




The Ideology of modernism

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- ▶ Georg Lukacs – Hungarian Marxist Theoretician
 - ▶ 1923 book – ‘History and class consciousness.
 - ▶ The end of any novel is the restoration of the wholeness of life.
 - ▶ Modernist novels have forsaken this end.
 - ▶ György Lukács (1885-1971), Hungarian literary critic and political theorist, born in Budapest, and educated at the University of Budapest. By 1918, when he joined the Communist Party, he was already considered a major European literary critic. He served in the regime of Béla Kun, leader of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic. When Kun's government collapsed in 1919, Lukács fled to Vienna, where he continued his writing. After Hitler's rise to power, Lukács moved to the USSR and worked at the Institute of Philosophy of the Soviet Academy of Science. Lukács returned to Hungary in 1945 and became a member of parliament. In 1956 he took part in the Hungarian revolution; after its failure he lost his influence with the Communist Party, but was allowed to live in retirement and continue his writing.
 - ▶ In Lukács's work Marxism is combined with his belief in humanism. Among his major books are *History and Class Consciousness* (1923; trans. 1971), *Studies in European Realism* (1948; trans. 1950), and *The Destruction of Reason* (1955).



▶ Modernist Anti-Realism


- ▶ Modernism has become ideological.
- ▶ Ideology tends to keep reality from being understood.
- ▶ It is a kind of deception.
- ▶ Other critics focus on stylistic differences.
- ▶ Try to define modernism by style
- ▶ But the real difference is in ideology.


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- ▶ The same stylistic device can be used in Realistic and Anti-realistic ways.
 - ▶ Eg. Interior Monologue: stream of consciousness, is a narrative mode or device that depicts the multitudinous thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind.
 - ▶ Ulysses – James Joyce 1918.
 - ▶ Lotte in Weimar – Thomas Mann 1939.
 - ▶ Joyce – interior monologue becomes the “formative principle governing narrative pattern and the presentation of character” “technique is absolute”
 - ▶ Mann – “simply a technical device” “allowing the author to explore aspects of” the characters’ world.

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- ▶ Joyce's aim is not to develop his characters into fullness or wholesomeness.
 - ▶ His technique neglects character development.
 - ▶ Thomas Mann – pierces into the core of his character.
 - ▶ Definite direction and aim in the narrative.
 - ▶ Two opposed viewpoints – static and dynamic.


2: What determines style?

- ▶ How does the intention realized in the work determine its style?
- ▶ The view of the world, weltanschauung, ideology underlying the writer's work.
- ▶ Style is rooted in content; it is the specific form of a specific content.
- ▶ Content determines style.
 - ▶ The content of all literature is Man.
 - ▶ Man is zoon politikon – a social animal.
 - ▶ Literature explores this social animal.
 - ▶ All literature is therefore social.

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- ▶ Examples of great realistic literature that is also social and historical in nature:
 - ▶ Achilles - Homer
 - ▶ Werther - Goethe
 - ▶ Oedipus - Sophocles
 - ▶ Tom Jones – Henry Fielding
 - ▶ Antigone - Sophocles
 - ▶ Anna Karenina – Tolstoy
 - ▶ Modernism however shuns society
 - ▶ Man is asocial, solitary, unable to enter into social relationships with others.
 - ▶ Basic solitariness of man. – Solitariness as ‘condition humaine’.

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- ▶ Modernist Philosophy of Solitude
 - ▶ Heidegger – 1889 – 1976 – German Philosopher
 - ▶ Existentialist philosopher.
 - ▶ Existence is “thrownness into being” (Geworfenheit ins Dasein”
 - ▶ Impossible to determine origin and goal of existence.
 - ▶ Man is ahistorical. Two implications of this in litt:
 - ▶ The hero is confined to his own experience.
 - ▶ The hero is without personal history.

Potentiality in Literature


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- ▶ Consequences of this type of literature: How *potentiality* is realized.
 - ▶ Potentiality = possibility.
 - ▶ Richer than real life. Imaginary possibilities are also part of potentiality.
 - ▶ Out of all imaginary possibilities only a small percentage will be realized.
 - ▶ Abstract and Concrete (or real) Potentiality.
 - ▶ Abstract potentiality cannot be realized in actual reality.
 - ▶ Modernism – gives importance to abstract potentiality.
 - ▶ The result is melancholy and fascination over never to be realized possibilities.




- ▶ Hoffmansthal –
The burden of these endlessly pored-over
And now forever perished possibilities...
- ▶ Faulkner.
- ▶ The potentialities that can become real –
these ought to be the basis of realist writing.
- ▶ In litt, the revelation of a potentiality which
circumstances have kept from coming to the
fore can be dramatic. These are real or
concrete potentialities.
- ▶ The literature of realism aiming at a truthful
relection of reality must demonstrate both the
concrete and abstract potentialities of
humans in extreme situations.

Ideology of *Modernism*

- ▶ When subjectivity is exalted at the expense of objective reality of his environment, man's subjectivity itself is impoverished.
 - ▶ Human personality must necessarily disintegrate
- ▶ Several ideologies underlie modernism in litt.
 - ▶ Rejection of narrative objectivity
 - ▶ Surrender to subjectivity
 - ▶ Pseudo-realization of abstract potentiality
- ▶ Eliot on human personality:
Shape without form, shade without colour
Paralysed force, gesture without motion.

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- ▶ The negation of reality
 - ▶ The outside world is inexplicable.
 - ▶ Gottfried Benn: “there is no outer reality, there is only human consciousness, constantly building, modifying and rebuilding new worlds out of its own creativity”.
 - ▶ Reality is ghostly for modernists.
 - ▶ Kafka – full of detail- but objective reality is replaced by “angst ridden vision of the world”. “Ghostly unreality of a nightmare world whose function is to evoke angst”

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- ▶ Stream of consciousness of mad characters.
 - ▶ Faulkner's 'Sound and Fury', Samuel Beckett's Molloy. (1951)
 - ▶ Attenuation of reality and dissolution of personality go hand in hand – both based on lack of a consistent view of human nature.

- ▶ Eliot :

Ah, but we die to each other daily
What we know of other people
Is only our memory of the moments
During which we knew them. And they have
changed since then.

To pretend that they and we are the same
Is a useful and convenient social convention
Which must sometimes be broken. We must also
remember

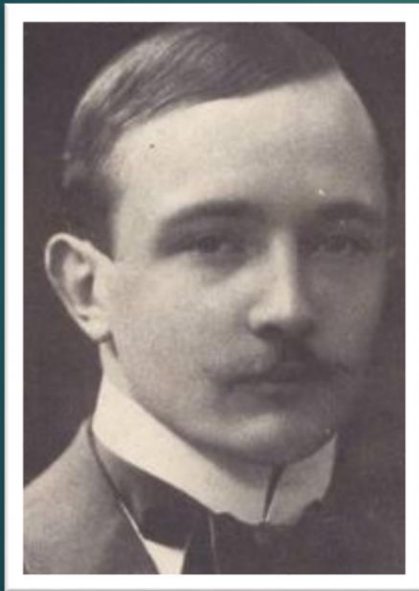
That at every meeting we are meeting a stranger.

- ▶ Keirkegaard – 1813-55 Danish philosopher
 - ▶ Objective reality and subjective reality cannot be distinguished between
 - ▶ Man lives in an eternal ‘incognito’.
- ▶ Echoed by post WW2 poets and writers.

This argument makes them innocent of their Nazi sympathy.



- ▶ Why realism is necessary?
 - ▶ The opposition between a man and his environment determines the development of his personality.
- ▶ Robert Musil – Austrian writer – 1880-1942
 - ▶ Modernist



- ▶ One must either run with the pack or become a neurotic.
- ▶ The question of Psychopathology.
- ▶ In Musil, psychopathology becomes the goal of literature.
- ▶ Freudian psychoanalysis is another modernist discipline that is obsessed with psychopathology.



- ▶ Psychopathology can be avoided if one avoids the argument that man is a solitary being.
- ▶ When man is considered as a social being, the contradictions within individuals and society can be understood in the context of a dialectical unity.
- ▶ People with violent passions can still be understood as belonging to society. They need not be cast out as 'sick'.

