

Philosophy as Exile from Life: Lukács' 'Soul And Form'

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As ethical explorations of the world of literary and philosophical works, Georg Lukács's essays are so many restatements of a fundamental question: what are the relationships between such works, the lives of their individual creators, and social existence in general? In giving new expression to the meditation on meaning, value and time (historicity) in the texts it discusses, the critical essay does not merely restore some already given content: it creates new forms of enduring ethical value, which contribute to tracing the limits of human generic life. The crucial ethical problem underlying all of Lukács's essays is whether an individual can ever give form and meaning to his everyday life in society, or whether he must abandon such an endeavour as hopeless and seek a higher form of existence beyond the confines of conventional social relations. Lukács's response to this question evolved in accordance with his more general philosophical positions, which in turn were intimately connected to his political and personal situation. His essays can be understood as theoretical discussions or aesthetic portrayals of profound issues of modern life. But what makes his case so interesting is the way that these essays can be understood as *practical* interventions, existential gestures, ethical behaviour both constituted by, and constitutive of, fundamental values. This is most clearly apparent in Lukács's first collection of essays, *Soul and Form*. It not only theorized Lukács's ethic, but in a unique way itself embodied a model of existence.

Written between 1908 and 1910, *Soul and Form* shows Lukács carrying out a ruthless self-criticism of romanticism, striving to discover in the very material of impressionism the basis of a new constructivism, and in the end proclaiming a new classicism. The style, themes and mood of the book are redolent of turn-of-the-century Vienna, and it is shot through with the recollection of Pater, Wilde and Rudolf Kassner; but its conceptual structures are built upon Plato, Simmel, Kierkegaard and the German mystics. Although a work of and about art criticism, *Soul and Form* is especially an incisive philosophical analysis of modernity. It has a peculiar relevance for those irresistibly drawn to a *life* (and not merely a profession) of philosophical thinking. Lukács typifies the predicament of the modern intellectual *qua* intellectual under monopoly capitalism: pure philosophical/artistic spirit caught between the Charybdis of closure within the pure 'inner life of the soul', and the Scylla of a totally reified social world. *Soul and Form* exemplifies the strength and weakness of the estrangement of intellect from everyday life. Its author is a typically bourgeois thinker, but one who rejects reconcili-

ation with reified inner or outer life, and whose irony drives bourgeois thought towards its utmost limits, mercilessly exposing its (and therefore his own) contradictions. And yet Lukács himself remains trapped within those very contradictions he unmasks.

While the gulf between intellect and everyday life provides Lukács with the vantage point from which to launch his critique, it also imposes fundamental limitations on his thinking. *Soul and Form* gives expression to a tragic vision of life: its rejection of all existing social relationships and conventions is combined with disbelief and despair in the possibility of any significant change. In a succession of remarkably acute and subtle pieces, Lukács charts the breakdown of genuine communication and the concomitant isolation of individuals in a universe in which institutions have become disconnected from authentic spiritual and ethical life. With exceptional lucidity, he criticizes abstract idealists who desire to remodel the world according to their own arbitrary aesthetic or ethical will. Yet, because Lukács does not recognize any collective alternative to the social *status quo*, his philosophical and literary activity provide at best a means of escape, a refuge and a vantage point from which to judge an everyday existence he considers meaningless, disjointed, prosaic and reified. If philosophy represented for Novalis the drive to be at home everywhere, in Lukács's case it serves as a place of exile - but not of rest or oblivion - for one who feels nowhere at home.¹

I

Although the tragic vision of *Soul and Form* had already been foreshadowed in essays Lukács wrote as early as 1903,² its proper foundation was provided in Lukács's first book the *History of the Development of Modern Drama* (1908-09). Lukács articulates therein a pessimistic sociological diagnosis of the possibilities of cultural development in bourgeois society, considering them to be drastically narrowed and distorted by the all-pervasive character of reification. In this account, reification is produced by a division of labour involving the rationalization and quantification of all social processes. This leads to the levelling of all quantitative distinctions, and a consequent paradoxical combination of extreme individualism and utter depersonalization or uniformity of life. In contrast to the medieval world, labour processes

impossible to hope, even in the distant future, of attempting one. There would only be leaders.¹¹

Thus the historical dimension of Lukacs's analysis extends only to the generation of the present by the past - the way from the present to the future remains obscure and bleak in the absence of the agent of revolution.

'There would only be leaders': Lukacs's attitude is resigned and yet voluntaristic. In his despair over the impossibility of change, he accepts as given and immutable the dichotomy between abstract, impotent subjectivity, and abstract, omnipotent objectivity in the sphere of reified, everyday social existence.¹² The internalization of this dichotomy in his theory assumes the shape of an antithesis between form and validity on the one hand and lived experience (*Erlebnis*) on the other. Because of reification, processes, practices and institutions escape from subjective control and determination and take on a life of their own, the meaning of which is no longer transparent, and the sheer complexity and infinity of which tend to defy understanding. In this context the random, meaningless movement of reality becomes a thing-in-itself in the Kantian sense. The absence of any discernable unitary complex of laws has as a corollary the necessity of a plurality of modes of subjectivity and objectivity. Experience, as the level of immediate, heterogeneous and unstructured reality, is paralleled at more mediated levels by different, irreducible spheres (realms of form) characterized by their own distinct subject-object relationships governed by their own specific laws and modes of validity (e.g. aesthetics, sociology, ethics, etc.). Lukacs's discussion of the socio-economic structures of modern life consists not so much in an analytical referral of life-problems to social-structural relations and developments, but rather in an 'overriding cultural-social parallelism, for which economic-social factors in no way function as the decisive causal basis'.¹³ Rather than search for unifying tendencies grounding a many-layered, integrated totality (as developed in their respective ways by Marx and the later Lukacs),¹⁴ different spheres are constructed autonomously and then compared and cross-referenced so as to yield insights into the state of culture. Thus the social study of art is irrelevant to the assessment of artistic value or validity, which is a matter for aesthetics, but it can examine the place of art in society.

Lukacs appears to seek a formal typicality in historical life-elements in a way not dissimilar to Simmel's study of money which serves as the pretext for discovering a network of metaphysical preconditions for various possible approaches to scientific investigation (in particular historical materialism).¹⁵ The acuity of Lukacs's analysis of modern



drama brings to the fore socio-historical factors which almost become overall explanatory factors. Yet their methodological relativization leaves a vacuum which must be filled. Epistemologically, all the different modes of construing reality (aesthetics, logic, historical materialism degraded to the status of sociology)¹⁶ have an equal validity as distinct and autonomous modes of positing objectivity. The practical consequence of this is the possibility of shifting emphasis from historical options (such as bourgeois class rule and proletarian revolution) to aesthetic, ethical or religious objectifications embodying an individualistic quest for the timeless, metasocial values of culture. Such a philosophy of culture is the object of *Soul and Form*.

II

The extreme ontological and epistemological separation of intellectual life from everyday experience which pervades *Soul and Form* furthers the train of thought of the *History of the Development of Modern Drama*, but it also reflects Lukacs's own situation which, in its particularity, came to mediate the general situation in his class and times in a typical fashion.¹⁷ Lukacs's early essayistic period, during which he composed *Soul and Form*, was one of retreat into work. Lukacs truly became an 'isolated individual in civil society', his individuality undetermined by any specific institutional attachment: neither selling his labour power, nor owning material means of production, neither bound by family ties, nor involved in community organizations of one sort or another; Lukacs's ties to the theatre ended in 1908), living off his father's fortune, frequently travelling, mixing with others similar to himself - students, independent academics, artists. Yet unlike most of the latter, Lukacs had foresworn, or felt himself incapable of sustaining, almost all personal relationships other than intellectual ones - and even those truly intimate friendships his correspondence reveals were intensely intellectual in nature.

I cannot find my place and will never find it. Not more so in the most elementary purchases than in the serious human situations in which one ought to be serious and human. There I am serious at a pinch - but as if paralyzed.¹⁸

Lukacs's renunciation of his amorous relationship with Irma Seidler was of crucial importance in the genesis of this sense of alienation and its expression in *Soul and Form*. His own diary and correspondence make it more than clear that this book was born out of that relationship and represented an attempt both to articulate its significance and to justify his own feelings, ideas and behaviour.¹⁹ Agnes Heller has demonstrated how the relationship provided the occasion, themes and central problematic of *Soul and Form*, namely the attempted artistic composition (in the sense of the German word *Dichtung*) of life itself. She has shown that both G. Lukacs and I. Seidler had rejected the 'inauthentic', reified conventions which among members of their class furnished the basis for interpreting words and gestures and therefore for mutual understanding. In the absence of any alternative objective standard readily available to them, both sought to create meaning in their lives by living in a new way - but the options they respectively chose proved antithetical. They both saw the removal of all barriers between individuals as the highest goal. Yet while Irma Seidler was inclined to strive for its practical realization, Lukacs despaired in its ever being

achievable, and retreated into *philosophy*. His own experience and analysis of cultural institutions, his evaluation of the available political options and his philosophically and sociologically grounded belief in the amorphous and incommunicable character of individual experience in general, allowed for no other solution. His intellectual work became everything. The other possibilities of his life not only remained unrealized; he consciously repudiated them. He broke off the relationship for fear that it would conflict with his work, and that by attempting to reconcile both he could do justice to neither. Intellectuality mediated all of his experience, or tended to, and consciously so.²⁰

Lukacs became a prototypical intellectual worker, a figure whose identity was in appearance defined exclusively by his intellectual activity. One is struck by the proximity of his work ethic and discipline to Max Weber's ideal of the scientific worker.²¹ Today, the nearest thing to the unattached and



unremunerated intellectual in the academic world is perhaps the non-salaried researcher or doctoral student, engaged for years on end in highly specialized projects which isolate him or her even from other scholars. It is typical of such individuals' lifestyles that work for them frequently becomes an exclusive, even obsessive, concern which dominates every waking moment. Such intense preoccupation cannot be sustained indefinitely though, and is necessarily punctuated by periods of inactivity when work can seem impossible. When these tendencies are fully realized, a doubly antinomic structure emerges: (a) *actual* existence is apparently reduced to intellectual labour; all the manifestations of sociability not mediated by intellectual labour appear to be relegated to the status of *possibilities*; (b) periods of intense work are succeeded by periods of impotence where nothing can be accomplished. Among most intellectuals this remains at most a virtuality; other relationships, with family, friends, colleagues or others, also play a role, often at odds with the necessities of work. By consciously refusing all such ties, Lukacs came near to embodying the 'pure' intellectual lifestyle. This explains why, in Lukacs's view, intellect and life are not just separate, but mutually exclusive. Humanity itself is sundered into distinct categories: those who live and those who understand. Neither can reach the other from the starting-point of its own 'primary' function of either living or understanding. Lukacs saw himself as one of the 'purest' types of those who comprehend but cannot live, or attain authentic 'living' life.²²

There are people who understand, but do not live, and there are some who live, but do not understand. And the representatives of the first category will never manage to be members of the second, although they understand them, and those of the second category will

never be able to comprehend anything, but that does not matter for them, because they love or hate, possess or will possess, and the category of understanding does not exist for them.²³

The fundamental categories of Lukacs's early philosophy appear in this light not merely as manifestations of an *outlook* predicated on the antinomy of positing intellect and metarational everyday life, but of a *very existence* predicated on it.

Of course, Lukacs did not truly cease to lead an 'everyday life' distinct from his intellectual activity, nor did his way of life cease to be dependent upon the social structures which so repelled him. Rather, his rejection of certain patterns, rhythms and conventions of everyday life was so vehement that he came to identify everyday life as such as a function of the existence of other people. Ironically, his own prototypical, 'purely' intellectual existence was only possible because it rested on the material substratum which he wished to reject. His physical being was only reproduced thanks to the stipend he received from his father,²⁴ the director of a Budapest bank, the very epitome of contemporary reification. Moreover, like any labour process, all intellectual labour receives its goals and objects from life. Once a gulf has opened up between the self and the community, and the self has retreated into a realm of pure intellectual activity, this gulf itself becomes the object of the intellect's analytic efforts, and it leaves its imprint on every question. Far from breaking down, or escaping from the barriers between the self and the world, the 'purely' intellectual lifestyle merely raises these barriers to a higher level of consciousness, while make them seem all the more immutable.

In his essay, 'Aesthetic Culture', Lukacs shows that the escape into inwardness, characteristic of the aesthete, is also a form of alienation. The aesthete is a specialist, in this case of inner life, who sacrifices the whole for the part as all specialists do, and remains isolated from culture as a whole and from other men.²⁵ Individuals cannot achieve self-realization by retreating into pure inwardness; they can only do so by means of the 'cultivation of objects' (to use Simmel's expression), i.e. by positing teleological processes involving external objects. In order to achieve an authentic, as opposed to an alienated, life one must, according to Lukacs, mould the totality of events befalling one into a personal fate expressing one's individual essence. This requires the fullest, most conscious, manifestation of subjectivity: "soul" means in fact the maximum development, the highest possible intensification, of the powers of an individual's *will*, his capabilities and his "psychical energies". However, in forging life into a unique totality one goes beyond the confines of mere individuality to establish a reality which functions as a value, a universal normative standard: 'the self-realization of a single human being means that self-realization is possible for all' and therefore 'such a life can serve as a model'.²⁶ The mediation and crystallization of the pure and homogeneous relationship between soul and value is provided by the category of *form*. Yet, an everyday life characterized by reification, heterogeneity and meaninglessness cannot give rise to form; those who merely live cannot impose a unifying *telos* on life. Forms exist beyond and outside of life as *a priori* categories of valuation. Although a given form can only be present in specific historical circumstances, all forms are eternally valid, metahistorical categories. In the timeless objectifications of art, the raw material of experience is given form in such a way as to confer on events of an individual existence the soul and value-constituting unity of a *destiny*. Yet, while it is foreign to those who dwell merely within the bounds of lived experi-

ence, form is the very stuff of life for those alienated from the everyday world, it is their 'moment of destiny ... the moment when all feelings and all experiences on the near or the far side of form receive form, are melted down and condensed into form ... the mystical moment of union between the outer and the inner, between soul and form'. For the critic (a designation which can be taken as synonymous here with the merely *comprehending* individual, and which clearly represents Lukacs himself), form 'is his greatest experience ... the really living content of his writing'. This experience confers objectivity on form as 'a world-view, a standpoint, an attitude vis-a-vis the life from which it sprang: a possibility of reshaping it, of creating it anew'. The ten essays of *Soul and Form* explore different possibilities of actualization of individuality; and while they deal with aesthetic questions, they more fundamentally address ethical issues affecting the very essence of life.²⁷

III

In the light of the meditation on the meaning of his own existence which animates Lukacs's whole project in *Soul and form*, it is hardly surprising that the book's two first essays reflect on the activity of the essayist and the nature of the essay. Lukacs consciously modelled his essays on Platonic dialogues. They flow in a dialectic where the ostensible goal, the discovery of truth, constantly recedes before its seeker, before whom, however, life itself unfolds. Lukacs compares the Platonist or essayist to the poet, portraying both as homeless, as standing outside of life. Although the poet never reaches the 'world of real life', he does exist in an absolute world (i.e. that of his creations and of poetic creativity) 'in which it is possible to live', one where things can be affirmed or negated. In contrast, the 'Platonist's world has no substantiality'. He always longs for something he can never reach; his essays or dialogues never achieve the ultimate goal for which they explicitly or implicitly strive. Poetry represents a perfect, but narrow and limitless stasis; Platonism, on the contrary, is problematic, pure movement directed by a longing for perfection. In his essay on Rudolf Kassner, Lukacs defines the *artist* as the unity of poet and Platonist, as the person who can combine longing and contentment, movement and rest, perfection and imperfection. The instrument of this accomplishment is form, which transforms accident into necessity, unifies conflicting tendencies, homogenizes heterogeneous elements,²⁸ in the creation of a work of art which subsumes the world's dissonance in a closed, harmonious, timeless totality. The function of form is ethical, the creation of the normative principle of an existence purged of everything accidental:

From the accidental to the necessary: that is the road of every problematic human being. To arrive where everything becomes necessary because everything expresses the essence of man, nothing but that, completely and without residue - where everything, as in music, is only what it means, and means only what it is!²⁹

From the unity of poet and Platonist, from the dissonance which gives rise to the creation of form, emerges a higher form of life.

Although the essay is clearly a transitional moment in the quest for an all-embracing totality of meaning, Lukacs sees it as inherently valid and meaningful. While describing the essay as the 'John the Baptist' of a future aesthetic system, he

insists that it is intrinsically important as the necessary road to travel from fragment to system. But besides this, the essay, as *form*, is an objectification of the soul, a value transcending the evanescence of an aesthetic system's prolegomena:³⁰

for in the system of values yet to be found, the longing we spoke of would be satisfied, and therefore abolished; but this longing is more than just something waiting for fulfillment, it is a fact of the soul with a value and existence of its own: an original and deep-rooted attitude towards the whole of life, a final and irreducible category of possibilities of experience. Therefore it needs not only to be satisfied (and thus abolished) but also to be given form which will redeem and release its most essential and indivisible substance into eternal value. This is what the essay does.³¹

Longing constitutes the essence of the critical or essayistic relation to life and - as the autobiographical essay 'Longing and Form' shows - can be taken as Lukacs's self-characterization.³² Just as the essay is described as derived from the Platonic dialogue, so the life of Socrates represents the typical life for the essay, one in which thought (contemplation) and being (life) are clearly separate, where longing becomes the whole content of existence as a philosophy aiming for the un-



attainable. Here one finds mirrored the repudiation of sexuality, the retreat into intellectuality, the positing of all facets of life as conceptual problems, so characteristic of Lukacs's own life:

By advancing thus towards the ultimate, insoluble conflict, [Socrates's] longing became free from conflict in terms of real life: love - the typical form of longing - became a part of the system, an object of his explanation of the world, a symbol of the way in which the world hangs together; Eros ceased to be the God of love and became a cosmic principle. Socrates the man disappeared behind his philosophy.³³

In contrast with the poet, the Platonist and the artist (who all discover their respective destinies beyond life in poetry, philosophy or art), Lukacs presents in Theodor Storm an exemplary figure from an earlier bourgeoisie whose way of life was not devoid of meaning, but predicated on a work ethic quite distinct from the self-abandonment to work characteristic of Lukacs himself. Work for this bourgeoisie was no mere occupation, but a 'life-form', the element giving a purpose to life. Yet it did not represent that retreat into the soul, into interiority, which 'shifts the centre of life outwards, into the raging sea of uncertainties and incalculable possibilities'; in other

words, which crystallizes the dichotomy between abstract subjectivity and objectivity already discussed. Rather the form of work described here establishes existence on firm foundations, 'because the centre of gravity is displaced to the ethical sphere and to ethical values, i.e. to values where at least the possibility of permanent validity exists'.³⁴ The primacy of ethics negates egotistic solitude and dispels mood as the measure of significance of all things. Because it genuinely serves to unite subjects and thus to bring together subject and object, work does not devour the subject here the way it does in the case of later artists, where it becomes its own end and walls subjectivity off from the world. Lukacs compares Theodor Storm, for whom work was a life-form, to Flaubert, for whom life became in a sense a form of work:

The goal of the former [the Flaubertian aesthetes] was to approach ideal perfection through superhuman effort, that of the latter [Storm, Mörike, etc.] was to achieve the consciousness that they had done everything in their power to create a perfect thing. For the former, life was only a means of attaining the artistic ideal, for the latter perfection of work was only a symbol, only the surest and the finest way of exploiting every possibility offered to them by life; a symbol of the fact that the bourgeois ideal - consciousness of work well done - had indeed been achieved.³⁵

The role of duty, of ethical laws, subjects individuality to a higher power but simultaneously gives it an inner strength and consistency enabling it to weather the harshest circumstances. Thus Lukacs describes the characters in Storm's short stories as *incapable* of evil, for 'ethics for everyone in this world is a natural life-function like breathing; an unethical action is therefore *a priori* impossible'.³⁶ Although external forces may compel an individual to contravene his duty, ethics is so fundamentally constitutive of his individuality that no single deviation from duty can impugn his moral nature; Storm's characters accept the consequences of their acts, suffer retribution without complaint, and yet retain their belief in their own innocence and integrity, their conviction of being the victims of inevitable external odds.

In Lukacs's eyes, the contemporary world can boast of no such integration of ethics into society. The unity of duty, life and work has disintegrated, leaving only the shards of community. Individuals consequently live in utter loneliness. They constantly seek communion with their fellows, but can never find it. Nor can they simultaneously share any common experience: 'if something does touch many of us simultaneously, it touches only a large number of isolated beings.' Communication itself has become virtually impossible:

Today we tell everything, we tell it to someone, to anyone, no matter to whom, and yet we have never really told anything; other people are so close to us that their closeness transforms what we have to give them of ourselves; yet they are so far from us that everything becomes lost on the way from us to them. We understand everything, and our greatest understanding is a rapt marvelling, an incomprehension intensified to the point of religiosity. We long passionately to escape from our tormenting loneliness, yet what is closest to us are the subtle pleasures of eternal solitude. Our knowledge of humanity is a psychological nihilism: we see a thousand relationships, yet can never grasp a real connection.³⁷

At best souls can discover hints of the existence of other souls or fleetingly encounter them in isolated words or glances, in

the interstices of normal discourse.³⁸ Where no supra-individual ethic binds soul and life together, laying out the individual's path before him, life either stays without essential direction or must have its goals and structure imposed on it by the subject. Yet the latter is imprisoned in its own interiority, and can no more shape its own destiny than it can find fulfillment in human community. This Lukacs demonstrates in an essay on Kierkegaard, whose life-project was paradigmatic of Lukacs's own, as Agnes Heller has shown.³⁹

IV

Kierkegaard attempted to supersede everyday life by subordinating every event and action to one principle, embodied in a gesture - his renunciation of his marriage to Regine Olsen:

The gesture is the leap by which the soul passes from one into the other, the leap by which it leaves the always relative facts of reality to reach the eternal certainty of forms. In a word, the gesture is that unique leap by which the absolute is transformed, in life, into the possible. The gesture is the great paradox of life, for only in its rigid permanence is there room for every evanescent moment of life, and only within it does every such moment become true reality.⁴⁰

In a sense, *Soul and Form* itself represents such a gesture on the purely intellectual plane, capturing the fleeting aspects of contemporary culture in stable images which constitute normative forms. Yet for Lukacs such an attempt by an individual to raise his *everyday life* to the level of a self-imposed destiny must fail. For only in the work of poets can ambiguity and heterogeneity be superseded. 'In life, not only those motives play a role which have been accepted for the sake of the final unity.' The fate of the poet is to extract forms from the raw material provided by life in general, but to be incapable of fashioning his own life into a harmonious whole.

Kierkegaard's heroism was that he wanted to create forms from life. His honesty was that he saw crossroads and walked to the end of the road he had chosen. His tragedy was that he wanted to live what cannot be lived.⁴¹

Kierkegaard's gesture, while carried out and followed with rigour and determination, ended up being lost amid the infinity of ambiguous motives, acts and events it was meant to encompass. Idea and reality remained apart and opposed.

Like Kierkegaard, the poets discussed in Lukacs's essay, 'The Romantic Philosophy of Life', wanted to shape life according to poetic intentions. Yet they differed from the Danish philosopher in that they ignored the necessary distance between art and life of which he was at least aware. The romantic philosophy of life proposes an ethic of total individual fulfillment, predicated on a poetic stylization of life. In other words, the latter is to become a work of art and to be structured accordingly. Lukacs criticizes this ethic for not realizing that the difference between art and life cannot be overcome, and for dismissing the problem without mastering it. He shows that this ignored dissonance reappears in the romantic poets' life and work as a disruptive force, making it impossible for them to live up to their aesthetic ideal, and causing them to 'outlive', in a state they would once have considered banal and mediocre, the life they tried to mould into a work of art.

The exception among Romantics was Novalis, who was

able to fashion a life of disease and dying into the stuff of poetry precisely because his 'timely' death 'saved' him from outliving his ideal as other Romantics did. Paradoxically, death, the very condition which made possible this voluntarist project of a poetic stylization of life, was imposed on the poet by external circumstances beyond his control. As Lukacs points out, this resulted in Novalis's philosophy of life in fact being a philosophy of death. The mere suggestion that one could outlive the life for which one longs signifies that only death could be adequate to it.⁴²

The theme of the total opposition between empirical and 'authentic' life finds its most extreme expression in the final essay of *Soul and Form*, 'The Metaphysics of Tragedy'. Here the polarity is stated in the strongest terms. Everyday life is chaotic, fluctuating, unstable, never leading to any end or fulfillment, *unreal*:

To live is to live something through to the end: but life means that nothing is ever fully and completely lived through to the end. Life is the most unreal and unliving of all conceivable existences; one can only describe it negatively - by saying that something always happens to disturb the flow.⁴³

Real, authentic life cannot arise organically out of such an existence. It appears with the suddenness of a flash of lightning and the supernatural character of a miracle. It is a moment of living at the height of one's essence, and as such it cannot last, for 'no one could live at such heights.... One has to deny life in order to live'. In this, his least progressive and democratic text, Lukacs describes men as to *weak and cowardly* to live the complete break with inauthenticity which real life demands, to experience the unambiguous moment of fulfillment where 'the soul stands naked before the face of life'.⁴⁴

The miraculous moment of fulfillment finds its expression only in tragedy, defined by Lukacs as 'a revelation of God before the face of God', a sphere within which 'the immanent god awakens the transcendental god into life'. In tragedy the soul communes directly with destiny above and beyond the inessentiality of social relationships, customs, laws, etc. 'Tragedy is the most real life there is':

all the relationships of life have been suppressed so that the relationship with destiny may be created; everything atmospheric between men and objects has vanished in order that nothing should exist between them but the clear, harsh mountain air of ultimate questions and ultimate answers.... [tragedy] begins at the moment when enigmatic forces have distilled the essence from a man, have forced him to become essential; and the progress of tragedy consists in his essential, true nature becoming more and more manifest.⁴⁵

In ordinary life, experience of the self is peripheral, mediated by motives and relationships, i.e. by contingency. Every accident modifies past life, but does not bring anything necessary or essential out of itself. In great moments, a total break occurs, constituting a new ethic. Life acquires new foundations out of elements which previously might have seemed of no consequence. The emergence of essence is its own necessity; it simply occurs, requiring no other cause than its own essentiality. The great moment does not signify life, it is life. Stripped of all the trappings of empirical existence, souls lead new lives on the plane of the Platonic Forms.⁴⁶ This explains the unity of time in tragedy. Chronology is abolished in the realm of ideas. The different moments of the tragic drama do not follow each other in temporal sequence; they develop in a

sort of synchronicity or parallelism:

drama interrupts the external flow of time not only at its beginning and its end, bending the two poles towards each other and melting them together; it carries out this same stylization at every instant of the drama; every moment is a symbol, a reduced-scale image of the whole, distinguishable from it only by its size. To fit these moments together must therefore be a matter of fitting them into one another, not after one another.⁴⁷

The reality of the realm of tragedy, like that of the Kantian realm of ethics, transcends all spatial or temporal existence. The tragic experience, as a simultaneous beginning and ending, is a Last Judgement. The development of tragic characters is merely apparent; such development consists in fact of the experience of the moment of their becoming human. The values of tragedy are thus clearly antithetical to modern realism, and Lukacs in fact evokes their affinity with scholastic realism.

In an important passage, Lukacs establishes the difference between the 'mystical-tragic experience of essentiality' and the 'essential experience of mysticism'. The latter destroys all forms, reducing them to an undifferentiated unity, while tragedy creates forms. The essence of tragedy is selfhood, while that of mysticism is self-oblivion. In mysticism the self is paradoxically asserted by its identification with objectivity, its self-dissolution in the ocean of being. The struggle and self-assertion of the self in tragedy radically drives apart subjectivity and objectivity, reinforcing each in its autonomy and resistance to the other, and its outcome is the destruction of subjectivity by overwhelming objectivity.

Both mysteriously combine life and death, autonomous selfhood and the total dissolving of the self in a higher being. Surrender is the mystic's way, struggle the tragic man's; the one, at the end of his road, is absorbed into the All, the other shattered against the All. From being at one with all things, the former leaps across into the personal world of his ecstasies; the latter loses his selfhood at the moment of its truest exaltation.⁴⁸

The tragic destiny must fully encompass the dimensions of earthly existence. Empirical life falls short of them; thus it cannot comprehend the nature of death which is the limit of this world, and must experience it as a terrifying, meaningless, irrational force bursting into life. Mysticism 'overleaps the frontier' of life and thus denies death any significance. For the tragic existence, death is the limit of life, but, as *its* limit, is immanent to it and structures its every moment. Through the experience of death, the soul becomes conscious of its limits and thus attains *self-consciousness*. Death 'is only outwardly a limiting and possibility-destroying principle'; at a deeper level it is in fact the basis for self-realization, for living the soul's possibilities to the fullest.

The tragic personality is the opposite of the critical personality which finds expression in the essay form. In the latter, longing is raised above life as a value and the possibility of fulfillment in this world is denied. Tragedy also has its 'metaphysical root' in the longing for selfhood, the 'deepest longing of human existence'. Dramatic tragedy alone can embody the perfect fulfillment of this longing - and therefore its abolition. Longing, the root of tragedy, thus has no place *in* tragedy, which represents the moment of its supersession. Ironically, because 'the ethic of tragedy must have as its categorical imperative the continuance unto death of everything that has begun',⁴⁹ because tragedy must mean encom-

passing all of life to its very limits, longing is fulfilled and abolished by *death*. Fulfillment proves hollow indeed. For the Platonist, neither life nor truth can ever be fully appropriated; for the tragic character they can, but the moment of appropriation is also the moment of their elimination.

For true tragedy to occur, it does not suffice that objectivity impose its law on subjectivity, even to the point of destroying it; nor is it enough that the subject accept, like T. Storm's characters, the consequences of acts forced upon it. Tragic characters must go beyond this and assume guilt for their actions, and in doing so accept - and conquer - destiny by constituting it as *their own*. By positing what befalls them as *their destiny, realized by their acts*, tragic figures transform the seemingly accidental complex of events and relations which make up life into a totality determined by the essential category of guilt. The latter traces the limits of life, structures it, casts its diverse aspects into the mould of necessity.⁵⁰

Lukacs reserves tragedy for the aristocratic few, speaking of those 'who are too weak or too lowly to dwell in the kingdom of tragedy'.⁵¹ At the same time he sees the source of the tragic ethic's validity neither in its application nor in the particular subjects who apply it, but simply in its very existence. Like Kantian moral law, it confronts life as a utopia, standing in judgement over it:

Form is the highest judge of life. Form-giving is a judging force, an ethic; there is a value-judgement in everything that has been given form. Every kind of form-giving, every literary form, is a step in the hierarchy of life-possibilities: the all-decisive word has been spoken of a man and his fate when the decision is taken as to the form which his life-manifestations can assume and which the highest moments of his life demand.⁵²

This would suggest that the sequence of essays, and hence of value-judgements, in *Soul and Form* constitute a hierarchy, with the tragic ethic at the apex. However, one should not exaggerate the importance of 'The Metaphysics of Tragedy', as M. Löwy for example tends to do. It should be recalled that 'The Metaphysics of Tragedy' had not been written when *Soul and Form* was first published (in Hungarian), and that while it was placed at the end of the German edition, this was due more to its being the most accomplished of Lukacs's essays than to its being a sort of synthesis or logical culmination of the ideas contained in the other essays. As has already been noted, the latter represent the crystallization of different attitudes of life. Their order of appearance expresses no logical progression, no journey to an end that can be found. The very absence of such a resolution determines the sequence of essays as a kind of wandering, an exploration of alternatives none of which is ranked higher than the others. Although 'The Metaphysics of Tragedy' might seem a fitting last word be-

cause of the extreme nature of its views on life, it does not enjoy a privileged position. In attributing exaggerated importance to it, Löwy is led to the conclusion that the very essay expressing the nature of the essay and thus explaining the whole of *Soul and Form*, 'On the Nature and Form of the Essay', is 'dissonant' in relation to the whole, because it does not present the same 'Kantian-tragic rigour'.⁵³

The first (Hungarian) edition of *Soul and Form* concluded with the dialogue 'Richness, Chaos and Form: A Dialogue Concerning Lawrence Sterne'. (In the German edition this text occupies the penultimate position, immediately preceding 'The Metaphysics of Tragedy'.) In this piece two men debate the merits of Lawrence Sterne, one from a Vitalist, the other from a Neo-Kantian point of view. The passive witness of their discussion is a woman whom it becomes evident both men are trying to impress by their rhetorical skill and intellectual ability, for whose affections both men are in fact competing. The substance of the argument is shown to be irrelevant to life; it serves as 'a highly unnecessary preparation' for an episode in the lives of the characters involved. Philosophy as gratuitous and ridiculous courtship ritual - this is Lukacs's last word in *Soul and Form*:

Do you therefore understand why this is more profound than my earlier writings? It is because its form is the critique of all my writings, the critique of my form of life.⁵⁴

'Form is the highest judge of life' - but in this subtle parody the tables are turned, and life suddenly passes judgement on form.

The irony of this reversal could suggest an implicit dialectical leap beyond the 'Platonic' attitude on Lukacs's part. Yet the antinomy of intellectuality and everyday life is not abolished, nor transformed, but rather *reconfirmed*. In Lukacs's view the sublime is debased, not redeemed, by its contact with the mere contingency of everyday existence. True supersession of the contradiction cannot be brought about by the elimination of one of its terms, in this case by the transformation of philosophy into mere courtship ritual, but only by the

creation of a higher form subsuming the different terms within itself. This would involve the possibility of a positive reintegration of soul, form and life. But such an eventuality is strenuously denied through *Soul and Form*.⁵⁵

V

Lukacs's essays in *Soul and Form* present several facets of the inadequate relationship of the alienated individual to the social totality. In each case a profoundly utopian rejection of everyday life underlies the possibility of fulfillment, or, to put



it another way, given reality is the negative determination of a state of redemption. The poet, the Platonist and the artist cannot truly transform, or escape from, the ephemeral, chaotic flux of immediate existence, although they can detach themselves from it in their own ways, the Platonist for example to the extent that perfect longing distances him from every specific aspect of immediate existence, allowing him to relate to the latter as such, as an abstract, general state. The contrasting world of Theodor Storm, in which life, work and duty complement each other in harmonious unity, is presented as a lost utopia which the present negates. It amounts to a logical or narrative device, a fictional adequacy of subjectivity to objectivity, in which 'ethics for everyone ... is a natural life-function like breathing'.⁵⁶ It highlights the breakdown of communication, the isolation of the individual and the alienation of objectivity in the modern world. The Flaubertian aesthetes of whom Lukacs speaks still create perfection, but only at the price of superhuman effort. Their works like beyond reach, on the far side of a chasm of indeterminacy and imperfection which their souls cannot bridge. The examples of Kierkegaard and the Romantic poets reveal the impossibility of giving form to what is the very realm of formlessness. The tragic hero comes nearest to the artistic ideal, not however by giving form to, but by actually obliterating, everyday life. Here the soul crosses the gulf of indeterminacy to achieve perfection, but only for a single ultimate instant. As in Hegelian philosophy, where only the final outcome of the process of actualization confers full meaning on all the different moments, so in 'The Metaphysics of Tragedy' death alone can determine the life which it cuts off as a 'living' or 'authentic' life.

Lukacs's 'Platonic' approach adopts a critical attitude towards contemporary reality. In attempting to give voice to eternal values, it constructs ethical models which exist in the space between everyday experience and a systematic philosophy of totality. While essays such as 'The Foundering of Form Against Life' show the impossibility of ordering life in conformity with such values, they also propose a vantage point from which existence may be assessed. 'The validity and strength of an ethic does not depend on whether the ethic is applied.' Its power and effectiveness must lie elsewhere: 'Form is the only pure revelation of purest experience, but just for that reason it will always stubbornly refuse to be imposed on anything that is oppressive and unclear.'⁵⁷ In constructing philosophical models which radically dissociate themselves from the chaotic, irrational, preconceptual immediacy of everyday life, Lukacs's early essays attempt an ordered, rational conceptualization of its essential nature.

Soul and Form articulates Lukacs's subjective experience that subjective experience itself tends to be solipsistic and impossible to articulate. It analyzes the many facets of the inevitable solitude of the modern individual in an attempt to demonstrate the absence of any true community, and yet it does so by constructing a *spiritual* community, namely a catalogue of poets, playwrights, critics and philosophers from whose writings a portrait of contemporary alienation can be drawn by means of the essay. The essayist does not explain his subjects as they truly are, but extrapolates from them, chooses them to fit his designs and knits them into a homogeneous pattern. It is thus fair to say that Lukacs's new spiritual community is more imaginary than real, a fictional aristocracy united in its search for the 'living' life *beyond* reification and *through* the world of form. The paradox of this elite is that the foundations of its existence are entirely negative: the solitude of the individual, the refusal of existing reality, the quest for utopia and its discovery in death alone.

As yet unable to formulate a radical political critique of capitalist alienation, Lukacs's ultimate ethical answer to everyday social life consists of mythical models of an aristocracy of tragic heroes, dying poets and Platonic philosophers. The great merit of this approach is that it exposes not only reification itself, but also the futility of any attempt to overcome it by an attempted poetic stylization of life itself, in the manner of Kierkegaard. Predicated on the impossibility of ordering everyday existence according to ethical values, Lukacs's essayistic philosophy is 'exile' from life, providing a place of banishment and refuge, of seeming independence and real powerlessness. It is the moment of negation, privation and denial, which still awaits the return to plenitude.

NOTES

- 1 'Philosophy is really homesickness... it is the urge to be at home everywhere.' Quoted in G. Lukacs, *The Theory of the Novel. A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, Cambridge, Mass., 1971, p. 29.
- 2 'The New Hauptmann' and 'Reflections on Henrik Ibsen' (written in Hungarian). See L. Congdon, *The Young Lukacs*, Chapel Hill, 1983, pp. 19-23.
- 3 G. Lukacs, *Entwicklungsgeschichte des modernen Dramas, Werke*, Band 15, Neuwied, 1981, p. 95 (unless otherwise noted, all translations here from texts in French and German are my own).
- 4 Quoted by Jörg Kammler, 'Ästhetizistische Lebensphilosophie', in *Text + Kritik*, Nos. 39/40, October 1973, p. 11.
- 5 G. Lukacs, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, pp. 93-100.
- 6 See G. Lukacs's 1967 preface to his *History and Class Consciousness*, London, 1971, pp. ix-xvi. The development of Lukacs's views in the context of the liberal Jewish-Hungarian bourgeoisie of the previous generation and of the liberal radicalism of his own generation, is illuminatingly discussed by Mary Gluck, *Georg Lukacs and his Generation, 1900-1918*, Cambridge, Mass., 1985, chapters 2 and 3.
- 7 G. Lukacs, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, p. 95.
- 8 See Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, London, 1977, pp. 791-792. On Georg Simmel, see 'Subjective Culture', in *On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. by Donald N. Levine, Chicago, 1971, pp. 227-234. The influence on Lukacs of Simmel has been well documented. See David Frisby's introduction to Simmel's *The Philosophy of Money*, London, 1978; A. Arato, 'Lukacs's Path to Marxism, 1910-1923', *Telos*, No. 7, Spring 1971, pp. 128-136; Michael Holzman, *Lukacs's Road to God. The Early Criticism Against its Pre-Marxist Background*, Washington, D.C., 1985.
- 9 G. Lukacs, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, pp. 358, 359 (quoted by Ferenc Lendvai, 'The Young Lukacs's Philosophy of History', *New Hungarian Quarterly*, No. 67, pp. 154-163).
- 10 G. Lukacs, *Aesthetic Culture*, quoted by I. Meszaros, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
- 11 G. Lukacs, 'Ady Endre', quoted by A. Arato and P. Breines, *The Young Lukacs and the Origins of Western Marxism*, London, 1979, p. 12.
- 12 F. Feher, 'Die Geschichtsphilosophie des Dramas, die Metaphysik der Tragödie und die Utopie des untragischen Dramas. Scheidewege der Dramatheorie des jungen Lukacs', in A. Heller et al., *Die Seele und das Leben. Studien zum frühen Lukacs*, Frankfurt am Main, 1977, p. 33.
- 13 J. Kammler, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
- 14 See G. Lukacs, *Zur Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins, Werke*, Band 13, Neuwied, 1985, Chapters 3 and 4.
- 15 G. Lukacs, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, pp. 570-571; G. Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, p. 56.

- 16 G. Lukacs, 'Zur Theorie der Literaturgeschichte', *Text + Kritik*, Nos. 39/40, October 1973, p. 34.
- 17 The *typical* does not designate the average or the ordinary, but rather a personality in whom are represented essential structures and developmental tendencies of an overall situation, for example of a society at a given historical conjuncture. See G. Lukacs, *Writer and Critic*, London, 1970. For detailed accounts of Lukacs's development in terms of his class and family background, see M. Löwy, *Georg Lukacs – From Romanticism to Bolshevism*, London, 1979; M. Gluck, *op. cit.*; L. Congdon, *op. cit.*; A. Heller, 'Georg Lukacs and Irma Seidler', in A. Heller (ed.), *Lukacs Reappraised*, New York, 1983, pp. 27–62; and G. Lukacs's own autobiographical notes, *Gelebtes Denken. Eine Autobiographie im Dialog*, Frankfurt am Main, 1981.
- 18 G. Lukacs, letter to Léo Popper, 9 September 1910, in G. Lukacs, *Correspondance de jeunesse, 1908–1917* (hereafter referred to as *CJ*), Paris, 1981, p. 120.
- 19 'If you read *Soul and Form*, truly read it ... you know everything about me: the best part of my life; more things and better than I could say to you in any other way. You also know – and you do know, don't you? – who gave me the tone which has become mine, you know from whom stems the ever-changing form around which all these questions gravitate, and who is the being whom the multiple mask of the ambiguous dedication obscured. You know – once again – why these texts were written: because I do not know how to write poems; and you know – once again – to whom these poems were addressed and who awakened them in me. ... allow me to return them to the one from whom I received them, permit me to dedicate the book to you.' G. Lukacs to Irma Seidler, 2 February 1911, *CJ*, pp. 149–150. See L. Congdon, *op. cit.*, pp. 43ff.; A. Heller, 'Georg Lukacs and Irma Seidler'; G. Markus, 'Life and the Soul' in A. Heller (ed.), *Lukacs Reappraised*, pp. 1–26; M. Gluck, *op. cit.*, passim (but especially pp. 123ff.).
- 20 'I have the impression that what I began in the spring has succeeded: I have eliminated "life". This does not necessarily mean being ascetic, but only that the centre of gravity is definitely and unshakeably in work. People: perhaps there are some, perhaps there are not. Happiness: perhaps it exists, perhaps it does not. But all that is at the surface of life ... I used to be *unglücklich* [unhappy], now I am *jenseits von Glück und Unglück* [beyond happiness and unhappiness].' G. Lukacs to Léo Popper, 10 December 1910, *CJ*, pp. 134–135. See also A. Heller, 'Georg Lukacs and Irma Seidler', pp. 43–48, 57ff., and especially p. 35: 'Lukacs fled into "pure spirit": he learned to breathe the heady air of philosophy. To the irrelevant conventions that represented chaos to him he counterposed pure spirit, the created work.'
- 21 See Max Weber, 'Science as a Vocation', in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, translated, edited and with an introduction by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, London, 1985, pp. 129–156. The considerable mutual sympathy which developed between Weber and Lukacs in the 1912–1920 period was no doubt unrelated to this. On this point see Eva Karadi, 'Bloch et Lukacs dans le cercle de Weber', in *Reification et utopie. Ernst Bloch & György Lukacs un siècle après*, Actes du colloque tenu au Goethe Institut de Paris en 1985, Paris, 1986, pp. 69–87.
- 22 G. Lukacs to L. Popper, 27 August 1911, *CJ*, p. 193, and 25 April 1909, *CJ*, pp. 45–49.
- 23 G. Lukacs to I. Seidler, 20 March 1910, *CJ*, p. 84.
- 24 On Lukacs's relationship with his father, and on the latter's political and ideological outlook, see M. Gluck, *op. cit.*, pp. 77ff.
- 25 A. Arato, 'Lukacs's Path to Marxism, 1910–1923', pp. 130–131: 'Lukacs calls the culture of such men aesthetic culture, which implies the cult of the atomized self and its passing moods, the submission to fancy and enjoyment, and the impossibility of real creation and action. The outcome in art itself is a dilettantism and constant irrational vacillation of moods and technique. More generally, "the development of a general culture which engages men at only one point and never touches the whole of their humanity tends to weaken the human in men".'
- 26 G. Lukacs, *Aesthetic Culture*, quoted by G. Markus, 'Life and the Soul', p. 9.
- 27 G. Lukacs, *Soul and Form* (hereafter referred to as *SF*), London, 1974, pp. 8–9. Lukacs's 'exile in a realm of philosophical activity was not emancipatory, but profoundly alienating. This alienation of course differs from that suffered by wage labourers. Lukacs's products and labour power were not estranged from him. However, the highly specialized, exclusive form of his activity, the segmentation of his life, and his Platonic devaluation of sensuous drives are characteristic of what Marx calls the alienation of species-being. See Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, in *Early Writings*, introd. by Lucio Colletti, trans. by Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton, Harmondsworth, 1975, especially pp. 327–339.
- 28 'The essence of form has always resided in my view in the process whereby two principles which are mutually exclusive become form (without reciprocally abolishing each other); according to my conception of the matter, form is paradox incarnate, the reality of the lived experience [*Erlebniswirklichkeit*], the veritable life of the impossible (impossible in the sense that its components exclude each other absolutely and eternally and that their reconciliation is impossible). For form is not reconciliation, but war, transposed into eternity, of struggling principles.' G. Lukacs to Salomo Friedländer, mid-July 1911, *CJ*, p. 170. On the *a priori* nature of forms, see G. Lukacs, 'Zur Theorie der Literaturgeschichte'; G. Lukacs, 'Georg Simmel', in *Buch des Dankes an Georg Simmel. Briefe, Erinnerungen, Bibliographie*, zu seinem 100. Geburtstag am 1. März 1958 herausgegeben von Kurt Gassen & Michael Landmann, Berlin, 1958, p. 175.
- 29 *SF*, p. 23.
- 30 Lukacs himself understood Simmel's pluralism and studies of exemplary lives embodying typical values, in terms very reminiscent of his own essayistic project. See G. Lukacs, 'Georg Simmel', pp. 174–176. On the essay as *form*, see G. Lukacs, *Frühe Schriften zur Aesthetik, I: Philosophie der Kunst (1912–1914)* (the Heidelberg Philosophy of Art), *Werke*, Band 16, Neuwied, 1974, pp. 55–56.
- 31 *SF*, p. 17.
- 32 See Rainer Rochlitz, *Le jeune Lukacs (1911–1916). Théorie de la forme et philosophie de l'histoire*, Paris, 1983, pp. 84–86.
- 33 On Lukacs's view of Socrates in this period, see for example his letter to Sara Ferenczi of January 1909 in *CJ*, pp. 34–39.
- 34 *SF*, pp. 57–58.
- 35 *SF*, p. 61.
- 36 *SF*, p. 66.
- 37 *SF*, pp. 86, 87.
- 38 *SF*, pp. 84–85.
- 39 See A. Heller, 'Georg Lukacs and Irma Seidler'.
- 40 *SF*, p. 29.
- 41 *SF*, p. 40.
- 42 *SF*, pp. 42–54; R. Rochlitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 59–63.
- 43 *SF*, p. 152.
- 44 *SF*, p. 153.
- 45 *SF*, pp. 153, 156, 155.

- 46 For the characters in a drama, 'all manifestations of their life are mere cyphers for their ultimate relationship, their life merely a pale allegory of their own platonic ideas', *SF*, p. 156.
- 47 *SF*, p. 159
- 48 *SF*, p. 160.
- 49 *SF*, p. 161. Tragedy appears in this essay as redemption from earthly, bodily existence. Both the Platonic and the tragic attitudes in *Soul and Form* find value in the escape from the physical, the sensuous. It is worth noting in this context that the misogynist remarks scattered throughout Lukacs's early essays are rooted in his identification of woman with everyday life, with the world of the flesh or of nature. For related comments on this issue, see R. Roehlitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 85, 134-135; and M. Gluck, *op. cit.*, pp. 37ff.
- 50 'Through guilt, a man says "Yes" to everything that has happened to him; by feeling it to be his own action and his own guilt, he conquers it and forms his life, setting his tragedy - which has sprung from his guilt - as the frontier between his life and the All.' *SF*, p. 165.
- 51 *SF*, p. 173. In such passages Lukacs makes it quite clear that the tragic option is not and cannot be open to any but a few 'exceptional' individuals. It is therefore difficult to agree with Dennis Crow's assertion that this 'universal (pan-tragic) vision can be seen to raise the discussion of "form" out of the contradictions of the purely aesthetic toward a utopian vision of collective fulfilment.' Dennis Crow, 'Form and the Unification of Aesthetics and Ethics in Lukacs's *Soul and Form*', *New German Critique*, No. 15, Fall 1978, p. 174 (emphasis added). For a discussion of Lukacs's aristocratic attitude before World War I, see F. Feher, 'Am Scheideweg des romantischen Antikapitalismus. Typologie und Beitrag zur deutschen Ideologieggeschichte gelegentlich des Briefwechsels zwischen Paul Ernst und Georg Lukacs', in A. Heller et al., *Die Seele und das Leben*, pp. 241-327.
- 52 *SF*, p. 173.
- 53 Michael Löwy, *Marxisme et romantisme révolutionnaire: essais sur Lukacs et Rosa Luxemburg*, Paris, 1979, p. 79. G. Garkus points out that in the year in which he wrote 'The Metaphysics of Tragedy', Lukacs also wrote a 'passionate' critique of it (in *Aesthetic Culture*). See G. Markus, 'Life and the Soul', p. 5.
- 54 *SF*, p. 151. G. Lukacs to L. Popper, 27 October 1909, *CJ*, p. 69.
- 55 Intimations of such a possibility already appear in an unfinished essay Lukacs wrote in 1912, 'The Aesthetics of the Romance'. See F. Feher, 'Die Geschichtsphilosophie des Dramas', pp. 41-49; and Philippe Despoix, 'Mystique et tragédie. La rencontre des mondes spirituels de E. Bloch et G. Lukacs (1910-1918)', in *Réification et utopie, op. cit.*, pp. 28-30. Lukacs first gives expression to a vision of a higher synthesis of soul, form and life in his concept of the party as incarnation and representation of the identical subject-object in *History and Class Consciousness*.
- 56 *SF*, p. 66.
- 57 *SF*, pp. 174, 172.

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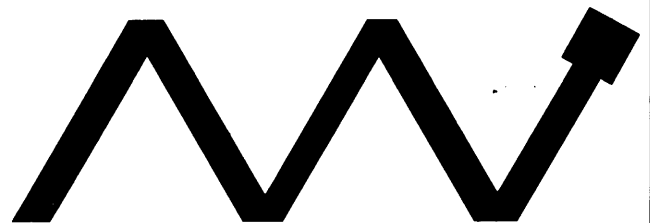
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