic standard, but a measure of sociological significance and an explanatory device. In The Hidden God Goldmann distinguishes between accidental and essential elements in a work and accidental and essential works in a writer's opus in terms of coherence. He associates the

accidental with individuality and biographical explanation, and the essential with the group consciousness and sociological explanation. Only the essential, the collective, the socially determined will constitute a coherent whole, in other words, coherence equals correspondence. Nor is coherence always the doing of the writer, it seems, for in editing out the accidental, it is the critic that perfects the correspondence and the coherence of the work and the opus.

We are left, therefore, with no literary criteria at all, but only two measures of sociological significance. In fact, we are not even left with a means of distinguishing between art and non-art, for if 'coherent realisation of that global significant structure towards which all the members of a certain social group are tending'⁷ defines cultural creation, and if the critic has carte blanche to eliminate and organise material in order to achieve such a coherent realisation, then, presumably, he could make a work of art out of the complete opus of an advertising copywriter. Goldmann seems to have painted himself into a corner from which he makes a weak attempt to escape when he assures us that 'aesthetically satisfying' works will never turn out to be accidental, individual, non-coherent, or non-corresponding.⁸

I have been dealing with the first of two important and interrelated aspects of Goldmann's theory of cultural creation, his attempt to synthesize the aesthetic and the

social, coherence and correspondence, and I have shown how he actually eliminates the dimension of creative freedom. I want to look now at the second aspect, that is, Goldmann's attempt to add a sociological gloss to his anthropological-type theory, showing how his projected synthesis fails at the level of social determinism as well. In approaching the same field from a different angle a certain amount of repetition is unavoidable; a certain amount of contradiction may also arise, because Goldmann is contradictory.

What emerges from the footnote discussed on Page 347 is firstly, that social group membership is the significant factor as regards human consciousness, secondly, that there is a collective consciousness specific to particular social groups, and thirdly, that cultural creation is the realisation at an individual level of a group phenomenon, the subjective perfection of an inter-subjective project. As I have suggested before, it would seem to be Goldmann's intention to give due weight to both the social and the individual dimensions of creativity in the interests of his synthetic theory. Accordingly, while his artist is in some (as yet unexplained) way not entirely mentally free, there is at the same time, in this particular formulation, no reductive denigration of the role of the individual artistic imagination in the process of creation.

The most striking thing here is the vagueness of the references to social groups and the resultant amorphousness

of any sociological significance. Goldmann's phraseology suggests concerted action in response to some inner compulsion rather than the more usual Marxist understanding of the relation between being and consciousness. Consequently, there is no explanation why members of a specific group should create the same structures, nor why a particular group should create this worldview rather than any other. That this lack of specificity with regard to the crucial question of social groups and/or classes is not an isolated occurrence is shown by the extract from The Hidden God reproduced on Page 344, for the same deficiency prevails there.

The inadequacy of Goldmann's account of stratified society may be attributed to his attempt to modernise Marx in the belief that the structure of what he calls organisational capitalism so differs from the form of capitalism that Marx knew, that it requires a different understanding. Consequently, Goldmann largely ignores an essential element of Marx's concept of structure, that is, the idea that the interdependence of the parts can only be understood properly within the framework of the notion of a fundamental social contradiction.

Now if one holds that 'the Western proletariat, far from remaining alien to the reified society and opposing it as a revolutionary force, has, on the contrary, become integrated into it to a large degree'⁹, if, that is, one eradicates the class conflict characteristic of bourgeois

society, one eliminates not only material differences, but differences of consciousness. One has deprived oneself of the Marxist explanation for the relation between class and consciousness and its understanding of the concept of ideology, and one is then left with the sort of romantic ideal of community and consensus that Goldmann's three characteristics of human behaviour tend to imply.¹⁰

However, while Goldmann is prepared to revise Marx's account of bourgeois society, he is not prepared to dispense entirely with the notion of class. In "Genetic Structuralism" in the *Sociology of Literature* we find an attempt to explain what he means by 'certain select groups' and 'a certain social group' that play decisive roles in the initiation and development of worldviews:

... we must make a further distinction, in terms of their importance for cultural creation, between two different types of social groups and two corresponding collective consciousnesses - first, all the groups such as families, occupational groups, etc., which are concerned, in terms of collective behaviour, only with improving particular positions within a given social structure. I will call the collective consciousness which corresponds to them an ideological consciousness, in so far as it has a restricted character specific to the group, and since material interests, in the more or less narrow sense of the term, often play by far the preponderant role in it.

Secondly, there are particular social groups whose consciousness, feelings and behaviour are taken up with some wholesale reconstitution of all kinds of relationships between men and relationships between men and nature, or else with maintaining the existing social structure in its entirety. This

comprehensive view of human relations and of relations between man and the universe implies the possibility (and very often the active presence) of an ideal of humanity. It is this which inclines me to distinguish it from the type of collective consciousness which I have called ideological by attaching to it the term "world view".

It is necessary to add that very often in this last type of collective consciousness, though material interests naturally continue to play an important role in the articulate development of concern for unity and coherence, such concern takes a far more important place than it does in the ideological type of social construction.

To conclude, the decisive factor in cultural activity is constituted by world views and by the social groups in which they originated and were developed (which were, for at least a very long period of Western history, social classes).¹¹

This brief account is not only inadequate but extremely irritating, for several reasons. Firstly, having used the first two paragraphs to distinguish the two kinds of social group in terms of the motivation that accounts for their different consciousnesses, Goldman uses the third paragraph to blur that distinction and make it a question of proportion. Secondly, since Goldmann gives no examples of what we may call the Type B group, we are left to our own inferences. Thirdly, he does not clarify the relation between Type A and Type B groups. Since every member of a Type B group must also be a member of a Type A family group, groups A and B would seem to overlap: Type A appears to be a substantive system of classification, while Type B is a theoretical or analytical one, but this is far

from clear. Nor are matters helped by Goldmann's post-script - in a bracket, no less - to the effect that 'for at least a very long period of Western history' the groups 'in' which worldviews developed were social classes.¹² This is surely deliberately evasive.

On the basis of this particular text one might well infer that Type B refers to an intellectual élite who also happen to belong to a particular social class. In terms of Goldmann's distinction, it follows that the concern of this group¹³ to reconstruct or preserve man's relation to his world is most likely to be a purely theoretical exercise, and a vast gap opens up between the ethical idealist and the practical revolutionary, who would presumably fall under a Type A occupational group and be concerned only with improving his material position and not with fulfilling a humanistic ideal or achieving a coherent worldview, although Goldmann's qualification in the third paragraph may allow for his using such an ideal or worldview to bolster his ambitions.

This interpretation smacks of an élitist division¹⁴ of the world into a mass of short-sighted workers with a store of practical, everyday, recipe knowledge, plus a desire to better themselves materially, and a small group of visionary thinkers and artists, driven by a psychological need, who build theoretical systems and symbolic universes of meaning which are informed by a humanistic ideal yet are, somehow, at least partially determined by

their real situation in a stratified society. But since this last is not elaborated upon, the question of the validity of these systems of meaning does not, and cannot, arise. The disparity between such a conception and that of orthodox Marxism scarcely needs to be underlined. This is quite unlike Lukács's idea of the dependence of realism (or correspondence) upon participation. Psychological idealism replaces materialism, and we have an odd version of a class conflict existing purely in worldviews.

In other formulations Goldmann produces a variant of this that will be familiar to any student of romantic literary criticism - a conception of the creator as the highpoint of consciousness of his time that is reminiscent of one of Lukács's explanations for realistic insight.

Thus, the writer does not reflect the Conscience Collective, as the traditional line of positivist mechanistic sociology maintained, but, on the contrary, advances very considerably the degree of structural coherence which the collective consciousness itself has so far attained only in a rough and ready fashion. Thus the work constitutes a collective achievement through the individual consciousness of its creator, an achievement which will afterwards reveal to the group what it was moving towards 'without knowing it' in its ideas, its feelings, and its behaviour.¹⁵

The artist has the task of actualising and articulating the consciousness of his lesser classmates, giving them insight into themselves. Again there is an élitist attitude towards the writer, and again Goldmann significantly

avoids any reference to an external reality, so that potential consciousness here is not what Lukács means by the term, and Goldmann's writer, unlike Habermas's sociologist, is the very opposite of a modern Marxist liberator, for, far from dispelling false consciousness, he perfects it - unless one adopts a total relativism and equates real consciousness with truth.¹⁶

There is, of course, an alternative and perhaps more likely reading, namely, that by Type B groups Goldmann means social classes, a pretation supported by other Goldmann texts, but if this is Goldmann's meaning, then his account¹⁷ is still unacceptable.

Social stratification is not a simple issue, but perhaps I can indicate briefly some of the peculiarities in Goldmann's analysis. Social classes have traditionally been distinguished in terms of such economic criteria as income, occupation, and education, although a more sophisticated version that allows for variation in status and power as well speaks of a common life-situation.¹⁸ All agree that the notion of class rests upon objective bases that may be summarised in terms of relationships of inferiority and superiority as regards access to scarce goods, which includes both material and immaterial, or psychic, satisfactions.

In the first place, therefore, it is difficult to accept a categorisation of social groups which distinguishes

class from one of its most commonly used indices, occupation, and from its most significant component element, the family. In the second place, it is difficult to conceive of the notion of class without any objective foundation. While Marx did insist that a common objective situation within the productive system is not sufficient to constitute a class and that a complementary subjective consciousness of common interests is needed before a class becomes a community, this is a far cry from Goldmann's idealistic and romantic account of class and class consciousness.

By idealistic, I mean that Goldmann distinguishes between classes purely in terms of shared worldviews, which fall into one of two broad categories - the conservative or the revolutionary - and ignores the question of a common objective situation from which these develop. By romantic, I mean his view of social class as a group not really concerned with material interests, but motivated by a psychological desire for a coherent world-picture which includes an ethical ideal of humanity that accordingly directs the class's interests towards the preservation or transformation of the social structure.

While his idealism leaves him unable to explain differences in worldviews, his romanticism presupposes a degree of consciousness and altruism in all men that is highly implausible, for if Type B groups are not an intellectual elite but social classes, then every member of

society must surely belong to a Type B group, and must fit the description given, that is, they must be concerned to perpetuate or revolutionize the existing structure in accordance with an ideal.

Goldmann's strange conception of the nature of social class, as dependant upon shared constructions of reality and divorced from material interests or objective situations, has the unacceptable consequence of effecting an artificial dichotomy between the pragmatic everyday meanings used by men in their practical roles as fathers and workers and those idealistic theoretical systems of meaning that they supposedly construct in their alternative identity as class members. On a human level, this schizophrenic conception does violence to what Goldmann takes such pains to emphasize, the tendency toward consistency. On the sociological level, it implies a separation between theory and praxis which also contradicts what Goldmann has gone to great lengths to establish, their inseparability. Neither the non-materialism nor the separation of theory and praxis accord with Marxism.

Having suggested two possible interpretations of Goldmann's theory of social class, neither of which is satisfactory, I should like now to offer an explanation for the inadequacy of his theory and its violation of basic Marxist doctrines.

It seems to me that what Goldmann is attempting here is to distinguish between two forms of ideology, between

'ideology' in the pejorative Marxist sense of 'delusions' and 'ideology' in the neutral sense of 'social constructions of reality' used by Berger and Luckmann,¹⁹ between a false consciousness with a material basis and a relative epistemology with a psychological function.

In his Ideology and Utopia²⁰ Mannheim makes a similar distinction between the special-particular-evaluative and the general-total-nonevaluative kinds of ideology, but, unlike Goldmann, he associates the latter with the socially unattached intelligentsia, who, because of their minimal involvement in economics and politics, are able to achieve a coherent, dynamic, relative synthesis of partial and partisan perspectives, and it is the former that are either conservative or revolutionary.

Now, as we have seen with Lukács, rigid adherence to the Marxist theory of ideology entails either complete rejection of all bourgeois literature or unconvincing theoretical contortions in order to preserve the favoured few. On the other hand, the problem with Mannheim's analysis, from Goldmann's point of view, is that it does away with the essential Marxist aesthetic doctrine of at least part of class-related determinism.

In attempting to avoid both extremes, Goldmann produces an ambiguous formulation that almost coincides with Mannheim's except that the complete non-alignment of the intelligentsia yields to the implication of some undefined relationship between this group and social class. Thus,

because Goldmann reserves the term 'ideological', together with all its unpleasant overtones, for the partial and particular material-interest-determined consciousness of Type A groups, the coherent, global, idealistic worldviews associated with Type B groups avoid the stigma of the label 'ideology' while somehow maintaining their social location.

Since it is these non-ideological worldviews that find expression in literature, the utility of such a conception for a Marxist critic facing bourgeois literature is clear. A work based upon a worldview that is altruistically concerned with the possibilities for human selfrealisation inherent in a particular form of social structure is far more acceptable, however mistaken its ideals, than one that expresses unexamined ideological precepts designed to further the egoistic aspirations of a Type A group.

To summarise the discussion this far: whether one begins with an analysis of the terms of Goldmann's attempted synthesis (coherence and correspondence), or whether one starts with an examination of his notion of cultural creation and its foundation (the relation between society and the individual consciousness as expressed in the literary work), one arrives at the same conclusion - Goldmann's theory is essentially unsatisfactory. His apparent liberalism boils down to dogmatism and his dogmatism is without a supportive material foundation. From the point of view of the literary critic, he fails to come

to grips with the issue of literariness, and from the point of view of the Marxist sociologist, he fails to provide an adequate explanation for the social component in individual creation. Goldmann's theory is not really a sociology of literature, but a sociology of knowledge in the broadest definition of that field - hence his concern with worldviews.

Central to Goldmann's theory of cultural creation is his understanding of the worldview, but this concept raises more questions than it answers. Apart from such specific problems as why worldviews should develop in social classes rather than in other social collectivities, and whether we must expect to find a single worldview per class, there is the all-important and primary matter of the ontological status of a worldview, the question of whether it exists in the consciousness of a social group, or whether it is the ideal-type construct of the theorist, a model used as an analytic tool and as such of indubitable utility for understanding, but not to be thought of as an actually existent consensual 'picture'.

Goldmann displays his usual inconsistency on this topic. In The Hidden God he asks 'What is a world vision? It is not an immediate empirical fact, but a working hypothesis ...'²¹ Yet two paragraphs later he writes:

It would be wrong however to look upon this world vision as a metaphysical concept or as one belonging purely to the realm of speculation.

On the contrary it forms the main concrete aspect of a phenomenon which sociologists have been trying to describe for a number of years under the name of the collective consciousness.²²

In its first meaning, the worldview as a means of analysing underlying literary structures is no innovation: it has a long and respectable history in literary criticism. As regards its second meaning, Eagleton²³ has criticised what he calls the naive historicism of Marx's conception of a unitary worldview and maintains that Lukács, too, thinks in epochal rather than class terms; Goldmann's theory, then, could be seen as an attempt to put right this failing by positing class-related worldviews rather than a single system of ideas, the product of the ruling class, which forms the reality of a society.

Now, within the context of orthodox Marxism, the question is whether this leaves room for Marx's false consciousness or Lukács's mendacious consciousness. Two further problems are how one is to reconcile oppositional writing, such as bourgeois realism, with Goldmann's definition of cultural creation in terms of correspondence, and how these ideas fit into Goldmann's relativism. Goldmann cannot simply assume traditional Marxist answers to these problem areas; the altered nature of his theory requires new answers or some indication of how and why the old answers are still relevant. Perhaps it is these considerations that account for the fact that in his theory of the novel Goldmann reverts to that concept of a global false consciousness, a single ideological worldview -

that arises out of his vision of contemporary capitalism - plus an inexplicable critical consciousness.

If Goldmann's theory, as a Marxist theory, is inferior to that of Marx and Lukács in these respects, there is one aspect in which it represents an advance over their ideas, or, at least, a move in the right direction.

The main advantage of Goldmann's idea of the literary work as presenting in its most coherent form the worldview of the group or class to which the writer belongs, as compared with the more usual Marxist conception of ideology, is the attitude towards the real which follows upon it. Previous Marxist analyses discussed here have seen literature as a reflection, however mediated or distorted, of a given real. That is, they presuppose a knowable reality, a real referent, to which ideology stands in a relation of deformation. Literature, then, either mirrors this deformation or reveals the reality behind the ideology through some process of dissociation, transcendence, or distanciation.²⁴ As we have seen, this necessarily involves the unsatisfactory notion of a transcendent critic with a 'true' interpretation of reality who judges literature in terms of an extra-literary criterion of correspondence.

Now Goldmann's conception of a worldview, which sees ideology in the non-pejorative sense of that word as a social construction of reality and literature as the perfection of such a construction, stresses the fictiveness of all versions of reality as well as of literature. There

is no privileged access to reality presumed here. Literature refers back not to some objectively existing real, but to a subjectively constituted symbolic universe. Thus he might have avoided the reification inherent in realism and opened the way for internal coherence, an aesthetic criterion, to displace external correspondence as the prime literary value.

Although Goldmann, unfortunately, does not exploit to the full the potentiality of this approach, but, as I have indicated above, allows the demand for correspondence to overcome the criterion of coherence, there is still a significant difference in status between the worldview with which Goldmann proposes to interpret a work and the particular interpretation of reality that Lukács brings to bear upon all works. Ideally, the former is a flexible construct deriving partly from the work itself and partly from the ideology of the group in which the work was produced, while the latter may be completely external to both. I say 'ideally' because in Goldmann's account of the novel we shall see the gap between his liberal theory and his prescriptive practice.

It is the structuralist dimension in Goldmann's thought that accounts for this development, for where Marxist aesthetics sees the literary work as a symbol of an historical reality, it is the structuralist who sees it as a symbol of a particular reality that a society constructs for itself. But, in the same way as Goldmann's theory,

in deviating from certain bases of Marxism (such as its materialism and its denial of a universal human nature), fails to provide an adequate foundation for those Marxist ideas that he clings to (such as the social determinism of literature), so other inadequacies arise from his failure to pursue his structuralist inclinations sufficiently. Goldmann's theory stresses one half of the Saussurean set of dichotomies (langue, the signified, synchrony - the idealist-formalist notions that apply primarily to a given system of social meanings), and he neglects the equally important, indeed inseparable, other face of meaning - language and the individual act of production. A greater concern with parole, the signifier, and diachrony would introduce into the Goldmannian theory the idea of language as a process of ceaseless productivity, as the medium for something beyond the communication of socially pre-given meaning. This would allow him to cope with poetry as well as the novel, and would allow the idea of aesthetic coherence to stand on its own feet instead of sliding into social correspondence. He is enough of a Marxist to view language as transparent and to concentrate upon what it means (interpretation) and why (explanation), but in ignoring the question of how it means (semio-structural analysis), Goldmann shuts the door on all those benefits that should have derived from a blend of structuralism with Marxism.

I want at this point to recall the problem with which we began this section, the necessity for some synthesis

of the literary theories of reflection and creation, correspondence and coherence - and their related methodologies, genetic explanation and textual interpretation - that would satisfy the orthodox Marxist's belief in some degree of economic determinism as well as his respect for purely aesthetic values.

We have looked at Goldmann's variety of Marxism with its theoretical stress on totality, identity, potential consciousness, and dialectics, and we have observed the discrepancies between this and his theory of cultural creation as well as the discrepancies between that theory and his actual method. We have examined his anthropology, his psychology, and his sociology, with their emphasis upon the class-related yet altruistic construction of coherent, consistent, global structures of significance, showing how he violates the bases of Marxism. We have seen how literature relates to the above as the individual perfection of the transindividual tendency, noting how Goldmann fails to maintain the difficult balance between freedom and determinism. We have discussed the notions of class, ideology, and worldview upon which this theory rests, pointing out their deficiencies in terms of Marxism and simple consistency. Finally we have observed the potential advantage of Goldmann's theory as compared to that of Lukács, but also how performance fails to live up to promise - the theoretical possibility of a synthesis between reflection (of class worldview) and creation (coherent realisation of potential

class consciousness), correspondence (to class worldview) and coherence (the human and aesthetic criterion of validity), does not quite come off. In taking up Goldmann's theory of the novel in the next chapter, we shall see a further discrepancy between theoretical speculation and practical application.

CHAPTER 11
THEORY OF THE NOVEL

As a basis for his own sociology of the novel, Goldmann turns Lukács's early theory of the novel from an analysis of a literary form to a critique of bourgeois society. His manoeuvres are essentially designed to explain bourgeois critical realism, that anomalous phenomenon that constituted the theoretical stumbling-block for Lukács as well. Having distinguished two types of novel, that which celebrates the values of capitalism and that which appears to be in opposition to them, Goldmann must explain the relationship between the latter and the collective consciousness of bourgeois society, because not only has he insisted that all cultural creation is a collective product, but his interpretation of contemporary society posits a universal false consciousness. Like Lukács, Goldmann must either explain critical realism, or discard the entire literary output of reified bourgeois society as ideology.

I shall investigate here the hypothesis that Goldmann offers to resolve these problems, and the history of the novel that he produces in support of his hypothesis. This will involve a discussion of his structuralist version of a Marxist sociology of literature, where I shall argue that his so-called structuralism is merely a question of terminology and reduces ultimately to the most dogmatic Marxist conception of art as a superstructural reflection of the base. I shall also discuss here his failure to

use those structuralist insights that would firstly, have reduced the inconsistency of his theory, and secondly, have eliminated his major problem. By this I mean, had Goldmann adopted their precise analyses of the component elements of the novel, he would have avoided the confusion of structure, form, and content that makes his already simplistic history of the novel so difficult to understand, and had he followed their exposition of the true nature of realism as a literary form, he would have seen that the problem he is trying so tortuously to resolve - namely, how critical realism can be simultaneously determined, reflective, yet free from society's values - is actually non-existent.

In general my analysis will have three aims: to interpret Goldmann's concepts, to consider the internal consistency of his theory of the novel, and to consider its consistency with that general theory that we have already looked at. As regards the first issue, I shall be concerned with the meaning of Goldmann's ostensibly structuralist terms and with his use of the concept of form; as regards the second issue, I shall show that having devised a theory of the novel whose central point is the elimination of subjectivity as a significant factor in its creation - whether this be the consciousness of society or of the writer - Goldmann contradicts himself and reintroduces it; as regards the third issue, I shall suggest that, despite the explicit intention of his general

theory to allow for a structuralist understanding of the dimension of creative freedom, Goldman's theory of the novel stresses a Marxist understanding of social determinism - although even here he cannot maintain a consistent attitude.

Finally, in the second section of this chapter, I shall compare Goldmann's theory to more recent developments in the area of Marxist structuralism - in particular, the ideas of Roland Barthes - showing how insight into the part played by language, conventional forms, other texts, and the reader in the construction of meaning leads to a better understanding of the extent to which literature is socially determined.

1. Analysis of Goldmann's Theory of the Novel

In developing his sociology of the novel, Goldmann begins by attempting to define the novel as a literary genre. To this end he offers what purports to be an account of the significant elements in Lukács's Theory of the Novel, modified by certain ideas taken from René Girard, whose theory, Goldmann claims, is very similar to that of Lukács.

Goldmann is not concerned here with a faithful exposition of Lukács, but is using him as an unimpeachable source and unquestionable authority for his own theory. He is paving the way for the sociological hypothesis he is about to offer us by presenting certain insights contained in Lukács's historico-philosophical account of the

evolution of the novel in a form that will justify his contention that there is a correlation between the history of the novel form and the history of economic life in Western societies. In order to do this, Lukács must be adapted so as to replace a psychological perspective and metaphysical overtones with social critique and ethical implications - and this is where Girard comes in.

In Girard's approach Goldmann finds certain elements that are more suited to his purposes than the idealism and the individualism of the young Lukács. By this I mean firstly, that the basic Girardian distinction between the authentic or ontological and the inauthentic or metaphysical provides a terminology more compatible with Goldmann's Marxist frame of reference than does the real-ideal, essence-existence dichotomy in Lukács's early works, and secondly, that the introduction of Girard's concept of mediatization shifts to the social Lukács's emphasis on the individual. The Lukácsian idea of a discrepancy between individual ideal and the real is replaced with an opposition between theory and social praxis, and the significance of the hero's individual quest for values is replaced by the impotence of the individual in the face of certain environmental features. It is this subtle difference in perspective that Goldmann is trying to introduce into Lukács's theory. Where Lukács's history of the novel form focuses on various individual creative attempts at synthesizing the life-real-concrete-ontological and the theory-abstract-

ideal-metaphysical poles, Girard analyses the novel as a form that reflects the existence of these poles in the social world. In other words, where Lukács stresses creative freedom and is concerned with how the writer resolves the problem inherent in his raw material, Girard stresses determinism and is concerned with how the novel is a characteristic product of the morally degraded world it reflects.

Goldmann's interpretation of Lukács's theory of the novel centres around this word 'degraded', a concept that is never defined and seems to be used in several different senses. In Towards a Sociology of the Novel, Goldmann writes that 'the novel is the story of a degraded search, a search for authentic values in a world itself degraded', that 'the hero and his world are both degraded in relation to authentic values', and that 'to the extent that the novel is the imaginary creation of a world governed by universal degradation, this supersession cannot itself be other than degraded, abstract, conceptual'.¹

The word is obviously a catch-all for everything that Goldmann rejects, for that whole complex of qualities that Marxism associates with capitalism's brutalised nature, and so it stands in various instances for 'debased', 'dehumanised', 'conventional', 'individualistic', 'idealistic', and so on. The problem is that a word which ought to serve a denotative function is exploited for its pejorative connotations, so that what appears to be a

descriptive adjective is actually an unsupported value judgment.

Goldmann's version of Lukács's theory of the hero will serve to illustrate further his illegitimate manipulation of both the original text and the reader's responses:

The demoniacal hero of the novel is a madman or a criminal, in any case, as I have said, a problematic character whose degraded, and therefore inauthentic, search for authentic values in a world of conformity and convention constitutes the content of this new literary genre known as the 'novel' that writers created in an individualistic society.²

Lukács uses the word 'demonic' to suggest the complex idea of something super-natural yet less than divine, something more than real in the sense of an ideal, yet less than ideal because unreal, but, by equating 'demoniacal' with madmen and criminals, Goldmann suggests the meaning 'possessed by evil spirits'. Where Lukács uses the madman or the criminal as the prototype of the hero of the novel in order to illustrate an extreme case of a discrepancy between the individual's ideas and the world's realities - the ultimate example of subjective personal meanings or values with no objective social correlative - Goldmann makes of this psychological classification an intellectual, moral, and social judgment. Again, in referring to the hero as problematic, Lukács is making a diagnosis of a personality type, but Goldmann alters it to a social evaluation - the man who has problems becomes one who is a problem. Goldmann's point here is that in a capitalist society that

values individualism above all else, a demoniacal, problematic, degraded and inauthentic madman or criminal is considered a hero.

Goldmann has not only rewritten the early Lukács in terms of the later Lukács so as to emphasize that sociological aspect that is not fully developed in The Theory of the Novel, but he has aped the later Lukács at his polemical worst. This is a distortion of Lukács's analysis of the novel calculated to arouse aversion to that form of society of which the novel is allegedly a characteristic reflection. Indeed, what we have here is not so much an analysis of the novel as a literary genre as an indictment of the form of society that produced the novel.

Having defined the novel in a manner most suited to the sociological hypothesis he is going to present, Goldmann proceeds to describe the typical sociological approaches to literature, all of which he considers inapplicable in the case of the novel.

According to Goldmann, sociologists of literature have always sought the relationship between the novel and society and between the writer and society. In the former case, they have made the mistake of seeing the novel as a social document whose content represents a transparent reflection of social reality, when they ought to have looked for a relationship between the form of the novel and that of the social structure in which it was developed. In the latter case, they have postulated a connection between the

writer's consciousness as manifest in his work and the collective consciousness of his social class. In other words, they have held that it is class consciousness that constitutes the mediating link between social reality and the novel, which, Goldmann implies, is also a mistake.

Where Marxism differs from other positions, Goldmann claims, is in its understanding of both the nature of the relation between the writer's individual consciousness and the class's collective consciousness, and the manner in which this manifests in the work. Marxism rejects the idea of a simple reflection of the real content of the collective consciousness and suggests that the writer presents in a more coherent form, and on the level of structure, the potential consciousness of the class. Moreover, Goldmann tells us, Marxism recognises that the writer does not have to be a member of that class whose worldview is elaborated in his novel: he does not tell us that this is the fundamental problem for an orthodox Marxist sociology of literature.

Goldmann now comes to his central thesis and the reason why he maintains that previous studies in the sociology of literature, including the sophisticated approach of Marxism, cannot be applied to the novel. He contends that there is an 'homology between the structure of the classical novel and the structure of exchange in the liberal economy' such that the novel form seems to be 'the transposition on the literary plane of everyday life in the individualistic society created by market production',

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and, most significantly, that 'one can detect no analogous structure at the level of the collective consciousness that seemed hitherto to be the indispensable intermediary link to realise either the homology or an intelligible, significant relation between the different aspects of social existence'. It is this absence that leads Goldmann to posit a 'direct transposition of the economic life into the literary life' rather than 'the imaginary transposition of the conscious structures of a particular group'.³

What is this homologous structure that exists in life and in the novel, but not in the consciousness of society? In the novel it is the search for authentic values by a problematic individual in a degraded and mediatized mode. In market society, where authentic use values have become implicit, yielding place to inauthentic exchange values, it is the creative individual who remains oriented towards authentic values who becomes a problematic character on the fringes of society and who is forced to pursue use values through the medium of exchange values. Now Goldmann claims that this is the 'same structure manifesting on two different planes'.⁴

Leaving aside for the moment the question of the meaning of such terms as 'structure', 'homology', and 'direct transposition' - elements of textual interpretation - let us take up the other dimension of criticism stressed by Goldmann - that of genetic explanation - and we seek it, as he recommends, in the function of the structure of

significance or theory. In Towards a Sociology of the Novel we find the following passage:

The novel analysed by Lukács and Girard no longer seems to be the imaginary transposition of the conscious structures of a particular group, but seems to express on the contrary ... a search for values that no social group defends effectively and that the economic life tends to make implicit in all members of the society.

The old Marxist thesis whereby the proletariat was seen as the only social group capable of constituting the basis of a new culture, by virtue of the fact that it was not integrated into the reified society, set out from the traditional sociological representation that presupposed that all authentic, important cultural creation could emerge only from a fundamental harmony between the mental structure of the creator and that of a partial group of relative size, but universal ambition. In reality, for Western society at least, the Marxist analysis has proved inadequate; the Western proletariat, far from remaining alien to the reified society and opposing it as a revolutionary force, has on the contrary become integrated into it to a large degree ...

Furthermore, cultural creation, although increasingly threatened by the reified society, has continued to flourish. Fictional literature, as perhaps modern poetic creation and contemporary painting, are authentic forms of cultural creation even though they cannot be attached to the consciousness - even a potential one - of a particular social group.⁵

We see here how Goldmann's understanding of the universality of reification in post-capitalism intensifies the central predicament of a Marxist sociology of literature that he inherits from Lukács - how to account for

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bourgeois realism within the framework of an orthodox theory of the role of class consciousness. Goldmann's problem is clear, then: he wants to explain a critical consciousness and non-conformist values without giving up the notion of a class-determined consciousness, and he wants to retain as valid cultural creation the literature of a society that he sees as universally bourgeois and reified. The function of his theory of direct transposition is equally clear: in bypassing human consciousness as a mediating factor he eliminates any question of bourgeois ideology, at the same time implying both determinism and objectivity in his image of the novel as a direct reflection of social reality.

To justify this mechanistic determinism Goldmann cites Marx's theory of the fetishization of merchandise and reification, which, he claims, affirms that in a market society the collective consciousness 'loses all active reality and tends to become a mere reflection of the economic life and, ultimately, to disappear'.⁶ Now Marx's reification thesis refers to a certain everyday type of relation between men that results from the fetishization of merchandise: others have elaborated upon how this experience is accompanied by a related false consciousness. But surely to offer this ideological distortion as an explanation of how economic life comes to be directly transposed into literature is to subscribe to the false consciousness that Marxism only describes. It is not,

as Goldmann suggests, that the relations between the infra- and super-structures change, but that the reified consciousness's perception of them alters.

If Goldmann's use of orthodox Marxist doctrine is dubious, his interpretation of structuralist concepts is equally so. In taking up the second dimension of criticism, the explication of meaning, I want to look at those quasi-structuralist terms in which Goldmann expresses his sociological theory of the novel, namely, 'structure', 'homology', and 'direct transposition'.

The term 'structure' is at the best of times a problematic one, but Goldmann's version of the structuralist understanding of this concept is particularly idiosyncratic. To the structuralist the word 'structure' refers to a patterning of internally organised relationships that can be expressed in multiple forms that are transformations of one another with no particular form being a truer expression of the underlying structure than any other. The essential points here - besides the question of meaning being dependant upon interrelationships within a whole, an idea we dealt with in Chapter 9 apropos of Piaget - are firstly, the emphasis on a deep structure which generates observable phenomena, secondly, the fact that variations in surface phenomena are not explained causally but in terms of a transformation, thirdly, the consequent tendency to synchronic analysis rather than diachronic explanation, and fourthly, the belief in binary oppositions as the

main structuring principle.

Now this is obviously a far more complex and specialised concept than Goldmann's. As we saw earlier, by 'structure' Goldmann means a coherent construction of significance that is 'essentially defined by the necessity to fulfill a function in a certain situation',⁷ and as situations alter so these structures are modified to fulfill a changed function. For Goldmann, then, the notion of structure is inseparable from meaning, behaviour, function, and socio-historic situation, and although certain of these aspects could be interpreted in terms of the orthodox structuralist stipulations, others obviously violate such basic requirements as a fundamental, unchanging, generative type and transformations, replacing them with historically specific phenomena and causal explanation.

When Goldmann speaks of structures in literature, it is to these worldviews which constitute the underlying meaning - or what he calls the 'deep structure' - of the work that he is referring. Justifying his description of a worldview as a form or structure he explains that

there exist two distinct levels of form. Beyond the pure form spoken of by the linguist or the semiologist, there is what could be called the form of content. Some might call this content, but it is form; it is the significant structure of the universe created by the writer ... it is the semantic material ... not the linguistic form of the message.⁸

It is, in fact, what Lukács meant by 'form' in Soul and Form.

Goldmann's three-way distinction between content, linguistic form, and meaning-form is a valid one, but he does not go far enough here, and in other contexts, as we shall see, confuses form, content, and structure. In a more extensive structuralist analysis of the novel, Roger Fowler⁹ differentiates between surface structure and deep structure in a similar fashion: the former includes sounds and written symbols and is directly perceivable, the latter constitutes the abstract meaning and is only retrievable by a complex process of decoding. Fowler identifies two main components of the deep structure - propositions (content) and modality (worldview) - and stresses that although these may be expressed through different modes - for there is no one-to-one relationship between meaning (deep structure) and form (surface structure) - meaning always comes to us processed by the form in which it is expressed.

Now, Goldmann is solely concerned with the form of content (deep structure) and ignores the vital aspect of literary form (surface structure), and this to a large extent accounts for his inadequate understanding of the nature of critical realism as a conventional literary genre. It also accounts for his failure to see that his theory of a directly transposed identical structure of meaning does not answer the problem of explaining differences at the other level of form, the literary one.

Our discussion of the structuralist definition of a

structure also reveals the disparity between Goldmann's understanding of an homology and theirs. For the structuralist, an homology can be traced between two transformations of a structure in terms of that fundamental structure to which they both relate. For Goldmann, however, there is no question of a generative master structure; for him an homology simply means a correspondance between two socio-historically specific structures. Consequently, his postulation of an homology between economic life in capitalist society and the form of the novel has no explanatory power: it merely indicates the existence of such a phenomenon.

It is presumably the concept of direct transposition, with its implication of an action, that is intended to explain how the homology comes about, but direct transposition explains nothing, for in the absence of a responsible agent, it is simply another way of expressing the existence of an homology. Indeed, it might well be called a mystification of an homology, for what it means is far from clear and what it implies is quite implausible. So, not only is direct transposition not an explanatory concept, but the term itself requires explanation. Now, in order to explain it, Goldmann must either have recourse to the unconscious, in Freud's sense of the repressed, or he must ask us to believe that the artist's mind acts as a non-conscious catalyst, transforming appearance into art in such a way as to reveal reality without itself being affected.

Direct transposition appears to be Goldmann's structuralist version of the dogmatic Marxist concept of determination, for, ultimately, it is only explicable as another mode of expressing the old mechanistic base-superstructure theory of art as a reflection of economic reality, except that here the explanatory element of social determinism has been omitted and only the assertion of a mirror-image remains.

The advantage of direct transposition and its implication of a non-conscious novelist is that whatever the writer thinks subjectively, and whatever the overt contents of his work, and whatever the surface form, at the level of the objective meaning of the text and at the level of significant form, his novel will provide an accurate reflection of the structure of reality, which, as I suggested earlier, answers the problem of authentic bourgeois art and bourgeois insight into capitalist society.

This is why Goldmann prefers the pseudo-structuralist 'direct transposition' to the more obvious orthodox Marxist explanation. Given a situation where all novels exhibit the same ideological structure, the orthodox Marxist would say that, since all authors of this type of novel were members of the middle class, the phenomenon under consideration is evidence for the belief that what the writer expresses in his art is the collective consciousness that he shares with his class. But what then of Goldmann's contention that this ideological structure constitutes an accurate

reflection of reality, an insight into truth presumably beyond the grasp of the ideologised middle class or the reified consciousness of all post-capitalistic man?

The concept of direct transposition, then, serves two purposes. In the first place, Goldmann is trying to find a formula that will allow for what appears to him to be allegiance on the part of a bourgeois writer to a code of values that is endorsed neither by the bourgeoisie nor by any other class without at the same time postulating the complete independence of consciousness from determinism. That this is, in fact, a non-existent problem that only arises because Goldmann misunderstands the nature of critical realism, partially as a result of concentrating upon ideology and ignoring both the literary component and the literary tradition, is another matter. In the second place, the concept of direct transposition guarantees realism in the novel.

For Goldmann, realism in the novel means 'creating a world whose structure is analogous to the essential structure of the social reality in which the oeuvre has been written'.¹⁰ Now, since the novel form with which he is primarily concerned fits this definition, it must be the realistic novel, and non-realistic novels, then, are those that fail to display the requisite homology. What accounts for the fact that some novels do and some do not, why direct transposition holds in some cases and not in others, remains a mystery, but what is clear is that the notion of

direct transposition is neither an explanation, nor a description, but an evaluative criterion designed to separate the realistic from the non-realistic novel. Now, since what we are talking about as realism is an ideological structure and not a literary form, we are back to the reductive position of Lukács, and we understand why Goldmann's theory of the novel focuses upon a single type - to qualify as realistic, and thus as authentic-even-if-bourgeois literature, a novel must conform to a specific vision of the real, whether this is achieved by dissociation (as in the case of Lukács) or by direct transposition (as in the case of Goldmann).

Having eliminated the role of the collective consciousness in art - and with it, by implication, that of the individual consciousness as well - and having posited a direct transposition of reality into the novel, like some magic mirror, which, when held up to society, reveals its true face without any equivalent insight at the level of the person holding the mirror, Goldmann himself finds this position quite untenable and tries to put the novelist back into the novel as the mediating consciousness.

Goldmann's subsequent use of the individual consciousness to explain 'how the link between the economic structures and literary manifestations is made in a society in which this link occurs outside the collective consciousness',¹¹ appears to me to be in blatant contradiction to the idea of direct transposition. One cannot help feeling it

is not that one has misunderstood the original formulation, but that Goldmann has seized upon an ambiguity in it in order to extricate himself from an indefensible position without actually recanting. Thus, where originally the assertion that life was directly transposed into literature outside the collective consciousness appeared to mean that there was no mediating consciousness at all, now it is made to mean that the individual consciousness is quite separate from the collective consciousness. Well, perhaps not quite separate, for Goldmann now ties it to the collective unconscious of society.

Of the four convergent factors that Goldmann cites to explain how the novel comes to reflect the economic structure without the involvement of the collective consciousness, the first two are neither explanatory nor new - they simply restate his position on the subject of consciousness in post-capitalist society. Firstly, there is the false consciousness and false values of bourgeois society, who 'make of money and social prestige absolute values and not merely mediations that provide access to other values of a qualitative character',¹² and secondly, there is the existence of a small group of problematic individuals, creators and thinkers, who retain their insight and true values, 'whose thinking and behaviour remain dominated by qualitative values',¹³ although even they cannot entirely escape the effects of the social structure within which they live and work. How these individuals avoid the general

ideology Goldmann does not explain, but we see the same elitist tendency here that we noted in Chapter 10 when discussing his theory of social class and the construction of worldviews.

The remaining two factors are the significant ones. They show Goldmann moving in a direction that, if pursued, would allow him to provide a more convincing explanation for critical realism than he has up to now, but the latter of these factors appears to be totally inconsistent with the fundamentals of Goldmann's understanding of the novel form. I say 'appears' because he so confuses the issue by referring to the same elements (for example, biographical form) as structure, form, and content, that it is difficult to follow his argument.

Point three represents a modification of the first two points, an explanation of the critical individual consciousness, in spite of the collective false consciousness, which accords with Goldmann's insistence on a collective subject for all cultural creation. The decisive factor in determining the consciousness of the critical realist, we learn, is the collective unconscious of society: there must be 'a non-conceptualised, affective discontent, an affective aspiration towards qualitative values'¹⁴ either in the society as a whole, or amongst the middle-class from which most critical realists come. The independence of the writer's consciousness, then, is as much an illusion as the apparent consensus of society's consciousness.

Finally, the fourth point explains that the novel form - and the sense in which Goldmann uses this word here is open to argument - is determined by values in both the collective consciousness and the individual creative consciousness: its biographical form reflects the general bourgeois belief in liberal individualism, and the fact that it became the biography of the problematic individual reflects the alienated writer's personal experience of the disparity between this ideal and social reality. Here we are back to Lukács's original conception of the novel as an individual response to a dichotomy between the real and the ideal, and we are also back to the collective consciousness as the mediating link between society and novel.

Goldmann's fourth convergent factor, together with his history of the novel - which draws parallels between the changing form of the novel and the disappearance of individualism in the evolution of capitalism - suggests that the decisive factor as far as literary form goes is not, as he suggested earlier, the question of implicit values or a mediatized mode of existence, but the explicit bourgeois value of individualism. In other words, what structures the novel is not what he, implying the absence of the collective consciousness as mediating link, describes as 'values that no social group defends',¹⁵ but a value that the whole society subscribes to in theory, even though it fails to honour it in practice, a value, therefore, that

is very much part of the collective consciousness.

It follows that what critical realism deplores is not the values of bourgeois society, but the failure of bourgeois society to realise its ideals. It also follows that what the novelist is after is not an alternative set of ideals, but those of capitalism practised or, perhaps, purified. Critical realism is not, as Goldmann believes, 'a form of resistance to developing bourgeois society',¹⁶ but an awareness of its ills. Critical realism is not oppositional, as I discussed at length in Chapter 8 apropos of Lukács's similar illusions about the nature of this deceptive form.

It is Goldmann's rudimentary history of the novel that provides the fundamental observation which supports his contention of an homology between literary structures and economic structures in capitalist society, namely, that when the individual loses his importance in an economic structure which has changed from free competition to one of cartels and monopolies, the novel form alters accordingly, and the individual problematic hero disappears.

Now this seems to be a reversion to the original conception of homologous structures, direct transposition, and unmediated reflection, for Goldmann makes no attempt to relate this development to either the collective or the individual consciousness, to explicitly held values or implicitly felt aspirations. Perhaps this is no longer oppositional writing.

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