BEYOND IMITATION: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LITERATURE AND SOCIAL REALITY AS IMPLIED IN GEORG LUKÁCS'S *REFLECTION THEORY*

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ABSTRACT: *Reflection is not a new concept in literary criticism. However, this concept reached its dialectic perfection at the hand of the Marxist philosopher Georg Lukács (1885-1971). Believing that Man is the focal point in every literary content, Lukács conceives Realism as the basis of all literary genres due to its significant role in solving Man's problems of alienation and the self- spilt caused by Capitalism, and it is, therefore, the best representation of his Reflection Theory. Reflection for Lukács is neither spontaneous nor photographic, but deliberate and conscious. In this process, the writer plays the role of the mediator between literature and the society. A great writer has, thus, to portray his characters and their struggle for self-realization objectively without imposing his political orientation. Through his typical characters and situations, the writer brings the reality in front of his readers' eyes so as to enable them to confront their troubles and think of change, and this is "intellectual and moral work" of the realist writer in Lukács's perspective.*

KEYWORDS: Reflection, Realism, Type, Totality, Reification.

INTRODUCTION

Georg [György] Lukács (1885-1971) was a Hungarian Marxist philosopher, literary historian, critic, an aesthetic theorist and one of the prominent and active Hungarian politicians, especially during the 1919 and 1956 Hungarian revolutions. Among his numerous intellectual production, *Soul and Form* (1911), *Theory of the Novel* (1916), and *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) are hailed as the most influential and widely read books. In *Soul and Form*, for example, Lukács investigated the mechanism through which literary genres can transform reality of the outer world into art, while in *Theory of the Novel* he postulated that the form of the literary work expresses a world-view of its writer due to the writer's direct or indirect ideological, economic, political, or cultural experience. It was also through *History and Class Consciousness* that Lukács remarkably contributed to the development of the Marxist theory of class-consciousness. In that book, Lukács inaugurated what is known as 'Western Marxism' to be distinguished from Marxism of the Soviet Union; a contribution that labeled him as one of the founders of 'Western Marxism'. This paper is, accordingly, devoted to examine Lukács' Reflection Theory, its development and the factors that paved the way for its development, as well as the arguments raised concerning its premises.

As a Marxist, Lukács preferred realism to the extent that he perceived it as " the basis of literature; *and that* all styles 'even those seemingly most opposed to realism' originate in it or are significantly related to it" (*Meaning of Contemporary Realism* 48; italics added). Realism, for Lukács, is the foundation of all literary genres due to its significant role in solving the social problems, such as alienation and the self- spilt, caused by the cultural reification. It is the realist literature, according to Lukács's point of view, that perfectly represents the *Reflection Theory*. Such preference of realism and the realist literature can justify his

rejection of the idealistic epistemology, which suggests that one's experience and knowledge of objects are mentally structured because they exist only in one's mind. Lukács denies this idealistic premise as he believes that the existence of objects is prior to our knowledge or our consciousness of them, and that the mental content is a reflection of the material world. In other words, human consciousness is formed through the perception of the outer world (i.e. reality) and, therefore, concepts and words represent reflected images of reality in the human mind.

This Luckácsean advocacy of the realist literature sprang from his political experience during the 1920s. Due to his withdrawal from the political scene at that time, Lukács felt that realist literature would be the best alternative that could enable the working class to achieve the required social change. However, Lukács's support of realism does not mean that he accepted all its forms as he frequently attacked socialist realism for producing works with stereotyped characters. This opposing attitude is implicitly expressed in his *European Realism*, *The Historical Novel*, *Essays on Realism*, and *Realism in Our Time*.

Lukács is frequently described as one of the most influential Marxist critics who decided to examine literary works sociologically to address the problematic issues caused by Capitalism. In this regard, he believes that Man in modern societies suffered alienation and self-fragmentation due to the oppressive capitalist division of labor; a crucial problem that can prevent progress in any society. Thus, he asserts that Man has to be "the focal point" in any literary work and that "there is no content of which Man himself is not the focal point" (*Meaning of Contemporary Realism* 19). He further associates the success and greatness of the literary work with its ability to address and treat feelings of self- split resulted from Capitalism. This led Taek-Gwang Lee to see that Lukács aimed through his realism to "provid[e] a practical strategy to overcome cultural reification, focusing on the mediation between an author and his material condition" (61).

In fact, Lukács's realism is an entirely opponent of cultural reification; a phenomenon resulted by Capitalism. According to Enani, "[Reification] means thingification of a person or a concept" (Modern *Literary Terms* 90; translation mine). Based on this phenomenon, human relations become like the relations between objects, and individuals, in turn, become objects rather than subjects and feel that they are alien from their history and their society. The danger of reification lies in the fact that it produces individuals deprived of any sense of will or desire to bring about development or changes within their societies. It also increases feelings of alienation, passivity, and intolerance of ideas and beliefs that require massive social revolutions to be changed; and here lies the importance of the realist literature/art.

This belief in the function of literature/art, as a reflection of its society as well as its age, in the progress of human life has been an inherent belief since ancient times, and is regarded as one of the most important approaches in the history of literary criticism. Admitting such ingrained relationship between art / literature and social reality, thinkers and intellectuals of the twenties century decided to inaugurate what is known as sociology of literature. Proponents of such approach, accordingly, perceive literature as a document that records or reflects circumstances and changes within any society. Marx and Engles, for example, believe that any artistic or literary product is a reflection of interests and ideology of the dominant class(es).

This concept was, then, developed by Georg Lukács who saw that the literary work is a reflection of class struggle as well as the writer's view of reality; and how this view reflects

the influence of his environment on his creativity. However, reflection for Lukács does not mean presenting a photographic image of reality with its details; reflection for him is to "depict the whole process of life but not its details. If we should compare life-details with the details in the work of art, we should destroy the artistic illusion" (Rieser 239). In this process of reflecting the reality of any society, the writer plays the role of the mediator between literature and the society. It is not a photographic process, but it is a process entirely based on the writer's consciousness and his deliberate targets beyond his literary work. That is to say that reflection for Lukács is not spontaneous nor photographic, but deliberate and conscious.

Indeed, the concept of reflection is a pivotal concept in Lukács's aesthetic work, but it is not, however, new to the literary field. The origin of this concept can be traced back to ancient ages through the philosophical doctrines and thoughts of Greek philosophers, mainly Plato and Aristotle, who were interested in the relationship between art / literature and the society. Both Plato and Aristotle addressed such relationship through their *Theory of Imitation* (or Mimesis), as represented in Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Poetics*, but with different perspectives.

Plato's *Theory of Imitation* (or Mimesis) is described by Hassan Al Kiri as "the first literary theory in the written history of humanity" ("Plato's Theory of Imitation"; translation mine). His perspective of the role of arts was idealistic. He believed that arts should improve morals and ideals and, therefore, he condemned poetry (the core of the Greek educational system) describing its stories about Greek gods and heroes as lies that can destroy the society. Plato argues that if gods and heroes, who are supposed to be representatives and symbols of righteousness, commit such heinous deeds, young men will, in turn, commit the same acts following, for instance, the example of those model heroes as Homer and Aeschylus. Thus, he attacks poetry because it corrupts minds of its hearers, especially young men, causing harm to the society. Poetry then, in Plato's view, is lies and if it is an imitation, "it is not an imitation of any truth and therefore must be condemned" ("Essay: Art as Imitation"). Such imitation, then, is undesirable as it destroys the society.

This hostile attitude by Plato against poetry and poets can be justified that Plato perceived poetry idealistically based on his idealistic belief in superiority of the world of ideals over the physical world. Accordingly, he perceives consciousness as prior to the physical world, and that the ultimate target that a man seeks to realize is knowledge/ Truth. The function of art or literature here is to provide such knowledge/ Truth. Art for Plato is, therefore, imitative. Since the ultimate target of the citizens in his Utopia is to be virtuous, Plato exempts poets from his Utopia because the imitative nature of their poetry is based on lies and, thereby, it will hinder people's search for the Truth. The poets, in Plato's perspective, imitate the appearance of the world of senses , which is a copy of the truth and not the truth itself. In short, "if art does not provide knowledge and truth, it is not art at all [...] and the right artist is the one who delves into the world of knowledge [...] and the supreme target of real art is to find out the nature of the soul" (Qsbjee 43; translation mine). For this reason, he placed them in an inferior level after philosophers and craftsmen.

In contrast are Aristotle's perspectives on imitation or reflection. Aristotle's ideas were widely different from those by his teacher, Plato, due to the difference of their philosophical perspectives. Plato's ideas were mystical and idealistic, while Aristotle's were practical and experimental. Indeed Aristotle believes that art is an imitation, but he does not associate his theory of imitation with idealism. For him, art should not be constrained by principles of philosophy. It is an imitation of nature, but nature for him is not a copy of Plato's world of

ideals. The poet, according to Aristotle, imitates nature but he also puts his perception into it. The poet for Aristotle does not mirror the phenomenal world because he imitates what could happen not what already exists.

Aristotle believes that Man is a mimetic being and that he creates art to reflect his reality. However, this imitation is not only producing a mimetic copy of real life because Man, in his search for Knowledge and truth as beauty, justice and goodness, uses mathematical ideas and symmetry. Literature, according to Aristotle,"is not the photographic reproduction of life in all its totality. It is the representation of selected events and characters necessary in a coherent action for the realization of artist's purpose. [The artist] even exalts, idealizes and imaginatively recreates a world which has its own meaning and beauty" (Barad).

In addition, Aristotle rejects Plato's claim that art is lies because it does not teach morality and virtues. Aristotle sees that the function of art is not aesthetic; it is not created to teach:

> morality teaches. Art does not attempt to teach. It merely asserts it is thus or thus that life is perceived to be. That is my bit of reality, says the artist. Take it or leave it – draw any lessons you like from it – that is my account of things as they are – if it has any value to you as evidence or teaching, use it, but that is not my business: I have given you my rendering, my account, my vision, my dream, my illusion – call it what you will. If there is any lesson in it, it is yours to draw, not mine to preach. (Scott-James 42)

It should be mentioned here that in spite of their different philosophical premises, Plato and Aristotle agree on ranking philosophers at the top, but Aristotle located the poets in a higher position not after the craftsman as Plato did.

This interest in the relationship between art and social reality continued through successive ages but was not theorized into a critical approach till the advent of the Nineteenth Century at the hand of Madame de Staël (1766 1817), the French woman writer who proclaimed through her book, *De la Littérature dans ses Rapports avec les Institutions Sociales* (1799) or *Literature in its Relationship with Social Institutions*, that literature cannot be studied or appreciated in isolation from social reality; the same trend that was adopted and developed by the French critic and historian Hippolyte Adolphe Taine (1828 –1893).

Through his book *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise* (1864), which was later translated into *History of English Literature* (1872), Taine claims that a work of art is a social product and that any analysis of a work of art has to be done based on three basic elements: race, milieu, and moment. Each race (i.e. nation) has its own characteristics in terms of climate, norms, and customs, which contribute in the formation of the author's creativity. For the second element, milieu or environment, Taine claims that a work of art is a product of the author's environment, including political, social, and economic circumstances. The third element in Taine's three- pronged approach is time or the historical period in which the work of art was produced; each age has its own features that affect profoundly every aspect of life during that time. Thus, a better understanding of any work of art requires studying the dispositions of the nation, environment and the historical era that produced this work.

Another important and prominent figure in development of this social approach of reflection is the German philosopher Georg Hegel (1770-1831). In an attempt to detect the relationship between arts and various forms of human activity, Hegel used his dialectical method in

analyzing the social phenomena and asserted that the relationship between literature and social reality. Hegel perceived arts as "a form of one's search for the absolute spirit, but he concluded that not all issues can be represented through forms of arts because arts express issues in a specific subliminal form" (Bastawess 8; translation mine). Hegel further associated the emergence of the novel with the social changes in any society, proclaiming that the "transition from the epic form into novel was a result of the rise of the bourgeoisie classes and their congenital and educational concerns" (Khattam; translation mine). These Hegelian ideas paved the way for Marxism in general and Georg Lukács in particular.

Indeed, the aforementioned efforts contributed to the development of reflection theory, but it was Marxism that gave it new dimensions. Marxism is "the political, economic, and social principles […] advocated by *Karl* Marx *along with Friedrich Engels*; especially a theory and practice of socialism including the labor theory of value, dialectical materialism, the class struggle, and dictatorship of the proletariat until the establishment of a classless society" ("Marxism"; *italics added*). The main idea in Marxism is that development of societies results from class struggles between the bourgeoisie (i.e. the ruling class) and the proletariat (i.e. the working class).

Marx, accordingly, devoted his theories to enable the working class to achieve their socio-economic emancipation and resist the restraints imposed upon them under the capitalist system. For Marx, there is a reflexive relationship between the base/substructure (i.e. classes) and the superstructures (i.e. various forms of creativity, including literature, arts, philosophy, etc.). That is to say that literature is a reflection of the social classes in the society. Marx, in fact, was greatly influenced in this regard by Hegel's dialectics as he applied it to explanation of the social reality, but he rejected Hegel's idealism.

Marx himself explained the differences between his dialectic method and Hegel's in the first volume of his *Capital* (1867) as follows:

> My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of "the Ideal," he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of "the Idea." With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought. (*Capital Vol.1*, 14)

Hegel's dialectics is Dialectical Idealism while Marx's dialectics is Dialectical Materialism.

The aforementioned critical perspectives, starting from Plato and Aristotle to Marxism, largely contributed to the formation of Lukas's views on reflection, and he, in turn, developed his distinguished *Reflection Theory* which is described as "the real contribution that Lukács provided in aesthetics" (Bastawess 111-12; translation mine). Plato and Aristotle's Imitation influenced him, but Aristotle's influence was greater. Aristotle believed that the poet's interest should focus on everything that is mentally accepted. However, his Imitation does not mean a photographic portrayal of reality, the same approach that Lukács developed through his theory. Reflection for Lukács is not an imitation or a photographic depiction of reality as the Naturalists used to claim. Like Aristotle, Lukács sees a difference between aesthetic reflection (reflection of the Social Totality) and automatic reflection (presenting a photographic image of reality). Another similarity between Lukács's concept of reflection and Aristotle's Imitation is that both are based on the idea that the writer's vision determines the

choice of the form and content of the literary work. A literary work is merely an artistic construct that reflects the writer's or artist's view of reality in an objective manner.

However, it should be noted here that although Lukács was influenced by Aristotle's views, the real contribution to the reflection theory was by Lukács. Lukács believes that the construction of any literary work begins from the writer's vision of the contradictions and conflicts involved in his reality. Lukács attempts to provide through his theory solutions for problems of the cultural reification in an aesthetic manner and away from laws of science. The first step in the formation of the literary structure, in Lukács's point of view, is the writer's observation of the events and their related details to give a total and a comprehensive depiction of the reality.

Aesthetic theorists of the eighteenth century and Positivists in the nineteenth century also adopted the same idea of literature a reflection of its producing society, but their reflection was limited to presentation of a photographic copy of the outer world. Lukács, accordingly, criticized the positivist social and natural science because they "uncritically accepts the nature of the objects as it is given *and considers* the manner in which data immediately present themselves [a]s an adequate foundation of scientific conceptualization" (Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* 7; *italics added*). Categorizing it as modern realism, Lukács criticizes Naturalism because it made the novel lose ""its capacity to depict the dynamics of life, and thus its representation of capitalist reality is inadequate, diluted and constrained" (*Writer and Critic* 147). For Lukács, it is possible to grasp knowledge of the objective reality, but this has to be done away from any attempt to merely present a photographic copy of this immediate reality.

Lukács further argued that when science and naturalist literature dealt with immediate reality, they had "torn the real world into shreds and […] lost its vision of the whole" (*Writer and Critic* 104). He, accordingly, urged the writers to transcend such photographic imitation because "go[ing] beyond this immediacy […] means[s] the genesis, the creation of the object" (155). It was such aspect that led Lukács to praise Marxism because Marx, in his point of view, was able to develop the theory of reflection to its dialectic perfection in the sense that he produced an obvious and valid perception of the relationship between *Being* and *Consciousness*. Lukács, therefore, focuses on the association between various forms of consciousness and their economic structures, as well as the relationship between literature and reality within any society. Literature for him is a reflection of the social phenomena.

Reflection for Lukács is a term used to refer to formation of the mental structure that is expressed through words, and , therefore, ,"the theory of reflection '*Wiederspiegelung*' is the common basis of all forms of theoretical or practical dealing with reality by the human mind. It is also the basis of the artistic reflection of reality" (qtd. In Rieser 238). Through this *Reflection* theory, Lukács examined the relationship between aesthetics and reality until he decided *Realism* as an aesthetic way to analyze literary works based on the idea that all knowledge are built on reflections of the external reality (i.e. the outer world). However, this does not mean that reflection for him means to reproduce a typical picture of the outer world because the result will be superficial art. "The aim of the work of art", according to Lukács, "is to give a picture of reality such that the contrasts of appearance and essence, of general law and of the particular, of immediacy and of concept coincide in a direct impression so that the public has the feeling of indissoluble unity: the essential becomes visible in the appearance, the general law seems to be the cause of the particular instance" (238).

In this process of reflecting the reality, the writer, in Lukács's point of view is a mediator between literature and society because creative process in literature is not spontaneous, but it is related to the conscious purposes of the writer. Reflection is, therefore, an intentional process done by the author because the objective reflection is associated with the writer's attitude towards the development of society. Thus, literary works can be described as objective based on the writer's choice of issues. In other words, the writer is able to change an ordinary incident into a typical one, reflecting the overall essence of a human being in his relationship with the world around him. Thus, reflection is not a photographic process, but it is a process entirely based on the writer's consciousness and his deliberate targets beyond his literary work. As a literary process, Lukács's reflection is neither spontaneous nor photographic, but deliberate and conscious. This deliberate and objective process expresses the writer's attitude towards the successive changes and radical transformations witnessed by his society, and the influence of such changes on individuals. Lukács believes that the writer has to be committed to the reality of his society, not to be idealistic or prejudiced to his personal views.

Thus, the success of the writer, in Lukács's point of view, is based on the richness of his experience and depth of his world-view. A great writer has to portray his characters and depict their struggle to achieve the required social change objectively without intruding his political orientation. For this reason, Lukács sees in Scott, Balzac and Tolstoy a perfect example of realism and reflection because through their works "we experience events which are inherently significant because of the direct involvement of the characters in the events and because of the general social significance emerging in the unfolding of the characters' lives" (*Writer and Critic* 116). The problem with modern writers, in Lukács's perspective, is that "they are used to literary fashions swinging to and fro between, the pseudo-objectivism of the naturalist school and the mirage-subjectivism of the psychologist […] they regard their own false extreme as a new kind of near-realism or realism". Lukács's realism, therefore, "is not some sort of middle way between false objectivity and false subjectivity, but on the contrary the true solution-bringing third way" (*Studies in European Realism* 6). For this reason, he finds in Honoré de Balzac a perfect example of the true realist writer: "A great realist such as Balzac, if the intrinsic artistic development of situations and characters he has created comes into conflict with his most sacred convictions, will, without an instant's hesitation, set aside these in his own prejudices and convictions and describe what he really sees, not what we would prefer to see" (11).

Lukács prefers Balzac's example to Zola's (the naturalist writer) because Balzac depicts characters and society objectively, without directing his characters to support his personal views. A great writer, as Lukács claims, has to enable his character to "live an independent life of their own; [whose] comings and goings, […] development, [and] destiny is dictated by the inner dialectic of their social and individual existence. No writer is a true realist or even a truly good writer, if he can direct the evolution of his own characters at will" (11).Through his works, Balzac portrays the whole essence of social reality through characters able to reflect the overall aspects of the human entity; and in spite of his solidarity with his social class, he succeeded in reflecting its collapse. To give a photographic reflection of the reality is perceived by Lukács as a mechanic reflection, as the naturalists (e.g. Zola) used to do. Lukács sees that type of reflection unreal and against the function of arts in the societies. The realist literary work, for Lukács, reflects human essence, as Balzac did in his literary works.

It was, in fact, Lukács's belief in the difference between the scientist's perception of the concept of reflection and that of the realist writer that affected Lukács's formulation of his theory of reflection. For Lukács, the scientist is interested in analyzing the details of any phenomenon in order to reach its causes and then formulates his scientific laws to control this phenomenon; the scientist always seeks to find solutions. On the contrary, the realist writer is concerned with totality or the essence of the phenomenon regardless its constituting details. Unlike reflection in science, reflection in literature/ arts has its own independent world. The work of art has its unique "self- containment" form. Unlike the scientist, the realist writer tends to reflect the contradictions and conflicts within his society and he is not obliged to produce any solutions. For this reason, he was fond of the literary works by Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Honoré de Balzac because they were able to "represent the 'socially typical' [,] *and for Lukács* [a] writer who represents the socially typical can connect individual narratives with the broader social totality" (Koutsourakis 21; *italics added*). The great realist writer only expresses his vision through what Lukács terms as the *Type*.

In his *Studies in European Realism*, Lukács defines this *Type* as "a particular synthesis which organically binds together the general and the particular both in characters and situations"; and , therefore, he believes that the great realist work presents "[a] truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances" (6; Baxandall & Morawski 114). The way that this typical character perceives the world is considered the basis upon which the writer depends to reflect the social phenomena that concern his society. In addition, Lukács believes that it is not necessary for such type to have an objective world-view, but he has to own such quality of self-awareness. That is to say, a typical character must be a self-conscious character regardless he is a positive or a negative character because Lukács believes that even the negative character is important as it enables the writer to reflect the contradictions in the society. This type, whether positive or negative, should be marked by such sense of self-realization; someone whose world-view reflects the social totality of the society. Noteworthy, being described as a type does not mean that this charcater is different or unusual. The type has to be a representative of his people. He has to reflect an actual image of the social class it represents. This literary type has the ability to represent "both the tensions of everyday life, and historical trends and conflicts that shape the wider world" (Lanning 133). For this reason, the typical character in the literary work can be used for what Robert Lanning terms as, "political socialization" (152).

Beside depicting typical characters, objectivity is another fundamental element in Lukács's reflection theory. In fact, the objectivity that Lukács refers to "does not mean strict objectivity, but objectivity in its dialectical sense. The writer's personal perspective, of course, influences his choices in shaping the work of art and its final image. The writer is not controlled by certain rules, but writing for him is a means to reveal the special laws of reality" (Bastawess 114-15; translation mine). For this reason, when the writer tries to reflect the reality of his society, he may focus on a certain phenomenon to express his own literary vision and this, in Lukács's point of view, does not deprive him of objectivity. Objectivity for Lukács means totality; that the writer has to reflect the real world as a total entity with all its contradictions and produce the type that reflects the private and public, the part as well as the whole. It is not important for the writer to portray the reality correctly, but it is important to understand this reality totally.

In addition, the writer, in the process of reflection, is not required to provide the sources of his creativity that may be formed from his own imagination, observations in life, or from his

personal or non-personal experience. This means that the writer during the process of creativity rephrases the reality in order to reveal the fundamental and total aspects of life through his own free choice. The real writer has a distinguished ability to give a total and deep portrayal of the self , illuminating its deep secrets and ambiguity. In his *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács asserts the importance of such totality that:

> Only in this context which sees the isolated facts of social life as aspects of the historical process and integrates them in a totality, can knowledge of the facts hope to become knowledge of reality. This knowledge starts from the simple (and to the capitalist world), pure, immediate, natural determinants […]. It progresses from them to the knowledge of the concrete totality, i.e. to the conceptual reproduction of reality. This concrete totality is by no means an unmediated datum for thought. 'The concrete is concrete,' Marx says, 'because it is a synthesis of many particular determinants, i.e. a unity of diverse elements'. (8-9)

Indeed Lukács was a Marxist but Marxism for him was not only a theory adopted to cause a political change, but a theory that enables change in all aspects of social reality. For him, the social reality of any society cannot be divided into parts as each of its constituent parts has to be examined and understood in relation to other parts (i.e. the social totality), another unique contribution that Lukács's presented through his theory of reflection. However, Lukács's development of the concept of reflection does not prevent opposing critical viewpoints against his claims. His approach is opposed by some critics, such as Adorno and Althusser, who claim that Lukács's realism is couched in Stalin's Socialist realism, a theory of music, art, and literature developed and institutionalized in the Soviet Union in 1943 to assert that the function of a work of art is to reflect the Communist ideals, such as freedom of the proletariat class (i.e. class of wage-earners) in capitalist societies. It is sometimes confused with Social realism, a global movement of art (originated in the United States of America) that focuses on the social structures which control conditions of the poor as well as the working class in any society. Preoccupied with social realities of their societies, social realists are interested in the idea that any phenomenon results from social conditions is a realistic phenomenon, and that existence of society was prior to existence of individuals; that is why any individual should be a member in a social group (i.e. a community). Through the analysis of Lukács's *Reflection* theory, it becomes clear that Lukács is not a socialist realist but a social realist.

Another point that asserts that Lukács's ideas on realism and reflection were different from those of Stalin is that Lukács himself criticizes Stalinist socialist realist as embodied in the "illustrating literature". The term "literature-as-illustration" refers to a form of literature "devoid of the historical substance of class struggle, scientific inquiry, and philosophical debate—a literature that reduces history and the problems of everyday life to slogans and formulaic resolutions" (Lanning 134). It is a didactic form as it determines the appropriate behaviours of the characters. Lukács criticizes this Stalinist literature, beside naturalism, because it failed to represent "the complex reality of capitalism and the necessary struggles against it" (134). The function of literature, as Lukács argues, is more than didacticism; it has to contribute to self-formation and consciousness. Literature, in other words, shall lead to development at the individual and the social level. He was against Stalin's socialist realism because he believes that Stalin's socialist realism is a socialist naturalism as well.

Another opposing viewpoint against Lukács belongs to Bertolt Brecht who perceives Lukács's critique as idealistic. Lukács believes in the totality and coherence between people and constituting objects in their real world. The function of the realist literature, according to Lukács, is to "construct a coherent , non-alienated human world by relating everything back to man and by creating meaningful connotations between people and things and between interiority and exteriority" (Bannet 477). In fact, the purpose of Lukács's emphasis on totality was to solve the problems of alienation and fragmentation suffered by his society due to the domination of the capitalist system. In an attempt to justify Lukács's interest in totality, Taek-Gwang Lee claims that the reason is that "Lukács's way of understanding realism arises from his emphasis on objectivity rather than subjective reflection such as Kantian philosophy" (61). Lukács's reflection theory is based on objectivity rather than subjectivity. Lukács tends through his theory to reflect what is beyond our visible reality. For Lukács, reality comprises of total sum of actions and events. The reality of any society consists of two pillar elements: essence and appearance.

In this regard, Lukács himself asserts that the great realist writer "[has] to seek out the lasting features in people, in their relations with each other and in the situations in which they have to act; he must focus on those elements which endure over long periods and which constitute the objective human tendencies of society and indeed of mankind as a whole" ('Realism in the Balance' 47). The realist writer depicts social and political tensions, contradictions, conflicts and daily interaction between people, and conditions, which constitute consciousness of his characters towards their society or the wider world and how these elements develop such characters, and here lies "[t]he tremendous social power of literature", as Lukács describes through the following words,

> The tremendous social power of literature consists in the fact that it depicts the human being directly and with the full richness of his inward and outward life, in concrete fashion not equalled by any other field of reflection of objective reality. Literature is able to portray the contradictions, struggles and conflicts of social life in the same way as these appear in the mind and life of actual human beings, and portray the connections between these collisions in the same way as they focus themselves within the human being. (*Essays on Realism* 143)

To sum up, the realist writer has to bring the reality in front of his readers' eyes so as to enable them to confront their troubles and think of change. He plays a great role in helping people to overcome their feelings of self-split produced by reification and Capitalism:"[t]he central aesthetic problem of realism is the adequate presentation of the complete human personality" (*Studies in European Realism* 7). Thus, the main aim of the realist writer is to enable his characters, who are representative types of ordinary people, to achieve self-realization, and this is "intellectual and moral work" of the realist writer in Lukács's perspective (178). It is this interest in the significant function of literature in reflecting the reality of any society objectively and wholly in order to enable people to realize their reality and contribute to its progress that attract attention of researchers to Lukács's works which "remains of philosophical interest not only because it contains the promise of a reformulation of an undogmatic, non-reductionist Marxism, but also because it connects a philosophical approach drawing on Neo-Kantianism, Hegel and Marx with an acute cultural sensitivity and a powerful critique of modern life" ("Georg [György] Lukács").

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