

cases one can see how the outcome in terms of values and ends is affected by one's view of the nature of the subject. It is obvious that our view of the nature of religion will be affected by our view of the how and the whether of divine existence. It is equally true that our notion of the worth of mathematics must be affected by our view of *what* it is that is the object of mathematical study, whether it is a creation of our own or a voyage of discovery, whether its substance is mere marks or inscriptions, or Platonic forms, or the form of the world known in experience, or the consequences of arbitrarily defined concepts. All our enterprises will be profoundly affected depending on our knowledge or ignorance of the kinds of assertions we are dealing with and what procedures of verification are appropriate to them. Similarly our notion not only of the being of art but also of the creator and the participant in the aesthetic process must affect our notion of what values are to be gained, what it is that can be learned or inculcated in art. The philosopher's own interest in art and artists is the best reason why the artist, particularly the teacher, should have a reciprocal interest in the philosophy of art.

Artistic Value

STEFAN MORAWSKI

I have no ambition to set forth my own position regarding artistic value in its entirety within the compass of the present essay.¹ Much less do I aim to expound here my philosophical presuppositions. This discussion will treat the typology of the axiological solutions in aesthetics, and is but a fragment of a much more comprehensive study in progress — one which entails primarily the discernment of certain common principles of the theory of value. Marxist research on this question has been extremely scarce. My investigation begins with a survey of current points of view and critiques of these, and moves to the statement of my own conclusions, which presuppose the possibility of agreeing on some common axiological principles.

I

The question taken up here is not an arbitrary choice on the part of this writer. Rather, since the second decade of the twentieth century an axiological orientation has had a commanding if not exclusive interest for aestheticians. I shall consider three leading anthologies of contem-

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¹ The title of this article is intended to delimit the subject matter for study — since aesthetic value occurs in nature, as it does in works of art. My previous article of this title was published in *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* (No. 4, 1962). Having been reworked and enlarged at the beginning of 1965, it appeared in Russian in the journal *Philosophical Studies* (No. 187, 1966) edited at Tartu State University. The present text stems from the Russian version with some modifications. Unfortunately my essays on the nature of the value-fact (a question I was able only to broach here) are not yet translated into foreign languages. Polish texts are to be seen in *Studia Filozoficzne* (No. 4, 1967; No. 1, 1968).

porary aesthetic thought published in the United States.² In two of the three the material is so organized as to encourage introductory discussions of that which is "essential" to art. The third, Rader's, achieves this less transparently, since its first and second parts ostensibly treat of the creative process and of the structure of artistic composition, while in fact various attempts to define art are presented, i.e., diverse interpretations of artistic (or aesthetic) value. And, launching his prefatory article with a discussion of "What is art?" Rader only confirms our statement, as has — in another context — R. Bayer.³ Lalo and Souriau of France, Pareyson and Tagliabue of Italy, adopt such a focus. These authors all stress that aesthetics must come to terms with the question of value, that it is a fit and needed matter for study. G. Morpurgo-Tagliabue, the author of what at present is the sole synthetic work devoted to the trends in contemporary bourgeois aesthetics, brings his thoughts on the subject to a close with a number of conclusions, among them the following: "An axiological aspect is inherent to the entire history of aesthetic doctrines: far from being novel, it can be said to represent the primary characteristic for the discussion of beauty and of art. It remains however to free this characteristic of delusion and of the ontological-cosmological views that have distorted it."⁴

How shall we answer the question, What is artistic value, the specific, primary type of aesthetic value? (As I have argued elsewhere, not only does art prove able to draw upon nature but it provides models wherewith we project our aesthetic evaluations onto nature.) To answer this question is to answer the question, What is art? From the outset, then, we meet difficulties of a terminological nature, and most investigators have readily noted them. The definition of the problem of artistic value becomes in this sense the problem of defining the object of one's investigation, and, unavoidably, a problem also of defining one's procedure of investigation.

In a highly instructive work, *Value in Social Theory* (1958), G. Myrdal demonstrated how a valuational orientation must be part and parcel of every scientific study, in the humanities at least. Undoubtedly, for this is confirmed when we consider the genesis and function of our investigations. E. Nagel states in *The Structure of Science*

² M. Rader, *A Modern Book of Esthetics*, 2d ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1952); E. Vivas and M. Kreiger (eds.), *The Problems of Aesthetics* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1953); M. Weitz (ed.), *Problems in Aesthetics* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1959).

³ Raymond Bayer, *Traité d'esthétique* (Paris: 1956), pp. 234, 238-39.

⁴ G. Morpurgo-Tagliabue, *L'Esthétique contemporaine* (Milan: 1960), p. 612.

(1961) that the humanities do not even present a special problem in this respect; natural scientists face the same difficulties, the same "logical crux" (in Myrdal's terminology). But Myrdal's compelling views on the axiological traits of scientific statements seem to me excessive. I hold with Nagel that were the stronger assumptions of this kind valid, scientific findings would be simply meaningless beyond the social groups of their origin with their own axiological bases. Precisely this state of affairs permits us to demarcate between statements and judgments, and their equivalents, i.e., facts *sensu stricto* and value-facts. Value-facts are always much more dependent on individual attitudes, on *hic et nunc* cultural contexts; the objective qualities that correspond to judgments never are univocal. Yet this does not mean we must say that only the traditionally fostered notion of *adequatio rei et intellectus* can assure the objectivity of our approach to the external world. To rule value-facts out of order flatly as unsusceptible to any kind of verification is an error. Indeed they are not condemned to be strictly personal. The intersubjectivity of value-facts has merely a character other than the truth or falsity of atomic propositions. In this regard some authors follow in the Anglo-American tradition of Royce, C. Stevenson, and Wittgenstein and sharply distinguish between description and evaluation on the premise that art, unlike science, can provide only a sensual-emotional selective approach to the world. Some other aestheticians, for example M. C. Beardsley, T. Munro, and Rader, hesitate to separate description from value but they do not propose a clear constructive solution. Still others simply sidestep the question, only noting a need to distinguish between constitutive beauty (goodness) and beauty by comparison (greatness).⁵

No doubt this latter distinction must be made. Without it, no axiological aesthetics can be fruitfully developed. One has first to define aesthetic value *per se* before one can be concerned with its hierarchies. Both Hume and Taine well understood this. If we can accept this distinction then the other — as to whether in answering the question of the essence of art (i.e., of artistic value) we thus effect a description of art — will become less a matter of argument. It should then appear that what we do in fact is describe, even though the purpose of the description differs from that in a scientific approach to physical or biological facts. There some neutral objects and occurrences are described, while in the former case we encounter values, that is, a peculiar sort of phenomena constituted by our own intervention. To put it more

⁵ See, e.g., K. Aschenbrenner, "Aesthetic Theory — Conflict and Conciliation," in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (September 1959).

precisely: in the act of pure cognition subjective elements such as emotion and conation do not define the character of a given fact, whereas in every act which we may call appreciative, a conjuncture of certain given objective data and of this kind of participation is precisely what constitutes the particular value-fact. We should not neglect to give some thought to the feasibility of philosophical analysis of these distinctive value-facts. They are an integral element of the history of mankind and no less of the developing course of man's culture. This supposition may explain why ways of thinking recur among aestheticians over a period of many centuries. For if the value judgment is simultaneously *assertive and normative*, axiological norms in aesthetics may be adequately founded upon some set of qualities which have been accepted again and again in varied cultural settings and in different epochs.

In any case, if the twentieth century has seen an abandonment of the preceding century's efforts to work out the essence of artistic phenomena in physiological or biological equivalents, this can perhaps be attributed to the rise of the cultural-anthropological approach. The only experiments today in the older orientation are in the field of cybernetics — and even its spokesmen prefer to regard their work as in the nature of propaedeutic measures. Meanwhile, the definition of the artistic values established by man in the course of his development is being attempted at present in the area of specialized sciences. Gestaltists, for instance, are concerned with some peculiarities proper to both the psycho-physiological structure of man and the nature of the material world. The study by K. Koffka, "Problems in the Psychology of Art" (*Art: A Bryn Mawr Symposium*, 1940), further work having this tendency by R. Arnheim, author of *Art and Visual Perception* (1954), and the collaborative *Aspects of Form* (1951) edited by L. L. Whyte (where combined knowledge of the physicist, neurophysiologist, biochemist, botanist, etc., is focused on problems of aesthetics), lead one to conclude that the human artistic (aesthetic) sense evolved through a process that embraced an enormous range of internal and external factors, which combined to form the "socio-cultural environment" wherein *homo faber* has acted from his origins. These introductory remarks may be concluded with the following points:

a) One has to distinguish the problem of artistic value, i.e., the definition of what art is *per se*, from any question of which artworks are superior or inferior to others and why, i.e., the hierarchy of values. This

position is taken by C. I. Lewis (*An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 1946, chs. 14, 15) and especially by S. Pepper (*The Sources of Value*, 1958, ch. 13). I do not accept the whole of their axiological systems but I agree with these writers on the necessity of disentangling this pair of problems. I believe that, terminologically, this can be done more readily if we apply the term *valuating* to the discovery of artistic values, i.e., investigation of the common distinguishing signs for a class of objects called artworks. The term *evaluating* will be restricted to the discovery of a scale for such objects with explicit criteria for recognizing that work *X* surpasses work *Y*. A question arises here which, however, can best be dealt with separately and in a more suitable context: i.e., isn't it true that in valuating, we already have formulated the criteria of evaluation?

b) In common with every branch of knowledge, the task of aesthetics is descriptive. However, the object it describes — as an axiological discipline — is value. Now arbitrarily to pit description against value is to falsify the core of the question; it is to hurl aesthetics into a stew of subjectivism, since a sphere of values that confounds description has then necessarily to be assumed.

c) The terms "good" and "bad" may be used in the aesthetic sense as denominators of valuation. But (some philosophers of art to the contrary notwithstanding) it is inadmissible that they should have purely individual significance. The ultimate aim of our study must be to discover what indeed are art's fundamental values as authenticated in the experience of man.

d) When attributing "artistic value" to a given object, we establish a kind of division between artworks and nonart. Insofar as the phrase "artistically valuable" refers to the fact that we have to do with such a *good* (aesthetic), the term *bad* will then simply indicate objects which make us doubt they should be classed among artworks in view of concrete deficiencies of their structure. It happens often that such defects are not so exaggerated as to cause our disqualifying them as works of art.

e) Wittgenstein has rebuked endeavors similar to the present undertaking (*Philosophical Investigations*, 1930, para. 77): "Anything — and nothing — is right. And this is the position you are in if you look for definitions corresponding to our concepts in esthetics and ethics." We accept his warning not to try to impose too rigorous, confining definitions upon art; yet in view of the primarily historical rather than linguistic focus of this discussion I find more to the point the view of

Melvin Rader stated in the introduction to the third edition of his anthology.⁶ Rather than Wittgenstein's advice, "Beware of definition," Rader proposes as his watchword: "Seek definition but distrust it."

Returning now to our initial task, its aim — to effect a classification of the various theories of artistic value based on definitions provided by their authors — will, I hope, be accepted without any serious objections. The study of the various efforts to define art will provide the ground floor of my own argumentation, because any interpretation of value necessitates the choice of a philosophical (or scientific) method. Stolnitz rightly emphasizes that "Each of the major theories of art . . . told us what to 'look for' in the work of art. Each thereby established criteria for judging art."⁷

In scrutinizing, then, the chief solutions to the problem of value, the order will be: (1) psychological *subjectivism*; (2) ontological *objectivism*; (3) the *sociological* viewpoint, with close consideration of its tendencies to both the subjectivist and objectivist poles; (4) a look at *relationism* which will permit us to work out a constructive position, one grounded moreover in Marxism's historical method. The classificatory assumptions adopted here are precisely the common coin in present-day scholarship. The novelty will consist in the articulation of some distinctive sociological solutions, and as well in the discovery of some significant shadings of implication in the viewpoints of extreme subjectivists (psychologism) and extreme objectivists (ontologism). Yet since similar though not identical mappings are published by Beardsley, Stolnitz, Heyl, and others, readers may prefer to read a digest of my critical typology and then to turn directly to my positive proposal as it is described starting a page or so into Section IV. In brief then: axiological subjectivism (psychologism) and objectivism (ontologism) both fail to stand up under critical examination, as likewise do relationism and sociological relativism. Those who reduce aesthetic values to aesthetic experiences (whether fleeting or stable) are quite unable to explain why they reject every objective factor. In turn those who voice the objectivistic conception, claiming to have resolved aesthetic questions once and for all and laughing at certain reservations urged by the sociologist, fail to note that some of the latter's points are valid. However, the sociologist knows nothing but ever-varying collective tastes and judgments, and he hands us cursory relativistic data certifying that every

⁶ Rader, *op. cit.*, 3rd ed. (New York: 1960), p. xviii.

⁷ J. Stolnitz, *Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960), pp. 371-72.

period and each subculture has its "own values." Relationism, in its logical version (subject and object as potentially coequal determinants), yields a purely schematic solution; and even if the axiological adequacy of subject and object is rendered empirical, as in the Gestaltist studies, it still remains outside culture and history — the structures of the human mind and of the external world are supposed to suffice. Neither of these solutions can surmount its difficulties, which must be brought back again to the relativistic conception. For this reason I distinguish another version of the sociological orientation: it is concerned with prolonged cultural cycles, with *vertical* samplings through history, with the aim of discovering some recurrent motifs. Carl Jung and the Jungian school, as is well known, have done much with such motifs (archetypes). But the axiological trend I am emphasizing does not share the Jungian premises. Its cradle is not the human psyche but history. Its referential field consists of cultural facts, rather than of certain mysterious powers which cannot be adequately stated. So much for summary; now to detailed examination or page-skipping, as the reader may prefer.

II

The subjectivist viewpoint, though still in favor with many representatives of the semantic school, has not withstood the test of critical analysis. It will be useful to examine the arguments introduced by psychologists on its behalf. To cite the instance of Poland, the extreme view of subjectivism was held by J. Segal and W. Witwicki, and among moderates were S. Ossowski (before 1934) and also M. Wallis.⁸ The extreme wing concluded that aesthetics cannot be and is not a science since — they asserted — aesthetic values coincide solely with individual experience and are impossible to verify. Thus Witwicki argues for what he deems to be the happenstantial character of art. Each person acts aesthetically in his own way according to a personal need of the moment.

⁸ J. Segal, "The Psychological Character of the Fundamental Problems of Aesthetics," *Przegląd Filozoficzny* (No. 8, 1911), 369-429; W. Witwicki, "A Communication on Aesthetics," *ibid.* (Nos. 1-2, 1949), 25-35; S. Ossowski, *The Fundamentals of Aesthetics* (Warsaw: 1933), and "Subjectivism in Aesthetics," in *Księga pamiątkowa ku czci T. Kotarbinskiego* (Warsaw: 1934); M. Wallis, *Aesthetic Propositions* (Warsaw: 1932), and *Aesthetic Values: Gentle and Harsh* (Lodz: 1949); all works in Polish. I should stress that I do not attempt to cope here with the entirety of the views represented in these texts. I have restricted myself to what is predominant in them and suited this attempted typological scheme. In justice to the above-cited scholars I must state that, for instance, M. Wallis, in his contribution "Verité et validité des propositions esthétiques" to the *Travaux du IX Congrès International de Philosophie* (XII: Paris, 1937), said that the aesthetic experience *proper* actualizes all of the aesthetic potentialities of the perceived object.

The "beauty" of an object wholly depends on whether and how it pleases someone at some point. Segal — debating M. Sobieski, another Polish aesthetician who in the period of 1908 to 1910 had defended the study of forms as an objective basis of experience — stated his position as follows: Every work has its own beauty as is affirmed by a given person in the process of a particular perception. This beauty is quite irrational in the sense that it is experienced (i.e., perceived), and no way exists for the correctness of the perception to be verified.

To support this conclusion Segal made the following two arguments. There are no objective criteria of beauty, because if there were we should be able to point to these necessary and sufficient traits in all of the objects termed beautiful. However, such traits do obtain in aesthetic experience — reference here is to a theory of contemplation which has its origin in Kant. This latter point is unsubstantiated by Segal. Then, too, it contradicts Segal's assertion of an irrational beauty which, we noted, will appear among his conclusions. The first point in the argument is also unproven. During its course Segal does indeed make several concessions to the objectivist position, as he allows that some objects may correspond more than others to one's mood at the moment of contemplation, or he concedes quite incidentally that ugliness occurs in the absence of certain technical criteria, compositional elements, etc.

Wallis had still greater difficulties. In his essay "Aesthetic Propositions," he urged a distinction between personal propositions and impersonal propositions. Wallis sought to ground the latter in the specifics of perception. He cited criteria such as an absence of all defects of the sensory organs, strong impressionableness, a definite background, ability to grasp the artist's intentions, and a normal psychic state. Wallis did not explain the conditions whereby an aesthetic background and the comprehension of art are acquired. Nor did he arrive at a more precise definition of the specifics of aesthetic experience. Add his stipulation that the experiencing person must in effect be the perfect observer responsive, *inter alia*, to the demands of the perceived object; and add also his remark, in discussing the differences among aesthetic values, about a need to account for historico-cultural changes, and undoubtedly his contextual psychological arguments appear insufficient. Another of his studies which was inspired by a psychological proposition — that aesthetic value is the result of experience — in actuality educes the historico-evolutionary thesis that the rhythm of artistic change and even the displacement of artistic eras is determined by the parallel needs of the artists and audience. These needs have a connection, to be sure,

in the common psychic structure. That the harmonious aesthetic values which Wallis calls "gentle" are ascendent in one epoch, and the disharmonious or "harsh" are prevalent at another time, Wallis despairs of explaining on strict psychological grounds. The aesthetic values of both categories are determined by real properties of the objects (i.e., size — small is beautiful and the gigantesque sublime — or formal-stylistic indices) as well by objective characteristics in the development of society and culture (e.g., economic and religious factors, national tendencies). Thus we see how Wallis, whose initial premises were somewhat similar to the thesis of Segal and Witwicki (according to which the aesthetic object is absorbed in aesthetic experience, beyond which one presumably may not go), demolished that standpoint in the course of his analysis.

Ossowski took the question still further in disengaging himself, after 1934, from the psychological standpoint stated in the first edition of his *Fundamentals of Aesthetics* (1933).⁹ From the outset he rather doubted that a theory could be viable which treated aesthetic experience as an isolate from other varieties of experience. It followed that a definition of aesthetic value which reduced it to some peculiar perception had to be erroneous. Ossowski was subsequently led to doubt the purported possibility of the subject discerning some necessary and sufficient objective condition or an ensemble of conditions. His essay "Subjectivism in Aesthetics" treated aesthetic values as being neither ontologically nor gnoseologically verifiable. In the second edition of his major work in this field, however, Ossowski sought to argue for the idea of an intersubjective verification (based in social and historical acceptance of certain values). This viewpoint was already asserted in his essay of 1936, "The Sociology of Art." Witwicki's position came to appear to Ossowski as untenable and, indeed, as "aesthetic nihilism."

Outside Poland, psychological subjectivism in the interpretation of artistic value was central, for example, to C. J. Ducasse's *The Philosophy of Art* (1929) and *Art, the Critics, and You* (1944); and E. Bullough's *Aesthetics* (1957; a collection of essays from 1907-20). Ducasse's subjectivism is unbounded. According to his "dogmatic liberalism," every person might well demand recognition of his singular and momentary experience as having fixed an artistic value. Bullough gave the thesis a more moderate turn, having suffered doubts such as we noted afflicted the Poles Segal, Wallis, and Ossowski. Despite significant dif-

⁹ See above. For my own review of the third edition of this work, see "An Introduction to the Labyrinth of Aesthetics," *Studia Filozoficzne* (No. 5, 1959).

ferences in philosophy, however, intuitionism in the spirit of Croce does not cease to be subjectivism. Such was the standpoint of R. G. Collingwood; he held that the empirical understanding of intuition could be secured by putting stress on sincerity and lyricism. The semantic-linguistic school, which sharply attacks the Crocean position as being an "essentialist" one, is itself inclined toward subjectivism.

We cannot here argue against this aesthetics, even sketchily, for to do so requires a philosophical basis we cannot presently enter upon. The central text here is Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (paragraphs 65-77), in which he proposes abandonment of exact definitions in favor of "open" concepts with blurred peripheries, restricted, e.g., to indicating that such and such objects, at a given moment, due to some measure of family resemblance among themselves, would be termed (say) works of art. This family resemblance is not based on common traits of the phenomena, but on the relationship among the phenomena of a given class. In any case, the limits of a class are flexible (*verschommen*), since the relations among phenomena are different in each specific case. C. L. Stevenson,¹⁰ following Wittgenstein, holds that a class of poetical works can only be defined with an ostensive definition (by means of "look and see"). From this it should not, but can, be deduced that artistic values are subjectively determined. Thus to speak of a poetic work as a value (i.e., as an aesthetic phenomenon) is to advance a personal, rather arbitrary recognition of some traits of the object as being artistically valuable. M. Weitz¹¹ sees the problem in a similar light when he says that the statement of a type "this is a painting" is a description given in accordance with the methodological views of Wittgenstein. As for the judgment of the type "this is a good painting," it is no more than an expression of the speaker's personal viewpoint. Aesthetics as an axiological discipline is interested in judgments and these, it must appear from Weitz's premises, are condemned to subjectivism.

The most popular version of this linguistic variant of subjectivism is provided in the collection *Aesthetics and Language* (Oxford, 1954). A. Isenberg and M. MacDonald attempt proof that aesthetic values are

¹⁰ Charles L. Stevenson, "Interpretation and Evaluation in Aesthetics," in Max Black (ed.), *Philosophical Analysis* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1950); and "What is a Poem?" *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (July 1957), 329-62.

¹¹ Morris Weitz, "Criticism Without Evaluation," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (January 1952), 59-65; and "Reasons in Criticism," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Summer 1962), 429-37.

in the eye of the individual beholder,¹² since supposedly no means exists to uphold the objective correctness of an aesthetic judgment (other than purely verbal argument, which may easily be refuted). These allegations were quite firmly rejected by American aestheticians of various orientations, among them other semanticists such as Heyl.¹³

The subjectivists' positions might seem strengthened by the numerous attempts to regard aesthetic experience as the decisive factor in assigning aesthetic value. However, certain critical observations argue to the contrary. First, subjectivistic interpretations are multitudinous and each cancels out the others. Thus empathy theorists eliminate the illusionists, who refute the proponents of the *Einfühlungstheorie*, while both make short shrift of the upholders of a "pure contemplation." Second, it is yet unproven that there are, in fact, (intrinsic) experiences of a distinctly aesthetic kind. Third, those who fall back on the analysis of aesthetic experience as the sole basis of artistic value generally cut the ground from under them by also indicating some traits of objects which prompt the adoption of an aesthetic attitude. Thus Aram Torossian's *A Guide to Aesthetics* (Stanford University, 1937), which by and large summarizes subjectivist conceptions in twentieth century aesthetics, offers an analysis of experience as the condition for deciding which objects will be regarded as aesthetic. But as he proceeds it turns out that certain patterns possessing certain objectively verified expressive qualities appear decisive for artistic value.

It will be recalled that Bullough encountered the same difficulties in his notable essay on the psychic distance characteristic of aesthetic experience. He found some objects far more productive of such distance than others. But the direction taken by Ingarden proved methodologi-

¹² M. MacDonald writes: "So, to affirm that a work of art is good or bad is to commend or condemn, not to describe it" (p. 129). A. Isenberg says: "The truth of R never adds the slightest weight to V because R does not designate any quality the perception of which might induce us to assent to V" (p. 139). By "R" Isenberg means reason — the basis for value judgment — and by "V" he means the verdict, the judgment itself. There is left only the eye of the beholder, "whose praise or censure" in fact decides N (the norm), which comes to be asserted as a general statement that whatever possesses such and such qualities is *pro tanto* good.

¹³ B. C. Heyl, *New Bearings in Esthetics and Art Criticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), part 2, sec. 2; M. C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1958), para 27; J. Stolnitz, *Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 409-19, also D. Walsh, "Critical Reasons," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 69, No. 3 (July 1969), 386-93. Since this essay was initially composed, the representatives of the analytical trend in aesthetics have altered their views in some respects: see C. Barrett (ed.), *Collected Papers on Aesthetics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965).

cally the more rewarding (see his *Studies in Aesthetics* [in Polish], Warsaw, 1957-58). His analysis of aesthetic experience led him to describe qualitative patterns which are comprised in the determinates of an aesthetic object. In natural phenomena but especially in works of art, these qualitative patterns (*Gestaltqualitäten*) are not a result of subjective perception. They appear as a property of the objects.

This phenomenon of the formation of patterns is explained by the Gestalt school as a psychophysical predisposition of mankind. Since the Gestaltist conception seeks objective laws which govern aesthetic processes, it is not to be identified either with the extreme subjectivism of Witwicki and Ducasse, nor with the moderate wing of Segal or empathicists such as T. Lipps. Rather, Gestaltism might be called ready to cross the threshold.

III

The objectivist conception, sometimes called ontological, has as its primary Polish representatives Ingarden and Galetski. One can add the "formalists." Elsewhere this point of view is defended by phenomenologists, for example M. Dufrenne, and formalists as well as by neo-existentialists such as L. Lavelle (*Traité des valeurs*, Paris, 1951) and some scholars of the empirical tendency, for example, T. Greene. The objectivists associate aesthetic value with objects pertaining to some special kind of reality which is rendered accessible by the act of intuition; or with certain empirically given properties which are considered to be exempt from social and historical associations; or with an attitude of *Sollen* (we should call this conception de-ontological), whatever the status of being ascribed to the properties. The many possible variations of objectivism cannot be described here. I shall instead touch on characteristic examples.¹⁴

Ingarden has told us he is not yet past the initial premises for his theory of aesthetic value. In any event, in his article "On the Relativity of Values" (1948) as later in "La valeur esthétique et le problème de son fondement objectif" (Third International Congress of Aesthetics, Venice, 1956) and "Bemerkungen zum Problem des ästhetischen Werturteils" (International Congress of Philosophy, Padua, 1958), he asserted firmly that aesthetic values, in their essence, "are not relative."

¹⁴ Stolz (op. cit., pp. 390-419) offers an interesting analysis of this conception. He sees in it two principal tendencies—one denying the possibility of a definition of values, the other admitting the possibility. Common to both approaches is the notion that if two persons make differing judgments about one and the same value, just one of them can be right. He is the one having "good taste."

In the first of the articles mentioned above he states: "Values have being as particular qualifications of certain objects which are distinguished by their harmoniousness and their excellent structuralization. . . . They are not accessible to everyone but only to persons able to achieve entirely special and infrequently attainable conditions, as respects their particular perceptive dispositions."¹⁵ Ingarden has subsequently noted certain problems, i.e., the supposedly self-evident interconnections of aesthetically neutral qualities (material) with aesthetically significant qualities (such as symmetry, elegance, originality) and qualities of a positive or a negative value (for example, beauty/ugliness). Still, on the whole his position remained unchanged. Intuition, which not all are given to possess, reveals in an aesthetic object that which is independent of incidental experience and of evaluative judgment: *Wertqualität* → *ästhetische Bewertung*. Artistic values, i.e., creative techniques, will trace out the (certainly fundamental) aesthetic values, whose polyphonic pattern determines the proper response and appreciation.¹⁶ "Formalists," such as Clive Bell and S. I. Vitkevitch, have at times relied on a similar argumentation. But on the whole they simply declare that artistic practice is incorruptible, i.e., in all phases of art and all ages its creation of formal values is elemental and ineradicable. A sufficient criterion of these artistic values comes with experience in using one's senses and reason (and they note that the senses and reason are manifested intersubjectively, there is no question of intuition as purely subjective). W. Woringer supposed (in *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 1908) that this objectivity derived from an innate human drive to make nonorganic geometric patterns. Many others have been hesitant to endorse this thesis. They have adduced artistic values from what appeared empirically obvious, or they have acclaimed the idea of ontological objectivism as by all odds the most likely answer. Eliseo Vivas and Theodore Greene repre-

¹⁵ R. Ingarden, "On the Relativity of Values," *Przegląd Filozoficzny*, Vol. 44, Nos. 1-3, 92-93; in Polish. I simplify here to the extent of setting aside the problem of those artistic values which, says Ingarden, are "relative" in the realm of aesthetic values but also, *qua* intentional, have objective existence. — Since my present essay appeared in its Russian version, Ingarden has published a volume — *Experience, Artwork, Value* (in Polish, Cracow, 1966) — collecting all of his axiological essays on questions of aesthetics. My critique of this volume appeared in *Estetika* (Prague: No. 1, 1970).

¹⁶ Many complexities of interpretation in the phenomenologist conception I have had to leave aside; however, Ingarden stresses this moment particularly — the aesthetic object which comes into existence as a product of intentional attitude, aesthetic experience in turn being unthinkable without the object having taken form. In this sense, employing Ingarden's own interpretation, we might define his position as relationist. All the same, the objectivist version which emerges from the pronouncements of Ingarden himself would appear the more correct.

sent this stance in one way and Joad in another. Greene sees the acknowledgment of the objectivity of artistic value as a key point of his system. Briefly, his argument unites the two themes. He thinks that the objectivist solution speaks to ordinary experience of amateur and acclimated critic alike. Moreover, subjectivism cannot establish anything but the inclinations of *X* or *Y*.¹⁷ Vivas lays emphasis on the art object's structure as having a constant and indubitable value, though he does not specify whether structure is the basis of value or is itself the value. Vivas also introduces the concept of pleasure as the criterion of value.¹⁸ If empirical obviousness in the understanding of art would incline us to objectivism, it will do even more to support the relationist argument, as shall be seen.

But the objectivist position is more consistently presented and realized in C. E. M. Joad's *Matter, Life, and Value* (London, 1929). For Joad the subjectivist argument that the limits of one's own experience cannot be transcended has to fail owing to a defective theory of cognition. Erroneous, too, is the idea that the art expert is conceded to have superior taste and that only because of this do other persons (ordinary readers, spectators, etc.) grant his judgments similar recognition. Here is a vicious circle, for the opinion of an art expert can only be acclaimed by others who are not expert. Joad finds that aesthetic value cannot be all relative. For even if we grant that some person has to discover and evaluate it, the value has independent existence; indeed, it is absolute, being characterized by ontological objectivity. In concluding Joad, following Plato, finds value to be inalterable.¹⁹ And thus we are led back to an arbitrary stand which might be thought analogous to Ingarden's notion of intuition discovering the value in objects with special qualities patterned in specific ways only if Ingarden were less cautious and aware of complexity.

The objectivist position may be summarized as follows: *a*) Certain

¹⁷ T. M. Greene, *The Arts and the Art of Criticism*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952) pp. 4-5. In this same work the author, letting himself in for inconsistency, terms artistic values a "tertiary quality," i.e., he justifies their objectivity by saying they are dictated, as it were, to the perceiver by certain inner mechanisms. Such an understanding approaches Gestaltism in the relationist variant (the structures of the subject corresponding to the structures of the object). See the article in which the notion of tertiary quality is thoroughly analyzed: C. C. Pratt, "Aesthetics," *Annual Review of Psychology* (1961), pp. 71-92.

¹⁸ E. Vivas, *Creation and Discovery* (New York: Noonday Press, 1955), pp. 191-206.

¹⁹ He calls such values subsistent objects, in order to compare them with concepts which are neither physical nor psychic objects. For Joad on aesthetic value, see Vivas and Krieger, *Problems of Aesthetics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 474-79.

objective properties do exist which are the sole basis for artistic values; *b*) these properties are what determine distinctively aesthetic experience; *c*) only they provide the valid criteria for the specifically aesthetic judgment. However, objectivism has several versions. The most extreme of these states that objective properties, generally of a supernal character, must escape verification though they may be discovered in contemplation which also ascertains their constancy. In this manner a single trait or perhaps an ensemble of traits is to be established. Plato affirmed this position in speaking of a Hyperborean beauty, as did Schelling in describing an absolute beauty arising out of the identity of the object and subject. Still another version presents the monistic-absolutist viewpoint. While insisting on aesthetic value as an inalterable given, pertaining to a particular trait or ensemble of traits, it admits the possibility of definition, for such properties are considered to be given in nature. Examples of this variant are: the idea of beauty as "unity in diversity" or as perfection (i.e., Leibnitz, Wolff, and Baumgarten); or Edmund Burke's tying the concept of beauty to smallness, smoothness, etc. A modern instance of this version is G. Birkhoff's *Aesthetic Measure* (Cambridge, Mass., 1933). The fact of a constant objective beauty, says Birkhoff, can be shown by means of a mathematical formula founded on ancient canons derived from the Pythagoreans, that is, the equation $M = \frac{O}{S}$, with *M* the degree of aesthetic value, *O* the degree of order, and *S* the degree of complexity of a given system of properties.

Moderate proponents of objectivism do not hold that objective properties must necessarily obey one single inalterable canon. Rather, they accept a multitude of modes, for instance symmetry, proportion, harmony. They admit, in other words, numerous relations of the part to the whole and of part to part. In each instance, however, the relationship entails the expected objective value. Here we have the standpoint of Dürer and of Diderot (the 1751 essay "Le Beau" especially, but also Diderot's later works). Lastly, the most latitudinarian variant of objectivism supposes that objective aesthetic values can be grounded in differing systems of properties, which may occasionally come together in a single object. Such an interpretation is an achievement of twentieth century aesthetics. It is the position of pluralism which takes account of diverse systems of objective properties.

Who are its proponents? At present they include persons who try to vanquish the notion of the absolute uniqueness of artworks. R. Meager and H. Knight in England and M. C. Beardsley in the United States

have repeatedly and justly shown that the relations of the part to the whole are a recurring element in art which condition aesthetic judgment. They also show, however, that this relation is not unvarying. This interpretation of objective values, Beardsley has suggested, may be termed a "moderate particularism."²⁰ A more extreme case of this kind is made by W. E. Kennick.²¹ Ascribing objective artistic values to every phenomenon of art, he yet finds *differing* objective values in every single instance. This complete particularism finds itself in difficulty, since a) using empirical data, the "moderate particularists" can show that traits do recur; b) the more extreme interpretation once more opens the door to subjectivism. There is no way to prevent the designation of this or that property from becoming an arbitrary, subjective operation, having only the appearance of objectivity.

Doubtless the two extreme versions of objectivism are the least able to withstand criticism. Having failed to take account of demonstrated historical fact — the existence of canons of value and of changes therein — their premises are arbitrary. We must further reproach extreme objectivism for denying the possibility of defining aesthetic values. Its interpretation of "Beauty" is a mystery available only to the select few and to be submitted to no verification. Perhaps here lies a hint of the explanation why the extreme objectivists so frequently rely on a priori reasoning, metaphysical axioms, etc. They share with extreme subjectivists an attraction to nonverifiable knowledge.

Radical objectivism of an empirical cast does not stand up to criticism either. The thought of Burke or of Hogarth is an anachronism today. The same is true of Gustav Fechner, whose experimental aesthetics was planned to arrive at perfect findings and to reveal an ideal harmony in a given system of properties. Such experiments have never been fruitful. Birkhoff's mathematics seem no less arbitrary. The experimental approach today moves toward far more cautious conclusions: tending to confirm the existence of a multilateral system of relations, having equal value in the aesthetic sense.

However, the moderate variant of objectivism does not survive criticism either. Those who will admit that canons of value manifest themselves in different systems, refuse logical consistency which demands the abandonment of a single canon. And others who wisely acknowledge

²⁰ See Beardsley, "On the Generality of Critical Reasons," *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 59, No. 18 (August 1962), 477-86.

²¹ W. E. Kennick, "Does Traditional Aesthetics Rest on a Mistake?" *Mind*, Vol. 62 (1958), 317-34.

that beauty can occur in different systems, do not proceed to the inevitable question: by whom and when were these systems brought into the order of aesthetic values? This is a move away from objectivism, to a view often found in discussions by its critics. We are led to relationism.

Heyl, Beardsley, and Stolnitz²² correctly show aesthetic value to be always a value for some person, i.e., it is relative. According to this, whether a value is established as natural and available to verification or as spiritual and nonverifiable, it has to occur as an instrumental value, in a given concrete phenomenon. And yet this relationism, too, in its "pure form" cannot survive criticism, although it is without doubt much more persuasive than either subjectivism or objectivism. Thus Stolnitz, himself inclined to relationism, has provided a useful critique of the variant manifested in the work of the prominent American axiologist, C. I. Lewis.²³ For Lewis advances the term "potentiality" to signify the character of objective value; however, he does not elucidate the value underlying the potentiality. Hence what gives the appearance of a conclusive argument in fact glosses over a crucial weakness.

Gestaltism, it will be suggested, seeks to give an empirical response to the question of what underlies the potentiality. Gestaltism as a school is not homogeneous. Some representatives (Ehrenfels, Wertheimer) primarily underscore psycho-physiological traits of man which promote pattern formation of the phenomena of reality. Other Gestaltists (Koffka, Köhler, and also R. Arnheim, the major aesthetician of this school) hold instead that the pattern-creating propensities of man are enmeshed with pattern forming characteristics of reality. Koffka²⁴ argued that aesthetic value results from the process of a dynamic interaction of the stimulant and the response. Objectively, not only color, form, and their combinations exist, but so do the physiognomic properties of these elements and of their patterns, for instance sadness or joy; these are termed tertiary qualities as they result from the juncture of the objective and the subjective data. Arnheim in his essay "Gestalt Psy-

²² Heyl, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-45; Beardsley, *op. cit.*, pp. 530-43; Stolnitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 419-37.

²³ C. I. Lewis, *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* (La Salle: Open Court Publishing Co., 1946), chs. 12-15. I should add that despite his general relationist outlook, Lewis wavers continually in his conclusions; now toward psychologism (the contemplative state, acquiescence to what is immediate in the mind, as a basis of value) and now toward objectivism (value as a property possessed intrinsically by the object). The weakness of Lewis's position lies in his relationism being purely a logical proposition. Hence, he is given over to monotonous reiteration of an unvaried motif.

²⁴ Kurt Koffka, "Problems in the Psychology of Art," *Art: A Bryn Mawr Symposium* (Bryn Mawr, 1940), pp. 209-20.

chology and Artistic Form"²⁵ emphasizes that the principle of pattern — otherwise termed the principle of similarity — is one instance of a more general law, which holds that the phenomena of reality gravitate to the simplest coherent pattern. Our organism, considered as a whole, and the form of the world beyond it are linked by isomorphic relationships, and the law of economy governs both. In both, we discover an elaborate fecundity of invention, coupled with a gravitation to patterning, to compactness. Arnheim meets with difficulties, though, when it comes to attempting to define the distinctiveness of artistic patterns. He will speak of balance and the simplicity of a particular pattern; or again, of the expression of its separate elements or the pattern as a whole, thus adopting the view of Koffka ("the physiognomy of an object"). In one case Arnheim refers to value as a symbol. The Gestaltist conception is, then, susceptible to criticism. There are some who would term the notion of "Gestalt" too vague, who accuse the isomorphic hypothesis of being without foundation. The demand for a refinement of some Gestaltist theses is certainly to be welcomed. But if this and also other justified criticisms can be raised, Gestaltism is not readily dismissed.

As early as 1920 Wolfgang Köhler had compared the second law of thermodynamics with the principle of structure. More recently L. L. Whyte remarked the astonishing similarity of the physical and biochemical processes with those occurring in the cortex.²⁶ In both cases pattern formation occurs, the essential point of distinction being that the cerebral processes entail a conscious selection and unification of a diversified material. In Whyte's opinion the aesthetic significance of the cerebral functions is based on controlled formative plasticity, i.e., on the building up of interconnected patterns of changing elements. But even if we accept this Gestaltist conception, some questions linger. They are the same doubts as are raised by Arnheim's writings, as he averts his attention from the following problem. What are the strictly socio-historical conditions for given patterns to be singled out by perception as aesthetic values, and how are they explained? Consider Arnheim's essay "The Perceptual Analysis of a Symbol of Interaction" in *Confinia Psychiatrica* (1960) which analyzes the ancient Chinese symbol for *ying* (earth) and *yang* (heaven) in the setting of Taoist philosophy. Superb from the psychological standpoint and yet obviously onesided, Arnheim's findings are limited by an insufficient analysis of the cultural phenomena. Evidently

²⁵ In L. L. Whyte (ed.), *Aspects of Form* (London: Pellegrin, Cudahy, 1951), pp. 196-208.

²⁶ L. L. Whyte, "A Scientific View of the 'Creative Energy' of Man," in Morris Philipson (ed.), *Aesthetics Today* (New York: Meridian, 1961), pp. 349-74.

neither the consensus or climate of opinion among a given people nor the expert opinion of authorities yields a fully adequate field for relationism. That can only be had in an historical setting. Neither the objectivists such as Greene and Vivas nor Beardsley and Stolnitz seem to admit this.

Only Heyl moved toward socio-historical relationism, though inconsistently.²⁷ Important to note also are some other sorties into this terrain by Herbert Read, Maud Bodkin, Northrop Frye, and, most especially, Walter Abell (*The Collective Dream in Art*, Cambridge, Mass., 1957). In the main, however, the historicism of these authors is of Jungian inspiration. Thus Read in "The Dynamics of Art" (*Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 1952), while commenting on engrams and the Gestaltist notion of pattern, looks only to "archetypes" and the operation of myths for confirmation. Actual history remained outside his sphere of attention, although it is to this one ought to attend first of all.

IV

We are now prepared to consider sociologism but should distinguish two conceptions within the *sociological* approach to aesthetic values. One is completely *relativist* and might be described as contiguous with psychologism; the other is *objectivist* and is allied with the kind of relationism which, as we have seen, moves toward true historicism.

The view of the former version (following Dewey, Beardsley terms it instrumental) is that different social groups will decide aesthetic values differently, and even though a majority might vouch for certain values, other strata of society assuredly will reject them. In various periods different traits of objects are deemed aesthetically valuable, and accordingly only collective tastes, rather than individual tastes remain for investigation. As J. Flo declared: "An aesthetic object is an act of cultural faith."²⁸ George Boas represented the approach in its classic form. As the author of *A Primer for Critics* (1937) and *Wingless Pegasus* (1950), he finds the establishment and the spread of specific values to be due to inertia of habit, snobbery, and the mystifications of "experts." Though propaganda or advertisement may tend to entrench them, such values are so fickle that one may only describe them instrumentally,²⁹

²⁷ B. C. Heyl, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-44.

²⁸ Atti del III. Congresso Internazionale di Estetica, Torino, 1957, p. 177.

²⁹ Instrumentality has here a different meaning than it has for the relationists. The latter describe only the relation between a particular individual and a given object. What Boas indicates is the functional, changing relations of a particular social group in a given situation and a given class of objects, which, owing to

i.e., as having a meaning for certain kinds of persons at a certain time. To credit a value with "terminal" (or purely objective) significance would be an excursion into metaphysics. Boas sees as clinching proof of his position the history of appreciation of the Mona Lisa, or *Hamlet*, or the music of Bach. However, his opponents will rightly urge that the responses to such test cases were not of a consistently aesthetic character. A view such as Boas's is demonstrably subjectivism or objectivism disguised. What has determined a collectivism of tastes? Is it an aggregate of like preferences? Or has it to do with a given property or the sum of the properties of a work? Extreme relativism should legitimately be required to respond; but it is unable to do so.

Sociological relativism, however, does call attention to social facts which should not be underestimated. Yet it surely lacks an adequate orientation; when stress is laid on the social functioning of artistic values, the proof of an ethnocentrism has rarely been guarded from becoming the cause of a concomitant psychologism. What should be investigated is whether there are aesthetic values which endure beyond a single epoch and occur in several geographic regions. Whether this problem was understood by the pioneer of Russian Marxism, George Plekhanov, is difficult to say; most likely it eluded him. His writings on art, as those of Paul Lafargue and Franz Mehring which were also prominent in the period of the Second International, launched sociological relativism in Marxist literature. It is by no means the sole possible resolution of the problem.

The second of the two interpretations of the sociological position needs a more extensive discussion. It is oriented by a cautious analysis of culture in the process of development. It proves beyond a reasonable doubt that during late primitive times aesthetic values acquired an independence from practical and magical relationships and that subsequently, through the course of differing systems of social organization, certain recurring elements were confirmed. Such a view is seldom formulated in the United States or Western Europe, but it is not completely unknown. A case in point is Arthur Child's "The Socio-Historical Relativity of Esthetic Value."³⁰ Its author affirms the objectivity of artistic values, not so much from the viewpoint of the makeup of human psychology

considerations of one kind or another, are determined to be works of art. Heyl, Beardsley, and Stolnitz in some of their recent statements clearly have inclined to this interpretation, thus proving that no firm line demarcates relationism from sociological relativism. The sociological standpoint is subsequently defended by Teddy Brunius, the Swedish aesthetician, when he speaks of the ethnocentric foundation of aesthetic value.

³⁰ See *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (January 1944), 1-22.

as from that of a sociohistorical development. People indeed differ — owing to social (extra-aesthetic) causes — in understanding values; but the differences are secondary compared with certain objective values preserved and confirmed in the history of culture. Child does not clearly identify the historically enduring values, nor does he indicate their genesis or ask why some are retained and how they relate to more transient aesthetic ideals. Howsoever, he does move toward adoption of the historical viewpoint, as does G. Salinas in his "The Historicity of Aesthetic Judgment."³¹

One observes how in such instances an approach supersedes extreme relativism. The common aesthetic preferences of people are collected into the storehouses of culture, and inasmuch as through these the course of mankind's development becomes accessible, certain "objective" (relative) traits are observed which at some time society appreciated and confirmed as aesthetic. Chambers, Boas, Kellett, and others emphasize the constantly shifting fashions in art — its Whirligig of Taste. Taste but manifests the concrete conditions in the development of society and culture where art occurs. It indicates ideological (class) configurations thrust variously into prominence by religion, politics, morality, philosophy, etc. All this notwithstanding, there are permanent seemingly historical features of the physiognomy of taste we must take fully into account the basis in nature, i.e., the biological predisposition of man. When we speak of some recurrent elements what we mean are (relatively) objective traits which have been confirmed as aesthetic values by society in their time. This is not equivalent to appealing to "the test of time" in the manner of certain relativists who claim the latest generation's judgment may stand as final. Just that is the implication of André Malraux's proposal for *la musée imaginaire*. Here subjectivism enters by the back door, armed with sociological credentials. Such a view was already dispelled by E. Utitz³² who pointed out that the principle *non omnis moriar* can win assent only when backed up by other factors e.g., form, which he called the *Gestaltungsweise*.

To resolve the problem of artistic value this way is to run a gauntlet of particular dangers, which can be made explicit and anticipated. Thus a person professing this sociological objectivism may anachronistically claim that, first, values are absolutely given (i.e., once having been brought into being, they remain in effect forever and universally); or,

³¹ G. Salinas, "Storicita del giudizio estetico," *Rivista di Estetica* (May-August 1960), 213-21.

³² E. Utitz, *Grundlagen der allgemeinen Kunstwissenschaft*, Vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 1920), p. 292.

second, that artistic values include all the many contradictory and uncritically grouped elements itemized by the relativists. In other words, sociological objectivism is capable of disregarding its premises and of transforming either into an antirelationist dogmatism or into a kind of "pan-aestheticism" which liquidates aesthetics by wiping out the lines between aesthetic phenomena and other possible cultural phenomena (political, moral, religious, utilitarian, etc.). The only defense against these risks is a vigilant, aggressive application of historicism. This viewpoint is gradually winning more and more adherents, including present-day aestheticians who take their stand outside Marxism.

In the realm of Marxist methodology which leads to a consistent historicism, the problem of *genesis* is of particular importance. If we wish to understand how, despite constant changes in conditions and preferences, certain aesthetic values come to be preserved, then we have to reconstruct the process whereby these values have come to exist and review at least their most remote history against this background of the changes in culture. The Marxist conception offers a resolution to the problem. Marx formulates the following premise convincingly:³³

The *senses* of the social man are *other* senses than those of the non-social man. Only through the objectively unfolded richness of man's essential being is the richness of subjective *human* sensibility (a musical ear, an eye for beauty of form — in short, *senses* capable of human gratifications, senses confirming themselves as essential powers of *man*) either cultivated or brought into being.

This tenet, articulated in Marx's *The German Ideology*, points the way: there exist dispositions to aesthetic perception, but the latter is formed only in a social environment. And how do these factors interact? Plekhanov in his *Letters Without Address* (1900) offered conjectures about "drives" which condition creative activity and aesthetic perception. He specifies sexual inclination and imitative proclivity, a propensity for antithesis and the animization of phenomena, the sense of rhythm and of symmetry. Kautsky, in *The Materialist Conception of History* (1927), took Darwin's counsel in deriving the sense of beauty from the animal domain. Christopher Caudwell in the essay on "Beauty" (1938) presents the idea that the artistic process arises out of instinct remolded by the process of labor in a given social environment.³⁴

³³ K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1961), p. 108.

³⁴ "Our own proposition about beauty is this: whenever the affective elements in socially known things show social ordering, there we have beauty, there alone we have beauty." And: "Art, then, conditions the instincts to the environment, and in doing so changes the instincts." Christopher Caudwell, *Studies and Further Studies in a Dying Culture* (New York, 1958), Part II, pp. 106, 112.

Ernst Fischer in *The Necessity of Art* (1957) is of a rather similar mind. He advances the theory that there exist in nature pre-aesthetic elements — he gives as examples the structure of crystals or of living organisms. For a number of years now the argument over a natural versus a social basis of aesthetic value has gone on unabated among the Soviet aestheticians, proving that in this area the Marxist tradition cannot be reduced, as many have supposed, to the usual sociological relativism.³⁵ Of the authors I have mentioned the one coming nearer than the others to my own conception is Caudwell. He turns a critical eye on subjectivism, dogmatism, and relativism. In the latter he recognizes the pro and also the con. Caudwell was decidedly a relationist, and at least that was the conception which he outlined without identifying it by that or another precise name.

I think that to grasp the problem fully we have to go beyond Marx's utterances on art to an examination of the fundamental historical and methodological problematics of Marxism. What shall we infer, for example, from Marx's procedure in *Capital* which combines the historical and the logical methods of investigation? Here is a scrupulous study tracing the most minute changes that lead from the simplest elements to the most complex formations. Marx employed the logical method which is, in Engels' words, at bottom "no other than that self-same historical method only freed from historical form and from hindering accidents."³⁶ This method yields a more exact representation of the actual historical movement because it seeks the genesis of a given process, and investigates sedulously its initial structure to discover just what its essential elements are. In subsequent historical development

³⁵ For rejections of a basis in nature, see V. Vanslov, *Problems of the Beautiful* (Moscow, 1957), and L. N. Stolovich, *The Aesthetic in Reality and in Art*, Moscow, 1959. Both works in Russian. Their positions are criticized (in English) by Victor Romanenko, in *Problems of Modern Aesthetics*, ed. S. Mozhnyagin (Moscow, 1969), pp. 121-57. Ivan Astakhov likewise defends a natural foundation, *ibid.*, pp. 158-86. I might add here that Stolovich expresses an undue severity toward Dmitryeva's remarks recognizing "the elementary principles of beauty" in nature itself. Dmitryeva does not assert, as did Todor Pavlov, the existence in nature of pre-aesthetic and pre-social elements. Rather she simply puts forward an hypothesis analogous to that of the Gestaltists. It may well be that Dmitryeva is perfectly correct. She is not unaware that natural properties are activated aesthetically only in a social environment. When Marx, in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Chicago, 1904, pp. 20, 211) wrote of a diamond on the breast of a harlot and, particularly, of the natural splendor of gold and silver, probably he had in mind such elementary traits of beauty which are properties of reality itself. I have set forth and analyzed the discussions by Soviet aestheticians regarding the genesis of artistic value, in the second chapter of my book *Between Tradition and a Vision of the Future* (in Polish, Warsaw, 1964).

³⁶ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 13, p. 497.

these basic elements become articulated and crystallized. True, they undergo modification in the course of development, they acquire numerous adjunct traits, and may even at times be thus lost from view. Nonetheless, the essence of the process being traced is not subject to any basic change; such change as will come is due to the gathering strength and completion of the fundamental elements. From this genesis the structure of the object under investigation is derived.⁸⁷

One often hears such a conclusion disallowed. Since Dilthey's time humanists have argued that we must choose between a genetic analysis, treating of extra-aesthetic phenomena, and structural analysis which lays bare the substance of the artwork. If one is attuned to the *Lebensphilosophie* and the work of the phenomenologists and of the existentialists linked closely with them and the successful structural linguistics movement (F. Saussure through the Prague circle to R. Jakobson) and its more recent anthropological counterpart (Lévi-Strauss) — one cannot escape the idea that today structural analysis alone can guarantee successful work in the humanities. Marx thought otherwise, and not along either/or lines. For him genetic analysis was intimately interlinked with the structural-logical. He found it impossible to sever the basic traits of a phenomenon under study from its cultural-historical background. A phenomenon does not occur with complete fortuity, it arises as part of a process. Further, we have to assume the distinctive traits of a phenomenon under study are formed in the context of many other phenomena with which it is bound up and from which it derives. But investigation of the process of genesis does not yet provide an answer to the question, what essentially is this *X* which appears as a result of the process? All the same, the genetic analysis makes possible more thorough and reliable ascertainment of the basic structure of this *X*; just as it is possible to understand the "essence" of man better and more fully if we undertake his genealogical reconstruction, tracing his origin from (as it now seems) the dryopithecine ape.

A reconstruction of genesis is all the more important to the investigation of phenomena brought about as the result of the intervention of man. Of special significance is the genetic environment which embraces the pregnant encounter of the forces of civilization and of nature. The foregoing are the methodological aspects stressed by the French Marxist philosopher Lucien Goldmann (*Recherches dialectiques*, Paris, 1959),

⁸⁷ See the interesting treatment of this matter by E. V. Ilyenkov, *The Dialectics of the Abstract and the Concrete in Marx's 'Capital'* (in Russian, Moscow, 1960).

who delineates the ideological structure of a given epoch from its origin. A methodology of this type when congruous with the objective-historical viewpoint adopted in this study definitely can have application in the problematics of aesthetic (artistic) value. How can one determine the specific traits of the structure called "a work of art," "an aesthetic object" or "an aesthetic experience," if the sources and the character of the given originative process are not discovered? In addition, the relative autonomy of a given cultural phenomenon can only be revealed in its comparison with heteronomous facts.

Yet it may be urged that the intuitive grasp of the essential traits of a given phenomenon may be sufficient and even more profound. Where investigation is conducted within purely intentional limits (the consciousness of the investigator; the object of investigation) the meaning of things may often be revealed — but isn't it true that more often than not one tends to go astray? We reply that in this case the "essence" of a given phenomenon is ascertained arbitrarily, pursuant only to the rule of intentional consciousness and without taking account of the place and the social function of the object(s) under study. True, genetic analysis can also collapse if the investigator contents himself with discovering only the external sources and their interaction. No decisive gain could be secured in this manner for a structural analysis and for the determination of the peculiar features of the product of given social relationships. Marx cautioned against this kind of capitulation. In consequence, (1) one must study *the given structures* in their genetic aspect, i.e., in a maximally complete context; and (2) one must also study *the historical process*. In other words, an emergent phenomenon always is dependent on external factors, but in its further development both internal and external factors cooperate and their interaction determines the fundamental qualities of the *X* under examination.

The following is a résumé of our typology of solutions to the problem of artistic value.

a) The typology suggested by all the works known to me does not give consideration to disparate variants within the limits of a given axiological conception. In contrast, it was established here that: (1) subjectivism breaks down into extreme ("nihilistic") subjectivism, a moderate subjectivism, and lastly one which looks to the recognition of the universal basis of aesthetic experience; (2) ontological objectivism has the following versions: metaphysical, i.e., concerned with some special order of being the properties of which may or may not be determinable; de-ontological, i.e., concerned with *Sollen* (the *projets* man arbitrarily

adopts and he attributes to existence); and empirical, i.e., one which recognizes only one permanent quality of beauty or a variety of such qualities (pluralism); (3) relationism has two versions: logical-schematic (the abstract idea of "potentiality") and empirical (Gestaltism); (4) sociological relativism in its pure form sees only various collective predilections in a given historical context, but it may sometimes support the position of the relationists, i.e., assume the form of instrumentalism (X is an unchangeable property termed beautiful by virtue of a given tradition only in a given culture and moment); 5) finally, even within sociological objectivism there can be discerned a dogmatic, a pan-aesthetic, and a historical version. Now these are not scholastic fine points. The fact is, it is easier to pin down the visible or authentic distinctions when it is apparent that those holding unreconciled views proceed from different premises. Moreover, the discrimination between these variants causes us to see commonalities within all types of solution, an enduring vacillation between the Scylla of subjectivism and the Charybdis of ontological objectivism.

b) Among the five points of view set out here, only one is without a vestige of validation from everyday experience. It is the objectivist conception in its ontological version. There aesthetic value is considered a priori to be an absolute property. Yet, even in this conception there is "a nub of rationality" which is made comprehensible by sociological objectivism. The solutions of a more-or-less moderate objectivism can become the constitutive part of the relativist and relationist conceptions.

c) Among the remaining points of view, three (psychologism, relationism, and sociological relativism) gain some validation from empirical data. The psychologistic position emphasizes the inescapable fact that values always are given to the individual. Making absolute this obvious fact, though, must lead to paradoxical and ruinous conclusions. Relativism has a more serious basis; also drawing on obvious facts it takes into greater account their historical mutability. Sometimes this version verges upon the problematics of relationism ("instrumentalism"), thus becoming a much more persuasive approach.

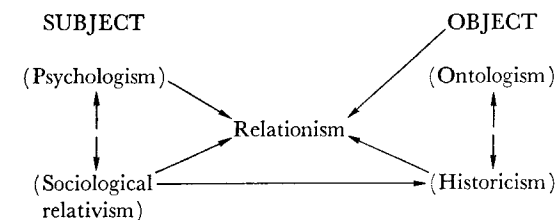
d) Relationism is the basis of every serious axiological analysis, but its point of view offers inadequate solutions insofar as it circumvents historical factors determining the relationship between object and subject.

e) Consequently, the credibility which accrues to objectivistically oriented historical studies. Whereas the three foregoing conceptions have their terminus in elementary facts, the present position tries to deepen

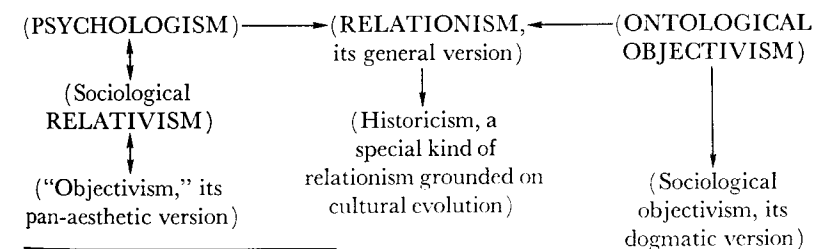
the study of values and evaluations by investigating the determinates of their duration through the changes wrought by time and occasion.

f) Two of the solutions presented here have appeared in aesthetic thought virtually since its inception: objectivism was championed by the Pythagoreans and subjectivism was promulgated by the Sophists. Subsequently, relationism was avowed by Basil the Great and the scholastics up to Thomas Aquinas. Philodemos, meanwhile, long before Hume and Kant, urged recognition of the universal traits of aesthetic experience. The case for psychological relativism was argued by Vitellius, the thirteenth-century Polish philosopher, though the position can also be described in the remarks by Socrates on functional value. As to sociological relativism, it appeared in the thought of Giordano Bruno and especially the architectural theorist Claude Perault. Historicism, with its precursors Vico and Herder,³⁸ is a more recent development.

g) If we graphically represent our various conceptions in their interconnections which reveal the inner dynamics and contradictions of the object under study, we get:



A breakdown of the position of sociological objectivism into its variants — dogmatic, pan-aesthetic, and consistently historical — yields this diagram:



³⁸ See the survey study by W. Tatarkiewicz, "Objectivity and Subjectivity in the History of Aesthetics," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (December 1963). It must be added that Tatarkiewicz leaves the historicist approach out of his account. Moreover, in light of arguments I have set forth here, his terminology appears dubious. He does not distinguish relativism from objectivism; and he wholly ignores any meeting ground of subjectivism with relativism.

It would be in keeping with the demands of our arguments to develop and establish the problem of the genesis of art on the basis of critical material. This I shall not do here. The problem is uncommonly complex, and the present context is not suitable. Recently, the question was elaborated from the Marxist point of view by Ernst Fischer in *The Necessity of Art* (chapters 2 and 4) and most notably by G. Lukacs in his fundamental work, *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* (1963). I have some disagreements with the views of both. Important here is not that we interpret some questions differently, but our overriding methodological unity. Concerning method it seems useful to emphasize that the genesis of art, just like the problem of any other social phenomenon, calls for two interlinked methods of interpretation: the idiogenetic and the allogenic. Allogenes refers to the totality of external factors, idiogenesis to internal factors. In the case of art, allogenes is a clarification of primary patterns which determine emergence of a new pattern as an artistic phenomenon. Primary patterns indicate both the biosphere and the social and economic conditions in the life of primitive man, two of which are of special importance: production and magic.

Now, idiogenesis is the process of the formation of an actual artistic pattern, and here such factors as rhythm and mimesis, which form an original whole and an art product, are decisive. In the course of an historical process, primary patterns give rise to such relatively autonomous particular structures as works of art. There occurs an *interiorization* of the productive and magical activities; they emerge transformed as formal characteristics and iconic symbols within the structure of the object. Hence the aesthetic object is interwoven of allogenes with idiogenesis. *Homo faber* plays even while producing, and step by step he advances through communicative and practical functions to autotelic structures.

The view of art as an autotelic entity is eagerly supported by the contemporary structuralist school, which backs up its position with enormous erudition. The structuralists are also accustomed to speak of the synchronic aspect of art which cannot be understood without diachronic analysis. They say that "history" abides in each and every pattern, while adding that each and every "historical process" inevitably brings about the formation of patterns. Such are the views of Jacobson and Lévy-Strauss and their structuralist forebears. There is, however, a problem concerning such statements taken as methodological guidelines. Their

inadequacy lies in their failure to face real history, the problem of genesis, the problem of cause-and-effect relations. And of course it is just that conditionality that most wants analysis. Examining the relation of art and reality, should we be interested only in semiotic-functional dependence? If so, shall it be assumed that it is only through such semiotic rules that the art object is determined by the traditions of culture (broadly understood), available artistic traditions, the particular system of other social circumstances? No; and therefore no to the proposition of the structuralists. According to them the already *given* structure undergoes such and such transformations within the boundaries of a semiotic field. For Marxists, by contrast, the question is, how does the artistic structure under study *emerge* from the nonartistic field and how do the internal and external factors cooperate through the history of art?

In a word, what we must search out is the historical process of origination and evolution of a given phenomenon, investigating a process which entails continual reaction and tension, unceasing clash between the archaic, the receding, and the novel — the constant upset of the balance of given patterns. In common with all social pattern, artistic patterns are subject to the laws of causality. Among the features of such processes are the ideological conflicts determined by class struggle. As a result one often finds a clash between the artistic personality (creativity) and the ruling model of what art should be (psychogenesis in conflict with sociogenesis). If we were to depend on the structuralists, we could do no better than to return to Tynyanov and Eichenbaum who understood the problem of idiogenesis perfectly. But we should not wish to stop there. Marxists must go further for idiogenesis is inexplicable without allogenes. In the 1930s this was the direction taken by the Czech philologist J. Mukazhovski; more recently it has been fostered by Henri Lefebvre and, today, Lucien Goldmann.³⁹ This perspective provides the means to resolve the problems I have outlined. It permits us to understand the *constants* within the framework of the history of culture. Lefebvre rightly observes that it will not do to look no further than *conjunctions*, i.e., convergences in the flow of events; rather, we must scrutinize these for certain invariants.⁴⁰

However, let us return to Marx. His *1844 Manuscripts* posed the

³⁹ H. Lefebvre, *Introduction à la modernité* (Paris, 1962). See also G. Gurvitch, *Déterminismes sociaux et liberté humaine* (Paris, 1955).

⁴⁰ This problem was taken up by F. Braudel on a different philosophical basis: "Histoire et science sociale: La longue durée," *Annales*, No. 4 (1958). His distinction of the history of "circumstances," i.e. chronological history, from a "histoire de longue durée," is strongly analogous to my own distinction of sociological relativism from the historicist position proper.

question of the origin of aesthetic value, or to use his own phrase, how primitive man had made the transition from a magic-utilitarian attitude to a "mineralogical sense." To put it differently: how did socio-historical factors liberate human artistic-aesthetic activity; did they release natural powers? Marxism does not seem to deny *a limine* the contributions of Gestaltism. Rather, it is able to assimilate and to elaborate on them, for it recognizes that early man, before he could create the first cave drawing, before he could ever tentatively pantomime the social performances he had observed, before he could find aesthetic significances in color — had to go through considerable development (preparation for a free practical and intellectual development, the hands' mastery of diverse tasks, the ability of people to understand one another with the aid of language, the mastery of the mind over reality). In other words, if we think the Gestaltists correct in saying that man is endowed with a special propensity for "pregnant" structures, the Marxist will still want to push investigation back to the domain of culture (history), to test historically the bio-physio-psychological hypothesis about man's visual "thinking" in patterns.

Marxism affords us a developed theory of labor considered as a process of "the humanization of nature" and, concurrently, the humanization of man. The conditions we have mentioned function only in a concrete social setting — which it is necessary to study thoroughly. When Marx wrote in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* that "the sensation of color is, generally speaking, the most popular form of aesthetic sense," he appeared to treat color as a natural aesthetic property. However, it is also Marx who cautions that this aesthetic function of color (i.e. gold and silver) is linked with a specific form of surplus wealth. This problem is not resolved or elaborated by Marx. In any case, it appears to us that Marx's idea of beauty as one of "measure" (in German, 'Mass') accords with the Gestaltist "structure," and also with the "rhythm" of the inner and outer world of man, a subject studied in the splendid essay by R. Bayer, "L'essence du rythme."⁴¹

What is needed is more searching analysis of the problem on the basis of contemporary studies. We need to know in just what way, during the protracted historical process, art acquired autotelic traits while never losing its connection with reality. Another question requiring further study is the origin of the divergences among artistic values, how in some eras the mimetic elements become independent of formal elements, while the opposite occurs at other times, with formal elements superceding

⁴¹ *Revue d'Esthétique*, Vol. 6 (1953), 277-90.

the mimetic. This history of the arts belongs indeed to the history of social conjunctures.

Following Marx's methodological formula that "human anatomy is the key to the anatomy of the ape," we can consider the phenomenon of art from a broad contemporary perspective — seeking a definition of art which will draw on the sketchy suggestion we have advanced here on the genesis of artistic patterns.

VI

In conclusion, we can more closely consider what definition of the work of art would accord with social and historical relationism, a viewpoint which alone can prove immune to the rebuke of ignoring the history of human culture and the trend of human effort toward the separation of the aesthetic phenomena from the remainder of life phenomena. In a word, this point of view unites the consciousness of the transiency of aesthetic values with an understanding of their fundamental (historically formed) properties. It should be pointed out that such a methodological statement does not hold that the *exact* ensemble of artistic elements as we might assume to have been present at the originaive or primitive era must necessarily endure. For instance, mimesis seems then to have been a *fundamental* value; but it cannot now be considered a universal trait of all art.

The definition of art has often, but not always, been brought down to a single property. Among those who have specified instead a complex of properties (an approach going back to D. Stuart and H. Taine), we find some interesting attempts and the most promising tendency.

In fact, the single-characteristic efforts to define art have proven a blind alley. This is confirmed in an essay by Morris Weitz;⁴² not one of the conceptions Weitz has undertaken to review — formalism, voluntarism, emotionalism, intellectualism, intuitionism — can withstand the buffets of criticism. We could add sensualism to his list, which fixes art as a given in a sensory-concrete form, or operationalism which declares that anything man-made is art, or axiologism of the kind that calls every sensually perceived value (iconic appraisal) art. Yet regrettably, Weitz's constructive proposal (*pars construens*) is difficult to accept — he would have the definition of art brought down to nothing more than this or that linguistic conditioning. In my remarks on subjectivism I have already alluded to where this tendency leads. Incidentally Weitz in his

⁴² M. Weitz, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (September 1956).

Philosophy of the Arts (1950), an earlier work, held a position much more restrained in its critical aspects and much more fruitful in its concluding deductions.

Wittgenstein's criticism of "essentialism," understood to mean speculative reasonings about an eternal essence of the world, is well taken. But one must reject as ill-founded his skepticism regarding empirical study of the essence of things. His examples, drawn from the sphere of games and amusements (seeking to prove that the child tossing a ball up against a wall will play differently from the adult football player, or that skill at tennis is unlike skill at chess) are well known, but they fall wide of their proclaimed target. Wittgenstein's difficulty stemmed from failure to analyze the general characteristics to be found in his examples in addition to their particular traits. If one has set out to determine the nature of games, is the deftness or degree of skill really the pivotal point? And if so, do not tennis and chess-playing have something in common from the viewpoint of game?

As we have suggested, a more correct position is that of DeWitt Parker in his study, "The Nature of Art."⁴³ He holds that art is not to be defined by any one of its properties but by a complex of characteristics. Parker names three which he terms the leading properties: the provision of satisfaction through the imagination, social significance, and the inner harmony of the work.⁴⁴

Soviet Marxist literature on the subject — casting aside such recent encumbrances as a reiteration of stereotyped phrases which do little to explain the crux of the matter, e.g. "art is thinking in images," or completely erroneous positions such as the claim that realism is the specific feature of all art — lately has looked to a "poetic pathos" (a term used also by Belinsky), understood to be synonymous with the "ideological-emotional-sensory content" of a work of art.⁴⁵ This trend is represented

⁴³ DeWitt H. Parker, "The Nature of Art," *Revue internationale de philosophie*, No. 4 (1939), pp. 684-702.

⁴⁴ D. W. Gotshalk in his *Art and the Social Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947) advances a similar conception, which centers upon the second of the properties here listed. Art is multivalent; yet it is vital to lend assistance to what is the basic value among the others (the term "multivalent" was introduced by the well-known American anthropologist, Franz Boas). Gotshalk's trend of analysis approximates my own to some extent.

⁴⁵ See M. S. Kagan, "On Ways of Studying the Peculiarity of Art," *Problems of Aesthetics* (1960), pp. 46-84, an essay especially interesting for its polemical demarcations. Related articles by this author in English in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* (November 18, 1959), and *Soviet Studies in Philosophy* (Summer 1968). Kagan carries forward the position stated by A. Burov in his book (in Russian), *The Aesthetic Essence of Art* (1956 — excerpt in *Soviet Literature*, 1957 no. 3, in English), according to which art, appealing to all of our psychic capacities, may be characterized as the synthetic embodiment of human life.

by M. S. Kagan and similarly by L. Stolovich whose book *The Object of Aesthetics* criticizes competitive positions on art and argues its own thesis so carefully as to have drawn much attention.⁴⁶ Yet it appears to us that the solution attempted by Kagan and Stolovich is as one-sided as those arraigned by Weitz.

It seems entirely possible to accept a definition of art which reconciles theories one might think disparate (such a methodological approach was suggested by Parker). I shall take the historical perspective as fundamental for such an operation, i.e., the simple fact that art originated under definite conditions of social and cultural development, that it altered with changes in these conditions and it is still changing now. However, I shall not try to supply an exposition of this conception of the work of art in this essay. Rather, I shall refer to it only in the very general terms sufficient to round off the question under discussion.

What then are the necessary conditions for a work of art? First, *techné* — a specific capability we call mastery and the result of this mastery. Second is a particular constellation of sensuous properties formed on the basis of this artistic ability and the artistic product, a compact structure or integrated pattern.⁴⁷ Now, such a structure or pattern can obtain not only where the elements are in harmony, but also where the work "plays" with dissonances or sharp contrasts. It may be that the work reproduces the harmonious structure of real things; but in every case it presents a sensory-emotional or ideological-emotional expression of the personality of the artist. The third condition is the relative independence of the artistic product from external conditions. It is usually said of the artwork that it enjoys an "autonomous existence" or, metaphorically, that it is a "rival" of reality. This is nothing more than a metaphor, for a work of art is assuredly a part of reality, although a part

⁴⁶ Thus Stolovich: "Man's aesthetic relation to reality is an integral, sensual — i.e., iconic, emotional and ideological relation, which psychically affirms man's place in reality." "Art — or the artistic — is a synthesis of the objective and subjective aspects of the aesthetic relation of man to reality." L. N. Stolovich, *The Object of Aesthetics* (in Russian, Moscow, 1961), pp. 69, 73.

⁴⁷ Stolovich, in his book *The Aesthetic in Reality and in Art* (in Russian, Moscow, 1959), offers a rather different definition of the aesthetic. He speaks of "the dialectical unity of the material form with the socio-human content" (p. 70). But such a definition leads to a peculiar "pan-aestheticism," i.e. the admission of all phenomena which in some sense express the domination of man over nature (e.g., the gesture of a man who has gone up a high hill, or a diagram by a learned biologist), as aesthetic phenomena. Stolovich advances a number of important remarks regarding form as a characteristic trait or artistic value (pp. 51, 155-58); however, he also skews these remarks as time and again he mixes up the genesis of the values in the labor process (whereof he writes sagely), and their significance within the structure of the artwork.

apprehended as something distinctive.⁴⁸ Furthermore, autonomy is bound up with another peculiarity of the artistic object without which the object would remain the thing it is in a "material" sense; e.g., in the case of a utilitarian object (a sofa, dwelling, poster, news review, sports item, etc.), it would achieve only its basic, ordinary function. In brief, the artistic function appears here as a kind of superstructure surmounting the "instrumental" function of the object. And this is the fourth condition for artistic value.

None of the four conditions is enough in itself; they function in the aggregate, as an ensemble of complementary properties. When works are judged on the basis of one property alone, the individual's experience of these works is sketchy, incomplete, and superficial with respect to discovering the originality of definable phenomena. This is not to say that such widespread "definitions" are of no use. All the same, it often happens in the humanities that objects and events characterized by the traits *ABC* or *BCD* are termed identical if they remind us of other phenomena with the properties *ABCD*. What determines the peculiarity of such phenomena is not a trait they have in common but the properties which distinguish them. Let us assume — and this also applies to our own definition — that phenomena corresponding to but one or two of the indicated conditions will occupy a borderline position, as is the case with a good many *objets d'art* of our time. The "ready-mades" introduced into art by the Dadaists and Surrealists are such a borderline instance, as are the creations of computers which require programming but in other respects represent a virtual denial of creative individuality. What is remarkable is that in both cases we regard the structure as complete in itself and we disengage it from ordinary function. The Surrealists called this effect *dépaysement*; V. Shklovsky spoke of the deliberate *Priyom Ostrannenija*, and perhaps Brecht with his "estrangement" (*Verfremdungseffekt*) had a similar aim.

⁴⁸ Dorothy Walsh justly termed art an alternative reality, as distinguished from possessing either the physical or the schematic (ideal) mode of existence ("The Cognitive Content of Art," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 52, No. 5 [September 1943], 433-51). Many authors note this characteristic moment of art; R. Ingarden, for instance, associates it with the intentional existence of the aesthetic object. However, this is a misleading thesis, since according to Ingarden all the phenomena of culture partake of this mode of existence. Much more productive, in the scientific sense, is the view of R. Jacobson who speaks of a poetic fragment as a specifically organized linguistic expression which "violates" the colloquial usage of words to focus attention not only, and never primarily, on information, but on the inner structure of the fragment. It is not hard to glimpse traces in this view of the thinking of Shklovsky and Tynyanov — which, if in a general way onesided, is not an unfounded conception on just this point.

On the basis of the elements mentioned, i.e., the product of *techné* and the complex of the three other conditions (the relative autonomy of structure, the sensually given, and irreducibility to merely instrumental function), an artistic value specific to art is engendered. Charles Morris in his article "Esthetics and the Theory of Signs" (1939) rightly remarks that this value is "non-transparent." Every artwork is a symbol of reality even if only because it is a symptom of the real, i.e., it is genetically and functionally bound to it. Yet indubitably, this symbol is at once "transparent" and "non-transparent." Its "non-transparency" is a function of its integral structure of perceptual qualities and their concomitants (ideas, representation, expression) which create a relatively autonomous value. These irreducible values have been and still are designated with the blanket term "form." If by form we understand the matters just defined (i.e., a relatively autonomous structure of data appealing first of all to our sense-perceptions, although emotional and intellectual responses are concomitant), then we must say form is a distinguishing trait of an artwork. For these are historically objective conditions. It is in relation to them that we will find those subjective conditions which are usually considered to be ultimate arbiters in determining what a work of art is — namely, that the work of art affords the viewer pleasure (*quod visum placet*), and the kind of recreation found in play, since art has beyond moral, practical, and cognitive functions, the capacity to imbue man with "surplus energy."

In my tentative definition of art I have not attributed merit to the criterion of originality. Not every work of art is original. It appears to follow from my discussion, however, that every work represents a given artistic individuality whose magnitude is only to be determined in the concrete instance. Every artwork has its own dialogue with past tradition and the set of artistic judgments prevailing at the moment. Every artwork not only propagates inherited standards but also modifies them. Taking the lead of S. K. Shaumian, the Soviet linguist, we might call works of art "phenotypes" within the bounds of genotypes, which means that each artist establishes relations, dialectical in character, with his historical situation and with the traditions in his domain. We would add that the phenotype has the possibility of shattering an accepted genotype (this occurs in cases of great artistic originality); nonetheless, the functioning of the genotype is indispensable in the process, and one result of originality is to prepare the groundwork for a new genotype.

The definition of artistic value I have offered here, like the hypothesis regarding art's genesis on which our definition is predicated, needs to be

verified by facts, and this admits the possibility that facts may disprove it. An initial and obvious difficulty lies in the question whether language arts (literature being the model) can be treated in the same way as the other arts. The sensually given structure of literature is of a specific kind and its irreducible values are not sounds (even in poetry) but meanings. Nonetheless, literature has art status only because of its *image-like* character, and this requires thorough investigation (see my essay "What Is a Work of Art"). Another problem arises in the comparison of different ethnocentric traditions. Is it really reasonable to conclude that the same constants recur in the Indian, Chinese, and European histories of art and aesthetic consciousness?

Again, this is the crucial question and it must be studied exhaustively. Our approach renders such research imperative and just this fact alone, we believe, would be highly important even if the research were to result in a negative answer. On evidence available — see, e.g., the special issue of *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Fall 1965 — we may hazard that the answer can be positive, for in the cultures of East and West, the concepts such as harmony, rhythm, symmetry, mimesis, expression, catharsis, *homo ludens*, appear again and again. Finally, the suggested definition in keeping with its procedures, has no blueprint for the future of art. It only proposes to look at the present very unsettled situation from the point of view of the *constants* and to inquire: does Pop Art, although it is negligent of form and simulative of life itself, annihilate *everything* in the aesthetic tradition? Though Happenings seem careless of artistic structure, have they *completely* departed from aesthetic patterning? I doubt it, although unquestionably there has been a downgrading of both *techné* and the work of art, of both artistic individuality and the appeal to the contemplative attitude of the beholder. For it still is art even if our object partakes of the spectacular or playful, if it is taken in as quickly as a glass of water, if it is improvised by the audience as well as by the artist. For here is still a *semi-reality, structured in a specific way, founded on sensually given data, appealing to our sense of equilibrium by engaging all possible psychic powers.*

Hence, it would be erroneous to reject our present analysis as "outmoded" in light of the newest artistic trends, which in their turn will surely be challenged and eclipsed. In Umberto Eco's fascinating *Opera aperta; forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee* (Milan 1962) one finds a persuasive argument that even the "open" artistic structure — Eco also calls it the "artwork in action" — will maintain

its inner coherence and specificity in the frame of our everyday world. Indeterminateness and ambiguity are the hoariest focal traits of artworks, and what we see at present, he holds, is simply a mutation in the prescribed role of the artist, the perceiver, and the result which relates and unifies them. This standard triadic schema has grown elastic or fluid, much more dynamic. The process of *theatricalization* of the fine arts and music shifts the attention to *creativity itself*, downgrading the created product; the *act of expressing* reduces the lasting result of the expression to secondary importance. Even literature has become involved to a point, though it is resistant to this trend of theatricalization. There is, for example, Julio Cortazar's *Rayuela* (1963), a stochastic playing of the artist's thoughts in such way as to entangle the reader in the search for the meaning of his existence and, also, the meaning of what is termed the domain of art. Perhaps the future of art will demand a modification (i.e., extension) of the concept of structure (pattern). A work of art's internal structure might lose some of its significance; instead there would predominate the structure of a *scene* that comprehends the artist, the public, and their mutual achievement. Beyond this we must not anticipate. We should bear in mind, as respects the lacunae in the prognosis, that no *rebus instantibus* definition of art could say more. It appears, to my way of thinking, that aesthetics may profit from the example of Hegel's "Owl of Minerva," which never ventures forth until dusk. Aesthetics should follow artistic developments and not attempt to precede them.